

# NEWSLETTER FOR KINGS THORN & THE BIRCHES

A Newsletter for the Villages of Kings Thorn, Little Birch and Much Birch – January 2008 - First published in 1977

2008

2008

We would like to take this opportunity to wish everybody in the Community a very Happy, Peaceful and Fulfilling New Year.

2008

2008

## Newsletter

Usually we print an appreciation to those who are involved with the production and distribution of this Newsletter on the back page, but I think they are worth a front page spread.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Roger Thomas, our tireless Printer, Des and Rose Wathen and family and Dick Brimacombe for painstakingly collating over 500 copies between them, John Bryant and Dick Brimacombe, the News Gatherers, and the army of wonderful volunteers who deliver the Newsletter to your doors. Thank you all for a superb job.

Please keep your news coming in, John Bryant can be reached on 540316 and Dick Brimacombe on 540677 or you can send it direct to me. Please keep us posted on new neighbours so that we can print a welcome, of any special anniversaries etc., and particularly any news of our young people. We also welcome letters on topical local subjects, poems, and even adverse comments too!

## DIARY DATES – JANUARY 2008

- 8<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY – Whist drive
- 16<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY – Community Safety Evening LBVH
- 19<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY – Flicks in the Sticks
- 25<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY – Halfway Community Theatre
- 30<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY – W.I.

## ADVANCE DIARY DATES

- 1<sup>ST</sup> FEBRUARY – Pantomime “Snow White”
- 16<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY – Flicks in the Sticks
- 20<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY – W.I. – Talk on Narrowboats
- 27<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY – Pantomime – Matinée Performance – 2.30pm.
- 27<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY – Pantomime – Evening Performance - 7.30pm.

### Whist Drive

at Little Birch Village Hall on **TUESDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY**, refreshments and excellent prizes, 7.30pm start entrance fee £1.50, new players welcome

### Flicks In The Sticks

*(By arr. with Arts Alive)*

The first film of 2008 will be on **SATURDAY 19<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY**. **ATONEMENT15** will be shown at Much Birch Community Hall

*This is a British romance that spans several decades.* In the summer of 1935, 13-year old fledgling writer Briony Tallis, irrevocably changes the course of several lives when she accuses her older sister's lover of a crime he did not commit.

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 up... 16 February – Ratatouille – One for all the family!**

### W.I.

Members of Much Birch WI enjoy a very varied programme each year with speakers to interest most tastes and outings which are very popular.

The Open Meeting, in April, is a talk by Radio Hereford and Worcester's Ellie Targett entitled 'In my father's shoes', a truly fascinating story told by a wonderful speaker.

If you are interested in joining Much Birch WI please contact Barbara Wilson (President) on 01432 840559 or Kath Watts on 01981 540382 if you require more details.

Meetings are held in Much Birch Community Hall, beginning at 7.30pm. The full programme for 2008 is printed at the end of the newsletter.

Visitors are always most welcome to join us at our meetings.

---

### *Halfway Community Theatre*

Due to the overwhelming success of the Mikado, the Halfway Community Theatre are pleased to announce that a one night repeat performance will take place at Much Birch Community Hall on **FRIDAY 25 JANUARY** at 7.30 pm. Tickets, price £5.00 will include coffee/tea and biscuits in the Interval. To avoid disappointment please ring either Jenny on 01981 5406127 or Shirley on 01981 541202.

Tickets will be on sale from the beginning of January (**but not before**) from Hilary Gould on 01981 540322, Jackie Morley 01981 541027 and from The Castle Inn. Tickets sold out quickly for last years pantomime, so book yours early to avoid disappointment.

---

### *Pantomime "Snow White"*

Little Birch Village Hall are proud to announce the dates for their pantomime **Snow White**. There will be 3 performances, **FRIDAY 1<sup>ST</sup> FEBRUARY** at 7.30pm, **SATURDAY 27<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY**, a matinée performance, at 2.30pm **AND** an evening performance, at 7.30pm.

---

### *Gardening Club*

The next meeting will be on **WEDNESDAY 30<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY** at which the speaker, Mr P. Ralph will talk about *The wildlife and plants of the Forest of Dean*.

