

# King's Thorn & The Birches Newsletter

A Newsletter for the Villages of King's Thorn, Little Birch & Much Birch – April 2007

## Gardening Club

The March meeting of the Kings Thorn and Little Birch Gardening Club is being held at 7.30pm. on **WEDNESDAY, 28<sup>TH</sup> MARCH** This month will be the AGM and will include a Gardening Quiz and Bring and Buy Plant Sale.

## Easter Bingo

Little Birch Village Hall – **THURSDAY, 29<sup>TH</sup> MARCH** - Eyes down at 8.00pm  
*Proceeds in aid of Village Hall refurbishment fund.*

## Lent Lunch

On **FRIDAY, 30<sup>TH</sup> MARCH** Little Birch Church will host the Lent Lunch at Little Birch Hall from 12.30pm. to 2.00pm. There will be a choice of four soups with bread rolls and cheese. Donations, as usual, will go to Sightsavers International. Please support this event if you possibly can.

## Concert

The Halfway Community Theatre will be presenting their next Concert on **FRIDAY & SATURDAY, 30<sup>TH</sup> & 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH** in Much Birch Community Hall commencing at 7.30pm, doors open from 7.00pm. The theme is *AT YOUR REQUEST*. The content of the programme has been taken from requests made by the audience in a Questionnaire and from the performers themselves during the concert in November. The Programme will include a mix of songs and poems taken from our past shows plus several new items. Tickets can be purchased by contacting Mrs. Webb on 01981 540406 (01981 540502 if Mrs. Webb is away). A light supper is included in the price of £8 but please bring your own bottle and glasses. Since these concerts are so popular, please book early so as not to be disappointed.

## The Evergreen Club

Our first outing for 2007 is on **TUESDAY, 10<sup>TH</sup> APRIL** and the destination is the dreaming spires of Oxford with its riverside walks and, of

## DIARY DATES MARCH/APRIL 2007

28<sup>TH</sup> MARCH – Gardening Club  
29<sup>TH</sup> MARCH – Easter Bingo  
30<sup>TH</sup> MARCH – Lent Lunch  
30<sup>TH</sup>/31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH – Halfway Theatre Concert  
5<sup>TH</sup> APRIL – Much Birch Parish Council Meeting  
10<sup>TH</sup> APRIL – Evergreen Club Trip to Oxford  
11<sup>TH</sup> APRIL – Whist Drive  
14<sup>TH</sup> APRIL – Flicks in the Sticks  
17<sup>TH</sup> APRIL – W.I. Open Meeting  
25<sup>TH</sup> APRIL – Gardening Club  
26<sup>TH</sup> APRIL – Bingo

## ADVANCE NOTICES

5<sup>TH</sup> MAY – May Day Celebrations  
8<sup>TH</sup> MAY – Aconbury Woods – Walk and Talk  
12<sup>TH</sup> MAY – Flicks in the Sticks – *Miss Potter*

course, shops. The University Botanic Gardens boasts 3,000 species of plants and is by Magdalen College. The Cathedral in Christchurch College is well worth a look. Walking tours are available and there are hop-on-hop-off buses to help get around the city.

The fare for members is £8 (£10 Non-members) and the pick-up times are as follows:-

8.45 Brandon Coach Station  
8.55 Tump Lane Bungalows  
9.00 The Park, Wormelow  
9.05 Poor Clares Convent  
9.10 Kings Thorn Bus Shelter  
9.20 M.B. Church Bus Stop  
9.25 Axe & Cleaver Bus Stop  
9.35 Peterstow Bus Stop  
9.40 Merton Hotel Bus Stop  
9.45 Fontaine Court, Ross

To book, please ring 01981 540406 by **Sunday, 1<sup>st</sup> April**, so that we can provide Golden Pioneer with our numbers. The following trip will be on **TUESDAY, 8<sup>TH</sup> MAY** to Cheltenham for an early lunch and then a scenic tour, to include a tea stop, of part of the Cotswolds with a Blue Badge Guide on the coach. Make sure you put both dates in your diary or on your calendar.

