

King's Thorn & The Birches Newsletter

A Newsletter for the Villages of King's Thorn, Little Birch & Much Birch – September 2008

Police Notice

On Thursday 14th August 2008 police were called to an address in Wormelow following discovery of the body of a local man. The identity of the man was confirmed as David Langdon, aged 40 years, who is a well known character in and around the village.

The cause of death remains unexplained so it is vital that all opportunities are identified to obtain information that will assist the Police and H.M. Coroner.

Since the start of the investigation police have conducted a large number of enquiries in and around Wormelow and Much Dewchurch, which has resulted in superb co-operation, communication and flexibility from residents and businesses alike. The support of the local community has been excellent over the past week and we would like to take this opportunity to say thank you.

However, the enquiry is ongoing so you will continue to see Police Officers in and around the villages over the coming days. We will endeavour to minimise the impact of police activity on the village but please understand that we have an important job to do. Your continued support will be greatly appreciated.

Historic Harewood

Heather Hurley, a local author and historian, will be giving a talk entitled 'Historic Harewood' on **THURSDAY 4TH SEPTEMBER** at 7.30pm in Little Birch Village Hall. Entry, which includes light refreshments, will be £2.50. This should prove to be a fascinating talk, taking us from its beginnings through the illustrious period of the nineteenth century, up to the sad demise of the mansion and beyond to future plans – involving royal connections! Heather has kindly agreed to follow up the talk with a walk – 'Past and present Harewood' - round the estate looking at various sites she has mentioned and more. The walk will probably be about 3½ miles, starting from Hoarwithy. Heather will give details on the evening of the talk. The walk will be on **SUNDAY 7TH SEPTEMBER** in the afternoon. This is a real opportunity to view the site

DIARY DATES SEPTEMBER 2008

- 4TH SEPTEMBER – Talk – Historic Harewood
- 4TH SEPTEMBER – Much Birch Parish Council Meeting
- 5TH SEPTEMBER – Children's Workshop
- 6TH SEPTEMBER - Annual Horticultural Show
- 7TH SEPTEMBER – Walk in Harewood Park
- 9TH SEPTEMBER – Evergreen Club
- 9TH SEPTEMBER - Whist Drive
- 12TH SEPTEMBER – Pantomime Meeting
- 14TH SEPTEMBER – Dog Show
- 20TH SEPTEMBER— Flicks in the Sticks - On the Black Hill "15"
- 24TH SEPTEMBER – Gardening Club
- 25TH SEPTEMBER – Bingo
- 26TH SEPTEMBER - Village Market

ADVANCE NOTICES

- 10TH OCTOBER – Harvest Supper
- 18TH OCTOBER — And When Did You Last See Your Father? "12A"
- 24TH OCTOBER – Haunted Evening
- 1ST NOVEMBER – Tips Tastes & Techniques

and see the improvements made by the present owners, the Duchy of Cornwall.

Annual Horticultural Show

The Show will be held on **SATURDAY 6TH SEPTEMBER** Attached is the schedule of classes and Entry Form from which you can see that there is plenty for all members of the family, **ALL ENTRIES MUST BE IN THE HALL BY 10.30am.**

Hall Opening Times

- 9.00am. open to Exhibitors only.
- 11.00am Closed to public. Open to Judges and Stewards only.
- 2.00pm. Open for public viewing.
- 3.45pm Presentation of 7 trophies and Draw, followed by Auction of produce.

The Committee would be grateful for the donation of produce for auction.

Organising Committee

- | | | |
|----------------|--------------|-------|
| John Bryant | 540316 | |
| Mike Leigh | 540698 | |
| Janet Gwinnett | 540651 | Steve |
| Holder | 540879 | |
| Derek Scrivens | 540374 | Helen |
| Fox | 541004 | |
| Des Wathen | 540557 | |
| Rev.J.Wilson | 01432 840559 | |

Show Secretary:

Mrs. Gillian Clouder 540080

Those children entering the Tallest Sunflower competition need to contact John Bryant or Helen Fox **BEFORE 6TH SEPTEMBER.**

The Children's workshop will be held on **FRIDAY 5TH SEPTEMBER** in Little Birch Village Hall at 4.30pm.

