

NEWSLETTER FOR KINGS THORN,

THE BIRCHES & ACONBURY



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

FASTER BROADBAND FOR HEREFORDSHIRE

Why should you register?

Because if you don't then you are not going to get the best broadband possible. It's all down to demonstrating demand to the private companies who will deliver the service. The bigger the demand the better the broadband. Central Government has thrown its weight behind broadband, to the tune of £530m. However, this needs to be matched by private sector investment. It's up to us to show the private sector that there is demand for superfast broadband and it's worth their while to invest. Herefordshire and Gloucestershire together have started a project to bring superfast broadband all across both counties. The Borders Broadband Project has invited tenders from the telecom industry to deliver the service starting in 2012. Their goal is to achieve better than 30 Mb/Sec speeds wherever they can. They want to understand how you use the Internet now, and what you might need from fast broadband.

So please sign up and tell us, the more interest we get, the better the final service. If you run a business then complete both the residential and business surveys.
www.fastbroadband4herefordshire.org.uk/

DIARY DATES FOR DECEMBER

- 1st December - Little Birch Village Hall Christmas Bingo LBVH
- 1st December - Much Birch Parish Council Meeting MBCH
- 3rd December - Steiner Academy Advent Fair Shire Hall Hereford
- 3rd December - Bekki Cameron sings at The Castle Inn
- 7th December - Gardening Club Annual Social LBVH
- 10th December - Book Exchange Launch LBVH
- 13th December - Whist Drive LBVH
- 15th December - Flicks in the Sticks MBCH
- 16th December - Much Birch Village Market MBCH
- 20th December - W.I. Members Christmas Evening MBCH
- 22nd December - Decorating Church for Christmas Much Birch Church
- 31st December - New Years Eve Groove Party LBVH

2012

- 10th January - Whist Drive LBVH
- 25th January - Gardening Club LBVH
- 3rd & 4th February - LBVH Family Pantomime LBVH

REPORT OF THE LITTLE BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 2ND NOVEMBER 2011.

No interests were declared.

Minutes of the meeting held on 7th September 2011 were read and signed as a true record.

Matters Arising

Two extra items were agreed to be added to the agenda

Police Update - CSO K. Powell informed the Parish Council about the new non-emergency number for West Mercia of 101.

County Councillors Update - Cllr. R. Hamilton was unable to attend and sent his apologies together with an email explaining that his Parish Council newsletter will be released imminently and amendments to the confirmed minutes. The Parish Council

responded to each of the points made.

Village Hall - The stage extension is complete however further work may be necessary. Bingo, Whist and the Pantomime are organised although the Christmas Fayre has been cancelled.

Parish Lengthsman Scheme - List of works completed by the Lengthsman and invoice received.

Parish Initiative - The Clerk is in discussion with Amey due to problems accessing the new internet based PC-Iris system. A number of sand bins were reported to the Parish Council as inadequate due to repair or design and Clerk to report these to Amey together with the erosion of the sleeping

policeman at Chapel Pitch and highway erosion at Crows Nest.

Community Led Plan - Representatives from the Steering Group informed the Parish Council that the Questionnaires have been distributed and are currently in the process of being collected.

Parish Field - The quote from Tugwell Trees to finish the clearance of the Parish Field was agreed by the Parish Council.

Parish Precept - Only one response was received from a resident who wished the notice board adjacent to the Castle Inn pub to be 'tidied' with a village logo displayed and the introduction of signs for the Ancient Hill Fort.

Ordnance Cottage - Clerk to request a copy of the surveyor's report from Amey for Parish Council records.

Parish Councillors Packs - It was noted that the Clerk requires a contract and appraisal process.

Training Courses - All training course's details were distributed and discussed with Mrs. E. Godding and Mr. M. Morley to attend the HALC Bright Ideas on 30th November 2011.

Internal Auditor - The Clerk informed the Parish Council on the attentiveness and flexibility of the internal auditor, John Penrice. The Parish Council agreed to continue with Mr. Penrice as internal auditor.

Japanese Knotweed - A case has now been reported in the village in the hedge between Higgins Well and Little Birch Church. Clerk to write to landowner.

Response to Herefordshire Council paper "Help plan

the future of Herefordshire" - Clerk to email research documents so that comments can be circulated and agreed by the consultation end of 28th November 2011.

Winter Gritting - Little Birch and Much Birch Parish Councils have worked together and each submitted an application to join the Winter Gritting Self Help Scheme with Little Birch Parish Council sending their forms in on 24th October 2011. Both Parish Councils are awaiting a response from Amey.

Purchase of Projector - The Parish Council agreed to the joint purchase of a digital projector with the History Group and the Village Hall Management Committee.

Report on recent HALC AGM and SAM Meetings - Mr. M. Morley and Mrs. E. Godding summarised the discussions held within these meetings including HALC subscription possibly increasing next financial year.

Neighbourhood Planning - Mr. R. Riddell came directly to the Parish Council Meeting after attending the Neighbourhood Planning event and gave feedback to the Parish Council.

Planning Planning Application for Castle Cottage, Little Birch for installation of ground mounted solar PV panels on gravel bed (DMS/112537/FH) - returned with no objections.

