



Newsletter for King's Thorn, The Birches & Aconbury

A newsletter for the villages of King's Thorn, Little Birch, Much Birch & Aconbury.

December 2015. First published 1977.

A Note from Miss Rosemary Rigby MBE

On Nov 6th in spite of cold and wet weather, children from Much Birch School laid a wreath at the World War One commemorative tree planted on the Rosemary Rigby Millennium Green. Rev. Mark Johnson conducted the ceremony and the year six pupils were accompanied by Head Teacher Mrs Bernie Davies and Mrs Sasha Davidson. Before laying the wreath, four pupils recited poems they had written to mark the occasion.

Mr. Keith James of Tump Lane told the scholars his great uncle's story. Scots Guard Company Sergeant Major Charles Lilley had married in September 1914 and within three weeks had been posted to France. He was killed in action just before Christmas 1914. His body and those of four fellow soldiers were found in a ditch some 43 years later and reburied in the London Military Cemetery in France.

After an early morning start and a long trip, Mr. Frederick Pearson, Drum Major of the Epping Forest Pipe Band, laid a wreath to the memory of Violette Szabo GC and former serviceman, Mr Trevor Forrester laid a wreath on behalf of the Pilgrim Hotel.

Veteran of the Normandy landings in World War 2, Mr Peter Davies gave the 'Remembrance exhortation' and told the pupils of his hopes that they would never know war but would live always in peace.

The ceremony concluded when Miss Rigby gave each child a bookmark from the museum and Trevor Forrester handed out hot chocolate and home-made biscuits from the kitchens on the Pilgrim Hotel.

Please send copy for the January 2016 Newsletter to birchesnews@gmail.com or written contributions to John Bryant at Bramley Bungalow, Aconbury Close, King's Thorn.

—by 18th December please.

Diary Dates

November

27th Community Safety Meeting
Little Dewchurch VH

December

3rd Much Birch Parish Council Meeting
3rd Christmas Bingo LBVH
8th Whist Drive LBVH
9th Gardening Club Annual Social LBVH
12th Flicks in the Sticks MBCH
18th Village Market MBVH
19th Book Exchange Old Methodist Chapel
21st Christmas Craft Fair
31st New Years Eve Party LBVH

January

27th Gardening Club LBVH

Church Services in December

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- Dec 6th. 11am LBirch Holy Communion
- Dec 13th. 09.15am MBirch Family Communion
11am LBirch Morning Worship
- Dec 20th. 4pm LBirch Carols and Christingles
- Dec 24th Christmas Eve
MBirch 3.30pm Carols and Crib Service
11.30pm Midnight Communion
- Dec 25th Christmas Day
11am LBirch Holy Communion
- Dec 27th 10.30am Benefice Service
at Llandinabo Church

LOCAL NEWS



Congratulations go to Cathy Sadler and her son, John, on completing a sponsored cycle ride around many of the churches in South Herefordshire. The generous sponsorship amounted to £430, of which half goes to Little Birch Church and half to the Hereford Historic Churches Fund.

Well done Cathy and John for that marathon effort and to all sponsors.

As reported last month, the funeral of John Evans of Castle Pool Cottage took place on 20th. October at Hereford Crematorium and was conducted by Rev. Mark Johnson. Steve Turner gave the eulogy from which these notes are taken.

John was born in June 1930 in Wormelow to Dolly and Ted Evans. He was the youngest of 8 children, having 4 brothers and 3 sisters. His father was head kennel man for the South Herefordshire Hunt but when John was about 2 years of age, his parents left to take up a new post with the College Valley Hunt in Northumberland. John, Mary and Donald stayed here and went to live with their Auntie Beattie at Cherry Orchard, Wrigglebrook.

John attended Little Birch School somewhat sporadically. The teacher was Mrs Nellie Pritchard who took the register first thing and usually at the first break, John and his mates scarpered and spent the rest of the day playing fox and hounds, climbing trees and smoking fags in Hastings Wood. John left school at the age of fourteen and went as an apprentice bricklayer but the 'tug of the woods', his real passion, led him to a job on the Guy's Estate working in the woods with Ivor Crum, Jack Cross, Eddie Hancocks and Ernie Thomas.