Speed Indicating Device

No doubt you will have heard that Much Birch Parish Council, at their July meeting, reversed their decision to purchase a Speed Indicating Device (SID). It is virtually two years since the petition was put before the council for something to be done regarding the speeding, particularly on the loop road through Kings Thorn.

Apparently Herefordshire Council is purchasing 4 SIDs which Parish Councils will be able to hire. However, there is already a long list of Councils waiting to hire one and, in reality, it will be quite some time before Much Birch will be allocated one and then only for a short period of time.

This matter will be raised at the next Parish Council meeting on **THURSDAY 4TH SEPTEMBER** at 7.30pm. at Much

Birch Community Hall. We need your support at this meeting so please come along and make your feelings known to the Council. **WE NEED ACTION NOW!**

Evergreen Club

Despite the dire weather forecast for our day out in the Cotswolds, the sun shone, the birds flew and the train steamed. We could not have asked for more. On **TUESDAY 9TH SEPTEMBER**, as requested, we revisit Wells, England's smallest City. The historic area round the Cathedral and the Bishop's Palace is remarkably well preserved, and there is a good selection of individual shops and several places to eat. We stop on the way home for tea at Henley Mill's two and a half acre garden beside the River Axe. There are plants for sale.

The cost is £14.50 (£16.50 for non members), and this includes entrance to the garden and tea. The number to ring is **01981 540932**.

The pick-ups are:-

8.45	Brandon Coach Depot
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
9.40	Merton Hotel
9.45	Fontaine Court

Whist Drive

We are holding a Whist Drive at Little Birch Village hall on **TUESDAY 9TH SEPTEMBER**. We shall start at 7.30pm. The entrance fee will be £1.50. There are excellent prizes and refreshments will be available. New players are always welcome.

Panto Time

Anyone willing, able and foolish enough to get involved in this year's **panto** is invited to gather at Little Birch Village Hall at 7.30pm on **FRIDAY 12TH SEPTEMBER**. Front, back and middle stage hands are wanted. **You can't do it? Oh Yes, You Can!**

Little Birch Dog Show

On **SUNDAY, 14TH SEPTEMBER** the Companion Dog Show will be held in the field adjacent to the Village Hall (opposite the Methodist Chapel), but will transfer to the Hall if it is wet. All dog lovers and fanciers are urged to keep the day free for what promises to be a most enjoyable occasion. Refreshments will be available. Entries will be taken from

1.00pm. and judging will start at 2.00pm. Enquiries please contact **(01981) 541027**.

W.I.

The Speaker at the meeting on **TUESDAY 16TH SEPTEMBER** will be John Clews from the R.S.P.B. We look forward to a most interesting evening. Meetings are held in Much Birch Community Hall at 7.30pm. If you would like further details of our programme, please contact Barbara Wilson, 01432 840559 or Kath Watts 01981 540382.

Flicks in the Sticks

We start our season at 7.30pm. on **SATURDAY 20TH SEPTEMBER** with **ON THE BLACK HILL "15"** a locally made film, celebrating 20 years of success.

This wonderful adaptation of Bruce Chatwin's famous novel tells the story of twin brothers and their life on a farm in Welsh border country, spanning 80 years of the 20th Century.

On **SATURDAY 18TH OCTOBER** at 7.30pm. The showing will be **AND WHEN DID YOU LAST SEE YOUR FATHER? "12A"**

Jim Broadbent shines in this painfully honest yet often hilarious re-telling of Blake Morrison's memoirs; also starring Colin Firth, Juliet Stevenson and Gina McKee.

Gardening Club

The September talk will be on **WEDNESDAY 24TH SEPTEMBER** in Little Birch Hall starting at 7.30pm. The talk will be given by Lorraine Coleman and is entitled "Growing Herbs And Plants For Complementary Therapies". There will be a bring-and-buy sale at this meeting. As ever, new members are welcome to attend

Bingo

Eyes down at 8.00pm. **THURSDAY 25TH SEPTEMBER**. in Little Birch Village Hall. There are good prizes and refreshments will be available.

M.B. Village Market.