Date of Next Meeting - **Wednesday 12th January 2012@7:30pm**

Please contact the Parish Clerk with any issues concerning Little Birch Parish. Contact details are: Liz Callwood on

01981-540081 or
lizcallwood@googlemail.com

**LITTLE BIRCH COMMUNITY PLAN
- THANK YOU!**

The Little Birch Community Led Plan Steering Group wish to **thank** all adults and young persons for completing the distributed questionnaires. We have had a very high response rate with just a few still to collect. Hopefully all should be sent to Herefordshire Council for analysis on 21st November. The £50 prize draw should also be made on that date, the winner of which will be displayed in the next newsletter. Please watch this space as when the analysis is complete, in early 2012, an evening will be organised to let you know the findings.

**REPORT FROM THE MUCH BIRCH
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING OF
3RD NOVEMBER 2011**

A member of the public gave feedback to the Parish Council from the AGM of HALC.

Apologies were received from Ward Councillor Hamilton and Parish Councillor Mike Smith. The **minutes** of the meeting of 3rd November were signed as a true record.

CSO Witcher explained that the Police would no longer be giving reports at the Parish Council meeting. Electronic briefings would continue and be available for anyone who signed up for them. The briefings will also appear in the newsletter and at www.muchbirchparish.org.uk. The public are encouraged to use the new **101** number to contact the Police in non-urgent matters. Posters about the **101** service to be placed on the parish notice boards.

A **financial report** was given to the Council by the Clerk, and all payments listed on the Agenda were approved.

Three **donation requests** were received and considered, the Council resolved to give

£ 100 to Dore Community Transport and £ 100 to The Parochial Church Council of Much Birch toward grass-cutting in the churchyard.

The Council resolved to maintain the **Precept** at its current level of **£ 6,000**.

Parish Roads and Footpaths were discussed. The height of hedges along The Thorn and wood side of C1263 King's Thorn Road were discussed, and the Clerk instructed to contact landowners to request that hedges be cut in accordance with Section 154 of the Highways Act 1980.

The Clerk was asked to contact the Planning Enforcement Officer for the area with regards to the building works at Kingsthorpe Cottage.

The resignation of the Footpaths Officer was noted and the Clerk instructed to place an advert in the newsletter for a new officer and volunteers to walk the footpaths. Also to contact The Ramblers to ask them to walk the paths and help report any defects.

The Clerk gave a **report on the current status of the Parish Paths Partnership scheme (P3)** and the Council **resolved** to return the £ 350 grant for 2011/12, and withdraw from the scheme as per the advice of the Public Rights of Way Warden Manager.

It was **resolved** to purchase a replacement for the damaged

grit/salt bin on Barrack Hill outside Anfield House.

Parishioner's report regarding complete obstruction of footpath MB24 at junction with B4348 to be given to AMEY to action.

Further defects to be reported to AMEY included, blocked drains at bottom of Ticklewithy Hill Pitch. Ridge in tarmac at junction of C1263 and A49 (travelling in Hereford direction). Potholes on C1263, and crumbling of road edging at one point near Waterloo Lane. Request to raise the Little Birch sign outside Anfield House Barrack Hill.

The Parish Council has accepted Mr. Brimacombe's kind offer to come to the next meeting to give an update on **The Poor's Acre**, and explain the constitution of **Much Birch Old Charities**.

Planning Matters, the Planning Sheet was noted and the Council resolved to comment 'no objections' to a new application **DMS/112600/F Land South of Crossways, Proposed Erection of Agricultural Barn**.

The **correspondence** sheet was noted. The Clerk was instructed to research the possibility of applying to **The Woodland Trust** for some free trees.

The **dates of Parish Council Meetings in 2012** were **agreed** and the Clerk instructed to place bookings with Secretary of Much Birch Community Hall.

Due to the **confidential** nature of **employment matters**, the **Clerk's contract** was discussed after the public had left the meeting, and a

confidential minute was made to be kept on record.

The next meeting will be held on **Thursday 1st December, starting at 7.30p.m.** in the Much Birch Community Hall.

Please note that this is not the official record of the meeting. The minutes of a Parish Council meeting are the official record, and these only, once signed at the next meeting as a true record.

If you have anything you would like to raise with the Parish Council, please contact the MBPC Clerk, Mo Ross on 07530 - 789447 or by e.mail muchbirchclerk@btinternet.com

AUDITED ACCOUNTS FOR MUCH BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL 2010/11

The above accounts were signed off by the external auditors Mazars on 20/09/2011. The Parish Council wishes to offer sincere thanks and appreciation to its internal auditor Mrs. Watham.

The accounts themselves, are shown further down in this newsletter.

MBPC FOOTPATHS OFFICER

Calling all walkers, and lovers of our beautiful countryside.

Much Birch Parish Council is looking for a Footpaths Officer and other volunteers to assist in walking the paths and reporting any defects back to MBPC . We have many paths in the parish and they need to be cared for if they are not to fall into disrepair, or worse still, become obstructed to the extent that it is impossible to walk them.