## Whist Drive

Following the success of our first Whist Drive, we will be holding a further drive at Little Birch Village Hall on

**WEDNESDAY, 11<sup>TH</sup> APRIL** starting at 7.30pm. Entrance fee £1.50 to include refreshments  
*Proceeds in aid of hall refurbishment fund.*

## Flicks In The Sticks

*in association with Arts Alive*

This month's film is **THE HISTORY BOYS 15** on **SATURDAY, 14<sup>TH</sup> APRIL** at Much Birch Community Hall,

*Based on Alan Bennett's play and starring the original stage cast, The History Boys is set in a school in the north of England in the mid 1980s, where the Headmaster is desperately trying to send boys to Oxford and Cambridge. To do this he enlists the help of a supply teacher to coach his brightest pupils for the exam. The boys however are torn by their loyalty to the eccentric, poetry-spouting English master Hector (Richard Griffiths).*

Doors open at 7.00pm and the film commences at 7.30pm. Tickets are £3.50 (£2.50 under 16s) and are available in advance or on the door. For further information or to book tickets please call Bryony Connolly on 01981 541274.

*Next month – SATURDAY, 12<sup>TH</sup> MAY*  
MISS POTTER

## W.I.

**TUESDAY, 17<sup>TH</sup> APRIL** is the **Much Birch WI Open Meeting** in the Community Hall, Much Birch. The speaker will be Mr. P Ralph and his

subject is *'The History of the Royal Forest of Dean-Canute to Elizabeth II'*. The meeting begins at 7.30pm for members - 8.00pm. for visitors and promises to be most interesting. Refreshments will be provided by the Committee.

For further details of meetings and joining the WI please contact Barbara Wilson (President) on 01432 840559 or Kath Watts on 01981 540382

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### *Gardening Club*

On **WEDNESDAY, 25<sup>TH</sup> APRIL** the Club will welcome Mr. D.J Cramp who will give a talk about *Wildlife In The Garden'*. This meeting will start at 7.30pm and will include a Bring and Buy Plant Sale.

Further information can be obtained from Helen Fox on 01981 541004.

### *Bingo*

Little Birch Village Hall on **THURSDAY, 26<sup>TH</sup> APRIL** eyes down at 8.00pm.

*Proceeds in aid of hall refurbishment fund.*

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### *May Day*

May Day celebrations will take place on **SATURDAY, 5<sup>TH</sup> MAY** at Little Birch Village Hall to include May Queen competition, glamorous Granny competition, best dressed Jack in the Green for the boys and much more. More information in the next newsletter.

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### *Aconbury Woods*

There will be a walk and talk on **TUESDAY, 8<sup>TH</sup> MAY** - Come and learn what is currently happening in the woods and what the future plans are from Geraint Richards, Duchy Agent. The walk will start from Little Birch Village Hall at 6.30pm and finish at the hall around 8.00pm where a Ploughman's supper will be available. Supper will be £5.00 and will also include a glass of wine.

All welcome to what promises to be a very interesting evening.

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### *Local News*

As reported last month, John Danks died on 8<sup>th</sup> February at the age of 85 years. The Crematorium at Hereford was full and overflowing on 23<sup>rd</sup> February for a Service of Thanksgiving for his life, conducted by Rev. Tim Shelley of Ross-on-Wye Baptist church. John's early life was spent on the outskirts of London just in Kent. During World War II he declined to serve in the armed forces but joined the Fire Boat Service on the Thames during the blitz on London and moved later to join the Auxiliary Fire Service (later to be

the National Fire Service) in Coventry until the end of the war. He settled in Warwickshire and married his first wife and they had a son, Jez and a daughter. Sadly, in the space of a few years, John's wife and their daughter both died. Later, John met and married Gill and they moved to Wrigglebrook lane, Kings Thorn with son, Ben, in the early 1970's. Subsequently, Becky and Ruth were born and all three children attended Much Birch School. Ben went on to study Art and Becky to University. Jez recalled that both he and his father had a great love of music and spent much time together walking in the countryside. Ben told of the happy family holidays in the caravan, usually in Wales, and particularly on the Gower coast. John was very much a countryman and always wanted to live a 'self-sufficient' lifestyle and dreamed of eventually settling down on the smallholding. When the family moved to Glendene on Wrigglenbrook Pitch, John had a large garden in which he grew fruit and vegetables, which he exhibited at the Annual Show and he also kept poultry.

