

# Newsletter for Kings Thorn, the Birches & Aconbury

A Newsletter for the Villages of King's Thorn, Little Birch, Much Birch & Aconbury – February 2011 – First published in 1977

## RECENT BAD WEATHER

Not so very long ago we were in the grip of what felt like, semi-arctic conditions. As usual this brought out the best, and sometimes, the worst in us. On the positive side, neighbours showed care and concern for one another. I have been asked to name and thank the following for helping to keep us moving, by gritting the 'dodgy' places on our roads: Cllr. Vivien Short, John Penrice, Andy Godding, Tony Rees, Cllr. Glen Sims, and any others we do not know about. Thanks also to Cllr. Alison Cook and others for 'nudging' AMEY to refill the grit bins when Hereford Council's supplies allowed. For the future, anyone else who is around during the day, particularly in the hour or so before sunset, your help with gritting would be much appreciated; there are still stretches of road unattended to, and the existing 'team' can't hope to manage everything.

A reminder please, that salt grit is supplied for our roads, and is not intended for personal use.

It was interesting to hear of the purchase of various items designed to help in these conditions: TYRE SOCKS which are placed on the drive wheels of a car, and enabled one resident to travel from Hereford and then up Barrack Hill when others had long given it up as a bad job. Also, for the feet, ICE GRIPS, that can be fitted over shoes and boots. Both items can be found on the internet.

## DIARY DATES FOR FEBRUARY 2011

- 3<sup>rd</sup> FEBRUARY – Much Birch Parish Council Meeting at MBCH
- 8<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY – Whist Drive
- 12<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY – Valentine's Dance and Disco
- 15<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY – W.I. Meeting
- 17<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY – Flicks in the Sticks
- 23<sup>rd</sup> FEBRUARY – Gardening Club
- 25<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY – "Up Little Birch" Pantomime
- 25<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY – Much Birch Village Market
- 26<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY – "Up Little Birch" Pantomime matinee and evening

## ADVANCE NOTICES

- 4<sup>th</sup> MARCH – HowdenJones in Concert at MBCH
- 7<sup>th</sup> MARCH – Pancake Evening
- 8<sup>th</sup> MARCH – AGM Evergreen Club

## PARKING DURING BAD WEATHER

The following notice has been received from the Clerk to Little Birch Parish Council:-

Little Birch Parish Council have received complaints about the selfish parking around King's Thorn bus stop during the bad weather, with a number of near miss accidents occurring. These parked vehicles caused enormous hazards to other drivers by reducing the size of driveable area on already very slippery, dangerous roads. Before Christmas this led to the bus service declaring the road unsafe for buses, and ceased the service from visiting King's Thorn. This during a period when residents really needed the bus service!

It is understandable that residents should want to park overnight in this area in order to get out to work the next morning, but many cars were not moved for several days.

Drivers should park with consideration and avoid causing hazards and congestion. It is **illegal** to park on or around a road junction, as well as on the bus stop. West Mercia Police are now aware of the complaints, and agreed that sending them photographic evidence of the cars and their plates may be a solution to ensure that vehicles are parked responsibly.

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"A lot of people like snow. I find it to be an unnecessary freezing of water".  
CARL REINER

"Lo, sifted through the winds that blow, down comes the soft and silent snow, white petals from the flowers that grow, in the cold atmosphere" GEORGE W. BUNGAY

"Don't complain about the snow on your neighbour's roof, when your own doorstep is unclean"  
CONFUCIOUS

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### *WHIST DRIVE*

Our next Whist Drive is on **Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> February** in Little Birch Village Hall. We shall start at 7.30p.m. The entrance fee is £ 1.50. Excellent prizes and refreshments will be available. New players are always welcome.

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### *VALENTINE'S DANCE AND DISCO AT LITTLE BIRCH VILLAGE HALL*

Light supper – Bar – 70's music. Proceeds to Charity. **Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> February** Tickets are £ 6.50 for adults and £ 3.50 for children under 12. Advance booking required, Tickets from Jackie Morley 01981 – 541027 or Robyn Hodges 01981 – 540264.

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### *LITTLE BIRCH PANTOMIME*

“Up Little Birch” Performance dates **Friday 25<sup>th</sup> February 7.30p.m.** **Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> February at 2.30p.m. and 7.30p.m.** Tickets available from Jackie Morley 01981 – 540127 or Hilary Gould 01981 – 540322.

**Family ticket** (with up to two children) is **£16.00**, **Adult single £6.00**, and **Children (under 14) single £3.00**. Early booking recommended for this popular event. We look forward to an entertaining evening of fun and enjoyment for all ages.

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### *ADVANCE NOTICE*

**Monday 7<sup>th</sup> March** Pancake evening at Little Birch Village Hall.

**Friday 18<sup>th</sup> March** Little Birch Village Hall Quiz evening. Entrance £ 5. Teams of 4. Please note that if you would like to come but can't raise a team of 4, come anyway and we will be pleased to 'team you up' with others in a similar situation.

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Please book in advance by **Friday 11<sup>th</sup> March**. Bookings: Robyn Hodges 01981 – 540264.

