

King's Thorn & The Birches Newsletter

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

Village Hall

The Management Committee for LBVH is organising a working party to undertake a much needed tidy up of the outside. If you can spare a couple of hours on **SATURDAY 2ND JUNE** from 10.00am onwards your help will be much appreciated. Please note, this was scheduled to take place on the 12th May but due to adverse weather, was cancelled.

Forum

The next Golden Valley Community and Pact Forum is to be held in Peterchurch Community Hall on **WEDNESDAY 6TH JUNE** at 7.30pm. If you care about the community you live in, please come along and meet your Local Policing Team and Council Representatives and have your say!

The Evergreen Club

After the super Blue Badge tour of gorgeous villages in the Cotswolds, the next trip comprises a boat trip from Bradford on Avon on the Kennet & Avon Canal which will be on **TUESDAY, 12TH JUNE**. In the morning, those members who wish to go into Court Gardens at Holt, will be dropped off and picked up in time for the 3 O'clock boat from Bradford. The price will be £11 per head (includes the boat trip and tea) (£13 for non-members) with a further £4.80 each for non-National Trust members at Court Gardens. **PLEASE REMEMBER TO BRING YOUR N.T. CARD.** You must pre-book this trip by telephoning Beverley 01981 540406 **before Thursday 31 May** or Bridget (01981 540932).

It would help if you could indicate whether you wish to go to Court Gardens when booking.

Pick up Times are:

- 8.45 Coach Depot, Brandon
- 8.55 Tump Lane Bungalows
- 9.00 The Park, Wormelow
- 9.05 Tump Lane (Middle)
- 9.10 Poor Clares Convent
- 9.15 Kings Thorn Bus Shelter
- 9.20 M.B. Church Bus Stop
- 9.25 Axe & Cleaver Bus Stop
- 9.35 Broome Farm Lay-by
- 9.45 Merton Hotel, Ross
- 9.50 Fontaine Court, Ross

DIARY DATES JUNE 2007

- 2ND JUNE – LB Village Hall Tidy-up
- 6TH JUNE – Golden Valley Community & Pact Forum
- 7TH JUNE – Much Birch Parish Council Meeting
- 12TH JUNE – Evergreen Club Outing
- 12TH JUNE – Whist Drive
- 15TH JUNE – Summer Pudding Evening
- 15TH JUNE – Summer Garden Party
- 21ST JUNE – History Walk in Little Birch
- 23RD JUNE – Violette Szabo G.C. Memorial Gathering
- 26TH JUNE – History Group AGM
- 28TH JUNE – Little Birch Bingo

ADVANCE NOTICES

- 1ST JULY - Treasure Hunt and Cream Teas
- 7TH JULY - Little Birch Church Fête
- DATE UNKNOWN - Mini Antiques Roadshow to value items that you may have dug up out to your garden.

Whist Drive

Following another successful drive and through popular demand, a further Whist Drive will be held on **TUESDAY, 12TH JUNE** 7.30 pm start at Little Birch Village Hall. Excellent prizes and refreshments, entrance fee £1.50. Please note the change from a Wednesday to a Tuesday.

Proceeds in aid of hall refurbishment funds.

Summer Garden Party

Join us on **FRIDAY, 15TH JUNE** for an Evening Summer Garden Party with Strawberries and Cream and 'Fizz' at Chelston Grange, Much Birch at 7.00pm until 9.00pm. to raise funds for Much Birch Church. Tickets are available at £6.00 (children £3.00) available from Sheila Mortimore – Tel 01981 541022 or from the Churchwardens.

Summer Pudding Evening

FRIDAY, 15TH JUNE at Little Birch Village Hall - 7.30pm start

Eat as many as you dare

Entrance fee £5.00 for adults and £3.00 for children (14yrs & under). Raffle and refreshments available.

Walk in Aconbury Wood

On **THURSDAY, 21ST JUNE** Adrian Harvey is to lead a history walk taking you to some parts of Little Birch parish you may never have known existed! This is an opportunity to see on the ground what you may have read about in *Little Birch on Aconbury Hill*.

