

NEWSLETTER FOR KINGS THORN



& THE BIRCHES



A Newsletter for the Villages of Kings Thorn and Little Birch - December 2007

A very Happy Christmas to all our readers

DIARY DATES – NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2007

- 28TH NOVEMBER – Gardening Club Meeting
- 29TH NOVEMBER – Christmas Bingo
- 30TH NOVEMBER – The Mikado
- 1ST DECEMBER – The Mikado
- 5TH DECEMBER – Gardening Club Christmas Social
- 6TH DECEMBER – MBPC Meeting
- 8TH DECEMBER – Christmas Fayre
- 11TH DECEMBER – Christmas Whist Drive
- 15TH DECEMBER – Flicks in the Sticks
- 20TH DECEMBER – Carol Singing

ADVANCE NOTICES

- 16TH JANUARY – Community Safety Meeting
- 23RD JANUARY – L.B.P.C. Meeting
- 25TH JANUARY – Village Market
- 30TH JANUARY – Gardening Club Meeting

Gardening Club

The November meeting of the Club is on **WEDNESDAY 28TH NOVEMBER** at 7.30pm and will be a talk on 'Plants for Picking' given by Mr. M. Bracher.

The Christmas Social will be held on **WEDNESDAY 5TH DECEMBER** commencing at 7.30pm. Tickets can be bought at the November meeting or are available from John Bryant 540316, Helen Fox 541004 or John Wilson 01432 840559.

There will be a break over the Christmas period and the next meeting will be on **WEDNESDAY 30TH JANUARY** at which the speaker, Mr P. Ralph will talk about *The wildlife and plants of the Forest of Dean.*

Christmas Fayre

The Much Birch Christmas and Craft Fayre is to be held in Much Birch Community Hall on **SATURDAY, 8TH DECEMBER** between 10.30am. and 4.00pm. There will be a variety of Craft stalls and Christmas goods.

Tea, coffee and light lunches will be on sale. Hopefully Father Christmas will be making a visit. Please come along to visit us and support Herefordshire producers.

Christmas Bingo

Just to remind you all that this will take place in Little Birch Village Hall on **THURSDAY 29TH NOVEMBER**. There are excellent prizes and festive refreshments. Usual start time.

Halfway Theatre

The Halfway Community Theatre are Presenting Gilbert and Sullivan's 'The Mikado' (concert version) on **FRIDAY 30TH NOVEMBER** and **SATURDAY 1ST DECEMBER** in Much Birch Hall. We begin at 7.00pm. (not 7.30 this time).

Tickets are £8.00, to include a delicious supper (bring your own wine) and can be booked through Beverley Webb on 01981 540406. Don't miss out on our first ever costumed and colourful extravaganza.

M.B.P.C

Parish Council Meetings

The Parish Council meets on the first Thursday of each month (excluding August & January) at 7.30pm in the Community Centre. Local residents are very welcome to attend and air their views in the Open Discussion. Next meeting – **THURSDAY 6TH DECEMBER** at 7.30pm

New Parish Clerk appointed

Mrs Kath Greenow has been appointed as Clerk.

If you have any queries on Parish Council matters please telephone your Clerk on 01432 870874 or write to Mrs Kath Greenow, Hackford House, Dinedor Hereford, HR2 6PD.

Christmas Whist Drive

On **TUESDAY 11TH DECEMBER**, there is a Whist Drive at Little Birch Village Hall starting at 7.30pm. There are refreshments and excellent prizes. The entrance fee is £1.50. New players are most welcome.

Flicks In The Sticks

in association with Arts Alive

The final film of 2007 will be **AMAZING GRACE (PG)** at Much Birch Hall, on **SATURDAY 15TH DECEMBER**.

'Behind the song you love is a story you will never forget.' Amazing Grace is based on the life of antislavery pioneer William Wilberforce, played by Ioan Gruffudd. Elected to the House of Commons at the age of 21, and on his way to a successful political

career, Wilberforce, over the course of two decades, took on the English establishment and persuaded those in power to end the inhumane trade of slavery.

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.