---

### *Local News*

It is very fitting that Brenda and John Startin were present at the planting of the new 'Holy Thorn' on Nov. 20th. as near as practical to the original tree. John did the honours with the spade and declared it to be well and truly planted. It was most appropriate since John has been very keen for this to be done with the gradual demise of the original over the past 5 years. As a gesture for all the hard work

that Brenda and John have done in the community over the last 30 years or so, they were presented with a box of biscuits and 6 bottles of John's favourite tippie. We wish them well on their forthcoming move.

The new tree was produced by grafting a shoot from the original on to a hawthorn 'whip' (a 1 year seedling). This was kindly done by Major Haig at Hill Farm, Much Dewchurch and whose orchards on the west side of the A49 can be clearly seen when travelling down from the King's Thorn bus shelter on the C1263 towards Hereford.

Coincidentally, Major Haig suffered a nasty fall outside Llanwarne Church recently and was in hospital for a week or so but after rehabilitation treatment at 'Hillside', he is making steady progress from Zimmer frame to walking stick and hopes to be home for Christmas. We send our best wishes for a speedy recovery.

Several well known friends in neighbouring parishes have passed away recently including Anita Brooke, wife of the late John Brooke of King's Cople who farmed land in this area. Mrs. Erna Ramsdorf was a long time resident at 'The Old House' (latterly 'High Meadows'). She and her husband came over from Germany before WW2 to farm in Dumfries, where they worked extremely hard. Her memory was extremely good, she had a good sense of humour and was passionate over Volvo cars. She has been cared for at Dulas Court, near Eywas Harold for the last 3 years or so. Mr. Alan Brown was a very popular and skilled Vet. who practised in Ross on Wye for many years and was well known to both farmers and domestic animal keepers. We send our deepest sympathies to all the families of those mentioned.

We wish 'Bon Voyage' to Beverly and Peter Webb in their move to Sussex. They have both been very active in the community over the last eight years or so principally with the Half Way Theatre Company, the Evergreen Club and Much Birch Church. Jars of Honey will also be greatly missed! We hope that they will soon be happily settled in their new home and community.

---

### *Much Birch Christmas and Craft Fayre*

In spite of appalling weather on 8<sup>th</sup> December the Christmas and Craft Fayre at the Community Hall attracted a good number of people wanting to buy gifts and cards for Christmas or to enjoy a snack or light lunch with friends. Many thanks are due to the ladies who worked tirelessly in the kitchen and to those who provided the delicious food.

There was a good variety of craftworkers, all of whom put in a tremendous amount of time and work to produce their wares. It was also most interesting to see a team

of workers from Aconbury Wood, who brought along bags of firewood and various items made from coppiced wood. Who would have thought a baby's rattle could be crafted from a single piece of wood? I would like to thank all the craftworkers for supporting Much Birch Church and Hall, not only by having a stall but also for donating raffle prizes.

Thanks also go to the Choir of Much Birch Primary School, who entertained everyone with songs, including 'Away in a Manger', sung to a new, delightful tune. I am sure they will be a great success when they sing with the Police Choir at their Christmas Concert at the Courtyard later in the month.

No Christmas Fayre would be complete without a visit from that important seasonal visitor, Father Christmas. Many thanks to him for taking the time to visit Much Birch on such a wet day.

---

### *Thanks*

LBVH Management Committee would like to offer a huge thank you to Margaret Stringer for organising the very successful 70's evening. A truly enjoyable evening.

---

### *Much Birch 100 Club Draw*

The December draw took place on Saturday, 8th December 2007 in Much Birch Community Hall at 2.00pm

The winners were:

1. No. 47 - Mr. & Mrs. T.M. Wylor-Owen, King's Thorn
2. No. 30 - Mr. & Mrs. D. Pennington, Much Birch

The next draw will take place on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2008 at 7pm in Much Birch Community Hall.

John Jones, Chairman/Promoter.

Our grateful thanks to all those people who are participating for 2008. There is still an opportunity for anyone who wishes to join us. Please contact me or any Committee member.

John Jones, *Chairman/Promoter*

---

### *LBVH*

The Management Committee would like to thank everyone for their support and generosity during the past 12 months. Your support has helped raise funds for our much needed refurbishment project. We would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

## Neighbourhood Watch

### Crime Trends

During the daytime on 12-11-07 a quad bike was taken from a farm at **Little Dewchurch**.

Overnight 12/13-11-07 sheds in woodlands at **St Weonards** were broken into and a generator and other tools were stolen. The same premises were again broken into between 16/19-11-07 when more tools and sports equipment was taken.

