



Newsletter for King's Thorn, The Birches & Aconbury

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

John Bryant

Many readers will already know that one of the best known and respected local residents was awarded the British Empire Medal in the recent Queen's New Years Honours list. John was a member of the team that started this Newsletter in 1977 and has managed its preparation and production for many years as well as writing the regular local news and gardening columns.

There are many other community activities that John involved himself in during more than 30 years. A notable achievement was his part in the re-opening of Little Birch village hall after several years of closure and its registration as a charity. In recent years he has chaired the village hall committee and was an enthusiastic supporter of the refurbishments.

John previously delivered meals on wheels, is a member of the Little Birch Parochial Church Council, ex-Churchwarden and now chairman of the gardening club and the local history group. Some readers will also have noticed the unassuming and invaluable help that he regularly gives to local people during periods of sickness, hospitalisation and bereavement.

The community is therefore delighted by the well deserved honour to be bestowed on John. Special thanks are also due for the contribution of his wife Betty without whose support none of these things would have been possible.

It is expected that the presentation of the award will be at Little Birch village hall on March 2nd. Please watch out for details in the next Newsletter.

Diary Dates

January

30th Gardening Club LBVH

February

7th Much Birch parish Council MBCH

8th & 9th Pantomime LBVH

12th pancake lunch MBCH

12th Whist drive LBVH

15th Brownies Charity Bingo LBVH

16th Coffee morning 'Counties View'

19th Womens Institute MBCH

19th Pancake night LBVH

22nd Village market MBCH

23rd Book exchange LBVH

February

24th Afternoon tea Chevin House

26th Flicks in the Sticks MBCH

27th Gardening Club LBVH

March

12th Evergreen club AGM MBCH

13th Sugar craft demonstration MBCH

13th History Group LBVH

15th Annual Quiz LBVH

21st Easter Bingo LBVH

23rd Coffee morning MBCH

March Newsletter

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

Generous donations for the Newsletter received during the past few months are gratefully acknowledged.

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



**Saturday evening
performance sold out**

New Year Afternoon Tea at Chevin House

If you came to the Afternoon Tea on Sunday January 6th, we hope you enjoyed yourself while helping raise almost £300 for the fundraising to keep Much Birch Church open. Thank you for joining us.

Following on from this, a few of us have decided to hold another tea party this month, and we hope you will join us for An AFTERNOON TEA of FAVOURITE CAKES We want to support Sarah Dean's fundraising for The Little Princess Trust that supplies real hair wigs for children who are suffering hair loss.

Many of you will know Sarah, who lives with her husband, Graham, and two little boys on barrack Hill and who together run Dean & Sun. In December she had two operations for breast cancer and has now started chemotherapy, but just before Christmas Sarah arranged a sponsored hair cut for her long, thick locks.

The aim of the tea is to support Sarah and Graham and their fundraising efforts by offering slices of favourite homemade cakes for Afternoon Tea and we do hope you will come along and enjoy yourself. Lesley Lowe 01981 540366

In aid of Sarah Dean's appeal for The Little Princess Trust an
AFTERNOON TEA of FAVOURITE CAKES
CHEVIN HOUSE, BARRACK HILL, LITTLE BIRCH

Sunday, 24th February 2.30-4pm

You are invited to spend a relaxing afternoon in good company around a roaring log fire. If you would like to make your favourite cake please contact

Lesley: 01981 540366 or Peter 541185

Local News

Many congratulations are extended to VICTOR and BERYL TOWNSEND who will celebrate their Diamond Wedding Anniversary on 31st. January. There are many in the community who would like to congratulate them and all are welcome to drop into Much Birch Hall on Sat. 2nd. February, between 2 and 5pm., for a nice cup of tea and a slice of cake.

We are glad to report that Anne Rooke is out of hospital and being cared for by her neice Marilyn Kaye-Allen

A very warm welcome is given to MICHELLE and COLIN COURT, erstwhile of Cheltenham, who have recently moved into The Lodge, Hollybush Lane, Much Birch. They have two sons, one living in Bristol and the other in Cheltenham and enjoy the visits of their two grandsons. We hope that they have a long and enjoyable retirement in the community.

At this time of the year, it is good to remember and thank the team who give their time freely to produce this Newsletter. Each month, 'club' secretaries and others send in their copy which is then assembled by the editor, Antje Preston, who then passes it to Mike Morley who mails it to the Much Birch Parish website and then inserts the adverts. Mike Leigh and John Bryant print 700 copies, 500 of which go to Rose and Des Wathen for collating and stapling while the remainder are put together by Dick Brimacombe.