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### *EVERGREEN CLUB*

The Annual General Meeting will be held at Much Birch Community Hall on **Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> March at 2.30p.m.** followed by tea, biscuits, and a chance to chat. Anyone is most welcome to attend.

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### *MUCH BIRCH W.I.*

The **February Meeting** of 2011 takes place in Much Birch Community Hall at **7.30p.m. Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup>**, when we welcome our old friend Penny Platts, who will show us 'A Photographer's View of Herefordshire'. Visitors and potential new members are always welcome. Please contact Kath 01981 – 540382, or Caroline 01981 – 540422 if you would like further information about W.I.

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### *MUCH BIRCH VILLAGE MARKET*

The market takes place in Much Birch Community Hall on **25<sup>th</sup> February**, (4<sup>th</sup> Friday of the month, unless otherwise notified because of Easter and Christmas) between 2.30p.m. and 4.30p.m. The market began in September 2008 in order for local people to show their support for local producers, and has been one of the most successful in the area. Our suppliers produce excellent fayre which has become very popular over the years. As well as the original butchers, selling rare breed beef, including pies and ready made meals, pork, delicious sausages, (including gluten free recipe if ordered); there is free range chicken, duck

and venison. Julie brings fresh bread, some delicious, different flavours. When she is not inundated with orders, (having had an article about her company, Cake Angels, in one of the national newspapers), Julia brings her gluten free and dairy free cakes.

There is a popular cheese stall too, and one of our producers makes delicious chutneys and marmalades etc. Fair Trade goods are also available. At each market there are a few crafts, but generally, which ones, depend upon the time of year. The refreshments are home made and sold in aid of MacMillan Cancer Support.

For further details please ring Kath on 01981 – 540382. NOTE: Will the ladies who were enquiring about freehand machine embroidery and or patchwork classes, contact me on the above number. I put your details safely away, but I have mislaid them!!

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### *MUCH BIRCH IOO CLUB DRAW*

The January draw took place on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2011 in Much Birch Community Hall at 7.30p.m. The winners were:-

1. Mr. K. Davies, Much Birch
2. Mrs. P. Powell, Lower Bullingham

The next draw will take place on **Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> February** 2011 at **7.15p.m.** in Much Birch Community Hall. John Jones – Chairman.

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The only difference between a tax man and a taxidermist is that the taxidermist leaves the skin.

MARK TWAIN

### **MUCH BIRCH COMMUNITY HALL**

After the recent opening of the new extension room (The Arthur Harris Room), Much Birch Community Hall now has 2 rooms for hire on the ground floor and 1 small committee room for hire on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor, which gives greater opportunity for lettings on a regular or occasional basis. Rates are displayed on the notice boards in the hall, or are available from the Secretary, Sylvia Jones, Chelston Grange, Much Birch HR2 8HR. Tel: 01981 - 540980 or e-mail: josyjo@talktalk.net

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### **GARDENING CLUB**

The next meeting will take place on **Wednesday 23rd February** when, Mr. Paul Green of Newent will demonstrate and talk on 'Plants for the Season' including care and propagation of House Plant. Meetings are always held on the last Wednesday of each month at **7.30pm.** in Little Birch Village Hall. New members are always welcome. John Bryant 01981 - 540316.

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### **FLICKS IN THE STICKS**

Much Birch Community Hall on **Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> February at 7.30p.m.** The film showing will be 'MADE IN DAGENHAM' Cert.15 Its 1968 and in Dagenham, Essex, the Ford Motor Company is about to face its biggest ever threat, and from the unlikeliest of places; the female sewing machinists. The women down tools when they are re-classified as "unskilled". With humour, common sense and courage, they take on their U.S. paymasters, an increasingly belligerent local community,

and finally the government itself, to strike an everlasting blow for equal pay for women. Starring Sally Hawkins, Bob Hoskins and Miranda Richardson. Tickets £4 (£3 under 16s). Refreshments served from 7.p.m. Tickets in advance or on the door, contact Bryony Connolly 01981 - 580298.

### **ADVANCE NOTICE**

Next month's screening will be on **Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> March at 7.30p.m.**

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### **HEREFORD CHORAL SOCIETY**

### **ADVANCE NOTICE**

There will be a performance of Haydn's Creation on **Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> March** starting at **7.30p.m** at Hereford Cathedral. Tickets are priced £ 10 - £20 and are available from Claire Hancock, Knapp Farmhouse, Bridge Sollars, HR4 7JH. 0845 - 4633124 or Cathedral Shop or Outback Records.

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### **LOCAL NEWS**

A belated welcome is given to JACY and JOHN KINROSS, who moved into Ash View, at the top of Tump Lane, some months ago. John is an author and his latest book is entitled, 'Discovering Scotland's Smallest Churches'.