During the daytime on 21-11-07 a garage at the side of a house in **Callow** was broken into. Nothing was stolen. The offender, a male aged about 35yrs, about 5'8" tall, stocky build and short dark hair was believed to have left the scene in a large dark coloured estate car with roof rails on the top.

During the daytime 21-11-07 a workshop and shed were broken into at **Orcop Hill** and a number of power tools were stolen.

During the daytime 21-11-07 a garage at **Allensmore** was broken into and garden power tools were stolen.

### Suspicious Incidents

From the above reported crimes it is clear that there has been a slight increase in daytime burglaries of garage type premises. From the information given by the victim of the one at the Callow it is evident that these people will knock on the door of a premises before they try to break in. They are being cautious and do not want to be seen. If you have callers to your homes and they are not expected it could be that they are "casing the joint." If you think something is suspicious, it probably is. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you see something suspicious.

The van that was stolen from Hoarwithy last Wednesday, was found later that afternoon parked up in Mordiford, undamaged. I think the delivery driver must have heaved a huge sigh of relief!

### Results

On 1-11-07 a 21yr old male from Much Birch was arrested for theft. He was given a formal written caution.

On 1-11-07 a 33yr old male was arrested for the theft of a wacker plate from the Little Dewchurch area. He was released on police bail, for further enquiries.

On 4-11-07 a 24yr old male was arrested at Wormelow for drinking and driving. He was released on police bail for further enquiries.

On 9-11-07 a 50yr old male was arrested at Much Birch on the A49 for drinking and driving. He was released on police bail for further enquiries.

On 14-11-07 a 37yr old female was issued an Endorsable fixed penalty ticket for exceeding the speed limit at Kingsthorpe. Five others were warned about their speed.

### Christmas Drink Drive

The West Mercia Constabulary Christmas Drink Drive Campaign begins on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2007 until 1<sup>st</sup> January 2008.

The Department of Transport is also increasing awareness of the effects of drink

driving in a new TV advert, which is aimed at the 17 to 29 year olds.

You may have noticed in previous newsletters quite a number of persons being arrested for drink driving. The safest option is not to drink and drive at all and plan before hand how you are getting home.

### Postal Scam

We have had a postal scam reported to us. This happens when someone puts a card through the victim's letterbox which advises, that it has not been possible to deliver a parcel. The householder is then invited to call a telephone number that starts "090" to arrange for delivery of the item. This phone number is actually a premium rate number and is very expensive to call and at the end of the day, there is no parcel.

Our advice, in conjunction with the Trading Standards 'Scambusters' Team, is not to phone any premium rate number. If any postal item is undeliverable, either letters or parcels, then the carrier will notify you with a card through the door but it should have a local phone number and address from which to collect the item. Beware of all numbers that start with 090 - they may be part of a scam and will cost you dear.

### Crime Briefings – Be Aware

#### 7<sup>th</sup> December

The white vans are still around I'm afraid - the one we have already circulated twice in the past couple of weeks - HV\*\*LRK was in Garway on Tuesday, again asking for old batteries. This is the same one that was disturbed in St Weonards where the occupants looked about to break into a workshop, and a few days later was circulated by Gloucester Police for being seen in suspicious circumstances.

Another white van T\*\*\*BCY was in the Kilpeck area, looking for holly. The two occupants were described as dark skinned, the driver was 35-40 years, plump, and his passenger 25 - 30, a lot thinner. This vehicle has been seen around the north of the county, and our colleagues there are interested in its whereabouts.

Another one to look out for, a Gold coloured Land Rover Discovery H\*\*\*\*VJ There have now been 2 reports of a vehicle of this description acting suspiciously so please report any sightings.

Finally, there was a strange incident in Holme Lacy on Wednesday morning. A male claiming to be a taxi driver called at an address asking directions to a fictitious address. The householder said he couldn't help, and the male left. A short while later a lady of Asian appearance called at the same house, and asked for the same fictitious address, and claimed she was from the Census Office. She then asked to use the toilet, and went to a downstairs cloakroom. She then left, the householder has not noticed anything missing. The male is described as white, approx 5'6" in his early 50's, wearing a flat cap, no other clothing description.

The female is described as of Asian/Indian appearance, aprox 5'4", late 30's, with long dark hair, smartly dressed in a red coat.

She left the premises in a dark car, part registration P\*\*RGH, possibly a Mercedes.