WW2 was over and much of the country's timber had been used in the war effort. John and his colleagues planted various conifers in Warren Wood and Holloways Bank. Other areas of mature trees had to be cleared the hard way, using a cross cut saw or by axe. This was very hard work but John was young, agile and strong.

A new club opened at the King's Thorn Memorial Hall, now often referred to as the 'Scout Hut'. At one end was a boxing ring and John quickly mastered the art in which he matured and disciplined himself to the Queensbury rules. A boxing booth was always set up when the May Fair came to town. The ringmaster would ask anyone who was brave enough to take on the travelling champion.

John's hand would go up and he entered the ring with no chance of winning but that didn't matter.

It was the buzz and adrenalin rush that he wanted and got. After all, if John was willing to fight a champion in public, was there anyone to challenge him!

John and his gang usually went to Mrs. Howes' cafe in Bridge Street and often got into a punch up with other lads. The police got wise to them and didn't want them in High Town so they stopped the gang at the top of Bridge Street with the instruction 'Evans be on your way' so the

last port of call on the way home would be the Black Lion pub.

Tragedy hit the family and the whole community on Easter Monday 1950 when 5 local lads were in collision with a car carrying policemen returning to Hereford from a cricket match in Ross on Wye.

They were on 2 motorbikes and brother, Donald, (Bunny) and another of the party were killed and the others suffered life changing injuries. John and his mates were walking home from Hereford that night and were unaware of what had happened when they passed the scene.

One of John's friends was Michael Bond of Monkton, near St Weonards and he had a sister called Phyllis. Eventually John plucked up courage to ask Phyllis out and the spark was lit. They were married at Llanwarne Church in July 1964 and made their home at a cottage in Garway. Gillian was born in Jan 1966 and Andrew in July 1967.

John was now working at the Sentex plant at Tram Inn from where he would often come home covered in white dust, which turned out to be asbestos. He then went to Painter Bros. in Hereford but industry was working a 3 day week at the time. There were frequent power cuts and on one occasion when the factory was left in total darkness, the supervisor made a roll call and all were present except John Evans. He was eventually found in the cab of the overhead crane half way along the gantry. A very cross John Evans was cussing and fretting as he had been up there for about half an hour. A ladder was found and John rescued.

From Painters, John worked for a short time at Sun Valley. He finally got back to his first love working in the woods on the Guy's Estate which was then owned by the Prudential. The family moved to Castle Pool Cottage in 1978 where John and Phyllis were to remain for the rest of their

time together. John was reunited with Ivor Crum and John Lewis, Ivor Price and Ray Harris making up the team He found himself felling the very trees he had planted in 1948 and then helped plant the next generation. He loved it. His other passion was grass track racing and he would be found at events all over the country. Later, son Andrew would drive John to these events and they would often meet up with John Lewis, his ex-workmate.

One was always made welcome to the Evans household and the usual banter would take place. Phyl make a cup of tea, there's folk here could die of thirst! Will you have a piece of cake? knowing full well there wasn't any. If there was, the whole routine would be ruined. He loved mother in law jokes courtesy of Les Dawson, which would send John into guffaws of laughter and when he laughed the whole world laughed with him.

John loved his garden which was always immaculate with flowers and vegetables which he was very keen to share. He loved his children and 4 grandsons, which he thought the world of.

In 2013, John was diagnosed with cancer which led to a

steady decline in his health but it was only in the last few months that he gave up the fight. Phyllis proved to be a fantastic carer and totally dedicated wife, administering medication on a daily basis and looking after all John's needs. Andrew took over the running of the garden and taking John to hospital appointments. John died on Oct. 7th in the County Hospital

We send to Phyllis and her whole family our sincere sympathy.

It is sad to report the passing of Mrs. Peggy Newman of Much Birch at the age of 98 years. She was an aunt to Kay Garlick and Margaret Blackburn and brother in law to the late Arthur Harris. Her funeral service and interment of ashes takes place on Sat. 12th Dec. at 2pm at Much Birch Church. A full tribute will be given in the next issue of the News Letter.

New Year's Eve Party

Tickets for our annual New Years Eve Party are already selling fast so be sure to secure yours to avoid disappointment.

This year with **Live music** and **Disco** from Dave Harding **8pm til late..** Light refreshments and bar.

Tickets are just £8 (Please note £10 after 10th December!)