On **FRIDAY 26TH SEPTEMBER** we are holding our next market in Much Birch Community Hall between 2.30pm and 4.30pm. Please come along to help us support local producers and cut your carbon footprint. The ever popular **Moor Meals** (Dexter beef specialists, ready meals and pies), **The Squeaky Pig** (pork joints, chops and, of course wonderful sausages) will be there together with **Ali**, a new vegetable producer and **Elaine Pudge** with lamb. Last, but certainly not least,

Kelsmore Ice cream will be there with wonderful varieties of their ice cream. Visitors on a Gluten-free diet are catered for by The Squeaky Pig, who will take orders for gluten-free sausage and Kelsmore Ice Cream, who bring along gluten-free cones. Also there will be herbaceous plants, a Fair Trade stand and a variety of local craft makers. Refreshments are produced and served by Chris and Peter Dowsett and Pauline Rogers in aid of MacMillan Cancer Support so you can 'take the weight off your feet' and enjoy a 'cuppa'

Harvest Supper

Please bring your plate, pudding bowl, knife, fork, spoon and glass to our Harvest Supper, which will be held on **FRIDAY 10TH OCTOBER**. Price £6 per head.

Haunted Evening

On **FRIDAY 24TH OCTOBER**, by popular request, there is to be a return visit and evening with former Hereford City Councillor, John Newman.

Tips, Tastes & Techniques

Come to an evening with the renowned local chef, Ken Tait on **SATURDAY 1ST NOVEMBER** at 7.30pm in Much Birch Hall. Let Ken make you the perfect chef. Forget the stress and pleasure the success. Enjoy the evening as Ken guides us through a whole range of delicious dishes, with professional tips and techniques and lots of tasters. £10.00 a head, includes Punch on arrival, tasters and leaflets. Tickets can be obtained from Lesley on 01981 540366 and John on 540980. Be ready with canapés and starters plus main courses and desserts for Christmas entertaining.

Local News

Congratulations are extended to CARLA GILLESPIE and her partner, JOHN FERNEYHOUGH on the birth of FREDDIE who arrived too late for an announcement in July's Newsletter. Meanwhile the proud parents have now recovered and are enjoying their new son. The grandparents and immediate family are also thrilled with the new addition. Our warmest best wishes and congratulations also go to SHEILA PENRICE who was recently presented with a Royal Doulton cut glass bowl by the Regional Manager of the National Blood Transfusion Service in recognition of her blood donations over many years. In fact, Sheila has given 75 units of blood, which in the words of the late Tony Hancock is 'more than an armful on each

occasion'. Sheila still looks extremely healthy and wishes to encourage anyone under the age of 70 to donate a unit of blood as it is not a painful experience and the need for more blood continues to increase. Well done Sheila!

It is good to report that IRIS LLOYD is now back home much to the relief of the family after her operation in the County Hospital and we send our good wishes for continuing progress back to full health.

Good wishes and congratulations go to those who have been accepted for University or College and to those who will attend new schools in September, where we hope they will be very happy and make new friends. JOHN GWINNETT has achieved his ambition of joining the RAF and is at present training at Cranwell. Meanwhile FERN has just returned to India to complete her studies and teaching there.

The funeral service for MRS. VALERIE HOWORTH, erstwhile of Hill House, Kings Thorn, took place at St. David's, Much Dewchurch and was conducted by Rev. Kay Garlick and the following is based mainly on her address. Val's father was an Army Officer and was serving abroad during WW1 when she was born. Val attended St. Helen's School in Northwood, Middlesex together with her sister, Silva and was very happy and successful particularly in music and won the Henry Wood prize at that school. She went on to become a very accomplished pianist and performer. Between the wars, the family moved around quite a lot as her father had many overseas postings, including China. It was through army contacts that Val met Peter Howorth and they were married in 1951. When Peter and his brother bought Court Farm, Much Birch, Peter and Val moved into Bryn Garth. The farm produced chickens, blackcurrants and apples and gave seasonal employment to many local mothers during the picking season. Val provided tea for everyone and lemonade for the children who came along with their mothers. Although Val had no children of her own, she loved all the young ones and her nieces, Heather and Clare, spent many happy holidays at the farm. Val won a TV set in 1953 just before the Coronation and with the co-operation of Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Williams set it up in a barn at Ash farm and invited everyone in the community to watch the Coronation of our present Queen.