### 12<sup>th</sup> December

The crimes reported to us in the last 24 hours have all occurred in the Ballingham/Hoarwithy area, which is an area that normally has a very low crime rate!

This afternoon at 14.25 a silver Mercedes Sprinter van VN07VVG was stolen from outside an address in Hoarwithy - the driver had left the keys in the ignition while he was making a delivery, and persons unknown have made off in it. The van was empty.

Between Sunday evening and Monday morning, from a field in Hoarwithy, several 6ft steel girders were stolen. The gate to the field had been padlocked, but the thieves lifted the gate off the hinges.

In the last week the sign for the village of Ballingham has been stolen. It had been seen lying on the ground between Tuesday and Saturday, but then disappeared over the weekend. We believe this is not an uncommon incident, but usually these sort of thefts are not reported to police - we would urge that they are reported, especially in these times of increasing prices for scrap metal.

Also in Ballingham, a grit bin by the side of the road has been damaged, it seems that an attempt has been made to steal it, as two bins have been stolen from the same spot in the past.

### Community Safety Evenings

Following on from the success of our previous "road show's" we are holding two more in the New Year

On **WEDNESDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY** at 7.30pm, in partnership with Much and Little Birch Parish Councils there will be a Community Safety Evening in Little Birch Village Hall. There will be presentations on home and personal safety, SmartWater, and Hereford & Worcester Fire & Rescue will talk about fire safety. The Parish Councils will talk about the newsletter and Website.

### Smartwater – what is it?

SmartWater is a chemical property marking liquid that can be painted onto any property from jewellery, antiques, electrical equipment, power tools, horse tack, farm equipment etc. Each bottle is unique to the registered owner, it dries clear and can only be seen under ultra violet light. It acts as a deterrent and where present it can be used to identify property recovered by the police.

Each kit contains a bottle of the liquid, several stickers to put around your property and a registration form. They can be bought from your local policing team at a one off cost of £20 per kit – rrp from Smartwater direct £45 annually.

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

A young officer called at an address to carry out crime enquiries. As he walked down the garden path, the front door opened and a ball rolled out, followed by an excited young boy chasing the ball. The officer decided to join the young boy in a game of football by kicking the ball down the garden with some force. He was surprised to see the boy run after the ball

screaming “Timmy, Timmy”, and then realised that it was a hamster exercise ball!

---

*Neighbourhood Watch Local  
Representatives are*

**East**  
**JOHN BULBECK - 540178**

**Central**  
**BOB PETERS - 540670**

**West**  
**BETTY PHILPOTT - 540614**

---

*MBWI. Programme for 2008*

**January 15<sup>th</sup>** - *Iceland and the Northern Isles*  
- John Pearl

**February 19<sup>th</sup>** - *A Picture Quiz*  
Phil King

**March 18<sup>th</sup>** - *Lost in Herefordshire*  
David Hill

**April 15<sup>th</sup>** *In my father's shoes. OPEN MEETING.* - Ellie Targett

**May 20<sup>th</sup>** - *Resolutions Meeting*

**May 22<sup>nd</sup>** - *Member's Outing – Behind the scenes at Waitrose, Monmouth*

**June 17<sup>th</sup>** - *Quilting* - Kitty & Kath

**July 15<sup>th</sup>** - *The Travelling Library*  
Clare Lockley

**July 22<sup>nd</sup>** - *Member's Outing – 3 churches with Penny Platts*

**August 19<sup>th</sup>** - *Home Start*  
Diane Gibson

**September 16<sup>th</sup>** - *The RSPB*  
John Clews

**October 21<sup>st</sup>** - *Route 66...music and songs* -  
Richard Jordan

**November 18<sup>th</sup>** - *AGM*

**December 16<sup>th</sup>** - *Member's Christmas Evening...Christmas Poetry and Prose with Valerie Bingham & Joyce Hughes*

---

*New Year Resolution*

What about making it a New Year resolution to have the Newsletter by email. We now have 37 email recipients, an increase of 24 over the year. This has saved £75 out of an annual spend of well over £1,000.

Please consider receiving the newsletter via email to enable us to save more paper, shoe leather and time spent in collation..

---

*Items/Copy*

Please may I have items for the **JANUARY** 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 Wpod format to:

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

\* \* \* \* \*  
**18<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY**  
\* \* \* \* \*