

# Olney Chamber of Trade

NOVEMBER 2009

Welcome to the latest edition of the Olney Chamber of Trade newsletter.

## LATE NIGHT SHOPPING

A fun evening of entertainment is planned to attract shoppers in to the town centre for Late Night Shopping on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December.

There's a lively line-up on the stage in the Market Place for the event, designed to get everyone in the festive spirit.

Christmas Carols will be played by Olney's brass band. The Bolivian Sunshine Dogs will perform. The cast of Bedford's Dick Whittington will also be on hand to entertain, and there will also be a special version of The Jungle Book.

The Olney Chamber of Trade is funding the event, and members are invited to join in. All the local shops have been contacted as it is hoped they'll stay open later to benefit from a boost in business.

Performers will be on stage from 6pm until 8.30pm (entertainers will be mingling on the Market Place from 5.30pm). The last event will be followed by prize draws, including a special shop bingo and a raffle. Shops can put their names on the bingo card or donate a raffle prize (the shops contributions will be mentioned on the PA address system).

Half of the Market Place will be closed for the day, but the rest will be available for parking throughout. The organiser, Anna Wingerath, promises: "The evening is like last year, but bigger and better!" She can be contacted at [annamktoc@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:annamktoc@yahoo.co.uk)

## NEW BUSINESSES

Despite these gloomy economic times, it is encouraging that new businesses have started-up in Olney.

Sharon Cross of 'Love Lana' has opened a new fragrance boutique on the Market Place. It had its official ribbon cutting last week, with a number of Chamber members in attendance.

Jo and Mark Faulkner have opened Max's shoe and accessories boutique on Weston Road. Their official opening is on 19<sup>th</sup> November from 4-9pm when they are serving wine and canapés.

Social events are being planned for the New Year when there will be a chance to welcome the new businesses.

The Olney Wine Bar is back in action following its refurbishment. The first nights are already sold out.

Meanwhile, in October, many members enjoyed networking at the official opening of the new offices of Jane Smith Financial Planning at the Olney office park – where Chamber committee member Nicola Watts is a Director.

Many Chamber members also enjoyed a special evening event to get the first look at the elegant new refurbishment of Allens and Janey's clothing stores in Olney.

If you have any items for this section or for the forthcoming events (see below) please email [sophiasanger@googlemail.com](mailto:sophiasanger@googlemail.com).

## OLNEY FOOD FESTIVAL – A “BIG SUCCESS”

Thousands packed the Market Place for BOFF09 - to sample the great food cooked up for The Big Olney Food Festival on Saturday 19th September.

From the afternoon through to the evening, festival-goers could sample delicious food, enjoy entertainment on the stage, including two talented singers.

Cookery demonstrations from the Old Shanghai, Much Ado and the Caribbean Kitchen took the audience on a culinary tour around the world. And the BOFF version of 'Ready Steady Cook' featured the town mayor and Councillor Debbie Brock. Chefs Pete Matthews (The Swan) and Lynne Balletta (Much Ado) cooked on the massive 'dominator' oven onstage, to produce astonishing savoury and sweet pancakes.

Meanwhile, children enjoyed hurtling down the giant bouncy slide on the other side of the market place. Also popular was the food-themed face painting which raised money for a project to feed African orphans run by local charity Advantage Africa.

Food stalls offered a wide variety of foods, from Caribbean patties, to Teapots cream teas, Evans turkey burgers and curries from The Four Pillars. Jars of Olney Honey, pies from the local Harvest Bakery and produce from Parkins were also on sale.

Aubergine Cookshop ran a 'clinic' in the marquee where the public could ask about preserving food. Also popular was the 'speed' wine tasting sessions from Bacchus.

The highlight of the event was the 'Festival Feast', for which 450 tickets were sold for either lunch or dinner. Delicious homemade starters came from The Bull inn and then a choice of seafood paella cooked in a giant pan by the Much Ado chefs, or grills from The Courtyard Brasserie.