It is with sadness that the death of JOHN WEALE, of Tump Lane, is recorded. John was born in 1923 at 'Broughton Cross', the minor cross roads, half way down Hollybush Lane. His father was the village blacksmith and having the forge at this strategic crossroads was very important for horse drawn vehicles, as the main Hereford/Ross road went

along Hollybush Lane opposite the Axe and Cleaver. At Broughton Cross, traffic to Much Birch and Hereford would travel up Hollybush Lane, onto the existing, but much narrower, main road and on to Hereford via King's Thorn and through to Callow, turning down past Callow Church and on through Grafton. Horse drawn traffic to Little Birch and Aconbury would go straight on at Broughton Cross and down 'Conigre Lane', past 'Strickstening' and on up to Church Farm and Little Birch Church.

John attended Much Birch School and his contemporaries were the Manning sons from Minster Farm and the Cooke boys from Much Birch. Leaving school at 14 years of age, he had several jobs in the locality until he was 18, when he was called into the Army in WW2. He was drafted into the RASC, where he learned to drive both cars and lorries, transporting vital supplies. He also became a favourite 'chauffeur' for a particular General.

With the experience of driving trucks, John joined the Fire Service in Hereford after demobilisation, a job which he enjoyed for many years. At this time, he met Betty and they were married at Cyngenedd in Wales, which was a pretty small village in 1946, with a pub, a church and a couple of houses and cottages and hasn't changed that much over the years. They started married life in Church Cottage, just behind Much Birch Church, and lived there for about 10 years, during which time, David and John were born. In the mid 1950's, the estate in Tump Lane was being developed and the family moved there in

1955, when Colin was born, and John senior had lived there ever since. With the 3 sons at Much Birch School and then Haywood John went to work at Wiggins for 15 years whilst Betty supplemented the family income by working alongside other mothers 'on the land', including fruit picking at Court Farm for Col. Howorth.

After his time at Wiggins, John went back into driving, first with George and Tudors, the builders merchants, then to Dave Price's, delivering lime and slag to farmers near and far, then to Ron Jackson and Blue Circle at the Stretton Sugwas gravel quarry and finally to Saunders Valves in Grandstand Road, from where he retired at the age of 61 when the company closed down. John's early retirement was a blessing as he did get time together with Betty, until her untimely death at the age of 61.

John was always proud of his family and they were a great comfort to him as a widower. The grandchildren brought a new focus and lease of life and again with the arrival of great grandchildren. The family were pretty much all boys for so many years but the latest great granddaughter was the first Weale girl to be born in 106 years!

Arthritis badly affected John's mobility for many years and music of all sorts was a great consolation. His family took him to airshows and he particularly enjoyed the trips to Fairford and elsewhere. More recently, a large screen TV enhanced his enjoyment of his favourite programmes. Sadly, his youngest son, Colin, died in March 2010 and this was a bitter blow to John. In 1991, John underwent a

successful triple bypass heart operation, which did somewhat ease his health problems. A few weeks before Christmas, he was admitted to the County Hospital and although he came back home, his condition deteriorated and he passed peacefully away. The funeral service was held at the Crematorium on 11<sup>th</sup> January, conducted by Rev. Mark Johnson, from whose address these notes have been taken. We send to David and John and their families our deepest sympathy. John will be very much missed by them, his neighbours, and all who knew him.

A warm welcome to Much Birch to KEN and MAGGIE JONES who recently bought "The Old Orchard" (now re-named "Beechfield"), Holly Bush Lane and are busy renovating it, hoping to move in about Easter time. They spent 8 years running a guest house in Ross which they sold last year. Formerly they lived in Bath and had an antiques business.

MRS GLADYS GARLICK of The Coach House, Birch Lodge had a fall after Church on the 9th January. After a few days in hospital she was taken to Hillside to recuperate. We send our best wishes for a good recovery and hope she is able to return home soon. RICHARD and CELIA BROWN share some happy news about their children, CERIEN STOKES nee BROWN has given birth to a healthy baby girl and named her ERIN ANNETTE, Cerian and Billy, who were married 18 April 2009 now live in Shobdon, near Leominster. MICHAEL BROWN was married in Llanbrynmair on 11th September 2010 to a lovely young Welsh lady called

ELUNED. Mr and Mrs. Michael Brown now live in Llandindrod Wells.

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#### NEW YEAR'S EVE AT L.B.V.H.

Once again **Sofa** gave the village an evening to be remembered. The village hall was packed with people of all ages dancing to the music of the Band and Disco. To the delight of all, **Sofa** presented a special performance by the "New Spice Girls", a group of talented young mums! Let us hope we hear more from them! Didn't they do well!

**Sofa** did all the preparation (and cleaning up) for this successful event and provided the food, the profits from which were donated to charity.

Members of L.B.V.H committee ran the bar and hope that customers were satisfied with the service! Profits from the bar will be used for hall costs and improvements.

The hall committee would like to thank all who attended for making this such an enjoyable evening. By supporting events such as this, you are not only enjoying yourselves but also ensuring that your hall remains open for community activities and events.

So Special thanks to **Sofa** and to everyone who helped make this such a good start to 2011.

Jackie Morley.

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#### SOFA - SO GOOD!

Thank you to everyone who came and joined in at the New Years Eve Party at Little Birch Hall. We played nearly all of the 35 songs on our play list that night - even the Rolling Stones

don't do that many! We hope you enjoyed yourselves.