When Geoff Perry took over the farm, Peter and Val moved into Hill House, where she remained until some 2 years ago. She was a woman of real faith - a committed member of the congregation and a great supporter of St. David's. She

was very much involved with the Cathedral Perpetual Trust, worked tirelessly as a volunteer at the Three Choirs Festival, was a member of the Historic Churches Trust and of the Conservative Club. Val helped with the Red Cross "Over Sixties Club" when it met at the Park Hall for many years and continued when it became the Pop in Club, meeting in Much Dewchurch Village Hall. She was in every sense a real lady - always considerate, always welcoming, always smiling and although she was born to a fairly privileged lifestyle, she never held herself apart, but sought and won the true friendship of so many people from every possible walk of life.

Over the last few years, Val's health began to deteriorate and with the help of many friends and neighbours, particularly Margaret Blythe and Ruth Owen, remained at Hill House until the time came when she needed full-time nursing care and she moved first to Hentland and then on to Brockhampton Court Nursing Home. Visitors were always welcomed with "How nice to see you" and sent away with "Thank you so much for coming", even if she wasn't quite sure who you were. She will be sadly missed by her nieces and their families and many friends. Our condolences are also sent to John Caton and his family following the passing of his father, JACK CATON, the well known upholsterer in Hereford. Jack and his late wife always supported events at Little Birch Hall and he was brought to the Church Fete two weeks before he died. He was a real character and the respect in which he was held was reflected in a full and overflowing congregation at the Thanksgiving Service for his life, which was held at Putson Baptist Church.

Speeding

Many residents have expressed their concerns over speeding vehicles in the parish. A lot of our lanes are single track and cars are still travelling at great speed risking a collision with another car or, worse still, with a pedestrian. Recently, a car was hit as it was reversing out of a driveway by a speeding vehicle up Forge Lane, Wrigglebrook. This particular lane is often used as a 'short cut' and some drivers appear to disregard the fact that pedestrians use the lane and there is very little room to jump out of the way of speeding vehicles. Please drive safely and always expect the unexpected around the corner. If you do have young drivers in your family please do educate them on the dangers of single track lanes. And for the majority, thank you for driving safely

through our villages. Let's keep our roads safe.

Little Birch Church Fête.

The PCC would like to thank sincerely everyone who helped to make the Fête such a success especially those who manned the stalls, put up gazebos, fetched and returned tables and chairs, donated items for sale, prizes for the raffle and competitions and to those who gave generous donations as they were unable to attend. Our hosts, the Atkinson family, all worked extremely hard to make sure the venue was ready and safe for the Fête yet again and we are extremely fortunate to be invited back to this lovely setting. The net profit for Church Funds was £2,200 and a donation of £50 was made to the MacMillan Renton Appeal.

Handyperson Scheme

Herefordshire Council is introducing a Handyperson Scheme to anyone over the age of 16 regardless of whether you are an owner-occupier, private tenant etc. If you are having difficulty in maintaining your home, you can contact a fully checked 'Handyperson' who will undertake small home repairs and 'one-off' house and garden clearing. The work MUST be necessary for safety reasons or to stop you from being evicted. The only thing you pay for is the cost of materials used (if you have not supplied them yourself). Contact details are: telephone: 01432 260757, email: yah@herefordshire.gov.uk and address: You@Home (Home Improvement Agency), Herefordshire Council, 84 Whitecross Road, Hereford, HR4 0DH.

Village Hall Parking

The notice regarding parking at Little Birch Hall has probably been read by most people who park their cars there. Thanks to those who have left contributions in the box. The money will eventually be used to resurface the parking area. Those who park cars and do not contribute are reminded that the hall is a registered charity and as such has little spare money to keep the car parking area in good repair.

Uplands Open Garden

In the last newsletter Mike and Jackie Morley were thanked for opening their garden in aid of hall funds. In turn they would like to thank all those who made the opening possible.

The Hodges, Adrian (who did hours of mowing) and daughter Kate spent the afternoon at the entrance gate. Robyn who organised and served tea and cakes

with help from Alison Clarke, Jessica and Josh Williams sold draw tickets. Selby Lloyd ran the plant stall including many of his own plants as well as some given by John and Sheila Penrice. Sue Mason ran the bookstall helped by Iris Lloyd who also baked cakes. Also, a very big thank you to all who attended and made it such an enjoyable afternoon.

Shopmobility

We provide mobility scooters, wheelchairs and powered wheelchairs on a daily hire basis for anyone with permanent or temporary mobility difficulties wishing to visit Hereford, Leominster, Ledbury or Ross-on-Wye. Depending on the area, the service is either free, with a voluntary donation, or there is a small charge.

