

# Newsletter for King's Thorn, The Birches & Aconbury

A newsletter for the villages of King's Thorn, Little Birch, Much Birch & Aconbury January 2012- First published 1977



2012

We would like to take this opportunity of wishing all our readers a very happy, peaceful and fulfilling New Year



## THE NEWSLETTER

Back in June, Mo Ross kindly agreed to become editor on a trial basis for 6 months and we offer a huge vote of thanks for the continuity and enhancement of the Newsletter. Due to a change in circumstances, she has reluctantly had to give up the editorship, but has agreed to carry on handling the advertisements..

**IS THERE ANYBODY OUT THERE who is able to carry on this work that has been done by volunteers for more than 34 years ??????. Please contact John Bryant on 540316 If you can help**

Copy for the Newsletter can still be electronically mailed to 'birchesnews@btinternet.com' or handwritten copy delivered to John Bryant, 'Bramley', Aconbury Close King's Thorn. A very big 'Thank You' is also sent to each and everyone of the 15 residents involved with the production and distribution of the Newsletter, none more so than to ROGER THOMAS, who has done the printing for the last 20 years or so. A sterling performance! Now in his 90<sup>th</sup> year, he has been an excellent

## Diary Dates

December 31st. New Year's Eve Party LBVH

January 10th. Whist Drive LBVH

January 11th. Little Birch Parish Council

January 14th. Book Exchange LBVH

January 17th. 7.30p.m. WI MBCH

Sally Hooper & Kath Watts

-The Denman Experience

January 27th. Village Market MBCH

January 25th. Gardening Club LBVH

January 26th. Flicks in the Sticks MBCH

February 3rd, & 4th. Pantomime LBVH

February 21st. Pancake evening LBVH

February 25th. Police Choir Shire Hall



# SOFA

+ Special  
guest  
performance



**NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY**  
**AT LITTLE BIRCH VILLAGE HALL**  
**DECEMBER 31ST 7.30-LATE**  
**DISCO, LICENSED BAR, REAL ALE, SNACK FOOD**  
**GAGA-ESQUE DRESS OPTIONAL**  
**FREE CHAMPAGNE RAFFLE**

**FOR TICKETS CALL 01981 540348 OR 540885**

**ADULTS £5 UNDER 14 £3 (£10 AFTER 30 TH. DECEMBER)**

servant to the community and thoroughly deserves a hard earned retirement!! Mike Leigh will continue with the printing but it is essential that at least another person knows how this is done and volunteers will be most welcome. The printing takes about two to two and a half hours at a mutually convenient time each month.

### Diamond Jubilee Celebration – June 2012.

The Village Hall Committee is planning with other village organisations to celebrate the QUEEN'S DIAMOND JUBILEE with a street party and other events in June. It is hoped to join the nationwide lighting of beacons on hill tops. Other suggestions will be most welcome.

### Little Birch Book Exchange

Despite the cold frosty morning a good crowd of people came to the village hall for the first book exchange in December. The next session will be on Saturday January 14th

10-12 a.m, when many more books will be available. There is a charge of £1 for each adult towards the cost of hall hire, heating and refreshments. There is a selection of books available for young people,

The opening morning was a lovely social occasion as well as the opportunity to take home a good book. Thanks to all those who attended, brought books to exchange and helped the project make a good start.

### City of Hereford Revealed

What a magnificent talk about the history of Hereford given by Penny Platts on November 17<sup>th</sup>! She is a fantastic, fluent speaker, able to hold your attention with her exceptional knowledge of the subject she talked about, her sense of humour coming through on many occasions. Her accompanying slides were extremely good. I felt like going into Hereford straight away to examine and see

what has always been there unnoticed by me on hundreds of previous visits. I shall certainly see Hereford city and boundaries in a new light from now on. Thank you History Group for such an enjoyable and educational evening and thank you Penny Platts-and I only went to make the tea!-Jackie Morley

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### **Brownies**

The 23 members of the 1st. Much Birch Brownies have had an enjoyable first term with their new leader Kate Hodges and helpers. Included in the programme was a trip to West Midlands Safari Park with the Archenfield packs of Rainbows, Brownies and Guides and activities to gain Fire Safety and First Aid badges . (With help from Much Birch surgery) The term ended with a Christmas party and a visit from Father Christmas with a gift for each of them. All the Brownies and Leaders would like to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

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### **Traditional orchards in Herefordshire – can you help?**

Traditional orchards are a valuable and distinctive feature of the landscape in many parts of Herefordshire. They are one of the most important habitats for wildlife in the county and are often also of great cultural and historical interest in the local area.