The paths are part of the heritage of the parishes, often the routes taken by folk who lived here before us, on their way to work at the farms, or to church or pub. Please contact 07530 - 789477 if you can help!

AUDITED ACCOUNTS
MUCH BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL 2010/2011

	Year ending	
	31/03/2010	31/03/2011
Balances brought forward	11,294	13,788
Annual Precept	6,500	7,000
Total other receipts	1,890	1,389
Staff costs	2,975	2,826
Loan interest/		
Capital repayments	nil	nil
All other payments	2,921	5,008
Balances carried Forward	13,788	14,343
Total fixed assets	239,100	239,100
Total borrowings	nil	nil
Trust funds including charitable disclosure note	nil	nil

MUCH BIRCH MEALS-ON-WHEELS GROUP

This Group, who as an arm of the WRVS, distribute meals in the area to persons approved by Social Services, are shortly to lose two of their teams (4 persons in all) who wish to retire after many years of service.

At present each volunteer takes their turn on a Wednesday or Friday every 10 weeks, and we would like to preserve that interval if we can by recruiting two more teams (each of two persons).

If anyone feels they could volunteer one and a half to two hours every 10 weeks to this cause, please contact Roger Thomas Tel 540736, John Bryant 540316 or Mary Newman 01432- 840923 who will only be too pleased to give you further information.

MUCH BIRCH CHURCH

We are looking for help!

We need offers from people who would be willing to be included in the cleaning rota for our church. It takes about

an hour at the end of the week for the church to be tidy for weekend services. At present we have 5 people on the rota but the more we have the less often each one's turn would be. If you are willing to volunteer for the rota commencing in January 2012 please contact me on tel: 01981- 540980. Sylvia Jones, Churchwarden

CLEANER NEEDED

Much Birch Community Hall Management Committee is looking for a **cleaner**. The rate of pay is **£7.50 per hour** and the hours would be approximately 4 per week. If you are interested and would like more information about the post, please call John or Sylvia Jones on 01981 540980.

THANK YOU!

The Clouder Family would like to express our thanks to everyone who has sent us good wishes and support, with cards, calls and facebook messages. I am very proud to say that our

son Scott came all the way from Australia to donate his Kidney to me, after over 2 years of preparation.

Gillian and Scott are healing well and the new kidney is turbo-charged! The Drs are very pleased with its performance.

Scott has been about around the village and has been made very welcome by all, he has had a good taste of Village life! Brian has also received many offers of assistance for his caring duties.

I know only too well how lucky I am to have a "living donor" and would like to draw your attention to the NHS Organ Donor Register. In hospital I met many people who had no living donor to call on, and consequently had spent years on the Transplant waiting list, with their life severely restricted.

Age isn't a barrier to becoming and organ or tissue donor, and neither are most medical conditions. People in their 70's and 80's have become donors after their death and saved many lives.

If you support the idea of organ donation, then please discuss your wishes with your loved ones and ensure you are registered as a donor. More information on all aspects of organ donation can be found by calling 0300- 123 23 23 or visiting

www.organdonation.nhs.uk
 Best wishes, Gillian Clouder

MUCH BIRCH 100 CLUB DRAW

The November draw took place on 8th November 2011 at 7pm in Much Birch Community Hall. The winners were:

1. No 23 – Mrs. B. Townsend,
King's Thorn

2. No 74 – Mrs. B. Connolly,
St. Weonards

The next draw will take place
on **Friday, 9th December** 2011
at **10am** in Much Birch
Community Hall

John Jones – Chairman

**AN INVITATION TO JOIN THE
MUCH BIRCH 100 FOR 2012**

**Funds in aid of Much Birch
Community Hall**

Although we have
implemented some major
improvements to the
Community Hall we still have a
few small projects we need to
achieve so we shall be running
the 100 club for another year.
Many of you are aware that we
opened the new
Meeting/Resource Room in
January 2011 and it is now often
in use, so allowing events to be
carried out in parallel with
those being held in the main
hall. It also provides a storage
area for the staging and some
chairs, so freeing up additional
floor space in the main hall.

Once again I would like to
express a huge thank you to
those of you who have
contributed to the 100 Club
over the years and I do hope
you feel you can continue your
membership during this next
year of 2012. We would of
course welcome new members
to the club to help the Hall
Management Committee on
the way to improving the
facilities of the hall for the
benefit of the community.

For further information and/or
an application form please
contact John or Sylvia Jones
Tel: 01981 540980. The cost is
£12 for the year i.e. 1 entry per
month.

John Jones, Chairman and
Promoter

HISTORY GROUP

**IRON AGE HILL FORTS – RUTH
RICHARDSON**

Ruth Richardson came to talk
in Little Birch Village hall on
September 15th. She spoke to
over 30 people and gave us a
fascinating and greatly enjoyed
account of the Iron Age. She
told us that Iron Age type
settlements began to appear
about 600BC and lasted during
the Roman invasion. The
lasting structures are hill forts,
built to look down over the
fertile land they farmed. They
probably were defensive but
weren't built to withstand
siege. They had one or more
banks surrounding them, the
Aconbury ramparts are half the
height they used to be. These
would have had palisades on
them. They had defended
entrances which would have
had gates. Probably up to 2000
people depended on each
though would not all live
inside. There would have been
many huts inside, both round
and square, with support poles,
hurdles and overhanging
thatched roofs. Some were
made of wood. Curiously very
few had access to water inside
the fort.

