

KING'S THORN & THE BIRCHES NEWSLETTER

A Newsletter for the Villages of King's Thorn, Little Birch & Much Birch – April 2009

Bingo

The next Bingo will be a special **Easter Bingo** to be held is at 8.00pm **THURSDAY 26TH MARCH** at Little Birch Village Hall. There are special prizes and refreshments will be available.

Little Birch Quiz

Reminder... this year, Little Birch Village Hall is instituting an annual Perpetual Challenge Cup event starting on **TUESDAY 31ST MARCH**. The quiz will be played by teams of four and will cost £5 per team. Refreshments will be provided. If you would like further information (last minute entries?) please call Robyn on 01981 540264.

Dawn Chorus

Bob and Sue Mason invite you to a 'Dawn Chorus' walk on either **SATURDAY 4TH** or **SUNDAY 5TH APRIL** meeting at 6am. sharp at Merrivale Farm (approx. one half mile further on from Little Birch Village Hall). This will be a guided tour to hear and identify various bird songs. This will be followed by a hearty farm breakfast. Prices are; Adults £7 and Kids, 12 and under, £3.50. To book a place please ring Sue or Bob on (01981) 540032. Proceeds to Local Charities.

Whist Drive

Our next Whist Drive at Little Birch Village Hall is on **TUESDAY 14TH APRIL**. We shall start at 7.30pm. The entrance fee is £1.50. Excellent prizes and refreshments will be available. New players are always welcome.

Flicks In The Sticks

in association with Arts Alive

THE DUCHESS 12A is our next production at M.B. Community Hall, on **SATURDAY 18TH APRIL**.

DIARY DATES FOR APRIL 2009

26TH MARCH – Bingo
31ST MARCH – Little Birch Quiz
4TH & 5TH APRIL – Dawn Chorus
14TH APRIL – Whist drive
18TH APRIL – Flicks in the Sticks
18TH APRIL – Dinner & Music
21ST APRIL – W.I.
24TH APRIL – Village Market
24TH & 25TH APRIL – Spring Waters
27TH APRIL – Gardening Club
27TH APRIL – Housing Needs Survey

ADVANCED NOTICES

2ND MAY – Spring Waters
5TH MAY – LBVH AGM
23RD MAY – Flicks in the Sticks

Georgiana Duchess of Devonshire was beautiful, glamorous and adored by the public. But while her beauty and charisma made her a household name, one thing always seemed to escape her: love. Starring Keira Knightley and Ralph Fiennes

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.

Coming soon... The FLICKS season has been extended into May for a screening of the Academy Award winning SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE 15 on **SATURDAY 23RD MAY** at 7.30pm.

Borneo Expedition

Stefan Zylinski presents an evening of dinner and live music at Little Birch Village Hall on **SATURDAY 18TH APRIL**, and welcomes all. Tickets at £12.50 each.

Stefan has lived at Chetwynd, Kingsthorpe since 1997. Now at 16 years, he is preparing for an expedition to Borneo in July with the Herefordshire Expedition Group in cooperation with Raleigh International. It's a youth leadership program promoting cooperation and community service in foreign cultures close to their world interests. It is organised every two years for young people living here in Herefordshire. To help Stefan raise funds for the expedition he is planning an evening of dinner, entertainment (including his band 'Gigi') and a Borneo expedition presentation by the expedition leader Andy Preedy. It should prove to be a great evening. For more information and/or to book your tickets, please call Stefan or his mum, Helena Orłowski on 01981-540 217, or Stefan on 0777 361 0657.

You can also visit the expedition website: www.heginborneo.org.uk

WI

Jo Poole, from Virgin Cosmetics, is the speaker at Much Birch WI on **TUESDAY 21ST APRIL**. Meetings take place in Much Birch Community Hall at 7.30pm. Visitors and potential new members are always welcome. For further details please contact Kath Watts 01981 540382 or Barbara Wilson 01432 840559.

MB Village Market

The next market takes place on **FRIDAY, 24TH APRIL** at **Much Birch Community Hall**, just off the A49 at Much Birch, between 2.30pm and 4.30pm. Please join us in our support of local producers of beef, pork (including Gluten free sausage by order) lamb, chicken, cheese, preserves, bread and cakes. There are stands selling a variety of crafts and a Fair Trade stand. Refreshments are sold in aid of McMillan Cancer Support. Please contact Kath Watts 01981 540382 for further details.