Adrian is the author of the section in this book *The Ownership and Use of Land 1540 – 1840*. He will guide the walk through the parish examining the different ways in which its farms have developed over the centuries: Bromley, New Mills, The Ruff, Upper House, Lower House, Church Farm, Well Orchard, Green Farm and Castle Nibole. The walk will be about 3 miles, mainly along green lanes and unadopted roads, a bit hilly and stout shoes are advised, particularly if the weather has been wet.

Since this is a 'one-way' walk we will need to organise car transport. If you would like to come on the walk please would you be at Little Birch village hall with or without your car at 6.00 pm (we will leave at 6.10) We will endeavour to organise just enough cars to transport everyone down to New Mills Farm where we will leave these cars then, at the end of the evening, we will ensure everyone is reunited with their car! We intend to start the walk soon after 6.30 and should arrive at Little Birch village hall about 9.00 pm. There will be a most welcome

ploughman's to greet us with alcoholic refreshment (cost £6).

Violette Szabo G.C.

The Seventh Memorial Gathering will be on **SATURDAY 23RD JUNE** at 2.00pm. If you would like to join us for the celebration of her life, please telephone Rosemary Rigby MBE (*owner and founder of The Violette Szabo G.C. Museum*) on 01981 540477

LB & KT History Group AGM

This will be held at 7.30pm. on **TUESDAY, 26TH JUNE** in Little Birch Village Hall. Everyone is welcome. Now that our book is published it does not mean we are going to cease to exist. Indeed we hope to keep busy, organising walks and talks and carrying out further research. Since so many of you have bought the book, at least some of you must have had your memories jogged about information, documents or photographs which you have or know about and which we failed to include in the book, to say nothing of errors which you may have discovered. We are seriously considering putting together some sort of supplement in which these could be included so **please get in touch or come to the AGM**. If you would like to join the group at this stage you would be most welcome so, again, come to the AGM. We'll see you there!!

Bingo

Little Birch Village Hall – **THURSDAY, 28TH JUNE** - eyes down at 8.00pm
Proceeds in aid of hall refurbishment fund.

LITTLE BIRCH CHURCH FÊTE

SATURDAY, 7TH JULY, 2PM

At

THE OLD RECTORY, LITTLE BIRCH

Grand draw

1st prize – helicopter ride for 4
Teas

Games and competitions

Stalls – cakes, produce,
bric à brac, plants, books

Bouncy castle

Car boot - £5 a table

Local News

Older residents in Little Birch will be sad to have read of the death of ARTHUR WORSFOLD at the age of 86. Arthur was brought up in Much Birch and attended the local school. He worked in several of

the local sawmills, including those at Holme Lacy and Pontrilas. After his marriage to Violet and the births of daughters, Susan and Pauline, Arthur took over the Castle Inn in 1953 and was a popular landlord. David was born here and then in 1966 the family moved to 'Conifers', the new house on the other side of the lane which Arthur and Violet had built for them. Arthur then went to work for George and Tudor, the builders' merchants, who later were taken over by Jewsons. On his retirement, the family moved to the Ludlow area and then later to Gobowen, near Oswestry.

On Easter Sunday, the family met up at Little Birch Church as they had done 10 and 20 years previously but this time to celebrate Arthur and Violet's Diamond Wedding anniversary. It was a fine sunny day and although Arthur was in a wheelchair he enjoyed the service and the family then moved to the Axe and Cleaver for a celebratory lunch. Arthur will be sadly missed by a wide circle of friends and we send our sincere condolences to Violet, Susan, Pauline and David and their families and to sister in law by marriage, Grace Grundy, who lived for many years in Little Birch but who now lives in Ludlow.

Congratulations are extended to EDITH DAVIES in Upper Wrigglebrook Barn, who recently celebrated her 90th birthday. No election was needed this time for members of Little Birch Parish Council but god wishes are sent to those elected to Much Birch Parish Council and to Richard Smith, who was elected to represent the Pontrilas Ward, including our parishes, on Herefordshire Council.

The next few weeks will be anxious for local students taking important examinations and we wish them all well.