Here's a bit of background about **SOFA** – We got together 6 years ago and would describe ourselves as a Funky Party Band.

**Nick Ward** is singer songwriter, plays bass guitar (as well as many other instruments) and is band leader. **Gabi Ward** plays the keyboard and is a classically trained pianist.

**Andrew Nixon** – when you can stop him strumming his guitar and singing Michael Jackson in a falsetto voice, - works for the Wye Valley AONB.

**Adrienne Ruleman** on drums is still learning this craft in between making her living as a Printmaker and Art Practitioner in Education.

We practise every week in a cold barn and warm ourselves with a fan heater and by playing songs that Nick himself has written, as well as covers of other bands.

We do pub gigs all over the county, have played the Wye Festival and also play weddings and party's where we can do requested songs. Our own songs have been played on BBC Hereford and Worcester radio 'The Friday Session', a show that features local musicians.

If you are planning a party we can be the band that will make the event extra special and we can even do your disco too. We would love to hear from you, call Nick on 01981 540348 for details.

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#### **THE CASTLE INN ACTION GROUP**

The AGM of the Castle Inn Action Group was held on January 13<sup>th</sup>. This was delayed from November as notice of it was omitted from the newsletter. Unfortunately it was again omitted from the January

newsletter but we felt we must go ahead. Notices were placed around the village but we are aware that many people may have missed them. We apologise to all who would have come had they known about it.

Activities continue until such time as the pub may re-open. Support for the pub, if it does re-open, was endorsed by those present and, we hope, from the wider community. In the meantime watch out for another possible pub night.

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#### **DUCHY OF CORNWALL**

Dear Local Residents,  
Knowing how much many of you enjoy walking in Aconbury Wood it was suggested that I give you an update about activities in the Wood.

The Duchy's general aim is to reduce the number of conifers in Aconbury and grow mostly native hardwoods instead; some further felling of conifers will take place in 2011 with subsequent replanting of hardwood species.

You will also see some more of the sweet chestnut being coppiced. Coppicing involves cutting stems off at stump level so that multiple stems then grow from the same stump; it is a particularly productive system. With sweet chestnut, the coppice cycle is about 15 years by which point the stems are of a size to yield excellent fencing posts and stakes (which are naturally durable and which we use on the Duchy estate). Hazel is another species that can be coppiced but usually on shorter cycle of 6 – 8 years; the Duchy uses cut hazel stems for stakes and binders (or 'hetherings') for hedge-laying. Coppicing has a long tradition in this country

and offers many benefits including for biodiversity.

With regard to the hill fort, the Duchy is hoping to continue some clearance on the ramparts so that these boundary features are not damaged by tree roots and are generally better seen; all such work is carried out in agreement with English Heritage.

The Wye Wood Project has moved from Aconbury Wood to another Duchy Wood nearby; the Project continues to deliver valuable training and education to local people.

I am very glad that so many local people enjoy walking in Aconbury Wood and that the vast majority do so very responsibly. Can I appeal to dog owners, however, to please clear up any dog mess; there is a problem with this particularly near the main entrance to the wood and it makes it most unpleasant for other walkers and those working in the wood. Can I also remind horse-riders that you must purchase a permit to ride in the woods; please write to the address below for a permit.

Can I take this opportunity to wish you a very Happy New Year. If you do have any questions relating to the management of the Duchy's woodlands please do not hesitate to contact me.

Mr Geraint Richards  
Head Forester  
Duchy of Cornwall  
Station Road  
Liskeard  
Cornwall  
PL14 4EE

Telephone 01579 345580 or  
07860 790094

## **OPENING OF NEW ROOM AT MUCH BIRCH COMMUNITY HALL**

After a day of snow, Saturday, January 8th dawned bright and sunny for the official opening of the new Resource Centre and Meeting Room at Much Birch Community Hall. The event began with the chairman of the management committee, John Jones, outlining the history of the building and the efforts of the last few years. He thanked people for their work, highlighting amongst others the efforts of the architect, planner, electrician and builder for their excellent and generous work.

The first Resource Centre was formed and run by Kay Garlick, who was then invited by the Chairman to give a potted history of this valuable addition to the village and surrounding areas. In later years in his retirement, Kay's father, Arthur Harris, took over this role [following several other notable administrators in between] and it is to him that the new room is dedicated. He worked tirelessly in the community frequently spending hours in the Resource Centre printing jobs for people to raise funds for the hall.

Before removing the curtain covering the plaque, the Bishop of Hereford, spoke of the sense of community he felt in the area and the many uses to which the hall was put. He was sure the new room would be a great asset to an already well used building. Then, to a packed hall of invited guests, the Bishop cut the ribbon to officially open the new room.

Following a brief vote of thanks from the Rev Mark Johnson, the new room, flooded with sunshine, was viewed by the gathering, with several guests taking their refreshments at the

tables. Most people were surprised at the size and lightness of the room with immediate enquires for bookings.

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**M.B.P.C.**

### **Report on the Parish Council Meetings in November & December 2010**

#### **Proposed bus stop near the Old Shop King's Thorn:**

The Parish Council have been in discussions with Herefordshire Council regarding a request for a bus stop near the Old Shop, Kings Thorne. Herefordshire Council have indicated that although a stop could be provided in that area, they have some road safety concerns.