The 500 copies are then taken in batches to some 16 'postmen and women' who deliver to all the properties in King's Thorn and Little Birch whilst Dick Brimacombe has some 8 deliverers for Much Birch and The Surgery and Axe and Cleaver also kindly have copies available on their premises. All in all, 30 people are involved in the production and distribution each month, a fine community

effort!

Betty Bryant would again like to thank all those who kindly filled shoe boxes with what many would consider quite 'ordinary' items, but to the children in poorer countries who receive them, their eyes light up as this may be the only present they have ever received. 30 boxes were taken to a warehouse on the Rotherwas Estate, where volunteers check the contents and seal the boxes. Boxes were kindly donated by Surgery staff and friends in the community both here and in Ross. The school and Much Birch WI also have their own schemes for this 'shoebox' appeal.

The community's thanks are also extended to Mrs. Kath Watts who has worked tirelessly for 6 years, to organise the monthly 'Village Market' held at Much Birch hall.

Mrs. Olivet Lewis is currently being cared for at Brockhampton Nursing Home and we send to her our deepest sympathy following the death of her son, David.

Mr. Brian Pickering of Hollybush Lane passed away on 19th. December and his funeral took place on January 2nd. at Much Birch Church. The service was conducted by Rev. Elaine Goddard . Brian was 79 years of age and his sudden death was a great shock to his 3 children, Marcus, William and Flora. Brian had been a company solicitor and was described by Marcus as an intelligent man, larger than life, opinionated, unreasonable, difficult to live with but having a loving heart for his family and a bad way of showing it. He loved his grandchildren, Isabelle, Freya and Imogen who called him 'grumppar' Brian.

In later years, he wrestled with the big questions of life and sought for understanding and had a genuine openness to all possibilities. The easy fundamentalist answers from scientists and religious people simply would not do for Brian. He wrote a poem, 'Cosmologue', which was read by his daughter in law, Diane. In it, he wrote about the beginning and ending of everything and concluded 'this trendy cosmobabbles' just a guess.

New Year's Celebrations

The New Year's celebration in Little Birch village hall was a great success. The highlight of the evening being the arrival of the "Queen of Hearts"

and the " Mad Hatter" and friends. Their costumes delighted all present. DJ Wolfie played plenty of well known numbers and soon had most people dancing.

Needless to say the bar did very well! With a lively rendering of "Auld Lang Syne", 2012 ended and 2013 began. Many interesting events are planned for this year so please keep reading Newsletters for information.

Little Birch and King's Thorn Gardening Club.

The talk at the next meeting on WED, 30th. Jan. at 7.30pm will be given by one of our members, **Shaun Cadman** and his subject is '**Self Seeding plants—Friends or Foes**'.

On WED Feb. 27th, the speaker will be Pam Singer, a Forest of Dean Tour Guide, and her talk is entitled –The Dean, why is it so special? –verderers, sheep, badgers, free mines and more.

Everyone with an interest in gardening and local topics is warmly welcome and hopefully, you will be interested in becoming a member.

John Bryant 540316.

Refresher Day for Older Drivers

'Most drivers over 60 are reasonably satisfied with their competence behind the wheel' says an expert on older drivers: 'Except when they hear that death and serious injury is more likely in this age group, if you have a crash'. Following the very successful workshop in Leominster last year, another refresher day for Older Drivers will be held this time in Hereford at the Hereford Musical Theatre, Whitecross Road on Friday 8 March on behalf of Herefordshire Advanced Motorists. If you have problems with roundabouts or understanding the Highway Code, then this is the course for you. As well as a slowing of reaction times, ageing also causes a loss of peripheral vision, with the size of our visual field decreasing by approximately one to three degrees per decade of life. By the time you reach your 70s or 80s, you may have lost peripheral vision by as much as 20 to 30 degrees. As you get older you may rely more on your car for the basics of living - like food shopping - especially in the many rural districts of Herefordshire. In Japan the ageing population forced the Tokyo Motor Show to display a huge array of gadgets and

converted vehicles to keep elders on the road. But the answer for most older people is not vehicle adaptation but appropriate training. The Hereford course will impart useful strategies and tailor advice to individual drivers. Each participant will also have the opportunity to be accompanied in their own car by a qualified advanced driver and given friendly help and advice on their performance.

The day runs from 10am to 4pm and begins with a talk and concluding with opportunity to ask questions and seek advice from experts.