The pudding was a pancakes, filling and ice-cream. The Pancake committee made an amazing 800 pancakes, led by Viv Evans just two weeks after she underwent major surgery.

With tea lights on the tables, and the singers on stage, people enjoyed the balmy evening and relaxing atmosphere.

BOFF was organised by Kim Durden, Chair of the Olney Chamber of Trade & Sophia Sanger from the new websites, OlneyOnline.com and VisitOlney.com, with the aim of promoting the food available in the town.

Volunteers who helped on the day included Sue from The Swan Inn, the Brewsters from Bramley Accounting, a team from Teapots and John Durden from Kim Construction.

It was a long day for everyone involved, but none more so than for The Bull licensees. They had settled their beer in the market place at 2am on the morning of the event and then slept in the marquee the rest of the night. They were still in the market place late on Saturday to help with the clear-up.

Chamber flags were flying in the town for the whole of festival week. Many pubs and restaurants served special festival menus for £10. Shops had been asked to consider a food related theme and the Flower Shop joined in with a beautiful food and flowers display. Kim Durden involved her business Davis Optometrists by having a window display showing the best foods for the health of your eyes.

Will there be another BOFF? Kim Durden said "It was such a great event for the community we really hope it can be a regular feature of the Olney calendar". Report taken from [www.OlneyOnline.com/festival](http://www.OlneyOnline.com/festival).

## NEW COMMITTEE

October's meeting was the first for the new committee of Olney Chamber of Trade.

Kim DURDEN continues as Chair. But following Bob Wingerath's decision to step down, a number of new roles have been created to cover the many tasks that he had previously taken on. Bob was warmly thanked for his years of service.

Karen MAYES of Your Virtual PA is the Secretary and Social Secretary.

Mike REED continues as the Treasurer but will be assisted by bookkeepers Liz and Ian BREWSTER of Bramley Accounting.

Bill BETHUNE, architect and Deidre BETHUNE share membership duties.

Andrew CROOKES, Teapots, is webmaster for the Chamber.

Sophia SANGER of OlneyOnline.com and VisitOlney.com is Newsletter Editor and Chamber PR.

Samantha TOMLIN of Red Apple HR Consultancy will be working with Jo SHACKLOCK, style adviser on member events.

Nicola WATTS, Director at Jane Smith Financial Planning will be assisting Karen with social evenings.

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

**26<sup>th</sup> November 6-9pm.** Members are invited to the Olney Business Fair at the function room of The Bull. It will showcase Olney business with a range of stands and information, an exhibition on making a website 'Google friendly' and the chance to make new contacts. Free Entry. Stands are still available. More information at [www.Olneyonline.com/fair](http://www.Olneyonline.com/fair)

**2<sup>nd</sup> December: 5.30-8.30pm** Chamber's Late Night Shopping. Market Place. Entertainment on stage (please see page 1). The Chamber aims to get people into the town and create a great atmosphere so that people can shop until late, or eat early. More information at [www.olneychamberoftrade.co.uk](http://www.olneychamberoftrade.co.uk)

**6<sup>th</sup> December 10-4** Dickens of a Christmas when Olney will be packed with stalls and visitors. The event is organised by the Town Council and attracted an estimated 8,000 people last year between 10am-4pm. More information at [www.visitolney.com/dickens](http://www.visitolney.com/dickens)

**5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> December** - Olney's town museum, The Cowper and Newton museum (a Chamber member) has a special Dickens trail and crafts. It is one of a number of special events planned. More information at [www.cowperandnewtonmuseum.org.uk](http://www.cowperandnewtonmuseum.org.uk).

**Friday 11th and Friday 18th of December**, Rose Court shops will have their own late night opening for Christmas shoppers to allow them to buy Christmas presents or a special festive item for themselves. More info on the night will be on [www.rosecourtolney.co.uk](http://www.rosecourtolney.co.uk) soon.

## CONTACTS

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