A very generous donation of an 'as new' caravan awning has been made and will be sold for church and village hall funds. The new cost was over £500 and it is now being offered to the best bidder over £100. A real bargain!! It is a 'Universal' awning and will fit any caravan with a length of 14.5 to 15.5 feet. The offer includes help to show how it is erected. Offers to John Bryant on 01981 540316 please.

The Gas Pipeline Update

The Gas Pipeline has been put under Tump Lane by an amazing machine that drills a suitable hole and the pipe is pushed through it and then externally welded to the adjacent pipes. Tump Lane was not closed for this operation and the road surface has not been disturbed. Digging the trench for the pipes across the

Millennium Green and neighbouring fields is progressing. The pipes that have been already welded together will be placed in position in the trench that will be then back filled. The array of heavy equipment on site is impressive.

Walk in Aconbury Wood

In May around 70 people set off from Little Birch Village Hall to be led round the woods by Geraint Richards, who is head forester for the Duchy of Cornwall, and Graham Taylor, director of Pryor and Rickett Silviculture who are contractors for the local Duchy woodlands. It was a most interesting if slightly damp evening and we were given a wealth of information about the woods and future plans.

We entered through the gate behind the chapel where we were given a brief background of the Duchy's acquisition of the woods and its management over the previous 5 years. The plantation of sweet chestnut and fir was then pointed out. Plans are now to remove the firs (which acted as nurse trees to encourage long straight trunks on the chestnuts) and most of the chestnuts will be coppiced (cut down to the base) as such a large number have been damaged by squirrels. The healthy trees will be left as standards. Squirrels, which have a particular fondness for chestnuts, have stripped the bark in many places and there are various control methods being used to reduce their number. Warfarin has been used but now trapping and shooting are the favoured methods. Apparently these are having an impact. The other main threat to the forester are the deer which have been getting out of control as they have no natural predators. There is deer stalking ongoing to reduce their numbers. The main problem as well as some bark stripping is that they graze on all the new shoots from coppiced stumps and seedlings.

We then proceeded to the area where the woodland crafts project is based and were told by Maurice that he is teaching some of the old woodland skills to a variety of people including those with learning difficulties, those with drug or behavioural problems and ex-offenders. The hope is that some may rebuild their lives with their newly acquired skills. Hazels have been coppiced and the wood used for a variety of purposes as is the oak from a traditionally felled tree (i.e. without a chain saw!) Various items are being made including stools, hurdles, chair-legs and lamps turned on a lathe. There are also a large number of pea/bean sticks which local people can ask for. (There is usually

someone there on Tuesdays and sometimes at weekends.) At present there are no products for sale but there may well be in the future. The Duchy has recently acquired charcoal burning equipment which will be used in the wood and plans are to sell the charcoal locally – much more environmentally friendly than using imported charcoal for barbecues! The Duchy also hopes to sell firewood including woodchips. It was pointed out that there had been a very successful acorn mast last year and the ground under some oak trees was carpeted now with oak seedlings, the greatest number seen for at least 10 years. This will give the opportunity for some natural regeneration and may point to some older, less healthy trees which could be identified for the ongoing selective felling programme. Where possible the Duchy intends to rely on natural regeneration. The only places where planting has taken place is where clear-felling has been carried out. Clear-felling was of the worthless conifer Western Hemlock.

We then walked up to one of these areas just below the camp ramparts, north of the triangulation point. This was felled last year and had been replanted with a mixture of mostly native trees including oak, ash, cherry and yew. There is also some fir and even a little resistant elm. The oaks, in particular had been grown in Duchy nurseries from acorns collected in Aconbury to ensure the genetic continuity. The extensive view over Hereford and beyond which has opened up as a result of the felling has been much appreciated by local walkers and we were assured that this view, and the one over to the Black Mountains at the other end of the camp, would be preserved as far as possible by keeping an open swathe. We then entered the camp. The density of trees is being maintained at a much lower level here as a result of an agreement with archaeologists and in order to keep the sheet of bluebells carpeting the area. These are much appreciated by the local people and were looking their best on this evening. Bracken growth does tend to take over when they die down but this is beneficial to an extent in ensuring the bulbs do not get overheated in the summer. The bracken is controlled somewhat by annual rolling. This has been carried out by a horse-towed roller, an activity which Prince Charles came to see on one occasion. It was mentioned that over 80% of the bluebells in the world are in the UK, a situation which might be threatened by global warming. On the other hand, oaks are apparently at the northernmost extent of their range which is why they bear an acorn mast so infrequently. This is much

more common in France so may happen more often here in the future.