It has been advised by parishioners that there was a stop at the location of the Old Shop some years ago. To prove the existence of the stop the Parish Council ask parishioners that if they recall a stop existing at this location would they please write to the Parish Clerk with details to help compile a report for submission to Herefordshire Council advising them of that past existence.

#### **Parking Issues in the Parish during bad weather:**

Parishioners are asked **not** to park on or near junctions or pavements during bad weather. Parking of vehicles has been causing difficulty for road users with visibility at junctions and for those walking on pavements.

#### **Highways Issues reported to AMEY:**

The deterioration of the roads in Aconbury Close, Pages Pitch and the loop road through King's Thorn from the A49 (Hereford Side).

## **Planning Application Granted by Herefordshire Council:**

Newcroft Farm Much Birch Herefordshire

Proposed detached garage

**Planning Inspectorates**

### **Decision on:**

The Granary, Minster Farm, Much Birch, Hereford

Revision of application DCSW2005/3085/F-

to incorporate existing lean – to for additional living space

Appeal Dismissed

### **Footpaths:**

Councillor Glen Sims and Parishioner Mo Ross continue to undertake the regular inspection of all footpaths within the parish and to ensure that repairs are carried out where necessary, resulting in the footpaths remaining open and safe for use. If you wish to report a problem on the footpaths in the parish please contact Glenn Sims or Mo Ross

### **Finance:**

At the December meeting the precept for 2011/12 was set at £6000.00

A new Parish Council notice board will be purchased and sited at Much Birch Community Hall due to the deterioration of the existing noticeboard.

### **SID's:**

No further Sid hire at present in the parish – an evaluation will be carried out on its effectiveness and discussed at the next meeting in February

### **Correspondence:**

Parish Councillors had previously been given the correspondence list, the contents of which were noted.

**Next Meeting will be on Thursday 3rd February at 7.30pm in Much Birch Community Hall.**

If you have any queries on Parish Council matters please telephone the Clerk on 01432 870874 or write to: Mrs Kath Greenow, Hackford House, Dinedor, Hereford, HR2 6PD. For more information on Much Birch Parish Council please visit our website at [muchbirchparish.org.uk](http://muchbirchparish.org.uk)

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#### **NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH**

The following e-mail was received from LPO Andrew Bundy on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2011:-

Dear all,

Just to let you know that I am retiring very shortly having completed 30 years service with West Mercia Police.

I would like to thank all who have supported me whilst I have been the local police officer for Hereford Rural South and hope that you will continue to support the Hereford Rural South Team. There is no immediate replacement for my position and due to the financial situation all such posts have been put on hold, pending a reorganisation that will take place in the coming months.

Andrew Bundy

I am sure we would all like to thank him for his years of service to the community and wish him well in his retirement!

#### **CRIME TRENDS**

Overnight on 7th/8th January, an attempt was made to steal a battery from a tractor at St Weonards. The tractor was in an open shed, and the suspects had removed the battery and left it on the floor, they were possibly disturbed by the farmers dogs barking.

However, thieves were more successful overnight on 9th/10th January at another farm near St

Weonards, when three tractor batteries were taken, two were taken off machines, and the third was being charged at the time.

Between 10pm on Friday 7th January and 8am on Monday 10th January some industrial equipment was stolen from an industrial unit on the Holme Lacy Road, Rotherwas. The items are described as three stainless steel 'Orga' screws, about 9" diameter and 12 feet long, very heavy, and worth over a thousand pounds. A padlock was removed from the gate to the unit, and the 'screws' were taken from a pallet where they were stored at the rear of the premises.

On 11th January, a householder in Orcop discovered that approx 400 litres of heating oil had been stolen sometime over the previous week

Overnight last night, a quad bike was stolen from a yard near Pontrilas, it was green in colour with a 1300cc engine. It had been chained up in an open barn, it appears that bolt cutters were used to cut it free. Unfortunately, the owner of the bike is away and we do not have the make or other details of the stolen item at present. There were also diesel tanks at the property that appear to have been tampered with.

Between 11th and 12th January, an attempt was made to steal heating oil from a tank inside a barn at a property on Saddlebow Hill, Orcop. The offenders were possibly disturbed as the occupier found the top unscrewed and a pipe leading to a bucket.

Between 8th and 11th January, 3 batteries were taken from tractors at a farm in Broad Oak.

Several hundred litres of heating oil was stolen from a tank at a domestic property in Broad Oak over the past couple of weeks.

#### **Suspicious vehicles**

At about 11.30am last Monday 17th, a white Nissan van FG03KL\* was in the Much Birch area touting for scrap. The two male occupants spoke with Irish accents.

The white van we asked you to look out for - S997KT\* - was again seen on our patch, at Orcop and Ewyas Harold, last Monday 17th.

#### **TAX REFUND EMAIL SCAM WARNING**

There is currently a scam email in circulation, which purports to be from HM Revenue & Customs. The email tells the recipient that they are due a tax refund of approx £180.