Halfway Community Theatre

Are pleased to announce their April show "Spring Waters" will take place on **FRIDAY & SATURDAY 24TH & 25TH APRIL** at 7.30pm. As usual, we perform in Much Birch Community Centre, tickets are £10 (£5.00 for under 14's) to include supper in the interval. Please bring your own drink and a glass.

In addition we are presenting a repeat of this Concert at, and in aid of Llanwarne Village Hall at 7.30pm. on **SATURDAY 2ND MAY**, £6.00 a ticket to include tea/coffee/biscuits.

Tickets and further information from Jenny Wrigley on 01981 540617.

Gardening Club

The next meeting will take place on **WEDNESDAY 27TH APRIL** when, Mr. Adrian Hope will give a talk on 'Tree Care'. Everyone is cordially invited

Housing Needs Survey

As the Housing Need Study produced an identified need I now need to revisit and hold a consultation event to get the views of the parishioners as to where they would like to see affordable housing. I have arranged the event for **MONDAY 27TH APRIL** from 3.30pm - 7.00pm at Little Dewchurch Parish Hall. The event will be advertised in the Admag, Homepoint, hopefully the Hereford Times and I will produce posters to go on notice boards.

Winter Pantomime

Hilary Gould has kindly agreed to produce another pantomime for LBVH and will be holding preliminary auditions in late October. **Watch this space!**

AGM and Open evening

This will take place on **5TH MAY** and includes an invitation to attend and view LBVH developments (including new kitchen and fully accessible facilities) which have been made possible by the support of our local community.

Flower Festival

A Cornucopia of Silver. 17th, 18th and 19th July in aid of St Michael's Hospice, Hereford. For Tickets please contact St Michael's Hospice on 01432 851000 or email info@st-michaels-hospice.org.uk

Local News

Congratulations are extended to LYDIA (nee Garlick) and JOHN HUGHES on the birth of their first child, ARTHUR DILLON. Arthur was named after Lydia's grandfather, the late and much loved Arthur Harris. Dillon becomes the fifth grandchild for proud grandparents, Kay and Peter Garlick.

A boyhood dream of becoming a pilot in the RAF took another step forward when JOHN GWINNETT of Ross View, Barrack Hill was presented with his officer's commission recently. Proud parents, Janet and Murray, attended the passing out parade at

Cranwell recently. We send our congratulations to John and best wishes as he commences his flying training.

St. David's Church at Much Dewchurch was packed on 5th. March for the funeral of TOM HELME, who has died at the age of 92 years. The service was conducted by the Rev. Prebendary Kay Garlick. Tom's parents farmed at the Grove Farm, Wormelow and his other brothers and sisters were Jack, Mary, Peg, Philip and Peter. Tom attended Much Dewchurch School. He worked at the Grove for a number of years and also started his contracting business, mainly travelling around the local farms threshing corn crops. In his early years, Tom was not good at getting up in the morning and his father was often rebuked in no uncertain terms when he tried to get him out of bed.

Tom married his late wife, Peggy, who was one of the three Bowen sisters from Church Farm, Little Birch. They moved into a house in Hollybush Lane, Much Birch and in due time, John and Sarah were born. Tom's contracting business was expanding and when the opportunity came along, the family moved to 'Bryngwyn Grove', on the corner of the road from Wormelow to Much Dewchurch. Here there was plenty of room to store machinery and build a good size workshop. He was now into contract ploughing and combining and hedge cutting (to which many poles would give testimony) and later, when John joined him in the business, they became specialists in sugar beet planting and harvesting and the business is still going strong today.

Tom had been a member and one-time chairman of Much Dewchurch Parish Council and also a governor of the school. He was a founder member of the Llanwarne and District Agricultural Society, which was formed in Oct. 1943. He was a steward in the various ploughing classes and was chairman and treasurer over several years. He

was still actively involved when the Society celebrated its 50th anniversary. Tom thought that he would be called to serve in the forces in WW2 but was 'excused' because of his contribution to farming. He joined the Home Guard and he features in the photograph of the platoon NCO's taken outside of the Memorial Hall at King's Thorn.

This can be seen in the book, *Little Birch on Aconbury Hill*, and Tom said "I was much better looking in those days". He was put in charge of the Italian prisoners of war, who were housed at the hunt kennels at Wormelow. Most of them were from farming backgrounds, had never fought and were captured in Abyssinia. Tom was responsible for finding them jobs on local farms and remembers them walking to Hereford because there was no transport and with just enough money to buy a beer. It was a poor life for these chaps for some four years of their lives.