Herefordshire probably has the
largest number of hill forts and
it is likely that more remain to
be discovered. Aconbury is
quite large but Credenhill is
the biggest. However one on
Clee Hill is twice the size of
this.

Ruth explained that almost all
information comes from the
interpretation of excavation
and finds. It was obvious from
some hill forts that changes
had taken place over time, to

the banks and internal
arrangements. It was also
obvious that trading took
place, for example, weaponry
from France had been found.

Ruth then described something
of the life of the people as
interpreted from the artefacts
found. They had a range of
iron weaponry, pottery, spindle
whorls and querns so they
fought, killed for food, stored
food, wove cloth and ground
cereals. They cultivated many
small fields often enclosed by
wattle fencing. They grew an
early type of wheat called
emmer and later spelt. These
had twice the protein of
modern wheat but were of
variable height so the heads
were picked then straw scythed
after and used for thatching.
The cattle, nearest to our
modern Dexters, were used to
fertilise the fields in addition to
their many products. Oxen
drew carts. They also had
sheep like the Soay, not easily
herded. They were long-legged
with wool which could be
plucked then woven. Then
there were pigs, chickens and
ponies, like the Exmoor. They
had dogs and cats and there
were hares for trapping? (no
rabbits!).

The Iron Age people were
known to export cattle,
hunting dogs and gold, silver
and other metals and there is
evidence that they traded with
the Roman, amphorae were
found in burials.

Ruth's talk was most
informative giving us a good
insight into the Iron Age. One
wonders what Britain would
have been like if it wasn't for
the Romans... and all the other
invaders...!

Apologies for lateness of report

CITY OF HEREFORD REVEALED

Where were you all last night (November 17th) when Penny Platts came to talk to us about Hereford's history? You missed a treat, not only the talk but also the scrumptious food afterwards. It was disappointing to see such an excellent speaker rather poorly supported.

Those of us who did attend greatly enjoyed a most informative and well presented virtual tour of Hereford's past linked to what remains today.

We began at Herefordshire's first 'city', Credenhill Iron Age fort, much bigger than

the others in Herefordshire.

We continued to Magnis, the Roman town at Kenchester, then to Hereford where a river crossing already existed used by Romans and Saxons later. ('Here' – old German for army).

The Saxons laid out the first city, we started our tour at the cross roads outside the cathedral (smaller then).

Broad Street then extended on a line through the Bishop's Palace gateway down to the ford. The Great Hall of the Bishop's Palace is the oldest inhabited building in Hereford (c. 1100). Crossing this street,

King Street extended past the cathedral on to Castle Street, site of the medieval market place. Our tour went down

Gwynne Street, (site of Nell Gwynne's birth) to the Black Lion, one of the oldest of the numerous inns once in

Hereford, then to the old bridge with its replacement arch re-built after the Civil War. Our tour then took in

the south bank of the river bemoaning the lack of river activity compared to late 1700s

as depicted in an early Turner watercolour, when warehouses abounded and boats were built. Over Victoria Bridge and into Castle Green, site of St Guthlac's monastery and then the outer bailey of the castle, once as big as Windsor Castle was then. After the Civil War all stone was removed and used for building, only ramparts remain and part of the moat. The drawbridged entrance was over this was behind the Castle Hotel. Past Georgian Castle Street to St Owen Street (Georgian frontages to timber framed buildings) admiring the Town Hall built of terracotta in Indian Raj style, then the earlier Shire Hall and on to St Peter's church (replacement of original Norman one). This marks the end of the huge new market place created by the Normans outside the old Saxon city but then enclosed with new city walls. All Saint's church was built at the other end. The market place extended down to Byster gate (The Kerry is there now). Mention was made of the Booth Hall (late C14) with its magnificent hammer-beam roof, then of the incredible Elizabethan market hall in High Town with its 3 floors, guilds on the top, municipal offices below and market area at the bottom. It was sadly cut down in size in late 1700s and demolished totally in late 1800s. The city gates were described, St Owen's, Byster's, Widemarsh, Eign and St Nicholas, each with its story. All were removed to 'open up the city' in the late 1700s.

The tour finished down Broad Street passing the old City

Arms Hotel (Barclay's Bank) on site of entrance to old Saxon city, then the Green Dragon made up of many timber framed buildings now showing their age but listed, making much-needed refurbishment too expensive for most organisations. Then past St Francis Xavier (have a relic – hand of John Kemble reputedly used to relieve a Belmont monk of his suffering) and finally the library built, with its many natural history carvings, by James Rankin in the style of his mansion at Wormelow.

This is only a flavour of the talk, there was much, much more. Sorry you missed it!

CHRISTMAS BINGO

You are invited to join us for a **Special Christmas Bingo** at Little Birch Village Hall on **Thursday 1st December**. "Eyes down" at **8.p.m.** There will be very good prizes, and refreshments will be available.