Please contact:

Hereford 01432 342166
Leominster 01568 616755
Ledbury 01531 636001
Ross-on-Wye 01989 763388

Nature's Palette

Our very grateful thanks go to EVERYONE involved in the recent Flower Festival held in Much Birch Church in aid of the Church and Much Birch Community Hall. The weekend was a great success enjoyed by those who came to visit and by those who helped at the whole event.

The Church looked really beautiful and this was achieved by the very hard work of all those involved in arranging the displays. We could not have achieved this without the help and guidance of Sandra Snell of The Flower Shop in Ross-on-Wye, who also assembled four of the displays, and Betty Jones who did a lot of the planning for the church and provided the aftercare to keep the flower arrangements looking good for a long time afterwards.

We would like to thank Much Birch School for their art exhibition and Kath Watts and colleagues for the show of quilts both of which were in the hall. This is where the refreshments were served too and many thanks go to the people who helped with them and donated towards them. The plant stall was also a great success and we appreciate all of the donations of plants.

The evening events contributed much to the success of the weekend as both concerts were greatly enjoyed by their audiences so we are grateful to Vox Praeterita and Herefordshire Junior Singing Club for performing free of charge as donations to the event.

Finally there were far too many people involved in the weekend to mention here but we are very grateful to them and our sincere thanks go to them for the giving of their time and energy to bring about a very successful and enjoyable Flower Festival

L.B.P.C. Meeting

Report of the Little Birch Parish Council Annual Meeting held on Wednesday 2nd July.

No interests were declared.

The minutes of the meeting held on the 7th May were read and signed as a true record.

Housing Needs Survey Talk - Herefordshire Council reps, Ms. Hayley Crane and Mr. Nick Cadwallader gave a talk on the Housing Needs Survey that is to be sent out to all households in Little Birch during August and September.

Matters Arising

Village Hall - The notice board has been installed on the outside of the Village Hall. Two meetings have been held by the Village Hall Management Committee and current funding is sought for replacement fire doors. The outside storage container is to be delivered shortly now the ground has dried up. The Communications Committee is still to hold the last meeting to finalise details.

Parish Lane - No further information received.

Railings & posts at the bottom of Crow's Nest Lane - No complaints or further information received.

Financial Report - 3 cheques written and 1 cheque received.

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

Planning

Rosebank, Much Birch - Planning permission granted, for the demolition of existing store and replacement with store/workshop.

Any Other Business

CSO Fiona Witcher reported one crime for the Parish where two vehicles were stolen for scrap purposes. The perpetrators have been arrested and Fiona advised that anyone cold calling for scrap metal must display a licence from Environmental Health. She also informed the Parish Council about the Smartwater scheme with the Parish Council to purchase 4 signs to display around the village.

Correspondence to be sent again to HALC questioning the increased subscription costs.

Cllr Richard Smith announced the next series of PACT meetings.

Date of Next Meeting -
WEDNESDAY 3RD SEPTEMBER

Please contact the Parish Clerk with any issues concerning Little Birch Parish. Contact details are: Liz Callwood 540081 or lizcallwood@tiscali.co.uk

Community groups and Volunteers

My name is Amelia Quinlan and I work for Hereford Voluntary Action as the Outreach Worker covering South Herefordshire and the Golden Valley. I can offer **free** practical support and help to your group on any issue no matter how large or small. Groups I help at the moment include residents' associations, playgroups, youth clubs, local history groups and sports clubs.

For example I can help answer questions about: Finding Funding, Promoting your group, Setting up a new group, Proving a need for your project, Recruiting and keeping volunteers

To find out more please contact me on 07966 501 733 or 01432 343 932 or email Amelia Quinlan at amelia@herefordshireva.org

Much Birch 100 Club Draw

The July Draw took place on 15th July in M.B. Community Hall at 7.30pm.

The winners were:

1. No 1 - Sue & Dave Hall, Yoxall, Staffordshire
2. No 29 - Chris & Peter Dowsett, Little Birch

The August draw took place on Thursday, 7th August in M.B Community Hall at 7.00pm

The winners were:

1. No. 64 - Mrs A. Glorney, Ross-on-Wye
2. No. 33 - Mr. H.M. Watson, Wormelow

The next draw will take place on 11th September at 7.00pm in Much Birch Community Hall.

John Jones, Chairman/Promoter.