*First film of 2008 will be 19 January...
Film TBC*

Carol Singing

On **THURSDAY 20TH DECEMBER**, is in aid of Little Birch Church and Little Birch Village Hall refurbishment funds We shall be meeting at the hall at 6.30pm. All are welcome to come and join in this most enjoyable evening and help us spread a bit of festive spirit around the village.

Watch this space for the hotly awaited ticket sale further information in the next edition.

Community Safety Meeting

A Community Safety Meeting is to be held in Little Birch Village Hall on **WEDNESDAY 16TH JANUARY** at 7:30pm, where information will be given from West Mercia Police, Herefordshire Fire Brigade and its partners. These meetings have proved to be very informative and worthwhile in other parts of Herefordshire. Please come and join us. Further details will be displayed upon local notice boards.

Village Market

The Village Market at Much Birch Hall will start again on **FRIDAY 25TH JANUARY** 2008, and will continue to be every 4th Friday of the month after that.

Planning Issues

Are you thinking of applying for planning permission? Have you had problems previously understanding planning red tape? Peter Yeates, Development Control Manager at Herefordshire Council, is giving a talk on planning issues with a 'Question and Answer' session. Please come along on **WEDNESDAY 19TH MARCH** at 7:30 pm at Little Birch Village Hall and get your planning queries explained.

Local News

A Kenyan Wedding was held at Much Birch Church on Sunday, 4th November, when PURITY WAWIRA, the niece of Rev. Moses Nthukah, was

married to DUKE GEKAARA and we wish the couple every happiness in their life together.

A big 'Well done!' and thank you to all the parishes of the Archenfield Group who generously raised over £2,500 to the charity, NAPKENYA, which undertakes projects to bring clean piped water to marginal and needy villages in Kenya.

A sincere 'Thank you' too to all those who have donated shoe boxes of goods to the Samaritans Purse Appeal which will soon be heading off to very poor children in Eastern Europe. To see such joy on their faces when they receive a gift of very basic everyday things such as a toothbrush and paste, a flannel, a hat and gloves a toy and a few sweets, which they have never had before, is so rewarding and makes the effort put into it so worthwhile. Boxes were taken to the warehouse at Rotherwas from Much Birch School and from collections made by Ann Evans and Betty Bryant.

A number of friends have been in hospital or received treatment recently and are now back at home and making progress including DONALD COOKE, RODERICK STEWART and SUE MASON, who unfortunately 'broke' her shoulder in a fall in the dairy. MRS. JOSEFINA JONES of Little Birch and MR. TOM HELME, erstwhile of Wormelow and MR. NICK HANSFORD are still in hospital at the time of writing and we send our best wishes and hope they too will soon be able to return home. At this time of the year we also remember those in our communities who are suffering long term illnesses and those who care for them.

As the last Newsletter was printed, the death of MRS. LILY ANDREWS of Monkton Place was announced. Lily was a sister of the late Avon Morris and was brought up with her at Cuckoo Cottage, Kings Thorn. We send our sincere sympathy to her daughter, Julie, who has looked after her mother at their home for many years.

It is also sad to hear of the death of MR. JOHN GILBERT after a very long illness, bravely borne. The funeral service at Much Dewchurch was conducted by the Rev. Kay Garlick and the following is an extract from her address.

John was born and brought up in Balham, London. As a teenager, he played in the local Boys Brigade Band and made many good friends who have kept in touch over the years. He worked as an electrician for some 20 years mainly in ABC cinemas all over London. He first met Denny when she was just 17, at her father's pub and John was 20 years of age. After their marriage, Steven and Pippa were born in due time and soon afterwards, John gave up the electrical engineering and became a London cabbie. He had always dreamed of owning a shop

and when Pippa started school, the family moved to Brighton and took over a grocers shop. Over the next few years, they also had a Pet shop, a Café and a Newsagency. Steven said that his father always liked a challenge – to buy, build up and then move on. Eventually, the family moved to the Wormelow Shop and Post Office some 19 years ago and have built up and extended the shop and made a very thriving business which has proved to be a great asset to the community. John's main interests were DIY, music, a thirst for knowledge, particularly in astronomy and the Universe itself and his dogs. He loved dogs and Boston and Sam, his two boxers, were a familiar sight on the roof at the rear of the 'old shop'. His present dogs, Bart and Treacle, visited him in the Hospice the day before he died. He also loved good food and anything involving chocolate!