ADVENT FAIR

The Steiner Academy is holding its annual and famous, Advent Fair at the Shire Hall, Hereford on **December 3rd** from **10a.m. to 4.p.m.** Quite a few Academy pupils live in our local villages, so this a wonderful chance to see how beautiful the community can make the hall, and to support local families! It's a good opportunity to buy individual and handmade gifts at reasonable prices, as well as enjoying the café. The children can watch puppet plays, have their faces painted, and be involved in other fun activities. **Next !**

Some H-ART participants are taking the initiative this year to

hold a Christmas exhibition. One venue is h-Art at St.Dienst's Church, Llangarron in support of the North Aisle community project. There are 12 exhibitors offering a range of beautiful handmade items including ceramics, jewellery, glass, paintings, wood turning and textiles. The local good ladies are running teas, coffees and cakes, and there will be seasonal singing by children's choirs. This will all happen on the **3rd and 4th December** from **10a.m to 4p.m.** and everyone is welcome - even if it's only for a cup of tea and a mince pie !

LOCAL SINGER/SONGWRITER

Bekki Cameron young local singer songwriter, will be playing (acoustic guitar) at **The Castle Inn on Saturday 3rd December** starting at **8.30.**

KING'S THORN AND LITTLE BIRCH GARDENING CLUB

The annual social will take place on **Wednesday 7th December** at **7.30pm.**

Tickets £5. Please bring plate, pudding dish and cutlery. New residents with an interest in gardening will be most welcome. John Bryant 540316.

The 2012 programme kicks off on **Wednesday 25th January** at **7.30pm**, when Susan Russell will give a talk entitled 'Propagating and growing Pinks'.

All welcome on that date at Little Birch Village Hall.

BOOK EXCHANGE SERVICE

Owing to the demise of the Mobile Library, it has been decided to start a Book Exchange Service in Little Birch Village Hall. The first session will be on **Saturday**

10th December, 10.a.m. until 12 noon, and thereafter on **2nd Saturday** in the month at the same time.

There will be a charge of £ 1 per adult - children free, to include a cup of tea or coffee and a biscuit or piece of cake. The charge is necessary to cover the hire of the hall. Should any money remain after expenses are paid, it will go towards improving the service. This is **not** a profit making or fundraising venture.

The idea is to bring any books you would like to exchange (to the first meeting) and choose those you would like to take away, returning them a month later as you would the library. There will be no fines!

Hopefully it will be a pleasant social event, but the success of the scheme is up to you!

Everyone is welcome - don't forget the date.

LBVH WHIST

Whist Drive **Tuesday 13th December 7.30p.m.**

and also in the New Year, **Tuesday 10th January 7.30p.m.**

FLICKS IN THE STICKS

Thursday 15 December at 6.30pm

(note earlier start time)

IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE u

Frank Capra's uplifting classic about George (James Stewart at his finest), a man with troubles, who gets the chance to live his life over courtesy of his guardian angel Clarence.

Seasonal refreshments available from 6pm

Tickets £ 4 (£ 3 under 16)
In advance or on the door
Contact Bryony Connolly
01981 - 580298

MUCH BIRCH VILLAGE HALL MARKET

The December market takes place on **Friday, 16th December** when we hope to have all the usual stall holders just waiting to provide your Christmas 'goodies'.

The Market takes place in Much Birch Community Hall **between 2.30pm and 4.30pm.** *We would like to thank everyone who has supported our suppliers during the last year and look forward to your support for the Market in 2012.*

HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO YOU ALL



ST. MICHAEL'S HOSPICE GRAND CHRISTMAS DRAW 2011

This year's Grand Christmas Draw is taking place on **Monday 19th December** at **2pm** at St Michael's Hospice. If you would like to take part in this annual fundraising event, all you need to do is buy a ticket (for just £1) and ensure the stub is returned to the Hospice by noon of the **19th December.**

Prizes include £1,000 cash (a sought-after first prize just before Christmas!), a year's membership at Belmont Lodge Hotel & Golf Course, a luxury hamper, plus many more.

The Events Team would also welcome any offers to sell tickets on behalf of the Hospice in your area. For all information regarding the Grand Christmas Draw, please contact the Events Team on 01432 - 851000 or email events@st-michaels-hospice.org.uk

MUCH BIRCH W.I.

Much Birch WI hold their meetings on the third Tuesday of each month in Much Birch Community Hall. Meetings begin at **7.30pm**.

We have enjoyed a very varied programme this year, which culminates in the member's Christmas Festivities on **Tuesday 20th December**.

The 2012 programme is in the process of being completed at the time of writing and I would like to thank Barbara Wilson for all her hard work in contacting probable speakers on our behalf. If you would like details of Much Birch WI please contact Kath Watts, 01981 540382

DECORATING THE CHURCH FOR CHRISTMAS

Much Birch Church will be decorated for Christmas on **Thursday 22nd December from 10.30 a.m.** Help and flowers and greenery would be welcome.

LITTLE BIRCH VILLAGE HALL NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY

Come and party the night away on **31st December** to see in the New Year.

Enjoy the party atmosphere with live band 'Sofa', disco, bar and snack food.

Special guest performance included.

