



Newsletter for King's Thorn, The Birches & Aconbury

A newsletter for the villages of King's Thorn, Little Birch, Much Birch & Aconbury January 2013- First published 1977

A Peaceful and Happy New year to all our Readers

Diary Dates

December

- 29th. Book Exchange LBVH
- 31st New Year's Eve party LBVH

January

- 3rd. Much Birch Parish Council MBCH
- 8th. Whist Drive LBVH
- 9th. Little Birch Parish Council LBVH

January

- 12th. Wassailing Evening LBVH
- 15th. Womens Institute MBCH
- 24th Flicks in the Sticks MBCH
- 25th. Village Market MBCH
- 30th. Gardening Club LBVH

February Newsletter

Would you like to help ensure a good apple yield in 2013? If so, join the local Wassailers in January. See page 2.

Please send copy for the February Newsletter to birchesnews@gmail.com or written contributions to John Bryant at Bramley Bungalow, Aconbury Close by 18th. January



Little Birch Village Hall

Annual Pantomime

2013

Jack & the Beanstalk

Directed by Jane Bolam

Friday & Saturday 9th & 10th February

Adults £6 U14 £4

Tickets from:

Hilary 01981 540322

Iris 01981 540068



Hear Ye, Hear Ye

An Old Fashioned Wassail

Is to be a-taking place in the company of

Compost Heap and Friends

There will be Wassailing of the Orchard and a
Magnificent Presentation of a Mummers Play

Saturday, 12th. January

Little Birch Village Hall

Starting 7.30p.m.

All just a bit of Post-Christmas fun in order
to raise funds for St. Michael's Hospice.

Wrap up warm to walk up to the orchard
(torches useful)

Back to the Village hall for songs food and
merriment. Nothing serious

Tickets £5 (£3 for U 14) includes supper.

Bar provided. Book early to avoid disappointment.

Bob Chance 01981 540725

Don't you go a-missing the shenanigans!

**Message received from Sarah Dean
Valley View**

Little Princess Trust

Following being recently diagnosed with breast cancer - I've set up a fundraising page at www.justgiving.com/sarah-dean-hair - I'd be really grateful if you could forward the link to your friends, colleagues and family to see if we can raise some decent funds for this amazing charity. All the details are on the web page.

I have teamed up with a local hairdresser who is married to a photographer and they have offered their services free of charge for a 'sponsored hair cut'. Absolute Herefordshire magazine have offered us some free editorial in the January edition and online coverage.

Great to have something positive to focus on.
Kind regards

Much Birch Parish Council

Parish Clerk Mrs Alison Wright Longfield House
Gooses Foot, Kingstone Herefordshire HR2 9NE

Tel. 01981 250860

Email: muchbirchclerk@hotmail.co.uk

PARISH MEETING – at the Parish Meeting held on the 6th December, at the Much Birch Community Hall, Councillors were addressed by members of the public about Parish matters, including issues of flooding and problems with the roads in the parish. A gentle reminder follows for those that deposit mud onto the roads - it is your responsibility to clear it up, please, and hopefully prevent someone skidding on it!

There is now a plan to move forward with the winter gritting of the roads that are not gritted by Amey contractors. A new spreading attachment is to be purchased and will enable grit spreading on the minor roads, helping to keep people moving. Another reminder, to everyone, is that we are looking for willing volunteers to join the Parish Council. Come along to a meeting, and find out how you can join in, or contact the Clerk, or any of the other councillors, for details of how you can make a difference to your community by being part of the Parish Council.

Full minutes of the meetings and information etc. can be found on the Parish Council website www.muchbirchparish.org.uk.

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be on Thursday 3rd January 2013 at 7.30pm at Much Birch Community Hall. Please see notice boards and website for agendas. As always the public and press are more than welcome to attend and will have the opportunity to speak directly to their representatives.

Season's Greetings to everyone from Much Birch Parish Council.