Much Birch Flower Festival

The profit realised at the Flower Festival held from 20th to 22nd June was £1,317.02. This amount does not include the collection at the Songs of Praise service.

A Housing Need Survey

IS COMING SOON THROUGH YOUR LETTERBOX!

The Local Authority has a statutory duty to assess housing needs under the Housing Act 1985. The results of the survey will assist in identifying the size and mix of property required.

Don't put your survey in the bin!

A good response will ensure an accurate evaluation of the need for affordable housing in your parish.

Names and addresses of respondents will not be required.

Solar Heating System

Graham and Betty Philpott of Waterloo House, Kings Thorn have had a solar heating system installed. This is supplementary to the existing water and heating system in producing hot water, particularly in the warmer months, although there should be a benefit throughout the year. If anyone wants more information, please give us a ring on 01981 540614.

What is Affordable Housing?

Affordable housing is housing provided for rent or sale, at a price level which can be afforded by local people in housing need, where households are unable to access existing markets.

Herefordshire Council works in partnership with preferred partner Housing Associations (RSL) and private developers to deliver affordable homes in the county. The purpose of Housing Need Surveys is to ascertain if there is a housing need in a particular parish and the Herefordshire Council will, in partnership with RSLs deliver affordable homes to meet that need.

If any affordable housing is built in Little Dewchurch/ Little Birch it will be subject to a Section 106 planning agreement which states that any affordable housing built must be allocated to people with a local connection.

The criteria for Local Connection are:

- Is or in The Past was Normally Resident There and That Residence is or was of His Own Choice – normally resident shall be established by twelve months prior residence in one of the parishes specified in the Section 106
- Is Employed There – employed shall mean in the employment of another not being of a casual nature but shall not exclude part time hours of 16 hours or more
- Family Association – family association shall mean where a person of his household has parents, adult children, brothers, sisters currently residing in one of the parishes specified in the Section 106
- A Proven Need To Give Support Or To Receive Support From Family Members – support shall mean a proven need to provide or receive personal and physical care.
- Because of Special Circumstances – special circumstances shall not normally apply but amount to circumstances which in the view of the council may give rise to local connection.

It is proposed that the Housing Need Study will be posted out to all households within the Parish within the next two

months. The more responses received enables the Research Department to determine a better reflection of the need within the Parish.

For further information please contact the Housing Development Officer Hayley Crane, Tel: 01432 261919 or hcrane@herefordshire.gov.uk.

Neighbourhood Watch

Tax Scam

Please be aware that a scam email has been received by some users today (2nd July) seemingly from the tax office advising them of a tax refund and asking them to click a link to a very authentic looking web page and asking for personal details to verify.

Please do not enter any information into this page under any circumstances - it is definitely a hoax and the tax office has been informed.

Please continue to forward any emails you suspect of being a scam to IT for verification and many thanks to those who alerted us to this problem.

On the crime news front, it has been fairly quiet lately, but thefts of scrap continue.

The theft of two sets of rollers were reported to us from a farm in Kilpeck, and three sets from a farm in Didley - the suspects must have used a lorry with a Hiab crane on the back to lift them. Have you noticed any such vehicles in your area?

Farmers - check that machinery is as secure as you can make it, don't offer these thieves easy pickings!

A large strimmer was stolen from a farm in Much Dewchurch over the past two weeks, however the thieves left the straps behind.

Eight motor vehicles parked on a garage forecourt in Callow had their catalytic converters stolen overnight last night, the total value has been estimated at £12,000.

On 12th August a car and trailer were stolen from just off our patch in Eaton Bishop. A green Mitsubishi L200 4 wheel drive pick-up M282RVJ and an Ifor Williams 12ft trailer were taken from farm buildings between 10.30am and 4.30pm.

A garage adjoining a property in Much Birch was broken into during the past week, a quantity of alcohol was taken - 108 bottles in all! Amongst them were 8 bottles of Jamieson whiskey, and bottles of 'Speckled Hen, Old Peculiar, and Corona' beer. There were also several bottles of wine and champagne, so if you hear of anyone selling off cheap booze, let us know!

Results

You may remember reading about a group of unscrupulous males that did some 'drainage work' at a premises in Green

Crize several months ago. The occupant of the premises is an elderly lady who is almost housebound, and the work they carried out can only be described as appalling. They charged the lady £24,000 for the work, and took four blank, signed cheques.