Some owners and organisations are already carrying out excellent work to conserve traditional orchards. However, recent survey work has revealed that there are almost 3400 traditional orchards in Herefordshire and it is estimated that many of these are in poor condition, so there is much still to do. For this reason a partnership of interested bodies across the orchard-rich counties of Gloucestershire,

Herefordshire and Worcestershire has recently been formed to help develop project ideas and to prepare funding bids to help support more locally based orchard management.

Please contact the AONB if you:

- are interested in volunteering in some capacity to help conserve Herefordshire's traditional orchards (e.g. receiving training to carry out wildlife or archaeological surveys, getting involved in community events or carrying out tasks such as tree planting or pruning);
- are the owner of a traditional orchard and would like some help with its management;
- have some relevant knowledge or expertise that could be shared with others.

It is anticipated that applications to funding bodies to support orchard conservation work will be made in Spring 2012. The more people who register an interest in this subject the more likely it is that these applications will be taken seriously and funding be granted, so please do get in touch.

Please contact the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Partnership office for further information or to register an interest.

Email: [aonb@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:aonb@worcestershire.gov.uk). Tel: 01684 560616.

More about this project and the partnership behind it can be viewed at:

[http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/orchard\\_project.html](http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/orchard_project.html)

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### **Local News**

Congratulations are extended to LUCY and DAVID COOK of 'Crossways' on the birth of a daughter, ELISABETH JANE. Mother

and daughter are doing well and David has survived all the waiting and excitement! As reported last month, TIM DILLON passed away in December at the age of 81. It would take many pages to record the work that Tim did for this community but at the request of the family, only a brief tribute is given here.

Little Birch Church was full with standing room only at the Service to Celebrate the Life of well known, retired builder, Tim Dillon. The photograph on the front of the service sheet showed Tim with his trademark smile, which greeted everyone he met.

Tim was born in southwest Ireland and moved to Herefordshire in 1947, where he first had lodgings in Stretton Sugwas. He took up an apprenticeship with William Peake, the builder, and soon forged many friendships.

He married Joan in the autumn of 1957, starting their married life in Withington and Sharon was born in late 1958. A few months later, the family moved to 'Glen View', the house that Tim had built on Wrigglebrook Pitch. John was born there in 1960 and Sue in 1966. Tim and Joan had a few moves around King's Thorn, living in turn at 'Mount Skippett' and 'Jabiru' (the site formerly occupied by Mr. Taylor's Garage) and then in 2000, to 'Westerly', opposite the erstwhile Shop and Post Office.

Tim was a very well respected builder and built many new properties in the area as well as extensions and conservatories. One notable project, which he undertook with three other local builders, was the construction of King's Thorn bus shelter, not one of the largest or most complicated but certainly a well known landmark and a godsend to those giving directions to motorists or delivery wagons.

Tim fully embraced village life and was always happy to lend a hand and help out at local events. He put in a huge amount of work with others into the refurbishment of

Little Birch Village Hall in the early 1980's and also the bigger Village Show, which ran from 1977 until the late 80's. Joan and Tim raised many hundreds of pounds for the Hall in running disco dances.

Retiring in 1997, Tim and Joan then enjoyed travelling, taking several trips to Australia, America and Ireland, soaking up the local cultures and also catching up with brothers and sisters and their families, who had settled down all around the world.

Tim was a real gentleman and will be sorely missed by his family and by many friends and neighbours.

It is sad to report that the METHODIST CHAPEL has now closed, a decision taken with a heavy heart as 5 or more generations have worshipped there and at one time, it had a thriving Sunday School. Many local families have done sterling work for so many years to keep it going. Over the last 8 years, attendances have gradually dwindled due to an ageing congregation. This situation, unfortunately, is a sign of the times and many Churches are suffering lower attendances and consequently financial pressure. For some 8 years, the Methodists and Anglicans have worshipped together twice a month and an offer has been made for the Methodists to lead a service in St. Mary's once a month. Whether this will be possible is not known at the time of writing, but a new schedule of services at St. Mary's will be published in the near future.