Local News

A warm welcome to Much Birch to Kevin and Helen GWILLIM, who have recently moved into The Firs after spending some months extending and renovating the property. They have moved from Much Dewchurch and have children, Harvey (6) and George (5) who attend Much Birch School and Archey (2). We hope that the family will be very happy here.

Many congratulations are extended to Michael Baker of Much Birch who was presented with the Worshipful Company of Fruiterers National Management Award at a prestigious dinner in London recently. Michael is well known in the area having started with his father, Jim, at Long Orchard Farm, then owned by Mr. Anthony Acheson and then with Mr. Geoff. Perry, when he took over and

absorbed Long Orchard Farm in to Court Farm, with Michael as his Manager.

When Mr. Anthony Snell took over the fruit plantations, Michael was made manager in charge of the Much Birch fruit but also of the developing soft fruit farm at Windmill Hill, Harewood End. In presenting the award, the Master of the Worshipful Company said, "The qualities that make Michael Baker an outstanding manager include, excellent attention to detail, with all husbandry tasks carried out to the highest standard, spot on timing of operations, anticipating the impact of changes in the weather and an excellent general management style leading to a good atmosphere on the farm".

This award is richly deserved and all the testimony to his skills can be easily seen from the A49 travelling to Ross, where the standard of growing and farm tidiness is second to none. Well done! Michael and enjoy your retirement.

John Gwinnett of Little Birch was recently chosen to fly with the Red Arrows Aeronautical Display Team as an observer and took part in 2 manoeuvres, the second being the death defying 'Head to Head' pass. John was absolutely thrilled as he himself will shortly be flying the 'New Hawk' aircraft as used by the Red Arrows when he returns to his base in Anglesey. Meanwhile his sister, Fern, is travelling at a more sedate pace as she is currently working for a Ski Holiday company in Austria.

Also on her travels is Joanna Dillon of Little Birch who will shortly be leaving on a 3 month trip to Ecuador. She will be travelling with the 'gap year' company, Camp International, who specialise in ethical journeys and will be one of only 6 travelling from this country. The trip will start (after a 14 ½ hour flight) with a month in cloud forest just north of Quito, the capital, working in community projects, particularly with children and local schools. The group then moves down to the rainforest where they will concentrate on wildlife projects and re-forestation. The highlight of the trip follows with a week in the Galapagos Islands with a chance to explore and enjoy its unique wildlife. The last stop will be on the Pacific coast of Ecuador helping the local community to improve and develop marine conservation

initiatives. Joanna is very fortunate that her employers at Holme Lacy House, where she works in reception and holiday sales have allowed her the time away to pursue this wonderful, once in a lifetime experience. Good luck! Joanna, take loads of photos and hopefully, you will give a talk in Little Birch Village Hall on your return. Have a safe journey!

Older residents in the area will remember Hilda May Holley, nee Andrews, who died on 18th. Nov. aged 88, and whose funeral followed by burial, took place on 27th. Nov. at St. David's, Much Dewchurch, conducted by Rev. Mark Johnson. Hilda was born in Little Birch, the eldest of 5, followed by Bill, Happy, Tony and Joan, who all survive her and were present at her funeral, except for 'Happy' who lives in Gloucester and was too poorly to attend. Hilda attended Little Birch School and appears in the school photograph on page 178 in the book, Little Birch on Aconbury Hill. She entered into 'service' on leaving school and then worked in the Munitions Factory at Rotherwas in WW11. She married George Holley from Much Dewchurch in 1953 after he was demobbed, having fought against the Japanese in Burma. Apart from living in Grafton Cottages at the bottom of the Callow for a few years, Hilda and George lived all their 59 years of marriage in and around Much Dewchurch. They had a son, Brian, who sadly died some 20 years ago, and 2 daughters, Katherine and Julie. The abiding memory of Hilda was that she was always smiling and although she has been unwell for the last 2 years, the smile always welcomed visitors to her home. Her grandson, Stephen, sadly passed away just over a year ago and his brother, Andrew, was involved in a serious motorcycle accident about 3 months ago which has caused the family great anguish and distress but has not stopped Eileen, Hilda's daughter in law, from continual presence and encouragement in turn, at the bedsides of her 2 sons.