He enjoyed listening to Jazz at home and at the Jazz Festival at Upton on Severn. He was particularly keen that he should leave the church to the strains of the jazz setting of 'The Sunny Side of the Street'. He had a wicked sense of humour and relished in making people laugh especially the grandchildren, Sasha and Seren, who he entertained with 'funny walks' and mimicking the monkeys in the PG tips adverts.

After the service, John's body was laid to rest at the Woodland Burial site in north Herefordshire. Donations in memory of John will go to help the work of St. Michaels Hospice, where he received such wonderful care and the Marie Curie Nurses who were such a support to John and the family. We send our sincere sympathies to Denny, Steven and Pippa and their families.

Little Birch on Aconbury Hill **a history of the parish and its people**

Copies of this fascinating book are still available for those of you who missed out last year and for that Christmas present for friends and family who know the area and maybe, now, are far away. Copies can be obtained from John Bryant, Mike Morley or Alison Clarke (01981 540791). They can also be obtained at the Castle Inn and from local booksellers. Price is £10.

Much Birch 100 Club Draw

The September draw took place on Tuesday, 6th November in Much Birch Surgery at 7.00pm. The winners were:

1. No. 9 – Mr. I.K.J. Jones, Madrid, Spain

2. No. 59 – Mr. J. B. Willis, Much Birch

The next draw will take place on Saturday, 8th December at 2.00pm. at the Christmas and Craft Fayre in Much Birch Community Hall.

I would like to express very grateful thanks to all those people who have continued to support the 100 club during 2007. The monies raised have made an important contribution to the works that have been undertaken so far towards the overall development of the Community Hall. As many of you know the hall provides a meeting place and a venue for many different activities, with about 19 groups regularly taking advantage of its facilities. In addition, it is used for private parties and other occasions by people in the parish and surrounding areas. To help to continue to raise funds so that we can achieve the aims and objectives which we set out with, in order to improve and develop the Community Hall for all of us, we would like to look forward to running a Third year of the 100 Club during 2008.

I am pleased to say that in the not too distant future, following the involvement of Architects and Officers of the Local Authority, improvements to the car park will take place. It is also hoped to replace and relocate the 30 yr. old heating boiler and to upgrade the insulation of the building to meet modern day standards.

Whilst we continue to seek funding from national and local sources, we still need to raise monies locally to achieve our objectives, so I would be grateful if those who have contributed to the 100 Club so far would kindly continue to do so next year and at the same time bring it to the notice of anyone who is not yet a member as we would welcome their support. Re-application forms are being sent out to existing members but application forms for new members can be obtained from me and I would be grateful if the forms together with payment could be returned to me before **18TH DECEMBER**, after which the application will be acknowledged and draw numbers allocated.

John Jones –*Chairman*
Chelston Grange, Much Birch,
Hereford HR2 8HR Tel: 01981
540980.

L.B.P.C.

Report of the LBPC Meeting held on Wednesday 7th November. No interests were declared.

The minutes of the meeting held on the 5th September were read and signed as a true record.

Matters Arising

Crows Nest Lane – This issue is in the hands of Herefordshire Council.

“An Inconvenient Truth” - There was a disappointing turnout for this film. Another is to be shown at Little Dewchurch Village Hall, details to follow in the newsletter.

Athelstan Wood – to be monitored

Village Hall – The Village Hall Management Committee are still waiting for news from the Lottery Fund. An issue currently under discussion is the requirement of outside storage space. Funds received from HM Customs and Excise for the reclaim of VAT from Parish Council invoices was awarded to the Village Hall refurbishment fund.

Parish Lengthsman Scheme – School Lane flooding to be discussed. The clearing of the culvert in Crows Nest Lane and removing of gravel off the road at Walls Pool was agreed.

Parish Field – The Chairman has spoken to the company assigned to trim the overhanging branches and signed the relevant paperwork so that this process can begin.

Planning Presentation – Peter Yeates has agreed to complete a presentation on local planning issues, a newsletter article is to give details.