St. Mary's continues as the parish church but is not immune to the present economic situation. The Post Office motto of 'USE IT OR LOSE IT' is most apposite.

Several of our friends in the community have received hospital treatment recently and Andy Lowe has undergone his 45<sup>th</sup>. operation to knees and feet and we sincerely hope this one will give him some final respite from pain. Our best wishes go to everyone who is ill at this time, for a speedy recovery.

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### **Police Male Choir Performance**

St Michael's Hospice proudly presents The Hereford Police Male Choir in concert on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> February 2012 at 7:30pm in the Shire Hall, St Peter's Square, Hereford. Tickets are £8.50 per person and can be purchased from the Hospice Events Team on 01432 851000 or email [info@st-michaels-hospice.org.uk](mailto:info@st-michaels-hospice.org.uk). • Tickets can also be bought at The Outback, Church Street, Hereford. The Choir has a fantastic reputation; their harmonious voices resound at the Shire Hall, so join us for a special evening of song. • Refreshments will be available on the night. • All proceeds to St Michael's Hospice (registered charity number: 511179).

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### **Much Birch 100 Club Draw**

The December draw took place on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2011 at 7pm in Much Birch Community Hall. The winners were:

1. No 65 – Mrs. D. Pennington, Much Birch
2. No 71 – Mrs. Lewis, Much Birch

The next draw will take place on Sunday, 8<sup>th</sup> January 2012 at 11am in Much Birch Community Hall -John Jones

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### **King's Thorn and Little Birch Gardening Club**

The 2012 programme kicks off on Wed. 25<sup>th</sup> January at 7.30pm, when Susan Russell will give a talk entitled

#### **'Propagating and growing Pinks'.**

New residents with an interest in gardening will be most welcome at little Birch Village Hall. John Bryant

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### **Shoe Box Appeal**

Betty Bryant would like to thank all those who responded to the Children's Christmas Shoe Box Appeal. 27 boxes were received from Surgery staff and friends in Little Birch and King's Thorn and were delivered to the

collection point at Thorn Business Park for onward transmission to children in very poor countries.

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### **Police Briefing Wednesday 7th December 2011 South Herefordshire & Golden Valley**

#### **Crime Trends**

Outbuildings near Holme Lacy were broken into sometime in the past month, and electric cabling was taken from farm machinery. All the electric wiring from the building itself was also stripped out, and an electric motor was also taken. A house in Dinedor was burgled overnight Saturday 26th/Sunday 27th November, a laptop and some jewellery were stolen. A 47 year old male has been arrested and been charged with this offence, along with several other similar offences across the county.

The same property also had 1800 litres of heating oil stolen between Wednesday 23rd and Sunday 27th November, although it is not thought to be connected to the burglary.

Overnight on Monday 28th November/ Tuesday 29th November an industrial unit on the Dene Industrial Estate, Kingstone was broken into, and a large quantity of mechanical tools and welding equipment were taken. A Mercedes 313 tipper KU51XCN belonging to the unit and an Ifor Williams trailer were also stolen, used to remove the large amount of kit that was stolen in the burglary.

In the few days before Tuesday 29th November, a shed and touring caravan were broken into on **Dorstone Hill**, and a woodburning stove was taken. Between 3pm on Saturday 26th and 1pm on Sunday 27th November, a farm in **Harewood End** was broken into, and Jewellery was taken. Between 10.30am on Tuesday 29th November and 2.30pm on Thursday 1st December, an industrial unit on the **Dene Industrial Estate in Kingstone**

was broken into, and 24 aluminium racing car wheels and tyres were stolen. A Honda generator was also taken, this was found yesterday by a farmer in Madley in a field, and has been returned to the loser. Overnight on Saturday 3rd/Sunday 4th December a white Isuzu tipper truck parked in Coldstone Cross, Kingstone had its rear window smashed. On Monday evening (5th December), two incidents of criminal damage were reported to us involving missiles and paint being thrown at passing vehicles on the A49 at Much Birch. The culprits were two males in a small white van, part registration CE08. A livestock carrier that had been stolen from Tredegar was set alight and completely destroyed around 9.30pm on Monday 5th December in woodland at Cockyard.

If you can assist us with information on any of the above incidents, please get in touch with us on our new number 101, or on 0300 333 3000. Thanks.

### **Suspicious Vehicles**

A white Mercedes Vito panel van MV5\*MWJ was seen at around 2pm on Friday 2nd December in Harewood End. It had been driven onto a farm complex and the two male occupants between 20 - 30 years of age, were having a good look round.