George and Hilda went into care a few weeks ago, having been extremely well cared for by her 2 daughters and next-door neighbour, Shirley Gummery. We extend to George, now 97, and the family our sincere sympathy.

As reported last month, the funeral service for Mrs. Maisy Powell, erstwhile of Tump Lane, took place on Nov. 20th at St. David's, Much Dewchurch and

was conducted by Rev. Mark Johnson. Known to her family and friends as Maisy, she was born in 1923, the 4th. child of Edwin and Mary Powell, but tragedy struck when her mother died before she was 1 year old. She grew up in Wigmore Grange and attended Adforton and Leominster Grammar schools. The family moved to Martin Hussingtree in 1936 and Maisy attended Worcester Grammar before training as a secretary with shorthand and typing just before WW2. She joined the Red Cross and served in the National Fire Service during the war. Towards the end of the war, she lived with an uncle and aunt at Huntingdon and met her future husband, Wilfred, around this time.

They married in 1947 and lived at Vowchurch where Wilfred farmed Dolward Farm. Life was pretty hard as there was no electricity there. The winter of 1947 was very harsh and they were 'snowed in' for 3 weeks.

They were blessed with 2 children, Heather and Nigel, and then the family moved to Gloucestershire in 1954 where they ran a mixed farm until they retired in 1981 and moved back to Herefordshire. Meanwhile, 4 grandchildren had been born and later, 2 great grandchildren arrived, which gave Maisy great pleasure. In retirement, Wilfred and Maisy enjoyed point to point racing and played tennis at Madley. In 1993, they moved to Russell Cottage in Tump Lane, while Nigel and his family farmed 'Ridby Court', Much Dewchurch. Sadly, Wilf died in 2003 but Maisy soldiered on and at the age of 80, flew to Canada to stay with her brother, Douglas. It was a great time for Maisy and she really enjoyed her stay there. Her neighbours in Tump Lane were very supportive and she lived at home with her golden retriever dog and the daily walk with the dog gave her fairly good exercise. In the last few years, Maisy became more and more frail but valued her independence and only reluctantly moved into Dulas Court, where she received first class care. Maisy had been a stalwart member of the Mothers Union and faith played an important part in her life. She chose the hymns for her funeral service because they spoke to her about what was important in life. We send our condolences to Heather and Nigel and their families.

We send seasonal greetings to those who are in hospital at this time. Olivet Lewis continues her

stay in Ross Hospital and would like to thank every one for visiting or sending get well and Christmas cards and she wishes everyone in the community a Happy Christmas. It is good to report that Ann Rooke is making steady progress following a major heart operation and is now sitting up and enjoying conversations with her relatives. Please remember these two friends in your prayers and any others who will be in hospital over the Christmas period.

Much Birch 100 Club Draw

The December draw took place on 9th December 2012 in Much Birch Community Hall at 10.30am. The winners were:

1. No 77 - Mr. J. Clark, Exeter, Devon
2. No 50- Mrs. J. Hardy, Sellack

The next draw will take place 8th January 2013 at 7.pm in Much Birch Community Hall.

John Jones Chairman

Little Birch Village Hall Committee

Community Book Exchange/Lending Library

It was good to see so many of you on December 2nd. We hope you have had an enjoyable Christmas and wish you well for the New Year. The next meeting for the "Book Exchange" will be on Saturday 29 December at Little Birch Village Hall. A large selection of books to suit all ages and interests are available and for 2013 we have some new books and a small and growing collection of DVDs.

It would be great if some of the younger members of the community joined us for this pleasant social event. There is a charge of £1 per adult towards the cost of hall hire, heating and refreshments. We look forward to seeing you.