Recipients are asked to complete an attached claim form (giving bank details, card verification numbers and bank password) to receive the refund.

Should you receive anything similar - IGNORE IT - DON'T SEND ANY INFORMATION.

This is a "phishing" exercise, which could result in accounts being used fraudulently to obtain large amounts of money. HMRC have confirmed that they have never offered refunds by email

#### **CRIME PREVENTION**

Many people will have received valuable Christmas presents or treated themselves during the January sales, so it is timely to remind you about the importance of property marking, and also to inform you of a new scheme - "Immobilise". Property marking is of prime importance and you should all hopefully be aware of property marking solutions such as

"SmartWater" which is still available to you from your Local Policing Team.. For any of you wishing to purchase SmartWater packs feel free to get in touch with us.

Another useful way people can help themselves is to register their property on the "Immobilise" database - <http://www.immobilise.com>

What is the Immobilise database? Immobilise is supported by the Home Office and used by the majority of UK police forces. It is a free website which allows individuals to create a database of their personal property including serial numbers and even photos. The database is accessible to police forces nationally, and in the event that recorded property is lost or stolen, it can be flagged as such on the website by the user. This alerts officers should they subsequently recover property and check it against the database.

Please take time to have a look at the website and register your property .

#### **FUEL THEFT WARNING**

West Mercia Police is urging residents that use oil to heat their properties to be extra vigilant following fuel thefts in the county. Hundreds of litres of heating oil were stolen from a local farm property near St Weonards, Hereford on Tuesday (11 January). Also 500 litres was stolen from Arrow Wood, Kington (12 January). A number of similar thefts have also occurred recently in Shropshire and Worcestershire.

Sgt David Bishop at Hereford Police Station said: "While this not a large problem, we have noticed a slight increase in such

crimes in the county. It is possibly due to the increase in fuel costs over recent months so they may become more prevalent across the country. We are warning local people who use heating oil to take precautions against being targeted by thieves. "Among other security tips, we recommend fitting an alarm which rings if the oil level suddenly drops or installing security lights to alert residents when there are intruders." "Residents are also urged to keep any eye out for unusual activity or vehicles and report anything suspicious as soon as possible on 0300 333 3000, or ring **Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555111**. Of course, if you see a theft in progress, call 999." Sgt Bishop recommends the following hints and tips, which can help reduce the chances of heating oil being stolen from your property.

Plant shrubs or install fences to hide your tank from view. This is especially important if you live close to the road - although heating oil theft has also been known to occur at secluded properties with long drives. Remember to check your tank's oil levels on a regular basis. Where possible, install security lighting that covers your tank and the immediate surrounding area. If your tank is openly accessible to all, consider re-siting it to an area or building where it is better protected. Be extra vigilant of tankers or large vehicles close to your property. Note down any suspicious vehicles' registration numbers and report them to the police.

If your tank is located in an outbuilding, ensure it is kept

locked and secured at all times. Remove any empty containers or drums from the immediate area - they could draw attention to the presence of your oil tank. Deter the thieves from entering your property by installing and using lockable gates and by maintaining boundaries and perimeter fencing.

**CSO 6173 Fiona Witcher 07779 141232**

**CSO 6993 Kevin Powell 07779 141232**

**Hereford Rural South Local Policing Team**

Non - emergency no 0300 333 3000

[herefordruralsouth.lpt@westmercia.pnn.police.uk](mailto:herefordruralsouth.lpt@westmercia.pnn.police.uk)

**Your Local Representatives East -**

**JOHN BULBECK 540178**

**Central -**

**BOB PETERS 540670**

**West -**

**BETTY PHILPOTT 540614**

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#### **PEDESTRIAN SAFETY**

A plea to those walking to or from the bus stop in King's Thorn during the dark mornings and evenings. There have been a couple of reports of near misses by motorists where the pedestrian is dressed in black, with no reflective clothing, torch etc. It is particularly dangerous for those walking up The Thorn, where there is no pavement, and with your back to the traffic. As the advert used to say "see and be seen". Also, spotted by two motorists, were students coming home after school in daylight walking down The Thorn playing Frisbee across the road. **One day, someone might not be able to stop in time!**

## NATIONAL TRUST NOTICE

### The National Trust in Herefordshire launches its 'Your time, our place' recruitment campaign

Four Herefordshire tourist attractions have launched a major volunteer recruitment drive. Berrington Hall, The Brockhampton Estate, Croft Castle and parkland, and The Weir Garden are all calling for helpers to join their teams and have kick-started a 'Your time, our place' campaign.

All four sites will be open a full seven days from 5<sup>th</sup> March to 6<sup>th</sup> November 2011 for the first time, so volunteers are urgently needed.

There is a huge variety of roles available from gardeners, rangers and countryside helpers to fundraisers, room guides and events assistants.

For people currently looking for work or thinking about a new career, volunteering can help by improving CV's, aiding time management, planning and prioritising expertise; and helping to keep social skills fresh and energised. New recruits will also get free training and National Trust accreditation.