Tom was thoughtful man and did not like to be beaten if some problem or other arose concerning a piece of machinery. He would puff away on his 'trademark' pipe, relight it again and again, would never be hurried and would eventually come up with a solution. He could adapt machines to suit his own requirements and built the first reverse drive tractor out of an old Fordson Major before they ever came on the market.

Tom and Peggy retired to Ross on Wye, but Peggy sadly died in 2005 after 57 years of marriage. Tom carried on as best he could, aided by the family and when he lost the lower part of one leg through illness, he invented a facility which enabled him to get behind the wheel of his car again to carry on driving. Over the last year, he was cared for at Brockhampton Nursing Home. So the community has lost a real character, who would go out of his way to help anyone in difficulty and who was much respected by a very wide circle of friends both inside and outside farming circles.

He was very proud of his children and grandchildren and will be very sadly missed. We send our deepest sympathy to John and daughter in law, Sally, and to Sarah and her partner, Chris, to grandchildren Lawrence and his wife, Sam, to Dale and Penny and to Tom's sister, Peg, and his brother, Peter.

A number of friends are still very poorly and we ask your prayers for BRIAN POWELL and JEAN LATHAM and their spouses.

Castle Green at Hereford

Those of you who did not make it to David Whitehead's talk missed a most interesting and lively talk. Those who were there heard a comprehensive history of the area of Castle Green from earliest times up to the present day, all well illustrated with both slides and many stories, often humorous.

We heard how the area in question was at the highest point of a gravel bed left from the Ice Age so, being beside the river, became an obvious place for settlement.

By 700/800 AD the area had become an important graveyard as indicated by the finding of ritual burials in the style of 'Celtic' culture. The body of St Guthlac was buried here and a chapel dedicated to him was built. The caretakers of this graveyard formed a small monastic settlement here. St Ethelbert was also buried here initially after he had been murdered by Offa (for seeming to offer a threat to Offa's power). It is likely that royal connections led to the building of a large timber hall alongside the monastery.

Offa planned and built the Saxon town of Hereford and a cathedral was built near its present site in 790 AD. This he dedicated to St Ethelbert to expiate his sins for murdering him and his remains were moved here. A well close by was also dedicated to him and was thought to have curative properties (people continued to visit it even up to Edwardian times). The Saxon town was surrounded by walls which were stone rather than

timber (probably the earliest in the country).

Shortly before the Norman Conquest a small castle was built in the south east corner of the graveyard on what is now known as Hogg's Mount but after the conquest a mound was constructed at the west end of the Green area and a large stone square structure with a round tower erected on it by William Fitzosbern. It and the whole of Castle Green were moated and a bridge and gate created, the remains of which lie under Castle Hotel garden. A new Norman cathedral was built slightly to the north of the old one in 1100 AD and a new graveyard established here so the St Guthlac's one ceased to be used. The monastery itself was rebuilt where the new County Hospital now is. The old chapel was burnt down in the thirteenth century. At this time the old Saxon town was extended to the east, the new town including a new market (now High Town) to compensate for the land lost by the castle and new cathedral building. The castle had gardens and orchard on the opposite side of the river (now Bishop's Meadow) the boundary being the Row Ditch. At that time the river would have been much lower in summer due to very little run-off from fields and so easily fordable. The castle was used by royalty on occasions. King John spent much of his time here but after the 'taming' of the Welsh by Edward I it was no longer very useful and was ruinous by Richard II's time in the 1300s. It might have been refurbished for John o' Gaunt but he went to Kenilworth instead. It became a royal gaol in Elizabethan times and was used in the Civil War, being re-fortified by Colonel Birch. In 1660 Robert Harley bought the castle for the community, he paid £200. The tower was demolished but the mound remained for people to climb for the view. However in the eighteenth century the County Council, who had taken over

management, allowed people to remove the gravel for paths and roads so the mound disappeared. The area became industrial, bark was stacked here for shipping to tanneries. Some of the old castle buildings still remained including what is now Castle Cliff. A new prison was planned for this site but was built on the site of the new St Guthlac's monastery instead. The whole area of Castle Green and the cliff were much valued in the Picturesque period. The Duke of Chandos wanted the site to build a house but the Harley's would not sell and in the 1750s a public/private park was created by tidying, levelling and planting the area. Access was to members only but was very popular. Tea could be taken in a 'temple' building and walks taken along the terrace above the Wye. In 1805 a Nelson's column was erected by public subscription though money ran out before the statue could be placed on top so there is an urn instead. The walks in the park and beyond and the boat quay below providing boats to Ross were all part of Hereford's bid to be part of the Wye Tour.