Yesterday morning (Tuesday 6th December) a white Ford transit connect van CE08RH\* was snooping around the Dene Industrial Estate in Kingstone. There were two males in the vehicle, aged 20-25 years, and were asking for scrap.

### **From Ringmaster**

#### **Heating Oil Theft Advice**

As winter sets in, West Mercia Police is giving people advice on how they can avoid having their heating oil stolen. With the cost of fuel remaining high, oil tanks have become a target for thieves. Last year there were 176\* thefts recorded across

Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and Worcestershire where tanks were drained of oil.

Crime Risk Manager for the force PC Ian White has the following advice: "Hide your oil tank so you're not a target for thieves in the first place: if they can't see it, then they won't know it's there. "Plant shrubs or install fences to conceal your tank from view - especially if you live close to the road. If your property is more secluded, deter thieves from entering your property by installing lockable gates and maintaining any perimeter fencing. "Check your tank's oil levels on a regular basis. Be extra vigilant of tankers or large vehicles close to your property. Note down any registration numbers of vehicles you think look suspicious and report them to the police. "Where possible, install security lighting that covers your tank and the immediate surrounding area. If your tank is openly accessible to all, consider moving it to an area or building where it is better protected."

West Mercia Police has produced a leaflet detailing all this advice which is being handed out by a number of oil distribution companies at the same time as they make fuel deliveries to their customers.

Further crime prevention advice can also be found on the force website:  
<http://www.westmercia.police.uk/>

### **Operation Festive In Hereford**

On Wednesday 7 December, an operation will continue that aims to prevent crime in Hereford city centre as Christmas approaches and also provide reassurance to shoppers who are out and about in High Town. The operation - named Operation Festive - is running on every Wednesday evening in the build-up to Christmas so that it coincides perfectly with late night Christmas shopping in Hereford City Centre.



The operation - which has been launched in partnership with Herefordshire Council and the Hereford Retail security scheme - will not only see an increase in high visibility patrols in the city centre on Wednesday evenings, but also the use of a small team of plain clothes officers out on the streets aiming to catch any individuals committing shoplifting or 'purse dipping' offences. Speaking about Operation Festive, Sergeant Emma Freer from the Hereford City Local Policing Team said:

"We are working in partnership with the Herefordshire Council's CCTV Management Team and the Hereford Retail Security Scheme to run Operation Festive and hope that it will increase public confidence and provide additional reassurance to shoppers in the city. "A rise in the number of people shopping inevitably leads to the possibility thieves will increase their activity but we are hopeful that this operation will act as a deterrent to criminals. Certainly the fact that we have a more visible presence in the city centre should make thieves feel particularly uncomfortable.

"We are also hopeful that our plain clothes officers will be able to identify and arrest any individuals who are carrying out offences. "In addition to the operation in the city centre itself, we are carrying out ANPR (Automatic Numberplate Recognition) operations on the main routes into and out of the city centre.

"The ANPR camera systems allows us to target travelling criminals who may be coming to our city to carry out crime by alerting us to - and allowing us to intercept - vehicles that pass the cameras that may have been involved in criminal activity in the past.

"I am very hopeful that Operation Festive will help ensure that people using Hereford city centre will be as safe as they can be in the weeks leading up to Christmas.

"However, I would like to remind people that

they can call West Mercia Police if they see anything suspicious or have concerns about the behaviour of any individuals in the city centre. "Anyone who would like to report anything to us is asked to call on 101 - our new non emergency phone number - or 0300 333 3000. Alternatively, in an emergency, always remember to call 999."

### **Rotherwas Businesses please note**

As you may have read in my last bulletin, the Local Policing Teams at South Wye police station will now be covering the Rotherwas Industrial Estate and Thorne Business Park. CSO Kevin Powell has moved to South Wye and will be responsible for the estate, and will be sending out crime bulletins to each business that signs up to receive them. I will stop including Rotherwas crimes on my bulletins, and will stop sending my bulletins to businesses on the estate, unless they ask to remain on the distribution list.