David Bailey, Herefordshire General Manager says: "Our volunteers are part of the dynamic Herefordshire team who are leading the way in bringing our places to life and creating a fantastic day out for our visitors". For further info you can visit our website:-

[www.nationaltrust.org.uk/yourtimeourplace](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/yourtimeourplace) or you can telephone manager David Bailey on 01885 - 482077.

## HOWDENJONES IN CONCERT

At Much Birch Community Hall, **Friday 4th March 2011. Doors open at 7pm for 7-30pm start.**

Tickets £7, children under 16 free available from Lesley Lowe on 01981 - 540366.

Bar and Refreshments (hot dogs) available. Chinese Raffle

### Howdenjones

Kate Howden and Paul Jones are singer-songwriters with that special magic that captivates the audience in a unique and intimate atmosphere. They invite you to join them on a musical journey, through a landscape of original tunes songs and stories.

Kate and Paul are based in the North-West of England and have been playing together since 1999 and 'cut their teeth' as performers on the folk circuit at folk clubs and festivals all over the country. As contemporary musicians they enjoy travelling and sharing their experiences, creating new music inspired by the places they visit and the people they meet. They write all their own material and play acoustic instruments, which include, guitar, mandolin, fiddle and banjo. From their experience of working on the National Rural Touring circuit, which promotes music and performing arts in rural areas, they have been discovering new audiences, booking Village Halls, Small Theatres and Art Centres since 2007. With six albums of work in their catalogue and a sheer delight in live performance that shows, they continue to bring their 'beautiful music to beautiful places.'

[www.howdenjones.co.uk](http://www.howdenjones.co.uk)

## RNCB NOTICE

NEWS from the Royal National College for the Blind:-

Rod Mason's Hot Five Jazz Band celebrate 25 years

**Monday 15<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2011 at 7.30pm**

At The Royal National College for the Blind, Hereford.

Anyone who loves traditional jazz is in for a treat this March. After a sell-out concert last year, Rod Mason is returning to Hereford with his band, The Hot Five on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> March.

This year, The Hot Five, together and hugely successful since 1985, are celebrating their 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, playing just a handful of venues in the UK, including The Royal National College for the Blind (RNC).

The band's broad repertoire is firmly rooted in classic jazz, featuring Mason's original arrangements from Louis Armstrong's Hot Five and Seven, King Oliver's Creole Band and Jelly Roll Morton's Red Hot Peppers, plus a wide selection of material from other (sometimes unexpected) sources.

Funds raised will be used to help improve facilities at the college, providing students with increased employment opportunities and skills for independent living.

Tickets, priced £15, are available from RNC Fundraising on 01432 376372, or from The Outback, Church Street, Hereford.

For further information, contact Marion Lyons on 01432 376372, or you can send an e-mail to [marion.lyons@rncb.ac.uk](mailto:marion.lyons@rncb.ac.uk)  
Photos available on request.

## GARDEN GRABBING

"Owz at", he cried  
As ball hit bat.  
It's gone six o'clock  
So stop all that.  
Get washed and changed,  
It's drinks next door.  
Get out those trainers,  
Remember her floor.

We can't stay long.  
There are things to do  
We have enjoyed living next to you.  
I'll pop in for coffee before we go  
Just to say a last cheerio.  
Coffee's ready,  
Come on through.  
Shall I bring in your post?  
Oh yes please do.  
What on earth is this?  
A planning request,  
We've got one too.

Our buyer it seems  
Wants to build a small dwelling,  
Nobody knew and no-one was telling.  
On the boys' cricket pitch and below  
That it seems is where it will go.

It might well block your views  
I know how you must feel.  
You will I am sure make an appeal.

JOAN REES  
January 2011

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

And I never used to read self help books!  
I am passing this on to you because it definitely worked for me.  
By following the simple advice I read in an article, I have finally found inner peace...  
It said:  
"The way to achieve inner peace is to finish all the things you've started".

So, today I have finished one bottle of vodka, a bottle of red wine, a bottle of Jack Daniel's, my Prozac's and a large box of chocolates. I feel better already!

Pass this on to all those in need of Inner Peace...

ANON

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## DUMBED DOWN BRITAIN

The Weakest Link BBC1

**Anne Robinson:** The five breeds of swan found in the United Kingdom all have plumage of predominantly what colour?

**Contestant:** Red

**Anne Robinson:** Which city in northern England is the only one that begins with the letter "Y"?

**Contestant:** Wakefield.

**Anne Robinson:** In US history, during the Great Depression, parts of the Midwest afflicted by drought and high winds became known as the what bowl?

**Contestant:** Super.

*Taken from Private Eye Issue No. 1280*

TO CELEBRATE THE 33<sup>RD</sup> BIRTHDAY OF THIS NEWSLETTER THIS MONTH, WE RE-PUBLISH  
THE FIRST EDITION

KINGSTHORNE VILLAGE COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

February 1977

The Open Meeting, held in the Village Hall on January 27<sup>th</sup>, was very well attended when between 80 and 100 people turned up despite the rain.