Sheep continued to graze the green to keep down the grass up to the 1920s when lawnmowers became available. By the 1930s the green was a municipal park and plants were grown for it in a nursery at the back of Castle Pool (which is part of the old moat). The area below Hogg's mount became an area for celebrations and functions. A bandstand was built and sometimes a dance floor laid. The bowling green appeared together with its pavilion. Further changes in the 1960s/70s included the loss by building in of the 'temple' on Castle Cliffe House which became part of the Art College, also the loss of the bandstand. This was replaced by a very modern one on the site of the old castle mound. A few rather loud concerts soon saw the end of that enterprise and it has now been demolished. Also in the 70s it was decided that the cliff

below the green was being badly eroded so huge works constructed concrete reinforcement creating a sloping bank which was then planted. In the last few years the Green has been and is being supported by an organisation of 'Friends' who have many plans for improvement to enhance the area.. It is a sad reflection of modern society that it is not a nice place to be on a Saturday night and the Bowling Club are now so fed up with the attitude of 'onlookers' that they are moving. It is to be hoped that this very historic and interesting site will continue to provide pleasure to visitors in the future.

History Group

Over the past 2 years the history group has organised 7 talks given by various people but all with a historical theme. When we published our book *Little Birch on Aconbury Hill* (which we financed ourselves – copies still available!) we always intended to use any profit we made for the good of the community. We felt that organising a series of talks and paying the speakers out of the profits would be a good way of using the funds and, by the number of people who support the talks, it would seem that you do too. We have also purchased a large projection screen which is available for other groups to use at the hall. An entry fee is charged for the talks and this goes to Village Hall funds. We have another talk from Heather Hurley in the pipeline about the Wye Valley from Holme Lacy to Bridstow. This will be based on the book *Landscape Origins of the Wye Valley* which she co-authored and edited. It will take place on **THURSDAY 21ST MAY** at 7.30 in Little Birch Village Hall. More details in the May newsletter.

LBPC

Report of the Little Birch Parish Council Annual Meeting held on Wednesday 4th March.
No interests were declared.

The minutes of the meeting held on the 14th January 2009 were read and signed as a true record.

Matters Arising

From previous minutes – The phone box adjacent to Little Birch Village Hall is now in full working order. Lynda Wilcox has agreed to attend the 1 July 2009 Parish Council Meeting to discuss the benefits of subscribing to HALC. Mr. Morley thanked Cllr R. Smith for information concerning Herefordshire Council finances. The Affordable Housing Survey results have been received and distributed to all Parish Councillors. This item to be placed on the agenda for the next Parish Council meeting.

Village Hall – The toilets and external doors have been replaced together with fitting the kitchen and new hob. A request was made for the Parish Council to enter a team into the next Quiz night. The Village Hall AGM will be taking place in April, date to be confirmed and displayed in the newsletter.

Parish Lengthsman Scheme – The Lengthsman has completed work at Higgins Well and the surrounding area, a further day has been agreed. Two Parish Councillors have been assigned to walk around the Parish identifying possible Lengthsman work as well as any defects for the Parish Initiative.

Parish Field – Residents and the Parish Council agreed that this land was to continue as a rural area although the undergrowth and bordering hedges and trees needed to be trimmed, cleared or maintained now and in the future. Clerk given details of a possible contractor to contact for quotes to cut and clear overhanging branches adjacent to the road.

Financial Report – 3 cheques written.

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

Planning – Planning application received for two properties; Daneswood no. DCSW2009/0250/F

Proposed extension and alterations to house, new double detached garage with additional parking and improved road access. Paperwork returned with a request for a site plan as the Parish Council could not determine the location of the garage.

The Crickets Croft no. DCCE2009/0309/F – Retrospective application for ancillary accommodation for elderly parents – paperwork returned with no objections.

Any Other Business – Cllr. R. Smith discussed his disappointment with the organisation of recent PACT meetings and with the results from the A49 survey. Little Dewchurch Parish Council has requested an informal meeting with two Little Birch Parish Councillors. A newsletter article to be written displaying details of the forthcoming Flower Festival in aid of St Michael's Hospice.