To purchase your tickets, please contact:

Sue 01981 540682
Diane 01981 540401
Jackie 01981 541027

Meetings, Fundraising and Activities

Much Birch WI

Much Birch WI holds meetings on the third Tuesday of each month, at 7.30pm in Much Birch Community Hall.

The December meeting is the member's Christmas evening.

Visitors and potential new members are welcome.

Please contact Gillian, 01981 540080 or Caroline, 01981 540422 for more details.

Much Birch Village Market

Much Birch Village Market takes place on the 4th Friday of each month in Much Birch Community Hall between 2.30pm and 4.30pm.

The December Market is on the third Friday, 18th.

Stalls include award winning suppliers Moor Meals, who bring meat, ready meals and pies: Llandinabo Farm, with meat, cheese, cooked ham etc: Mr. G's award winning preserves: a Fair trade stall: Honey: The Great British Meatbox should be with us together with two new craft stalls.

Craft stalls include silver jewellery, knitted goods and embroidered cards and gifts (orders for special cards can be taken, in time for Christmas).

Mark has worked hard to find new suppliers so let us support him in this local event.

If you would like to find out more please contact Mark on 01432 278026

All information is correct at the time of going to press.

Little Birch and King's Thorn Gardening Club.

The Annual Social takes place on Wed. Dec 9th. at 7.30pm. This popular event will be followed by a quiz.

The menu consists of Cottage Pie with a Vegetarian Option, followed by Apple Pie and Cream/ Ice Cream. Please bring a plate, sweet dish and cutlery.

There is a charge of £5 and potential new members are welcome.


Tickets are available from Committee members ;- Derek Scrivens 540374, John Wilson 01432 840559, Janet Gwinnett 540651, Iris Lloyd 540068, Mike Leigh 540698 or John Bryant 540316.

The first meeting in 2016 will take place on Wed. 27th. January at 7.30pm when the speaker will be Mr. John Arnfield whose subject will be 'Attracting more birds into our gardens'

All meetings are held in Little Birch Village Hall at 7.30pm on the last Wednesday of each month.

John Bryant 01981 540316






FLICKS IN THE STICKS

at Much Birch Community Hall

Christmas Special...
Saturday 12th December
6.30pm



Come along and celebrate the 50th Anniversary of this classic film - watch, sing and dress up if you like!! Let's have some fun!

Refreshments available from half an hour before film.
Tickets £4 (£3 under 16s)

Coming up in the New Year...
Tuesday 26th January 2016 - JERSEY BOYS

Jersey Boys is a musical biography of the Four Seasons-the rise, the tough times and personal clashes, and the ultimate triumph of a group of friends whose music became symbolic of a generation.

Tickets available in advance or on the door - for further info or to book tickets please email bryonyconnolly@hotmail.com or call 01981 540097

For further information about films and screenings visit
www.artsalive.co.uk (online booking available!)

FLICKS IN THE STICKS

Lost items found outside the Village Hall

Several rings and a pair of spectacles have recently been found outside the Village Hall.

If you think these may be yours then please contact Sue Jones on **01981 540682**

Good Dog!

Kathy Williams' Beauceron Dido proved he wasn't just a pretty boy (he got 1st Post-Graduate Dog, 1st Good Citizens Dog, and Reserve Best of Sex in Breed at this year's Crufts) by coming 2nd in his first Open Companion Dog Stake with a qualifying score in Working Trials at the beginning of June, then Qualifying in his next trial at the end of June – which was a Championship Trial- to achieve his CD Ex title. Since then he has been working hard at improving his Tracking skills as all the Stakes in Working Trials after the Companion Dog Stake include tracking in the Nosework section, and he gained his Novice (Level 1) UK Tracking Dog Association award on 11th October, which should stand him in good stead for his next Trial, which will be an Open Utility Dog Stake at the end of November.