Whist Drive

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

New Years's Eve party and disco at little Birch Village hall

Have you booked your tickets for your local New Years's Eve party (with disco by DJ Wolfie)?

Tickets (£6) available from
Jackie Morley 01981 541027
Di Smith 01981 540401
Iris Lloyd 01981 540068

Much Birch WI

Much Birch WI hold meetings on the third Tuesday of the month, at 7.30pm in Much Birch Community Hall.

On January 15th we welcome John Marshall who will entertain us with a talk about his experiences in Andalucia and Mumbai.

Visitors and potential new members are always welcome.

For more information regarding Much Birch WI please contact Gillian, 01981 540080

Much Birch Village Market

MBVM takes place on the 4th Friday of the month, except December.

As far as I know at this time, all our usual suppliers will continue to be with us in 2013. The Squeaky Pig, award winning suppliers of rare breed pork, sausage, including Gluten free (to order) and bacon. Moor Meals, award winning suppliers of Dexter beef, ready meals and pies. Llandinabo Farm shop, Castle Cheese, Mr.G's chutney and preserves and vegetables. There is a Fair Trade stand and a craft stand, selling cards, aprons, shopping bags, children's T-shirts and sleep suits. Dan is there to sharpen knives and garden tools.

Refreshments and 'take home cakes', the proceeds of which go to MacMillan Cancer Support, are supplied by Chris and Peter. Regretfully, after 5 years of organising the Village Market, I am standing down and the market will be taken over by Mark (of Mr. G's Chutney and Preserves).

I would like to thank everyone who has supported the market over that period and hope you may long continue to do so.

If you would like to have a stall, or to find out more

about the market, please contact Mark on 01432 278026

Police Briefing Thursday 6th December 2012 South Herefordshire & Golden Valley

Abbeydore

A workshop on a farm was broken into sometime between Thursday 22nd and Wednesday 28th November. The padlock on the door was forced off to gain entry, and items were stolen. These include a Husqvana Chainsaw along with a Husqvana safety helmet and trousers, A Dewalt cordless drill and a Stihl chainsaw.
Incident ref 434-s-291112

Allensmore

Three vehicles had catalytic converters stolen between Thursday 22nd November and Saturday 24th November from a garage forecourt. The vehicles affected were a Mitsubishi Shogun, a Ford Ranger (a popular choice for cat thefts!) and an Iveco tipper.
Incident ref 274-s-041212

An attempt was made to break into a lorry that was parked in a layby between 11.30 and 11.45pm on Tuesday 4th December. The driver of the lorry was alerted by a noise from the rear of the vehicle, he went to investigate and saw two males running away. They got into an old style white box van which had the front number plate obscured, and drove away. He described them as a big chap with jeans and a light top, the second was all in dark clothing. There was damage to the rear door of the lorry where they had attempted to lever it open. Unfortunately, the driver didn't report the incident to us until lunchtime the following day!
Incident ref 236-s-051212

Callow

A black Giant mountain bike was stolen from outside the Renault garage between 9am on Thursday 29th and 4pm on Friday 30th November. It was secured to a metal post with a padlock, which was also taken.
Incident ref 789-s-301112

Cusop

An unlocked workshop at a farm was entered sometime between Wednesday 21st November and Thursday 29th November and several items

were stolen. These include a set of 5 285/75/16 Insa Special Track Tyres on a white 8 spoke wheel, 1 x 65 piece socket set and 1 x 25 piece socket set, a T-Max 4 x 4 12000 pound recovery winch and a Mig welder.

Incident ref 289-s-031212

Eaton Bishop

A farm in the village was targeted by thieves between 1.30am and 9am on Tuesday 27th November, and several items were taken. These include two tractor attachments - a pallet lifter and a bale lifter, along with a tractor battery and a Makita disc cutter. This is the fourth time this farm has had property stolen in recent months.