Tickets available from 1st December.

Please phone: 01981 - 540348 or 01981 - 540885. Adults £5 Children £3. Starts at **7.30pm**.

LOCAL NEWS

A warm welcome back is given to **ROS**, nee **ATKINSON**, who is living in the erstwhile family home, with her daughter, **CHARLOTTE** and son,

NICHOLAS. They are all very familiar with what goes on here and will no doubt have well settled already.

Hopefully, Charlotte and Nicholas are enjoying their new schools.

As darkness in the mornings and evenings increases, it is becoming even more noticeable that pupils with dark uniforms merge into the dark hedgerows in our lanes. This makes it difficult for drivers, especially with traffic coming in the opposite direction, to see pedestrians. It is imperative therefore that pedestrians wear some fluorescent belts or jackets for everyone's safety and peace of mind. It is incumbent on all road users not to put themselves into vulnerable situations. The motto should be 'See and be seen'.

It is sad to report the death of an erstwhile resident, **JOHN JENKINS**, at the age of 91 years. He was born into the family in 1920, on Winnal Common, Allensmore. He had 3 older sisters and was followed by a brother. His father died when he was 3 years old and life was so hard for the mother that all the children were taken into care at Ivy House, Ledbury Road. John attended Tupsley School until he was 14 and then left to work for Bob Skerret, who farmed on the site now occupied by the Further Education Colleges in Folly Lane. He delivered milk around Hereford with a horse and cart and on completion of the round, the highlight of the day was to have a 'chariot race' around the local streets against another delivery lad with their respective horses and carts.

John then went on to work at a garage where he learned to drive and went to live with his mother and step-father in Boycott Road, St. Martins.

At the outbreak of World War 2 in 1939, John joined the RAF as a driver and remained in that service for 7 years. During this time, he was based at wartime airfields at Hunsdon and Gilston, in East Hertfordshire.

On Good Friday, 1941, John met Audrey, his wife to be and who played the major part in his life for over 70 years. He was then posted to Iceland for some 3 years and on his return, Audrey and John were married in 1944 in St. Andrew's Church, Nettlewell, Harlow, Essex. Six months later, 3 months before Alan was born, he was posted to France and remained in Europe until his 'demob' in 1946.

John then brought the family to Hereford and eventually they moved into a 'pre-fab' in Westfields, where Valerie was born. He later joined British Road Services, where he worked as a driver for 25 years until its closure. In 1953, the family was completed with the arrival of Raymond, the second son. The 'prefab' became too small for the family and they moved to a larger house in Link Road, Hereford, where they remained until the 3 children left home and went their own ways.

Eventually, John and Audrey moved here to 'Gilston', at the bottom of 'The Thorn' to pursue a more relaxed life in the country. On retirement, John walked his dogs, Jim and Dylan, daily in Aconbury Woods and on one occasion,

John found a man in a 'diabetic coma' in the woods. Sadly, the man died but John and the dogs featured in both local and national newspapers. Latterly, John walked Audrey's sheepdogs, 'Cindy' and 'Mitzi' all around the local area. In 2002, Audrey and John moved to Chartwell Road, Hereford, where they were very happy but still came to King's Thorn regularly to visit Alan and the family, as well as to see Valerie at Weston super Mare and Raymond at Bartestree.

John died peacefully at his home on 27th. October, after a short illness. We send our sincere condolences to Audrey, Alan Valerie and Raymond and their families, made up of 10 grandchildren/great grandchildren. Donations in memory of John were made to the MacMillan Renton Unit, at the County Hospital.

It is also with great sadness that the death of another erstwhile resident, **RODERICK STEWART**, is recorded. His funeral service took place at Orcop Church, overlooking the land, which he had previously farmed. The service was conducted by the Rev. Elaine Goddard and tributes were given by Charles Mayson and his grandson, William Lewis from Ash Farm, Much Birch. These notes are given from their tributes.

Roderick was born in August 1924, near Stockport in Cheshire, where his father had a cloth making factory. Roderick attended a public school but was never inclined to follow his father in business. Instead, he went to learn about farming with a local gentleman farmer and later moved to

Herefordshire and gained further experience with 2 local farmers.

In 1946, he moved into Great Ynys Farm, Orcop and set up a dairying and sheep unit. At that time Olive worked as a Milk Marketing Board Recorder and as soon as Roderick saw her he pronounced 'That's the girl I'm going to marry'. The marriage took place sometime later and in due time, Alison and Fiona were born. Roderick was hard working, dedicated in everything he did and everything had to be done properly. He hated slackers. He was also producing beef cattle and later expanded into chickens and turkeys. He set up a butchery business in South Wales and was always thinking of how to improve the way in which things were done. He was a man of high principles and was invited to sit on the NFU Poultry Committee, but when travelling to London did not follow the example of others who went 1st Class on the train at public expense, but was content with 3rd. Class. He hated waste and thought there might be a market for dried poultry manure and to that end, he experimented with others in drying and mixing poultry manure. A machine was produced and he attempted to sell the idea to larger organisations but it never really took off. His idea was a bit before it's time as products of this nature are now sold to gardeners.