Meanwhile his litter sister Rubi has been pursuing a career in Competitive Obedience, and at Hatchford Brook DTC Open Show on 2nd August, which held one of the 32 heats (with the highest placed BC/WS and BC from each heat qualifying), she qualified for the semi-finals of The Kennel Club Good Citizen Dog Scheme Special Pre-Beginner Obedience Stakes, held at Discover Dogs in London on 18th October. I am absolutely over the moon to say that she was one of the 20 dogs who qualified for the Grand Final to be held at Crufts 2016! Rubi, who has conformation issues due to being VERY big for a female Beauceron, also took up training for Agility as a form of physiotherapy, and she enjoys it so much that she is currently aiming for a place on the Starters League team for Golden Valley – although she has a VERY full diary with her Competitive Obedience matches in the South West Obedience League, so it's paws crossed that the match dates don't clash. (It's worse than having kids – I just chauffeur these dogs around to their various activities!) Both Beaucerons are also in "Les Bas Rouges" Obedience team – a Kennel Club initiative to show owners of breeds other than Border Collies, Working Sheepdogs and GSDs that EVERY dog can do obedience. Don't think that Les Bas Rouges are going to make it to the final at Crufts this time – 2 of the 4 dogs on the team are little more than puppies, one 8 months old and one 12 months old, but the dogs (and handlers!) are having fun training the (not so!) synchronised heelwork!

Kind regards Kathy Williams

Little Birch Village Hall Committee

Newsletter notices for December 2015

Christmas Bingo

Eyes down at 8pm on Thursday 3rd December for our annual Christmas Prize Bingo. This is always a thoroughly enjoyable evening and has become a firm Christmas tradition.

Great prizes and refreshments are available. We look forward to seeing you.

Pantomime Group

Rehearsals for Camelot The Pantomime are well under way. Performances will be on Friday and Saturday February 5th and 6th. Tickets will be available from December 1st from, Margaret 540374 and Jackie 541027

Whist Drive

We'd love to see you at our monthly whist drive whatever your ability. We guarantee a warm welcome and a fun evening with good company. Excellent prizes and refreshments too.

Our next **Whist Drive** is on **Tuesday 8th December** at Little Birch Village Hall. We start at **7.30 pm** and the entrance fee is just £2.00.

Community Book Exchange/Lending Library

The next **Book Exchange** will be on the morning of **Saturday 19th December** at the former **Methodist Chapel 10am – 12pm.**

Festive Sherry & Mince Pies will also be available

All members of the community are invited to join us for this enjoyable event which offers not only a wide range of books and DVDs (to suit all ages and interests) but also an opportunity to meet others and exchange recommendations for "a good read".

A warm welcome, tea, coffee and refreshments will be provided and we look forward to meeting up with regular and new visitors to the Book Exchange.

There is a charge of just £1 per adult towards the cost of the hire and refreshments.

Much Birch Community Hall **2016 will be the 11th year of the 100 Club**

As Chairman of the Much Birch Community Hall Management Committee, I would like to thank those of you who have supported the monthly lottery over the years. It has helped us greatly to develop and maintain the facility for use by the residents of Much Birch and surrounding areas. During the last six months the Management Committee, who have the responsibility to manage the hall, have been quite busy in formulating plans for the future. As a result, a decision was taken to address some shortfalls in relation to the building, as it was not meeting present day standards. It was also apparent that it was an opportunity to develop and provide extra available space for users.

We are now at the point where plans have been drawn up and planning approval has been obtained. This includes upgrading the cloakroom and facilities for the disabled, to improve the kitchen and to provide two additional activity/meeting rooms. We have also sought to enlarge the lobby area and to provide a canopy over the entrance door. A Contractor has been selected and we are actively fundraising in the anticipation that work can commence in summer 2016. The 100 Club proceeds will contribute towards the cost of the project.

I would like to invite members once again to enrol in the 100 club for the coming year 2016 to help us to achieve the objective. We would also very much welcome new members to the club to contribute to our efforts. Please call me on 01981 540980 for an application form

As in previous years the scheme is that twelve pounds purchases a single entry into the draw each month. Entries for more than one per month require a further twelve pounds for each additional entry. We decided last year to implement a third prize in recognition of the support given to the 100 club over the years and the Management Committee have decided to continue with the third prize again for this next year.

On behalf of the Management Committee I would like to express our thanks for your anticipated response and our best wishes for 2016

Yours sincerely,

John Jones

John H.C. Jones
Chairman - Much Birch Community Hall Management Committee

Much Birch Community Hall 100 Club

The November draw took place on 15th November 2015 in Much Birch Community Hall at 11am and the results were as follows:

1 st prize – No 79	2 nd prize - 100	3 rd prize – No. 96
Mrs. B. Wilson	Mrs. N. Salter	Mrs. R. Wathen
Little Dewchurch	Much Birch	King's Thorn

The next draw will take place on 13th December at 10.30am in Much Birch Community Hall.