Cost is £10, but places are limited. Anyone interested in reserving a place or for more information should call Mary Bevan on 01874 712267 or apply online at

marybevan@dsl.pipex.com Herefordshire Advanced Motorists run courses throughout the year for drivers of all ages, who wish to improve their own safety on the road.

WHAT A WASSAIL!

Compost Heap - that is, Bob Chance, Bob Mason, Rob Gould and Allan Pugh - would like to thank all those people who came along to the Wassail on Saturday, 12th January at the Village Hall.

Between us, we raised £850 for St. Michael's Hospice, which is just incredible. Many thanks to all who attended for their generosity.

We were lucky to have a dry evening for walking up to Bob Mason's orchard with flaming torches and music in order to light fires and sing to the trees and generally make a great deal of noise. Back at the village hall, we soon got stuck into food and drink before the 'entertainment' started. Compost Heap offered their highly polished and professional version of a Mummers Play which seemed to amuse people, mainly as a result of the mistakes. Some of our friends sang songs, and the evening concluded with a rousing series of chorus songs and of course, a rendition of 'The Farmer's Boy' - we took no prisoners!

Sincere thanks go to Jackie Morley and Robyn Hodges for organising and running the bar, which contributed substantially to the total raised, and to our wives who organised the food. It was a great night of simple fun and entertainment with a wonderful result.

Thank you, Bob Chance

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 3rd January, at the Much Birch Community Hall, Councillors were addressed by members of the public about a possible community housing venture to be built within the Parish. A Parish Council meeting would be held once planning proposals had been submitted. A consultation afternoon had been arranged, by the consortium, for the 22nd January, at the Much Birch Community Centre, and everyone was invited to go along and find out more about the proposals. Another reminder, to everyone, is that we are still 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.

It was felt that it would be a good idea to publish the contact details of the existing Councillors so that everyone will know how they can reach them, should they wish to do so. The first point of contact will always be the Clerk (details at the head of this message), but the councillors are willing to assist where they are able to do so.

Your Much Birch Parish Councillors are:-

Cllr Alison Cook (Chair) Jasmine Cottage, Wrigglebrook Lane, Kingsthorpe, Hereford, HR2 8AW, e mail thecools@wyenet.co.uk Tel. 01981 540703

Cllr Steve Turner (Vice Chair) The Underhills, Hollybush Lane, Much Birch, Hereford, HR2 8HX, e mail turnersofcrossways@btinternet.com and tel. 01981 540090

Cllr Andrew Crum Anfield House, Barrack Hill, Kingsthorpe, Hereford, HR2 8AX, e mail a.crum@btinternet.com
Tel. 01981 540002

Cllr Terry Cook Jasmine Cottage, Wrigglebrook Lane, Kingsthorpe, Hereford, HR2 8AW, e mail thecools@wyenet.co.uk Tel. 01981 540703

Cllr Jon Norris Whitewells, Laskett Lane, Much Birch, Hereford, HR2 8HZ, e mail jon@jonnorris.co.uk Tel. 07944 301250

Full minutes of the meetings and information etc.

can be found on the Parish Council website following the link found in this summary. www.muchbirchparish.org.uk. The next meeting of the Parish Council will be on Thursday 7th February 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.

Brownies Charity Bingo

1st Much Birch Brownies are organising a bingo to raise money for Much Birch Church, this will go towards their helping in the community badge. It will be held at Little Birch Village Hall on Friday 15th February. Eyes down at 7:15pm. Refreshments will be available. Come and join in all the fun.

Much Birch Village Market

MBVM takes place on the 4th Friday of the month (except December), in Much Birch Community Hall, between 2.30pm and 4.30pm. The February Market is on 22nd. As far as I know at this time, all our usual suppliers will be with us. 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. If you would like to have a stall, or to find out more about the market, please contact Mark on 01432 278026.

Much Birch WI

Much Birch WI hold meetings on the third Tuesday of the month, at 7.30pm in Much Birch Community Hall. On February 19th we look forward to a talk entitled 'My Little Experience – Being a Volunteer at 2012 Olympics' by Sarah Smith. There will be a cake stall at this meeting. We recently enjoyed a super

evening – our speaker John Marshall was extremely interesting and an excellent speaker. His subject was mainly Mumbai, showing the extremes of the mega rich and the very poor – modern India and old colonial. For good measure he then moved to Andalucia showing beautiful scenery and the industry of cork. Visitors and potential new members are always welcome. For more information regarding Much Birch WI please contact Gillian, 01981 540080.