Olive and Roderick moved to 'Glen Helen' in Upper Wrigglesbrook in the late 1980's and they immediately set up

'King's Thorn Miniatures', producing Doll's Houses and Farm Scenes. These were produced with great precision and attention to detail. Olive made many of the furnishings and interior decorations for the miniatures. These products were always in great demand and gave endless pleasure to many families.

Olive and Roderick improved the garden at their new home but whereas Roderick was the boss in their businesses, Olive was the dominant partner in the garden and Roderick had to do what he was told, often muttering under his breath as he did so.

They both joined in Community activities with Olive becoming a Gardening Club Committee member, where her knowledge of plants was greatly appreciated while Roderick helped the Club by painting signs and making a notice board and always helping in setting up the tables for the Annual Show and lining them, where his pin hammer was invaluable. They made many new friends in King's Thorn and one had to be careful not to rise to Roderick's wicked sense of humour. As William said, Grandad always shrouded things in secrecy as he attempted to get help with something in later years. A Laurel hedge was planted in front of the bungalow and Roderick persuaded one friend to show him how to prune them in their early years. Having pruned several bushes, Roderick said " You're not going to leave the rest to me are you? You may as well complete the job while you are here". Roderick was the first in

the area to buy a Suzuki Wagon R red in colour and with a trailer to match. He hated being taunted 'Look out! Postman Pat's about'. He was most indignant when he was caught for speeding and said didn't the PC know that I needed to get somewhere in a hurry. Roderick could sometimes be very irritating when passing in the car with a loud blast on the horn and to announce his arrival at a house or farm. The family also were not amused when they were sat down for a meal and Roderick would knock loudly underneath the table and shout 'Come in'. It was his favourite party trick. However, he was a straightforward, honest man who did everything as it should be done and expected others to do the same. He liked a laugh and a joke and was very proud of his daughters and grandchildren in all their achievements.

Olive and Roderick moved to the 'Rose Garden' in Ledbury Road when it opened some 3 years ago and they were able to enjoy a more leisurely pace of life.

Roderick will be sadly missed by a great circle of friends and acquaintances and we send our deepest sympathies to Olive, Alison and Fiona and their families. Donations in Roderick's memory were given to the Alzheimers Society and to Orcop Church.

The death has also occurred of a well known and respected former builder, **TIM DILLON**. Our sincere condolences to the family. A tribute to Tim will be given next month.

A number of friends in the community have had

operations or hospital treatment lately and we send our best wishes for a full recovery. It is pleasing to see **GILLIAN CLOUDER** out and about again and glad to hear that she is making good, steady progress.

Mrs. **JEAN MASON** of 'Burcot', King's Thorn writes: I would like to thank everyone who have supported me with such thoughtfulness and kindness during the past year and I wish everyone a good Christmas and a Happy New Year.

CRIME TRENDS

Police Briefing **Monday 7th** **November 2011** **South** **Herefordshire &** **Golden Valley**

Three vehicles were broken into whilst they were parked and unattended at a car park by the Black Hill at **Longtown**, whilst the owners were off walking. This was on Sunday 30th October during the afternoon and property, including handbags, was stolen from each vehicle.

Overnight on 2nd/3rd November, a large red engineering bucket, 7'6" wide, was stolen from a farmyard at **Lulham, near Madley**.

About 5pm on Friday 4th November, an attempt was made to steal scrap metal from a buildings in **Llandinabo**, but the would be

thieves were disturbed and made off.

Several trailers had wiring taken from them sometime overnight last night (6th/7th November) whilst they were parked in a farmyard in **Holme Lacy**. This may well be connected to the thefts from farm machinery in Holme Lacy last week.

Suspicious Vehicles

A white car-derived van with an orange light on the top - **P862AD*** - was seen in a field at **Cobhall Common** about 12 noon on Wednesday 2nd November, along with a black car, part registration **JUJU**. There were two males in the van, the driver had spiky hair, it is not clear how many occupants were in the car. When approached by the farmer, the males said they were 'just chatting' and left the area. Later that day, 3 batteries were found nearby, hidden in a hedge. Enquiries are being made.

On Thursday 3rd November at about 11am, a yellow Ford transit van **N112PB*** was in the **Madley** area, there were two male occupants in the vehicle, asking for scrap. The owner of this vehicle is known to police, keep an eye out for it please.

Also on 3rd November, in the afternoon, the occupant of a blue Ford transit tipper was found in the garden of a public house in **Craswall**, when challenged the male said they were looking for

scrap. There were two middle aged male occupants of the vehicle, and the registration number was **K85*YUK**.

A white Ford transit van **V608XX*** was seen in **Garway Hill** at about 11.30am today (7th), there were two male occupants, and were paying asked the owner if it was for sale, which it wasn't.

Suspicious Incidents

A horse in a field in **Marlas, near Kilpeck**, had its mane plaited sometime between 3.30pm and 9.45pm on Saturday 5th November. There were two horses in the field, but only one had been interfered with. There is a theory that manes are plaited as a signal to horse thieves indicating which horses are worth stealing, however, there are no records of any horses having been stolen after having had their manes plaited. An investigation by Dorset police discovered that it may be 'Knot Magic', a practice carried out by white witches when a spell is cast! Apparently this has to happen on wet and windy nights, but I'll leave it to you to decide which, if either theory fits!