John Jones—Promoter

Can Anyone Help?

In the summer, Kath and Ron Sargent from Goolwa [meaning bend in the river], South Australia were in Hereford on family history research trying to find information about people named Ruck and Williams, mainly in Llangarron and the surrounding areas. Kath has done extensive research from Australia [back to the 1600 or 1700s if I remember correctly] but has some gaps she is trying to fill in. Apparently, the local records here have been water damaged and are unusable. If you can help this lovely couple at all their email address is rksarg@bigpond.net.au but I have not been able to get through to this address, so I would be happy to pass on any information by post if you send it to me at lesleylowe50@aol.com or 01981 540366, or I can pass on their address. Thank you, Lesley.

South Hereford Rural Police Briefing



West Mercia Police have developed a Citizens' Academy for Herefordshire which will start on Monday, 4 January 2016. The Citizens' Academy will offer people in the area a new and engaging opportunity to learn about and experience the day-to-day workings of their local police force.

This programme provides local people over the age of 18 with a unique insight into West Mercia Police's work to protect the community from harm, and improve residents' quality of life.

To find out more and to register your interest please visit the below link!

<https://www.westmercia.police.uk/article/13788/Herefordshire-Citizens-Academy>

On November 27th 2015 at 7pm, Little Dewchurch Parish Council and Officers from West Mercia Police invite you to a Community Safety Evening at Little Dewchurch Village Hall.

Rural Business Advice day on 25/11/15 all day at the three counties Hotel, Hereford. Everyone welcome.

Kind regards

Lowri Anderson

PCSO 40247

Hereford City Southside and Rural SNT

West Mercia Police

**Your nearest public service counter is at Hereford
Police Station, Bath Street, Hereford, HR1 2HT:**

**Herefordshire Road Safety Hotline
01432 364582**

Website: www.westmercia.police.uk

Little Birch Parish Council

What is Neighbourhood Planning and should you be interested?

Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development of their local area. You, the community are able to select suitable areas for the building of new houses, and also to say what those houses should look like. Neighbourhood planning can ensure local people get the correct types of development for their community, and can provide the opportunity for communities to set out a positive vision for how they want their community to develop over the next ten, fifteen and even twenty years, providing for future generations.

This is your opportunity to come together as a community and have your say in the future development of Little Birch. If you are interested in taking part please contact the parish Clerk on lbpc.parityclerk@gmail.com or any parish councillor.

Much Birch Parish Council
Parish Clerk Mrs Alison Wright
Longfield House, Gooses Foot, Kingstone
Herefordshire HR2 9NE
Tel. 01981 250860
Email: muchbirchclerk@hotmail.co.uk

16th November 2015

PARISH MEETING – at the Parish Council Meeting held on the 5th November at the Much Birch Community Hall. The Meeting heard about local issues, including those of road safety on Tump Lane. There was a further reminder that Much Birch Parish is considering undertaking a Neighbourhood Development Plan. This is an opportunity for the community to get involved in shaping development for the future. Anyone interested in taking part in this or just wanting to find out more about it, then please contact Cllr Steve Turner at the address details published below. More details of what is involved will be published soon.

The Parish Council approved an updated Publications Policy and details of this can also be found on the website.

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be an Ordinary Meeting and this will be held on **Thursday 3rd December 2015 at 7.30pm** - at The Much Birch Community Hall. Please see notice boards and website for agendas. As always the public and press are more than welcome to attend and will have the opportunity to speak directly to their representatives.

A reminder that:-

Your Much Birch Parish Councillors are:-

Cllr Alison Cook (Chair) , e mail thecooks@wyenet.co.uk Tel. 01981 540703

Cllr Steve Turner (Vice Chair) , e mail turnersofcrossways@btinternet.com Tel. 01981 540090

Cllr Andrew Crum e mail a.crum@btinternet.com Tel. 01981 540002

Cllr Tim Jones e mail tjsj@me.com Tel. 01981 540242

Cllr Ben Roberts b3nroberts@gmail.com Tel. 01981 540100

Full minutes of the meetings and information etc. can be found on the Parish Council website following the link found in this summary. www.muchbirchparish.org.uk.

You can also find us on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/MuchBirchPC> and Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Much.Birch.Parish>