Date of Next Meeting – **WEDNESDAY 6TH MAY** which is the **ANNUAL MEETING**.

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

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.

Report on Much Birch Parish Council meeting of Thursday 5th February 2009

The report also includes a synopsis of the draft minutes from The Parish Council meeting on Thursday 5th March 2009

Parish Paths Partnership

Parish Council has applied for the Parish Paths Partnership Grant. The grant is awarded by Herefordshire Council to carry out

minor work required on the Parish footpaths.

Parish Litter Pick

A litter pick of the Parish is to take place on **SATURDAY 2ND MAY** at 10.00am meeting at the Thorn bus stop area. If you are interested in helping please contact the Parish Council Chairman John Jones. Further information will be posted on the Parish noticeboards & Parish website nearer the time.

Lengthsman work

Work waiting to be carried out along Barrack Hill.

Planning

Application DCSW2009/0329/RM
Site: Rangers Lodge, Little Birch Lane, Wrigglebrook, Kings Thorn Hereford

Description; Erection of a detached dwelling with ancillary works

Application Type: Reserved Matters

Council Comment: Application unsupported

Correspondence

Parish councillors had previously been given the correspondence list of which was noted.

Date of next Meeting Thursday 2nd April at 7.30pm.

For information on Much Birch Parish please visit our website www.muchbirchparish.org.uk

Parish Clerk

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

Neighbourhood Watch

Please note the new number for contacting West Mercia Police (if you can't get hold of us on our mobile phones) is

0300 333 3000

Crime Trends in our area

Overnight 14th -15th February at Wormelow offenders threw a concrete block through the window of a vehicle parked in the centre of the village.

Overnight 25th -26th February vehicles and signs were sprayed with graffiti at a garage at Callow.

And a farm at Pencoyd was visited by thieves and an outbuilding was broken into and tools were stolen.

A Nissan Micra was stolen from outside an address in Wormelow overnight on the same night, and later found abandoned in Llanwarne with the windows smashed

There was a break in at a farm in Thrupton overnight 28th February. a stable was broken into, and a 'Blue Giant' road racing bike was stolen, valued at £2,000. Also stolen were a 'Castor' chainsaw and a 'Shindaiwa' hedge trimmer and attachments. The thieves also stole the battery from a Ford Maverick which had been parked in the drive.

There was a theft from a field in Orcop the weekend before last, where a cement mixer and a quantity of hand tools were stolen, also taken was the battery from a JCB, possibly a link to the Thrupton incident.

A pair of wooden field gates was stolen from the entrance to a field in a lane in Hoarwithy overnight 3rd/4th March. They were in an isolated spot, and were fairly new, and although the owners had attempted to make them theft-proof, unfortunately this didn't stop the thieves.

This is the second incident recently where wooden gates have been taken, so be aware if you have any that are quite new, and make sure that they cannot be easily lifted off the posts.

At about 4.35 am on Thursday 5th March, the post office at Kingstone was broken into and an attempt was made to remove the safe, but the thieves were disturbed by the alarm activating and left the scene empty handed in a grey Ford Mondeo Estate. This is probably the same team that attempted to break in on 19th February.

Overnight 5th/6th March an attempt was made to enter a garage at a property being built in Allensmore, damage was caused but nothing taken from within. A quantity of heavy duty cable that had been nearby on the property was stolen.

Overnight last night a vehicle parked opposite a property in Hoarwithy was damaged, two tyres were slashed.

Results 4 males were arrested at Callow for burglary in the county. They have been charged with conspiracy and remanded to court.

A male was arrested on Sunday for several offences, he has admitted to breaking into sheds and garages, as well as some vehicles, in the Kingstone and Clehonger areas.

Police have recovered an amount of property which needs to be identified.

If you, or someone you know, has been the victim of such a theft in the last six months in that general area, (it may not have been reported to us) please get in touch.

Arrangements can then be made to view the property at Hereford Police Station.

Bogus caller

We'd like to bring to your attention details of a male who is responsible for around 43 distraction burglaries in Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Gloucestershire, Dorset, Devon and Cornwall.

He is described as a white male, aged between 20 - 40, stocky build with a round face, clean shaven with a clear complexion. He has a bald head and often wears a woolly hat, and has been described as having a friendly face.

He has been using the name of Steve/Steven/Stevie and once used the name of Ian. He purports to know the victim previously, and claims they don't recognise him as he's shaved his head. He sometimes claims to be a relative of the victim, and will offer to go shopping or mow the lawn etc.