Scams

This scam e-mail was forwarded to me by a recipient of the bulletin - you may have already received a similar scam -

Due to the congestion in all BTinternet users and removal of all unused BTinternet Accounts,

BTinternet would be shutting down all unused Accounts, You will have to confirm your E-mail by filling out your Login Information below after clicking the reply button,

*Username:
*Password:
*Date of Birth:
*Country Or Territory:

After following the instructions in the sheet, your account will not be interrupted and will continue as normal. Thanks for your attention to this request. We apologize for any inconveniences.

Warning!!!: Account owner that refuses to update his/her account after two days of receiving this warning stands the risk of losing his or her account permanently."

Thanks for your time
Fiona p.p.
**Golden Valley & Hereford
Rural South Local Policing
Teams**

PS 3113 Robin Davies
robin.davies@westmerciam.pnn.police.uk

PC 2368 Chris Lea
07855 - 785080

PC 2176 Wendy Powell
07811 - 131525

CSO 6173 Fiona Witcher
07779 - 141232

CSO 6993 Kevin Powell
07779-141232

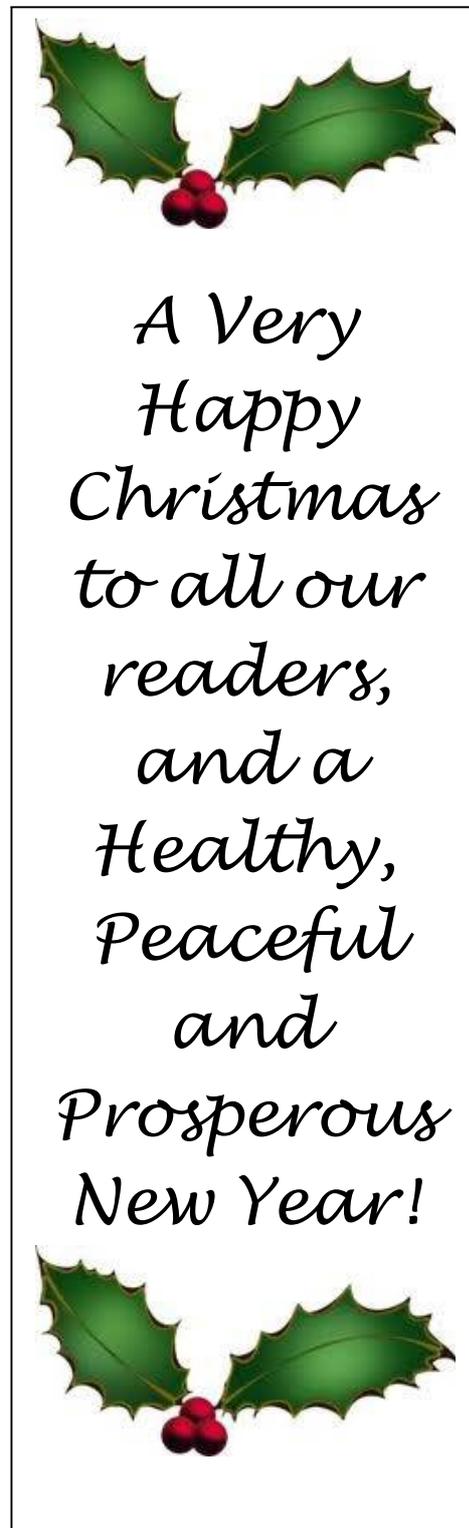
CSO 6366 James Cooke
07779 - 141223

CSO 6482 Katie Middleton
07779 - 141223

E-mail -
goldenvalley.lpt@westmerciam.pnn.police.uk

pnn.police.uk or
E-mail -
herefordruralsouth.lpt@westmerciam.pnn.police.uk

Non - emergency numbers
- **0300 333 3000**, or
101 - please use either
number to report
incidents.



IN MEMORIAM
SALLY CHAMPION 1953 – 2011

Sea Fever

I must down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by,
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's shaking,
And a grey mist on the sea's face, and a grey dawn breaking.

I must down to the seas again, for the call of the running tide
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;
And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,
And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the sea-gulls crying.

I must down to the seas again, to the vagrant gypsy life,
To the gull's way and the whale's way where the wind is like a whetted knife;
And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-rover
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick's over.

John Masefield 1878 - 1967

COPY DEADLINE

Thank you to all of you who have sent copy for this month's newsletter. The copy deadline for the January issue is:-

18th December

Please send your copy to
birchesnews@btinternet.com
in WORD format please

or

Post Box at 'Bramleys'
Aconbury Close

Thanks also to those who have expressed interest in helping with the newsletter – it's a good start! But, if the newsletter is to survive, more people need to come forward. What we are really trying to do is build a small team so that tasks can be shared.

HELP IS STILL NEEDED

With typesetting/word processing
and printing.

This would be an ideal opportunity for young unemployed persons wishing to gain work experience and add useful voluntary community work to their C.V.

Tel: 01981 – 540316

John Bryant