

## Welcome...

To the first ever edition of the Vale of White Horse Tourism Newsletter. Autumn is well and truly here but that's no reason to escape indoors and snooze in front of the fire. Its time to wrap up and enjoy what is on offer outside. There is plenty going on, outside and in, this season. The main events include: Abingdon's Michaelmas Fair, the Abingdon Marathon, Wantage Dickensian Evening, Festive Faringdon, Blues Nights as well as Christmas markets.

## Join Michaelmas in Abingdon for some Mediaeval Madness!

**Join us in Abingdon's Ock Street for some Family Fun on 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> October.** The Michaelmas Fair – which is now known as the Ock Fair because of its location on Ock Street – has mediaeval origins. Originally this was a kind of Jobs Fair held on the first Monday in October in 1348 when employers needed to recruit people quickly because of the high rates of employee-turnover resulting from the 'Black Death'. In other words it was an early JobCentrePlus in the Middle Ages! The smaller 'Runaway' Fair which is held a week later was traditionally for workers who ran away from their employers a week later because they found the work too much to bear!

Visitors to the town on the 5th and 6th of October can expect something a little more modern and less morbid! The centre of town and the whole of Ock Street (half a mile) will be closed on the 5th and 6th October for Britain's longest and narrowest funfair. The event is organized by Bob Wilsons' Funfairs.

Many visitors to Abingdon do not realize its history is so rich and varied. The town grew up outside the gates of the 7th century Abingdon Abbey and was the 6th richest town in Britain in 1538 at the time of Henry VIII. The town's prosperity continued driven in large part by its Monday Market. Abingdon is reputed to be the

October 2009

## WHO WE ARE

Trudy Godfrey - Economic Development Officer

Kate Forrest - LEADER Programme Manager

## Dates for your diary

## OCTOBER

Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> October

**Chase away the Blues and go MADD in Faringdon**

Faringdon Corn Exchange is continuing to host their 'blues' evening on Friday 2nd October. These lively events are repeated on the first Friday of every month. For more information please contact Sam or Hilary on 01367 243806.

oldest continuously inhabited settlement in England. The town is rich in traditions and has wonderful architecture and celebrated examples of public art. Intrigued? Come and join in the fun!!!

For more details please about Michaelmas Fair contact [Abingdon Town Council](#).

## European Funding available to support Tourism projects in South Oxfordshire



Do you have an idea for a project that will encourage tourism in the Vale? Would it help to conserve or upgrade our rural heritage? The European Union have made £1.89 million available to help support rural communities in southern Oxfordshire. To find out more please contact [www.southernoxfordshireleader.org.uk](http://www.southernoxfordshireleader.org.uk) or Telephone Kate Forrest on (01491) 823176 or [email](#).

## A Tale of Two Cities at Lains Barn

This Autumn's production by The Domino Players is Matthew Francis' inspired adaptation of A Tale of Two Cities by that master of story-teller - Charles Dickens. The Domino Players are joined for this production by Whippersnapper, the Wantage-based Youth Theatre. A Tale of Two Cities was Dickens' only historical novel, dealing as it does with The Terror, the horrific aftermath of the fall of the Bastille which turned the French Revolution from Republican dream to bloodbath. At the heart of the story is a tale of love and redemption which is perhaps, in these cynical days, even more startlingly heart-wrenching than it was in 1859 when Dickens wrote it. Tickets are available from Wantage Museum (01235 760176) The Domino Players (01235 868396) or [www.dominoplayers.co.uk](http://www.dominoplayers.co.uk)

5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> October

### Abingdon's Michaelmas Fair

Don your wooly hats and go to Ock Street, Abingdon to join in the fun at Europe's longest and narrowest Fair.

Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> October -

### Abingdon Marathon

This year Abingdon's marathon will be on Sunday 18th October 2009 at 9:00am. Whether you are running or simply spectating this will prove to be an interesting event. For more information please contact Abingdon Marathon.

31<sup>st</sup> October

### Tunes that Go Bump in the Night

For the musically-minded in Kennington Village Hall. Tickets £6 from Frugal Foods or Mostly Books in Abingdon.

## Get Festive in Faringdon

This year Father Christmas will be joining the people of Faringdon to celebrate this popular annual event. This event is organised by the Faringdon Retailers and Rotary Club. There will be lots of stalls to buy your Christmas Gifts, and fairground rides for the children. There will be Carols sung by local choirs, Mulled Wine from Faringdon Chamber of Commerce and much more. The Christmas Lights will be turned on during the afternoon by Father Christmas. See you all on the 28<sup>th</sup> November!

## Wantage Dickensian Evening

**Wantage 'Switches On' for Christmas** - this year the lights will be switched on by Adam Ball of Heart Radio at the Wantage Dickensian Evening. The date for this popular event is 4<sup>th</sup> December and we hope to see you in the Market Place, Museum and surrounding streets. Carol-singing, bands, Morris Dancers and late night shop opening add to the thrill of Christmas.

## Visit Vale and Downland Museum this Autumn

**Have you been to the Museum yet? If not then there's plenty of reason to do so before Christmas.** The Vale and Downland Museum is located in the busy market town of Wantage. The museum has been nationally acclaimed as an outstanding example of community partnership. When I visited a few weeks ago, I was pleasantly surprised by the broad range of services including galleries interpreting the cultural heritage of the Vale of White Horse region, to a cafe with a delightful terrace and garden... Current upper gallery exhibitions include 'Coast to Coast' by Pam Grayburn and 'Mindscapes' by local artists Mary Smith and Jane Hope. There is also a Childrens' Discovery Area to keep the little ones entertained. For more information see their [website](#).

## NOVEMBER

4<sup>th</sup> November

### **A Tale of Two Cities at Lains Barn**

Come and support the Wantage-based Youth Theatre at this inspired adaptation of A Tale of Two Cities. Buy tickets from Wantage Museum (01235 760176) The Domino Players (01235 868396) or [www.dominoplayers.co.uk](http://www.dominoplayers.co.uk)

27<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> October -

### **See Sweeney Todd The Demon Barber of Fleet Street** at Amey Theatre at Abingdon School.

28 November

'Festive Faringdon' – tell Father Christmas what you want for Christmas and see the Christmas Lights add sparkle.

## DECEMBER

3<sup>rd</sup> December

**Abingdon Lights Up for Christmas** Abingdon's Victorian Christmas extravaganza looks set to be slightly later this year on the