Mr. David Dyke, who was in the chair, gave a brief history of the Hall since its inception some 25 years ago and explained the purpose of the present meeting. He emphasised the 'tremendous effort' made by the local community at that time in raising the very considerable sum of £2,000 (equivalent to about £25,000 today!) in the space of three years and hoped that as much effort would be put in by the local folk today to make the Hall a worthy centre of social life for the whole community.

Mr. Dyke made it clear that the venture would be conducted on a 'non-religious, non-parish, non-political basis' and would be open to everybody in the neighbourhood to take part. This is obviously such an important point that it is perhaps worth quoting the original paragraph written when these matters were first discussed. "Every effort will be made to avoid any kind of division of the community, whether by age, social grouping, natives and non-natives, religion, church and non-church, haves and have-nots etc. The programme of activities will reflect this by its variety and wide scope and its attempt to cater for all ages and types of people".

Following Mr. Dyke's introduction two speakers outlined the aims and objects of the venture, giving details of the activities which it was hoped to hold, necessary work on the Hall, funds required etc. It was stressed that nothing could be achieved without good will, enthusiasm hard work and, of course some hard cash.. Both speakers referred to the necessity to get the whole family involved in as many activities as possible, so that a true community spirit could be achieved.

During the tea break, the Hall buzzed with talk, so that it was hardly surprising that the following session for questions and comments was very lively. A tribute to the Youth Club and its Officers was made in recognition of their continued effort to keep the Hall open and the Club going over a period of years. In turn, they promised their support for the new venture.

Finally, the Chairman asked for a vote of confidence in the venture as a whole, to which he received unanimous and enthusiastic assent. He then proposed that five of the people who had formulated the idea should be elected 'en bloc' as members of a Working Committee for the first twelve months. Nominations from the floor were invited for a further seven members to form a Committee of twelve. It was pointed out that this would be very much Working Committee, whose chief function would be to get the venture off to a good start, by arranging all the necessary services, repairs and redecorations to the Hall to make it suitable for all the functions which it is intended to hold. To organise the raising of funds; the use of voluntary effort; the setting up of sub-committees and working parties for various activities; and, above all, to get something actually happening at the Hall so that people can start using it again and we can all start meeting each other there.

A call for volunteers met with a good response and a good number of people came forward to give their names and addresses. There was no shortage of ideas for functions of many types. It looks as though the main problem will be fitting them all in! Nevertheless, YOUR views, ideas, suggestions, criticisms, as well as your HELP and SUPPORT, will all be welcome.

It is hoped to make the Village Newsletter a regular event to keep everybody informed of what is happening. There will also be further Open Meetings at which everybody can have their say and there will of course be the Annual General Meeting on a date to be decided.

Remember, it is YOUR Hall, YOUR Village and YOUR Community and it is YOUR help, YOUR support and YOUR enthusiasm that will make it a success.

## Brief History of the Newsletter

Following an 'Open Meeting' in January 1977, a new management committee was elected to re-open Little Birch Village Hall, which except for Youth Club use had been closed for many years.

The late John Danks was elected as Publicity Officer and edited the first edition in February 1977. John's wife Gill, did the typing and Ian Porter duplicated about 200 copies of a double-sided single page of news at Commercial Road Baptist Church. These newsletters were distributed by the Danks family on foot to each household in the area for many years. This continued until the late 1980's when Mrs Sarah Mathews undertook the typing and later, the layout of the text.

The Resource Centre at Much Birch Community Hall opened in the early 1990's, and with modern equipment, made the printing of the Newsletter much easier and with the production of 300 copies, more residents volunteered to help with delivery. Only small numbers of advertisements were included, mainly from Les Jenkins, John Robert's Carpets and a few others.

In 1995, the Danks family moved to Ross and Mrs Mathews took over as editor. Under her leadership, the Newsletter has expanded and the number of advertisers increased, so much so, that an extra 200 copies were produced for the Much Birch area. Now that the copy is available by e-mail, many local residents elect to receive it in this form and erstwhile residents who have moved also like to keep up to date in this way.

John Bryant

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## 'THANK YOU'

As readers will see from John Bryant's article many people down the years have contributed to, and kept this newsletter going. It is quite something for a community newsletter to have survived for 33 years!

Reading through the first edition, there is a strong sense of a groundswell of energy. The people of our parishes were able to focus that energy in a positive, creative, and practical way. It is obvious that everyone involved worked extremely hard, pulling together for the greater good. It seems to have been understood that good communications were an essential part of the renewed effort to re-vitalise village life.

Sarah Mathews has been our editor over a period of 27 years. Our heartfelt thanks to her!

John Danks, in his writing, appeals to the community to remember that "it is YOUR Hall, YOUR Village and YOUR Community; and it is YOUR help, YOUR support and YOUR enthusiasm that will make it a success". The same is true for this newsletter, it is YOURS and it will only be as lively and interesting as the copy you send in.

Thank you to all those who have contributed to this edition, and we look forward to your contributions for the March issue.

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## ITEMS/COPY

Please would you send items for the newsletter to [birchesnews@btinternet.com](mailto:birchesnews@btinternet.com) or deliver by hand to the post box at Bramleys, King's Thorn by:-

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**18<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY**

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