After walking through the camp we turned left in the direction of Warren Farm and came to another area which had been clear-felled 3 years ago. The replanting is now growing well, containing much the same mixture as before. It was possible to begin to see how the area would look in the future. The Douglas firs above this area would remain as they would continue to grow and produce a more useful wood. On the opposite side of the track is an area of sweet chestnut coppice which was last cut well over 15 years ago and was overdue for re-coppicing. A number of the trees may well have to be replaced as they have not received sufficient attention. This area will remain as coppice on a 15 year cycle. The wood is very useful for fence posts as it is hard and resistant to rot so does not need treating with chemicals. It is possible that these may become available for sale in the future.

We returned to the Village Hall at about 8 o'clock where we enjoyed a very welcome ploughman's supper. We are most grateful to Geraint Richards and Graham Taylor for an excellent evening and to the Village Hall committee for the supper afterwards.

LBVH Committee

To clarify any confusion caused, Little Birch Village Hall committee is made up of the following members

John Bryant - *Chairman*

Amanda Williams - *Secretary*

Robyn Hodges - *Treasurer*

Jackie Morley - *Hall booking clerk*

Committee members - Paul Bishop, Alison Clarke, Adrian Hodges, Mike Morley & Tonia Peters

Cleaner

Cleaner needed for MUCH BIRCH COMMUNITY HALL. The position is paid and the hours would be approximately 4 per week. If you are interested and would like more information about the post, please call Bryony Connolly on 01981 541274.

M.B. Parish Council Election

I would like to thank those residents who voted for me in the recent Elections - this was much appreciated. This is my first involvement in Parish Councils, but I will take the necessary steps to ensure that I carry out the duties to the best of my ability. Should anyone have any particular issues, views, suggestions, please let me know. I will do my best to address them. Again, many thanks.

Menna Swift

Found

A door key, on a key ring, has been found by a dog walker in Aconbury Wood. Please contact Andy on 01981 540382 if it could belong to you.

Much Birch 100 Club Draw

The May draw took place on Tuesday, 15th May 2007 at Much Birch Community Hall at 7.30pm

The winners were:

1. No. 101- Mrs. Shirley Gemmell, Peterstow

2. No. 75 - Mrs. Jean Porter, Ross-on-Wye

The next draw will take place on Wednesday, 13th June 2007 at 7.00pm in Much Birch Community Hall.

John Jones, Chairman/Promoter

Much Birch Parish Council

Parish Council Elections

Following the election on 3^d May, the Parish Council would like to thank outgoing Parish Councillor, Colin Anderson, for his work over the years, and his continuing role as Footpaths Officer for the parish. New Councillors, Vivienne Short and Menna Swift, are welcomed, and join Dave Davies, Peter Groom, John Jones and Glen Sims, as the six Parish Councillors to represent Much Birch over the next four years.

Officers

Mr Dave Davies has been re-elected as Chairman of the Parish Council, with John Jones as Vice Chairman.

Planning

Applications supported by Parish Council under planning policy:

St Gabriels Cottage - Single storey extension to rear and detached double garage.

Birch House - Replacement of two windows on ground floor.

Sandridge, Barrack Hill - New dwelling in garden to Sandridge.

Planning permissions granted by Herefordshire Council:

Much Birch VC Primary School

Removal of existing boiler room and tank enclosure and provision of new single storey extension and new fenestration to classroom and library. Provision of new oil store and enclosure.

Minster Farm - Revised details to previous approved detached house application

Tump Lane

The Annual Parish Meeting discussed road safety issues for Tump Lane, including:- continuation of the footpath, speed limit

and weight restriction. These issues will be discussed with our new Herefordshire Councillor, Richard Smith.