John was elected to the Village Hall Committee at an Open Village meeting in January 1977 when it was decided to re-open the Hall and edited the first Newsletter in February 1977. The Newsletter appeared every month with John as Editor, Gill typing the copy, Ian Porter printing the copies and the Danks family walking around the village to deliver to each household. This continued for many years until the Resource Centre opened at Much Birch and the printing was done there and a few others joined in distributing the Newsletter which helped the Danks family somewhat in a very onerous task each month. John helped with the Jubilee Celebrations centred around the Hall in June 1977, was a tireless worker in the staging of the Mini-Agricultural Show in September and organised a public fireworks display in November 1977. The whole village rallied round to support these events as well as other functions in what proved to be a very hectic year. John continued as Editor until 1995, a fine record, until the family moved to Ross.

He was also very interested in the Resettlement of Young Offenders and used his gardening skills to teach in local prisons over many years.

The Danks family were active members of the Methodist Chapel in Little Birch and later at Ross-on-Wye Baptist Church and John's Christian faith was unswerving to the end. He will be greatly missed by a very wide circle of friends and we send to Gill, Jez, Ben, Becky and Ruth, grandchildren Reuben and Jay and John's

sister, Margaret Sutton, our deepest sympathies.

A number of friends have been in hospital recently and it is good to report that most have returned home to recuperate and hopefully missed the dreaded infections which have been prevalent in the County Hospital. Several friends have and still are travelling to Cheltenham each day and we ask for your prayers for a successful outcome after their treatment.

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### *Little Birch Lanes*

Several complaints have been received by Little Birch Parish Council concerning the use of local lanes. A minority of locals and 'others' are driving along these lanes during wet weather as a 'short cut' or for fun in 4 x 4's leaving these lanes impossible to use. As a number of these lanes provide necessary access for local businesses and homes, the Parish Council request that drivers use these local lanes responsibly. Failure to do so will become quite divisive, in a small community such as ours. Co-operation rather than confrontation is essential.

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### *History Group*

Little Birch and King's Thorn History Group sent a copy of their book *Little Birch on Aconbury Hill* to Prince Charles since the Duchy of Cornwall own land adjacent to the parish. We received a very nice letter of thanks in which he sends his very best wishes to the community of the parish of Little Birch. Copies of the book continue to be available at local bookshops, the Castle Inn and The Pilgrim, also from Alison Clarke 01981 540791.

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### *Much Birch 100 Club Draw*

The March draw took place on Wednesday, 14<sup>th</sup> March 2007 at Much Birch Community Hall at 7pm.

The winners were:

1. No. 31 Dr. P. Garlick, Much Birch
  2. No. 39 Miss J. Williams, Much Birch
- The next draw will take place on Friday, 13<sup>th</sup> April 2007 at 12 MD in Much Birch Community Hall.

John Jones, *Chairman*

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### *Correspondence*

Michael Lacey writes to say

"My dad used to recite a poem that he learned as a child, the first part of which was:

*Us comes from Luch Birch which be Hereford way*

*And to sing you a song I been asked...*

*I've not tried to sing for this many a day,*

An' I'd thought as my song days was passed.

But I'll tell, if I may, of an outing one day  
When to Lunnun us goes by the train  
Farmer Hayseed, he paid an' he gives us  
the day

An' I hopes as he'll do so again.

There was Simon, there was Sis,

There Was Lisa there was Liz

There was \_\_\_\_\_ there was \_\_\_\_\_

An' Mother Miles,

An' the farmer says to me,

Now, you're in charge you see,

So bring them all home safe,

Gaffer Giles

He always said that the town was really Much Birch but the name was changed to protect the innocent.