Overgrowth in the lane from New Mills Farm to Little Birch Church Lane – Further investigation to be completed by the Clerk.

Financial Report - Three cheques written and income received from two sources.

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

Planning - Planning Permission and listed buildings consent given to buildings at New Mills Farm for the Conversion of redundant buildings into two dwellings.

Any Other Business

CSO Fiona Witcher informed the Parish Council that no crimes had been reported in the area. She also reported the positive reaction to the recent Community Safety Meetings and asked the Parish Council to stage one of these meetings in Little Birch Village Hall in partnership with Much Birch Parish Council. A date of 16th January 2008 was proposed. A discussion on the local newsletter and webmaster was also proposed to take place during this meeting.

All Parish Councillors adopted the current Code of Conduct.

Mr. Morley protested against the current licensing costs.

Cllr Richard Smith discussed the safety proposals for the A49 which he has championed resulting in two studies being commissioned.

Mr. Wilkins reported work being started by Welsh Water to renew the water pipes through Aconbury Woods. The Parish Council agreed to notify Little Birch residents and work with Welsh Water to promote communications when required.

Herefordshire Council has requested the 2008/2009 precept. The Parish Council agreed to reduce the precept as no elections costs were incurred.

Date of Next Meeting –

WEDNESDAY 23RD JANUARY

Parish Clerk

Please contact the Parish Clerk with any issues concerning Little Birch Parish. Contact: Liz

Callwood 540081 or
lizcallwood@tiscali.co.uk

Piano

Is anyone interested in the old hall piano? If so please contact Jackie on 541027

Goodbye

Leaving Hereford for Sussex - Peter and Beverley Webb will be moving if all goes well with their sale - on the 11th December.

May we thank all our honey customers who have enjoyed the hard work of both our bees and, of course Peter on the bottling front over the years. We go with just 52 lbs of best Herefordshire honey to take to our new home as a reminder of the fruit farm opposite and the enormous number of oil seed rape fields in the vicinity. None of this down in Sussex so we won't have the early panic to get the oil seed rape honey off the frames before it sets like concrete! Don't worry folks we are taking our 5 hives with us (not in the removal van!) and have found a friendly farmer where we can lodge them until we complete a purchase. The property we hope to purchase is empty and so we shall be wielding paintbrushes and having a bath ripped out and a shower installed whilst we stay in our rented accommodation. The view from the rear is over a farmers field and then the glorious Ashdown forest!

We have enjoyed being part of the Halfway Community Theatre as

founder members and wish them every success in the future. We have served on the Much Birch Hall Committee for a number of years and we hope they are able to achieve the dream of extending the hall.

We shall miss our friends and colleagues but if the property we are hoping to purchase in the new year comes off - we shall be only a 510 minute shall probably join the Forest Row Parish Church choir (the choirmaster is a friend). In the meantime think of us with furniture in store and living in a holiday chalet (small but with all mod con) over the Christmas period and beyond. We hope you will welcome Dave and Judy Goldsmith into our community and in particular to Hollybush Lane - we shall leave them with copies of the all important Magazines and Newsletter. Thanks to the various magazines to whom we have contributed on behalf of the Evergreen Club, Halfway and the Hall - keep up the good work.

Peter and Beverley Webb

Neighbourhood Watch Speed Enforcement

Peterchurch Police station has now obtained a newer and better Laser Gun for speed enforcement. There have been numerous complaints from members of the community in relation to speed problems on the roads. It is therefore possible that speed enforcement will take place in an area near you. Please watch your speed, I don't want you to become one of my "customers".

Theft from Premises

Unfortunately, we have two crimes to bring to your attention today.

A quad bike, a Yamaha Blaster 200cc, blue in colour, was stolen from a farm in the Little Dewchurch area on Monday 12th November between 07.45 and 16.30. It was in a storage shed on the farm, but not locked away, as there was someone around the farm all day.

On the same day In Kilpeck, another farm was targeted when a farm building was broken into between 1400 - 1700 and several items including a hedge trimmer, lawn mower and chainsaw were stolen. The metal clasp securing the door had been cut through. Neighbours report having seen two suspicious vehicles parked nearby at about 14.30, a white transit van and a white P reg Fiesta - does anyone have any knowledge of these vehicles?