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 7TH JUNE.**

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.

Neighbourhood Watch

**CENTRAL POLICE CONTROL
08457 444 888**

This time of year sees a rise in garden-related crime – but you can help keep crime low by improving security measures at home.

This time of year traditionally sees an increase in the number sheds and garages targeted by burglars but there are some simple steps that everyone can take to put off green-fingered thieves.

Around 1,000 shed burglaries take place every year across West Mercia, so it is important that people take the time to ensure their valuables are stored securely.

While many people take steps to protect their homes and the property inside them, they often leave valuable equipment such as power tools, mowers, garden tools and bikes in unsecured sheds or in sheds that are not strong or secure enough to protect the items from thieves.

Garden crime is an unfortunate reality so we are advising people to look at how secure their garden or shed is and if necessary make some adjustments to help 'weed out' garden thieves.

It's important to remember that most garden sheds are not designed for the safe storage of expensive items such as power tools, mowers, bikes and garden tools. If at all possible they should be stored somewhere more secure but if this proves impossible to do, there are some simple steps you can take which will still ensure your valuables are much better protected. Top tips for garden shed security include

- Keep the shed in good condition.
- Keep it locked.
- Fit a closed shackle padlock to the door and ensure that the fittings are bolted through the door and that any screws are concealed so that potential thieves cannot easily remove the padlock and it's fixtures.

- You should also fit grills or mesh to the windows and invest in an alarm.
- Chain together expensive items such as bicycles – this makes them much more difficult to move.
- Keep items such as ladders or tools that could be used to break into the home under lock and key and out of sight where possible.

Make your plants the first line of defence!

As well as increasing security for your shed or garage itself, the design and layout of your garden can also help to lessen the likelihood of becoming the victim of a burglary.

The first thing to look at is the boundaries of your property as these are your first lines of defence against burglars.

You should ensure that all gates, fences and walls are strong and kept in good repair to deter intruders from getting to the back and sides of your property. High fences are more difficult to climb, so consider attaching a trellis to your fence to add more height to it.

If you have a side gate ensure that it is positioned as close to the front of the house as possible. Would-be intruders will be put off climbing over it, as they will be in full view of your neighbours.

You should also ensure that the gate is kept locked at all times. Fitting motion sensitive lights over the gate and in other key areas in your garden is another good way of keeping intruders at bay.

Another way of increasing security in your garden is by doing some defensive planting. This means using certain prickly plants, bushes and shrubs and planting them around vulnerable areas such as windows, fences, boundary walls and drainpipes to deter burglars.

If you're not sure what sort of plants to use then ask for some advice at your local garden centre. However, defensive planting should be used to complement and not replace other security measures so do not buy prickly plants in place of lights, locks and alarms.

West Mercia Constabulary has produced an information leaflet with advice on how people can better protect their gardens and sheds.

It will be available from garden centres and police stations across the county shortly and can also be downloaded from the Force website at

www.westmerciamercia.police.uk

And finally on a lighter note...

Officers are increasingly finding themselves bombarded with acronyms and when an Inspector based at the IPLDP (Initial Police Learning Development Project) team at Greater Manchester Police was told a department was being looked at with a beady eye, he could be

forgiven for asking: "I'm sorry but who are BDI?"

Non-Emergency phone

08457 444 888

Emergency phone 999

Response Officers

PC Fiona Farrington

Mob: 07817 019 374

PC Roger Bradley

Mob: 07811 129860

Local PC Andrew Bundy

Mob: 07855 385 844.

Hereford Rural South Answer phone

01432 346756

Local Reps are :

East

JOHN BULBECK - 540178

Central

BOB PETERS - 540670

West

BETTY PHILPOTT - 540614

Fast Disappearing Verges

I came to live at "Cartref House" Tump Lane, Wormelow 43 years ago, when it was a lovely quiet green leafy lane. Three dogs came with me, the road gate was always open, they came and went as they pleased, and children played safely in the lane! What a difference now! I was once told by a resident of many years in the area, that on a certain day each year a horsedrawn loaded wagon had to pass down the lane, but before doing so, they had to cut back the lower branches in order for it to pass through.