My brothers and I have, for some time, wanted to find this recitation (more than a poem) and it occurred to me that there might be someone there that knew it? *Replies to the Editor, please.*

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### Website

The Much Birch Parish website is now live and can be found at:

[www.muchbirchparish.org.uk](http://www.muchbirchparish.org.uk)

The site is still in its' infancy and I am continually making alterations. In particular, I would welcome any photographs, both old and new. The website is not intended to be a rival to the Newsletter, but a companion.

Contact Terry Cook's email address at:

[info@muchbirchparish.co.uk](mailto:info@muchbirchparish.co.uk) or, if you do not have access to the internet, 01981 540703

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### LB Parish Council

No interests were declared.

The minutes of the meeting held on the 24<sup>th</sup> January were read and signed as a true record.

#### Matters Arising

**Village Hall** – Phase 1 has been completed and part payment to be recovered from the awarded Herefordshire Council grant.

**Parish Lengthsman Scheme** – Tim Townsend has offered to take on the role of Lengthsman. Clerk to create a 6 month contract for the new Lengthsman position.

**Parish Field** – No further progress.

**Parish Footpaths** – No correspondence has been received to document the use of parish footpaths. A newsletter article to be written requesting parishioners to responsibly use vehicles on these footpaths.

**Mobile Library** – Further correspondence has been received from a local parishioner concerned with the proposed new vehicle stops. Herefordshire Council to be contacted to ensure that the information

previously received about the size of these vehicles is still current.

#### Financial Report

4 cheques written and 2 payments received

#### Correspondence

A detailed list of all correspondence was given to the Parish Council and noted.

#### Planning Applications -

**The View** – Replacement dwelling. Notification received referring this application to the Southern Area Planning Committee.

**Greenlea Cottage** – Conservatory extension to dwelling (no objections recorded).

#### Any Other Business

- Community Support Officer Fiona Witcher introduced herself and issued contact details. Fiona offered to help with community issues alongside PC Andrew Bundy.
- Further correspondence has been received from Herefordshire Council concerning verge erosion at Crows Nest Lane and the possible erection of verge markers and kerbs. A formal reply to be sent rejecting these ideas.
- Further correspondence has been received from Herefordshire Council concerned with upgrading the U71603 road from Little Birch church to New Mills. A reply to be sent at a later date when budgets are renewed to request the upgrade again.
- A meeting is to take place on **WEDNESDAY, 4TH APRIL** to include representatives from Much Birch and Little Birch Parish Council together with members of the Little Birch Village Hall Management Committee to discuss the current Newsletter.

**Date of Next Meeting - WEDNESDAY 9<sup>TH</sup> MAY.**

#### Parish Clerk

Please contact the Parish Clerk with any issues concerning Little Birch Parish. Contact details are: Liz Callwood, 540081 or [lizcallwood@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:lizcallwood@tiscali.co.uk)

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### MBPC

#### Parish Council Elections

Elections will be held on **THURSDAY 3<sup>RD</sup> MAY**, for the six places available on Much Birch Parish Council. Local residents who live in the parish and three miles outside the parish (as the crow flies) are able to stand for election. Nomination forms may be obtained from the Clerk, or from the Electoral Office of Herefordshire Council. For further information, please contact your Clerk on 01432 276447.

**'Sid' - Speed Indicator Device**

The Parish Council has budgeted to purchase a 'SID' which can be located at several different sites within the parish. We are currently awaiting Herefordshire Council permission to site a rented mobile version of the proposed 'SID', near the school and at Kings Thorn, on a trial basis, prior to purchasing our own 'SID'.

#### Gas Pipeline

Work on the new pipeline will commence at the end of March, with pipe laying in April/May and topsoil replacement by the end of June. Temporary fence removal will take place in July. It is understood that Tump Lane will not be closed.

#### Planning

*Permissions granted by Herefordshire Council*

**Rosslea** – Two storey extension & replacement double garage.

**Westlands** – single storey extension (retrospective amendment).

**Claypitts House, Hollybush Lane** ... proposed new garage, shower room & porch.

*Applications refused by Herefordshire Council*

**Mushroom Farm** – outline residential application for four dwellings.

**Sandridge – Barrack Hill** ... new dwelling in garden to Sandridge with shared access & turning.

**Land adjacent to the Slinget – Tump Lane** ... Erection of a detached dwelling and ancillary garage.

*Applications supported by Much Birch Parish Council*

**Pilgrim Hotel** – erection of 8 no. single storey hotel accommodation suites.

*Supported subject to some design amendments.*

**Much Birch Primary School** ... removal of existing boiler room and tank enclosure and provision of new single storey extension + new fenestration to classroom and library. Provision of new oil store and enclosure.