### **Golden Valley & Hereford Rural South Local Policing Teams**

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

PC 2368 Chris Lea 07855 785080

PC 2176 Wendy Powell 07811 131525

CSO 6173 Fiona Witcher 07779 141232

CSO 6366 James Cooke 07779 141223

CSO 6482 Katie Middleton 07779 141223

E-mail -  
goldenvalley.lpt@westmercia.pnn.police.uk  
or

E-mail -  
herefordruralsouth.lpt@westmercia.pnn.police.uk

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

## Additional briefing Thursday 8th December

Yesterday between 7am and 6pm a garage in Closure Place, Peterchurch, was broken into and a Honda whacker plate and a Stihl disc cutter were stolen. Two quad bikes have been stolen overnight, one from a farm just outside Peterchurch, and one from a farm in Didley, Wormbridge.

The bike from Peterchurch was a red Honda TRX500, registration number CN11WCJ, which had been in a locked workshop - the lock on a single door was forced. The double doors to the barn were then broken open from the inside to remove the bike. The bike from Didley was a green Kawasaki KLF which had been chained to a tractor in a barn, the padlock had been forced open. There had been another lock and chain on the bike, but that went with it. The thieves then had to get the bike through a locked gate, the padlock was intact and it is believed they may have been in possession of the key to the padlock which went missing a few days ago.

This afternoon about 2.45pm a male attempted to steal a van parked outside a property in Michaelchurch Escley - the owner of the van saw it go past the house and rushed out, the van then stalled, the would be thief then ran off to a waiting silver Audi estate, part registration number RA51\*\*\*. This vehicle then left the scene.

If you have any information regarding these incidents, please ring 101 and quote the following incident reference -

- 539-s-071211 Garage theft
- 65-s-081211 Peterchurch quad
- 85-s-081211 Didley quad
- 376-s-081211 Michaelchurch attempt theft

## Cathedral choristers

Do you know of a boy, aged 6–8 years of age, who might be interested in joining the internationally-renowned Hereford Cathedral Choir? As well as singing in the cathedral, the choir regularly tours (South Africa last October), broadcasts on TV & radio (BBC Radio 3 in November), performs in London (Guards' Chapel in November) and takes part in the world-famous Three Choirs Festival.

It may be your son, or equally it may be a grandson, nephew or the son of friends – sometimes a gentle nudge of the parents might be needed! If a parent or guardian would like an informal discussion about the opportunities, Geraint Bowen, the director of music, would be delighted to hear from you (01432 374238, [organist@herefordcathedral.org](mailto:organist@herefordcathedral.org) or visit [www.herefordcathedral.org](http://www.herefordcathedral.org)). All choristers receive generous scholarships to the cathedral school and, in some cases, fully-funded places can be made available.

# FLICKS IN THE STICKS

## at Much Birch Community Hall

**Thursday 26th January at 7.30 pm –  
JANE EYRE PG**

Jane Eyre flees Thornfield House, the vast and isolated estate where she works as a governess for Adele, a child under the custody of Thornfield's brooding master, Edward Rochester. As Jane looks back upon the tumultuous events that led to her escape, from her childhood as an orphan to her education at the cruel charity school to which she was consigned, she realizes that she must return to Thornfield – to secure her own future, and to come to terms with the terrible secret Rochester had hoped to hide from her forever. Starring Judi Dench.

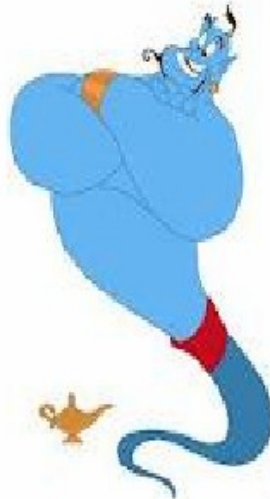
**Refreshments including hotdogs available from 7pm**

**For further information about films and screenings visit [www.artsalive.co.uk](http://www.artsalive.co.uk)**

**Tickets £4 (£3 under 16s)**

*Tickets available in advance or on the door - for further info or to book tickets please call Bryony Connolly 01981 580298*





**LITTLE BIRCH VILLAGE HALL  
ANNUAL PANTOMIME 2012**

**A SHOW FOR ALL THE FAMILY**

**DIRECTED BY JANE BOLEN**

# Aladdin



**FRIDAY & SATURDAY 3RD & 4TH  
FEBRUARY AT 7.30P.M.,  
MATINEE SATURDAY AT 2.00P.M**

**FOR TICKETS CALL 01981 541027 OR 540322 ADULTS £5 U 14 £3**