The first disturbance of the verges occurred when a large BT lorry arrived and parked on the side of the lane. Immediately every big vehicle coming up or down had to mount the verge on the other side, one only has to drive up or down to see the terrible result that has had. This happened a year or two ago. The complete devastation is now being undertaken by the Murphy Contractors, working for the National Grid Gas Pipeline. I would like to ask who is going to encourage/insist that our precious verges in Tump Lane are reinstated? It was made as a tiny green lane, not a Motorway!

Would it be possible for it to become a one way lane? Could we also have curbstones in the lower half as there are in many other parts? Might we have white lines and notices asking motorists not to drive over or park on the verges. I have very much enjoyed my 43 years living in Tump Lane and am very proud of Woirmelow and district and will do all I can to protect this little lane. I am sure many others feel as I do and I must hold on to the belief that someone somewhere will come forward and fight for its future.

Can you help? Please do not just read, but come forward and help if you can. Yours in very special anticipation

Rosemary Rigby MBE

Hazards on Roads

Cyclists Touring Club (CTC) Web Site www.fillthathole.org.uk This site is mainly aimed at cyclists but also serves a purpose for reporting roads which require attention by the Council to benefit all road users.

The CTC site is commended to you, especially if you use Tump Lane for cycling, walking, even by car, even other roads needing attention. It gives scope to report your observations on the condition of roads e.g. the upper parts of Tump Lane where the surface is much below par. The cause generally by contractors doing work and not bringing the lane back to a satisfactory state plus neglect especially when compared to the lower part of Tump lane, plus the excessive and frequent use by heavy goods vehicles taking a short cut.

Viewing the above site will show how easy it is to self help and report your observations via the CTC to the Herefordshire Council and do your bit for the public good.

Additional 'Snippet'. It has been reported in the English press that "last year councils spent £33 million repairing potholes and £60 million in compensation for the damage they caused".

CC addressees are requested to promote the gist accordingly as fits their new opportunities.

Your Ward Councillor

Richard Smith was elected to Herefordshire Council on 3rd May 2007 to represent Pontrilas Ward. Richard and his wife Henrietta have lived in Gorsley, near Ross on Wye, for over 12 years. He has chaired Linton Parish Council, was treasurer for Gorsley village hall for 10 years and remains a founder member of the village Neighbourhood Watch group.

After 37 years' service in the RAF and a further 3 years as a senior civil servant, Richard has wide management experience both in Britain and abroad. As chairman of the parish council he oversaw the production of a comprehensive Parish Plan, giving him a deep insight into three villages' problems and priorities. And a keen interest in road safety and traffic management, the environment, and the services and facilities which are essential to village life.

You can contact Richard by phone to 01989 720669 or 07803 273576, by email

to smithgorsley@aol.com, or by post to Prospect Cottage, Gorsley, Ross on Wye, Herefordshire HR9 7SH.

Cost of Printing the N/L

No new households have opted for the electronic version this month, which is a shame. Do please consider it – it really does save money and the environment. Your email privacy is guaranteed. Please always acknowledge receipt. We are now saving 319 sheets of paper each month but we would really appreciate more offers to accept it electronically.

Items/Copy

Please may I have items for the **JULY** 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 by

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18TH JUNE

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Please Note

There will be no Newsletter in August, so make sure that any August Dates are included in your July Copy.

ADVERTS

Please check. They have been updated.

MOBILE LIBRARY

2nd Friday of each month
Much Birch - Lees Field, Far End, Churchfield, Court Farm, Belle View -
9.25am. - 10.45am.

Kings Thorn - Hampden, Stoneleigh -
10.50am. - 11.25am.

Little Birch - Pendant Pitch Post Box, Crows Nest, Old Cottage -
11.30am. - 12.05pm.

Kings Thorn - Chances Cottage, Wrigglebrook Cottage, Jabiru -
12.10pm. - 1.05pm.

Much Birch - Old Shop, Old School House, Ash Farm, Council Houses and Cedar Eaves -
1.55pm. - 3.10pm.

Much Dewchurch - Callow View, The Pines - **3.15pm. - 3.45pm.**