Much Birch Church Fundraising Committee

Dates for your Diary

Pancake Lunch - Much Birch Community Hall at 12.30pm on 12th February 2013

Sugar Craft Demonstration with an Easter Theme - Much Birch Community Hall Wednesday 13th March 2013 at 7pm for 7.30pm

Coffee Morning with a Clothes, Books and Bric a Brac Sale – Much Birch Community Hall at 10.30am on 23rd March 2013

Rhayader and District Male Voice Choir Concert with Soloist- Much Birch Church at 7pm on 27th April 2013

Please put these dates in your diary and we look forward to you joining us for entertainment and friendship but at the same time helping us to maintain Much Birch Church. Watch this space for other planned events during the summer.

We invite you to a
Sugar Craft Demonstration
with an Easter Theme
by Mrs. Sue Kirby
On Wednesday 13th March 2013
at 7pm for 7.30pm
in Much Birch Community Hall
Tickets: £5.00 to include light refreshments
Available at Shirley's Hair Fashion, Ross on Wye
Or ring Shirley on 07787532720
Or Sylvia on 01981 540980
Proceeds for Much Birch Church

Little Birch Village Hall Committee

Community Book Exchange/Lending Library

The last book exchange was well supported despite being between Christmas and New Year celebrations. The next meeting will be on Saturday 26 January and the February meeting will be on Saturday 23 February 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.

All members of the community are invited to join us for this pleasant social event. There is a charge of £1 per adult towards the cost of hall hire, and refreshments. We look forward to seeing you .

Whist Drive

Our next Whist Drive is on Tuesday 12 February 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.

Pancake Night at LBVH

Tuesday 19 February 7.30pm start
You are warmly invited to come and sample a variety of pancakes with delicious fillings both sweet and savoury.
Entrance. £2 to include two free pancakes. 50p per additional pancake ! Raffle

History Group

Are you interested in where you live? Are you interested in how and why Little Birch and King's Thorn developed? If the answer is yes then you are interested in local history!
In response to the interest indicated in the questionnaire for the Little Birch Parish Plan, the Little Birch and King's Thorn History group are inviting you to an Open Evening on Wednesday March 13th in Little Birch Village Hall at 7.30.
We will tell you who we are, what we do and what our plans are. We will also show all the history-related photographs we have accumulated.
We will provide light refreshments at no charge!!
In return, we hope you will come up with lots of

ideas for talks and for research. We hope also that some of you will join the group and come to meetings on a regular basis
See you then!

DEAL SIGNED TO BRING FASTER BROADBAND TO RURAL AREAS

Herefordshire Council, Gloucestershire County Council and BT have signed a £56.6m deal which should enable 90 per cent of homes and businesses in the two counties to have access to fibre broadband by the end of 2016, with the ultimate aim to provide access to broadband speeds of 24 megabits per second (Mbps) or above for all who want it by 2018.

The aim of the councils' partnership is to have a majority of homes and businesses covered by this project able to enjoy speeds of 30 Mbps or more, and all areas will receive a minimum of 2Mbps. The project is a joint initiative between national government and the two authorities to address the challenge of bringing broadband to rural areas to support local businesses and enable households to access services.

Homes and businesses that are harder to reach with a fixed fibre line will be connected using alternative new broadband technologies. Also, Herefordshire Council has allocated additional financial support for businesses and homes that can demonstrate a need for faster speeds. There will now be a period of planning carried out by BT, with work expected to start on the ground during the second half of next year and being completed by the end of 2016.

For more information on the Borders Broadband project visit www.herefordshire.gov.uk/broadband.
Natalia Silver, Project Director

Plough Lane, PO Box 4, Hereford HR4 0XH Tel: 01432 260732 Fax: 01432 383031

(This entry, submitted by the Herefordshire Council, does not explain that it has agreed to contribute £10,100,000 to the project-equivalent to more than £54 per Herefordshire inhabitant. Does anyone remember being consulted?)

The Evergreen Club

The Annual General Meeting of the Evergreen Club will be held at Much Birch Community Hall on Tuesday, 12 March, 2013, starting at 2.30pm - followed by tea, biscuits a chance to chat.

Police Briefing Sunday January 2013 South Herefordshire & Golden Valley

Longtown

A property under construction in the village was broken into sometime during the night of Monday 7th/Tuesday 8th January. A side door was forced open and a quantity of power tools, a generator and a disc cutter were stolen.

Incident ref 97-s-080113

A farmer keeping sheep up on the mountains has discovered 26 sheep missing since the beginning of September. They were all tagged.

Incident ref 340-s-080113

Madley

A works van parked in Pennyplock was damaged overnight on Friday 4th/Saturday 5th January. A portion of glass trim was removed from one side of the vehicle, but no entry was gained.