Incident ref 225-s-291112

Kingstone

A unit at the Dene Industrial Estate was broken into overnight on Wednesday 28th/Thursday 29th November by forcing the door open. Two very heavy clipper saw benches were stolen, they are described as an Orange electric Clipper saw bench with a Honda diesel engine 9 horse power engine which may have Brandon or fusion stickers on, and another orange clipper saw bench with Honda GX 160 petrol engine 5.5 horse power. It is thought the items were handed over a fence to a waiting vehicle, several persons are believed to have been involved due to the weight of the benches.

Incident ref 434-s-301112

Pencoyd

There have been two incidents of horse riders being put in danger by vehicles driving too fast and too close to riders on country lanes.

The first incident happened between 3.30 and 4pm on Thursday 29th November when a silver/grey hatchback with an 11 plate clipped the horse which then bolted, throwing the rider off. Luckily the rider wasn't badly hurt, and the horse was found soon afterwards, but it could have been a lot more serious. The driver of the car did not stop, but was described as a lady in her mid 50's with blonde/grey shoulder length hair in a bob cut.

Incident ref 624-s-291112

The second incident happened at about 9.45am on Wednesday 5th December when a horse and rider were in the lane near the church when a silver Toyota Yaris approached from behind, the rider motioned to the driver to slow down, but the driver

did not, and came to within inches of the rear of the horse before pulling out and speeding past. Luckily, the horse did not get spooked, and the rider was able to take the registration number of the car, and the driver (again, a middle aged lady with shoulder length blonde hair) can expect a visit from police sometime soon!

Incident ref 145-s-051212

Suspicious Incident

Another report came in on Tuesday 4th December of two males flagging down motorists on the B4352 just outside Madley, asking for money for petrol, offering rings in exchange. The males were described as dark skinned, one wearing a suit aged between 35-40, the other also smartly dressed but more casual. There was a green Vauxhall Astra parked with the bonnet up on the side of the road, but the registration number is not known.

Incident ref 413-s-041212

Finally, we bid a sad farewell to PCSO James Cooke who has been posted to South Wye Police Station where there is a staff shortage. He will be joining PCSO Kevin Powell and PC Roger Bradley, also lately of this station, on the Belmont Local Policing Team.

We wish him well, and he will be missed! (Thanks for all the shiny boots Jim, we'll have to start cleaning our own now!)

Best wishes Fiona

Golden Valley & Hereford Rural South Local Policing Team

PC 2176 Wendy Powell 07811 131525

PCSO 6173 Fiona Witcher 07779 141232

PCSO 6482 Katie Middleton 07779 141223

E-mail -

goldenvalley.lpt@westmercia.pnn.police.uk

Report of Friends of the Castle AGM

This took place on November 22nd and was well attended by 23 members of the public. After the committee was re-elected the treasurer's reported that the accounts were very healthy. The chairman reported the various changes at the pub over the past year. Sadly it is now closed and up for sale for £350 000 so its future is uncertain. The Parish Plan for Little Birch showed that 91% of people

thought the pub is important or very important in the community and 50% used it regularly. The pub might be registered as a Community Asset, as specified in the Localism Act 2011, at some point.

At present there are various options for it:

- It will be sold to someone who will run it as a pub (preferred option)
- If supported by a large proportion of the community, a community group e.g. the Parish Council could apply for a loan on behalf of the community. This would be paid off by tenant's rent (as the Crown at Dilwyn)
- A buy-out by a group of shareholders who could lease it or run it themselves.
- If none of the above happen because the pub cannot be purchased at a suitable price the pub can remain closed with the owner in the living accommodation but the owner must not use the pub premises as living accommodation.
- The owner might apply for change of use.

CAMRA will help with advice whenever necessary.

It was decided to run another Pub Night in the Village Hall early in the New Year

And Finally

To illustrate the perils of using text messages

A wife sent her husband a text on a cold winters morning:

"Windows frozen"

The husband texts back:

"Pour some luke warm water over it"

The wife texts back:

"Computer completely b*****d now"