**Middle Ash – Tump Lane** ... new external balcony and stair to garden.

#### Donation To Community Newsletter

The Parish Council fully supports the community newsletter and has therefore donated £350 towards its publication.

#### Parish Council Meetings

The Parish Council meets on the first Thursday of each month (excluding August and January) at 8.00 pm in the Community Centre. Local residents are very welcome to attend and air their views in the Open Discussion session. Next meeting **THURSDAY, 5<sup>TH</sup> APRIL.**

#### Parish Clerk

If you have any queries on Parish Council matters, please tel/fax your Clerk, Mrs Lynda Wilcox on 01432 276447 or write to 5 Croome Close, Hereford, HR1 1UY.

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## *‘Unhealthy honey’ adverts banned*

*(Extracted from Bee Craft Newsletter to members).*

NEW rules preventing the advertising of unhealthy foods on TV to protect children have caused a backlash in the grocery trade.

Ofcom (the Office of Communications), the independent TV watchdog, set up the new guidelines to combat childhood obesity by banning adverts for junk food and soft drinks. But the move has turned into a ‘catch-all’ policy, inadvertently affecting goods including honey, Marmite, cheese, raising, tomato ketchup and most breakfast cereals.

Now the judging criteria have been slammed as ‘absurd’ by industry magazine *‘The Grocer’*, which has started ‘Weigh it up!’ campaign, urging the Food Standards Agency to conduct an urgent review into its “Nutrient Profiling Model”, used by Ofcom to judge what foodstuffs are fit for children.

“The problem is the NPM classifies all foods using a 100g (just under 4oz) measurement, regardless of the typical portion sizes” says *The Grocer* editor, Adam Leyland, “it makes no distinction between natural sugar (raw cane sugar) and processed sugar (white) and fails to take into account any minerals, vitamins and antioxidants”. Under those rules, 100g of honey, with its high (natural) sugar content, is deemed unhealthy. Yet non-nutritious products such as diet cola, white bread and even chicken nuggets, would still be allowed.

“This sends out too many wrong signals”, said Mr Leyland, “encouraging manufacturers to develop products full of artificial sweeteners and additives, while unfairly targeting many wholesome and nutritious products”.

“*The Grocer’s* campaign follows protests by the National Farmers’ Union and an all-party Parliamentary group. But the Food Standards Agency says it stands by the NPM, which “has undergone scientific scrutiny and been openly consulted on”.

Honey has been used as a food since the time of the Pharaohs and during the First World War, was used on infected wounds. I still cover any burns from oven shelves etc with honey overnight and in the morning there’s no sign of the burn or a scar! As no one eats 4oz of honey in one sitting or even in making a cake, how can this wonderfully pure product with no additives be panned by the beauracraty body Ofcom because the NPM has got its classification wrong! I would rather give my grandchildren a pot of honey to eat sparingly on bread and toast rather than a packet of high sugar (not natural) packet cereal. *(Name and address supplied)*

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## *Neighbourhood Watch*

### *Burglary Dwellings*

A burglary occurred at a house in Madley on 20<sup>th</sup> February. A local man has been arrested and is currently on police bail for this crime.

### *Burglary Buildings*

An outbuilding was broken into on a farm in Blakemere and chainsaws were stolen.

### *Vehicle Crime*

Minor damage caused to one vehicle near Longtown, but apart from this no other vehicle crime this month.

### *Theft*

Two child’s pedal cycles were stolen from outside an address in Lowfield Meadow, Kingstone during February. Anyone who has information about this incident please contact one of your local police officers.

Offenders are still engaged in stealing items made from different types of metal, for the current high scrap value. A stainless steel tank was taken from a farmyard in Didley off the A465, and heavy metal tractor weights were stolen from near a house in Preston on Wye.