Please be extra vigilant, especially on farms, and try and keep your kit secure. Also, if you see any strange vehicles,

try and get the registration number and phone it through to us

Other Local Thefts

- ❖ On 29-10-07 at Hoarwithy Overnight 16/17-10-07 a red Landrover defender P448CV* was stolen from a farm at St Weonards.
- ❖ Overnight 18/19-10-07 two orange coloured KTM motorcycles were stolen from a premises at Pengethly.
- ❖ Road, near Little Dewchurch, power tools were stolen from a vehicle working in area.

Theft of Vehicles

Results

- ❖ On 11-10-07 a 17yr old male from Little Birch was arrested for drinking and driving. He was charged and released on bail to attend court.
- ❖ On 16-10-07 a 42yr old male was arrested at Thrupton for drinking and driving. He has been released on police bail for further enquiries.
- ❖ On 17-10-07 a 27yr old male was arrested for criminal damage caused at Little Dewchurch. He was given a formal caution.
- ❖ On 18-10-07 a 29yr old male from Callow was arrested for assault. He was released on police bail for further enquiries.
- ❖ On 18-10-07 a 38yr old male from Kings Thorn was arrested for drinking and driving. He was charged and bailed to court.
- ❖ On 25-10-07 a 15yr old female from St. Weonards was arrested for Deception. She was released on police bail for further enquiries.
- ❖ On 28-10-07 a 27yr old male from Kings Thorn was arrested for drinking and driving. He was released on police bail for further enquiries.
- ❖ On 28-10-07 a 21yr old male was arrested at Much Birch for drinking and driving. He was charged to court.

One to watch out for!

There have been several instances in the last few months where a male, aged about 50, with grey hair, about 5'11" has been cold calling asking for gardening work. He has a white LDV Tipper truck S47*RNE (we do have the full reg no but unable to give it due to Data Protection!) He usually wears a green shirt with 'B P Landscaping' embroidered on it, and will claim to come from the Much Birch area.

DO NOT TRUST THIS MAN - he has grossly overcharged many vulnerable and elderly people for hedge cutting, tree felling etc and is known to Trading Standards as well as ourselves.

He usually works with another male, on one occasion his assistant was caught going upstairs whilst they were 'working' at an

elderly lady's house, when challenged stated he was looking for the bathroom!

He operates all over Herefordshire but was in Little Birch on Monday this week.

Any sightings, please let us know, and please pass these details to anyone in your community who may be taken in by this man.

Postal Scam

The Trading Standards Office is making people aware of the following types of scam.

An example of recent scam.

A card is posted through your door from a company called PDS (Parcel Delivery Service) suggesting that they were unable to deliver a parcel and that you need to contact them by phone. The number begins 0906 and is a premium rate number. DO NOT call this number, as it is a mail scam originating from Belize. If you call the number and start hearing a recorded message you will already have been billed £15 for the phone call.

If you do receive one of these cards or any similar then please contact Royal Mail Fraud on 02072396655 or ICSTIS (the premium rate service regulator) at www.icstis.org.uk

And finally on a lighter note

Following a call from an elderly lady an officer from of Kirklees Roads Policing Unit, West Yorkshire Police, was despatched to deal with a horse said to be in distressed state having been impaled on a post.

On attending, the officer was able to report that the horse was not impaled on anything but was simply feeling frisky. It was enough to radio this sensitive reply to the despatch centre, but he was left to explain to the little old lady that the horse was fine, and perhaps she should visit an optician.

Items/Copy

Please may I have items for the **JANUARY 2008** issue via post to Folly Cottage, Little Birch, HR2 8BD; or left in the post box at 'Bramleys' or by email attachment to sarah.mathews@tiscali.co.uk by:

* * * * *
16TH DECEMBER
* * * * *

Local Representatives are:

East JOHN BULBECK -
540178

Central BOB PETERS -
540670

West BETTY PHILPOTT -
540614

And **PC Andrew Bundy** can be contacted directly by mobile telephone whilst on duty. His number is: **07855 385 844.**