He has also mentioned selling cheap cigarettes and alcohol, and will sometimes ask for change of banknotes.

Once he has the victims trust he will steal cash, purses etc.

Please be aware of this, and warn any neighbours/relatives/friends who may be vulnerable and taken in by such a visitor.

Your Officers based at Peterchurch

Local Police Officer

PC Andrew Bundy.

Mobile No: 07855 385 844

Email:

andrew.bundy@westmercia.pnn.police.uk

Community Support Officers

CSO 6173 Fiona Witcher.

Mobile No: 07779 141 232

Email:

fiona.witcher@westmercia.pnn.police.uk

CSO 6993 Kevin Powell.

Mobile No: 07779 141 232

Email:

kevin.powell.c6993@westmercia.pnn.police.uk

[uk](http://www.westmercia.pnn.police.uk)

Response Policing

PC Roger Bradley

Email:

roger.bradley@westmercia.pnn.police.uk

Hereford Rural South Email

herefordruralsouth.lpt@westmercia.pnn.police.uk

[ce.uk](http://www.westmercia.pnn.police.uk)

Hereford Rural South Answer phone

01432 346756

Non-Emergency phone

08457 444 888

Emergency phone 999

Your Local Representatives

East - JOHN BULBECK 540178

Central - BOB PETERS 540670

West - BETTY PHILPOTT 540614

A Senior Moment

A 98 year old woman in the UK wrote this to her bank. The bank manager thought it amusing enough to have it published in the Times.

Dear Sir,

I am writing to thank you for bouncing my cheque with which I endeavoured to pay my plumber last month. By my calculations, three nanoseconds must have elapsed between his presenting the cheque and the arrival in my account of the funds needed to honour it. I refer, of course, to the automatic monthly deposit of my Pension, an arrangement, which, I admit, has been in place for only thirty eight years.

You are to be commended for seizing that brief window of opportunity, and also for debiting my account £30 by way of penalty for the inconvenience caused to your bank.

My thankfulness springs from the manner in which this incident has caused me to rethink my errant financial ways. I noticed that, whereas I personally attend to your telephone calls and letters, when I try to contact you, I am confronted by the impersonal, overcharging, pre-recorded, faceless entity which your bank has become.

From now on, I, like you, choose only to deal with a flesh-and-blood person. My mortgage and loan payments will therefore and hereafter no longer be automatic, but will arrive at your bank by cheque, addressed personally and confidentially to an employee at your bank whom you must nominate. Be aware that it is an offence under the Postal Act for any other person to open such an envelope.

Please find attached an Application Contact Status which I require your chosen employee to complete. I am sorry it runs to eight pages, but in order that I know as much about him or her as your bank knows about me, there is no alternative. Please note that all copies of his or her medical history must be countersigned by a Solicitor, and the mandatory details of his/her financial situation (income, debts, assets and liabilities) must be accompanied by documented proof.

In due course, I will issue your employee with a PIN number which he/she must quote in dealings with me.

I regret that it cannot be shorter than 28 digits but, again, I have modelled it on the number of button presses required of me to access my account balance on your phone bank service. As they say, imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.

Let me level the playing field even further. When you call me, press buttons as follows:

1. To make an appointment to see me.
2. To query a missing payment.
3. To transfer the call to my living room in case I am there.
4. To transfer the call to my bedroom in case I am sleeping.
5. To transfer the call to my toilet in case I am attending to nature.
6. To transfer the call to my mobile phone if I am not at home.
7. To leave a message on my computer (a password to access my computer is required. A password will be communicated to you at a later date to the Authorized Contact.)
8. To return to the main menu and to listen to options 1 to 8.
9. To make a general complaint or inquiry, the contact will then be put on hold, pending the attention of my automated answering service.

While this may, on occasion, involve a lengthy wait, uplifting music will play for the duration of the call.

Regrettably, but again following your example, I must also levy an establishment fee to cover the cost of setting up this new arrangement.

May I wish you a happy, if ever so slightly less prosperous, New Year.

Your Humble Client

Items/Copy

Please note change of date

Please may I have items for the **MAY** issue via email attachment in Word format to semathews@btinternet.com or by hand or post to Mrs. S.E. Mathews, Folly Cottage, Little Birch, HR2 8BD. by

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14TH APRIL
* * * * *

Please mark your envelope
"Kings Thorn Newsletter"