Incident ref 92-n-070113

Much Birch

A male was reported as calling door to door selling ariel photographs at 1.45pm on 5th January, we had a similar call from a resident of Little Dewchurch at 7.30pm on Friday 11th January.

Orcop

Between 4pm on Thursday 10th and 8.30am on Friday 11th January, three caravans on a farm site were broken into, and a TV was stolen from one of them.

Incident ref 120-s-090113

A 44 year old male from Orcop was arrested at 5pm on Wednesday 9th January for driving whilst unfit through alcohol. He was charged and bailed to court.

Pontrilas

Between 8pm on Tuesday 8th and 5am on Wednesday 9th January, about 80 gallons of diesel were stolen from a lorry parked in a yard adjacent to the A465. The tank of the lorry was drilled, leaving the owners with repair costs as well as the loss of fuel.

Incident ref 58-s-090113

Cold Mornings - Don't Give Car Thieves An Easy Ride

Although vehicle crime is low across West Mercia, every winter the force receives a number of reports from drivers who have had their cars stolen after leaving the engine running, while they wait in the warmth of their home for it to heat up

and defrost the windscreen.

Some vehicle owners nip inside for just a few seconds to collect a bag or finish the last mouthful of their breakfast coffee - but that's all the time an opportunist thief needs.

To 'freeze out' the thieves, West Mercia Police advises motorists to:

- Clear windscreens with de-icer and a scraper
- Sit in vehicles while the heater de-mists the windscreen

Drivers who ignore this advice are taking big risks. Thieves will drive around residential areas looking for likely targets - when they spot a vehicle with its engine left running on a drive or outside a home, it's there for the taking.

One person will be dropped off, gets into the target vehicle and simply drives away.

Many of the vehicles are never recovered, and some - especially high value models such as Mercedes, BMW and Audi - may be shipped overseas.

It is also worth remembering if your car is stolen when keys have been left in it, you may find your insurance will not cover you. If your house keys are stolen along with your car, your home is then vulnerable too.

So, this winter, don't give criminals an easy ride by leaving your car running unattended.

Get Warm, Stay Warm - Herefordshire

The Department of Health, under the Warm Homes Healthy People Fund, has again awarded the Private Sector Housing Team at Herefordshire Council, in partnership with 14 voluntary and community groups, funding for a project called Get Warm Stay Warm, whose aim is to provide assistance to reduce the effects of cold weather on vulnerable Herefordshire residents this winter.

Golden Valley & Hereford Rural South Local Policing Teams

PC 2176 Wendy Powell 07811 131525

PCSO 6173 Fiona Witcher 07779 141232

PCSO 6482 Katie Middleton 07779 141223

E-mail -

goldenvalley.lpt@westmerciam.pnn.police.uk

Non emergency number 101

Hereford Cathedral Perpetual Trust Tel 01432 374261

Saturday 2 February

La nativité du Seigneur Olivier Messiaen: Peter Dyke performs this innovative organ masterpiece and offers a conclusion to the Christmas season. The performance will be enhanced and supported by the projection of thought-provoking visual images on the large screen. Tickets £5 available from the Cathedral Shop and at the door of the concert. 7.30 pm

Sunday 10 February

The Evening Hour. A service of prayer for healing and wholeness, with words and music from Iona and Taizé and time for quiet reflection; all are welcome. The service is held on the second Sunday of each month. 5.30 pm

Wednesday 13 February

Ash Wednesday Choral Eucharist: the service will include the imposition of Ashes. With music including Allegri's Miserere. All welcome. 5.30 pm
Sunday 24 February, Sunday 10 March and Sunday 24 March

Living Prayer: a series of hour long films looking at the living prayer in the Christian and Buddhist communities and the Carthusian community at La Grande Chartreuse. College Hall. Free entry, though donations invited. 5 pm

Saturday 9 March

Chorister open morning. An opportunity for any boy (aged 6-8 years of age) and their families who have considered the possibility of joining the choir to attend a morning rehearsal. For further information on the open morning and the opportunities for choristerships, please contact the director of music, Geraint

Bowenorganist@herefordcathedral.org 01432 374238. 10 am

Cathedral Choir

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 or visit www.herefordcathedral.org). All choristers receive generous scholarships to the cathedral school and, in some cases, fully-funded places can be made available. Please contact us at the above number if interested.



Saturday 16th February

Coffee morning

In aid of Much Birch Church Flower Fund

at

Counties View, Much Birch

(Les Jenkins' abode)

10am until 12 noon

Cake stall and raffle