### *Court Result*

Herefordshire Council with the assistance of Peterchurch Police Officers recently brought a case to court against a 66yr old local man, who had been illegally residing in a caravan on Lower Maes-Coed Common.

On leaving the area, following legal action, this man left behind a considerable amount of rubbish and abandoned vehicles including a caravan. He failed to attend Herefordshire Magistrates Court for the trial but was found guilty in his absence. An arrest warrant was issued and this man was arrested and taken to court and then sentenced for dumping offences. He was given a conditional discharge for two years and ordered to pay £250 towards compensation for clearing up the site. I hope this will provide some consolation to the local residents who have suffered for over two years, as a result of the behaviour of this man and his wife living illegally on the common.

### *Mobile Phones and driving – New Penalties*

Motorists should all be aware that the use of a hand-held phone or similar hand-held device while driving is prohibited, even if stopped at traffic lights or in a queue of traffic.

From 27<sup>th</sup> February 2007, new penalties were introduced and you will now receive a £60 fine and three penalty points on your licence.

Some typical questions and answers:

#### **Q. “Is hands-free phone equipment allowed?”**

A. Provided that the phone can be operated without holding it, then yes. If the phone is in a cradle then you can push a button to answer it as long as you don’t hold the phone to operate it.

#### **Q. “What about texting/internet access/video phones?”**

A. The use of a mobile phone or similar device for any of these activities while driving is prohibited.

#### **Q. “Will mobile phones have to be switched off in vehicles?”**

A. No. Passengers may want to use them, and a driver may use them when they are safely parked.

#### **Q. “Who do the regulations apply to?”**

A. Drivers of all motor vehicles on a road, including cars, motorcycles, goods vehicles, buses, coaches, taxis and drivers supervising learners.

#### **Q. “Are there any exemptions?”**

A. Yes. There is an exemption for 999 calls in a genuine emergency, where it is unsafe or impractical to stop.

#### **Q. “Can I cradle the phone between my ear and shoulder?”**

A. No. The offence applies if a phone has to be “held” while making or receiving a call. Therefore you should not hold the phone between your ear and shoulder – or anywhere else – when driving.

#### **Q. “Where can I get more information?”**

A. From the Department for Transport or their website – [www.dft.gov.uk](http://www.dft.gov.uk)

#### **And finally on a lighter note.....**

A police control room received a frantic call from a man who needed urgent assistance following a crime at his home. Two officers were dispatched to the scene to help the caller, a Mr Wright. As they approached the address a local resident called to the officers: “Looking for Mr Wright?”. Quick as a flash the female police officer replied “Aren’t we all.”

#### **Find your local officers at the click of a button**

West Mercia Constabulary has been praised for it’s new look Local Policing Team section, on the force’s website. Each Local Policing team has it’s own page, featuring names and photographs of the team members and how to contact them.

To find out which team covers which areas simply visit [www.westmercia.police.uk](http://www.westmercia.police.uk) and click on the Local Policing link, then enter a postcode into the postcode locator and the policing team for that area will be displayed.

#### **CENTRAL POLICE CONTROL**

**08457 444 888**

**PC Christine Griffiths** (Golden Valley) -  
Mob: 07855 785 080

**PC Fiona Farrington**

Mob: 07817 019 374

**PC Andrew Bundy**

Mob: 07855 385 844.

#### **Local Reps are :**

##### East

**JOHN BULBECK - 540178**

##### Central

**BOB PETERS - 540670**

##### West

**BETTY PHILPOTT - 540614**

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## *Cost of Printing the N/L*

Four more households have opted for the electronic version. Thank you. I am now able to make sure that your email address is kept secret so your privacy is guaranteed. Please acknowledge receipt each month and do keep your acceptances coming.

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## *Items/Copy*

Please may I have items for the **MAY** issue via post to

Mrs. S.E. Mathews, Folly Cottage, Little Birch, HR2 8BD; or left in the post box at 'Bramleys' or by email attachment in Word format to:

[sarah.mathews@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:sarah.mathews@tiscali.co.uk) by

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**18<sup>TH</sup> APRIL**

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