The cheques were cancelled in time, they have all been recovered and as a result of painstaking enquiries, four males have been questioned and a decision regarding prosecution is awaited.

Also, a few weeks ago we reported the theft of some scrap radiators from Wormbridge, where an alert member of the public had taken the registration of the vehicle concerned. As a result of enquiries in a neighbouring force, a male and a female have been questioned and again, a decision regarding prosecution will be made shortly.

There are a few extra incidents to report and although they are not in our immediate area you may be able to help.

A lorry parked in a lay-by in Allensmore had about 200 litres of diesel stolen whilst the driver was asleep in the cab.

An office in Wormbridge was broken into between 1700 last night and 0800 this morning, an untidy search was made but it is unclear at this stage if anything has been taken.

The yard of an industrial premises in Pontrilas was entered and a quantity of red diesel was taken from a tank. The lock on the gates to the yard was cut off.

Two motorcross bikes were stolen from a shed of a house in Pontrilas, both were blue Yamaha WR450F off road bikes, one was registered - CF55UMB, the other was not registered. Also taken was a pair of white off-road motorcycle boots, and a black and red off road motorcycle suit.

Finally, a catalytic converter was stolen from a van parked in the Grafton area between 3 and 5am.

Our colleagues in Wales have recently arrested two males who were responsible for some drive offs from garages in our area, they were stealing number plates from parked vehicles and displaying them on their vehicle prior to the thefts, but only covered their rear plate - they were traced from the front plate! A decision rests with the CPS regarding charges.

Less Than One A Day

Herefordshire is a safe place - but particularly so in respect of house burglaries. West Mercia Police crime figures show that burglaries of homes in Herefordshire have more than halved over the past four years. In the last year, officers of Herefordshire Division dealt with under 300 such crimes, that is less than one a day - across the whole county!

Chief Superintendent Mark Turner, the Divisional Commander, said, "I am delighted that the efforts of the police in Herefordshire, supported by the community, have most importantly led to a reduction in these serious offences. Where they have occurred, victims can be reassured that we place great emphasis on finding the offender, allocating specialists to each and every offence and employing a wide variety of methods to detect them. Herefordshire IS a safe place - with the help of the people in the county and other partner agencies we aim to keep it that way".

Summer is now upon us and one of the ways that you can help us "keep it that way" is to be aware of the opportunities that the warm weather might present to the potential burglar. When it gets hot, it's natural to open all the windows in the house. An unattended open window can be an open door to the opportunist thief. So be careful which windows you do open. Consider the following:

- ◆ Don't leave windows open at the front if you are in the back garden (and vice versa).
- ◆ Consider getting window stay locks that allow you to open the window a little but lock it in place.
- ◆ Don't leave windows open above flat roofs that you cannot keep an eye on.
- ◆ Don't leave valuables on window sills or near an open window.
- ◆ Report all suspicious activity to the police as soon as possible.

Is house burglary a big problem? **Not in Herefordshire!** Please help us to keep it that way.

Your Chance To Have Your Say

During this month (July), West Mercia Constabulary will be sending out a Crime and Safety Partnership survey, which will ask people across the force area to have their say on how local policing is carried out in their communities. The survey asks people to comment on their own experiences of local policing and reporting crime, how they have been informed of local crime and disorder issues and gives them an opportunity to raise any current local issues that are concerning them.

The results of the survey will be used to improve the policing services we deliver alongside our partner agencies and will focus on local needs and expectations. We need to know what we do well and what we could do better, so please complete the survey form if you receive one in the post. Alternatively, if you don't get one mailed to you, you can complete an on-line version by simply going to www.ors.org.uk/westmercia.

A Sad Farewell

Sgt Robin Davies will be leaving the team at the end of July. He will be taking on new challenges in the role of custody officer at Leominster.

PC Fiona Farrington one of the response officers covering Hereford Rural South has left to become the local police officer at Belmont.

I'm sure that they will both be sadly missed and take this opportunity to thank them both for the valuable contribution they have made to policing Hereford Rural South.

Results

Due to the new format of our Newsbeat, we will no longer be giving lists of crimes committed or all the results as before.

One positive result is the arrest of a male in connection with the theft of several 'scrap' cars on our patch, including those in Little Birch and Wormelow. This was as a result of information received from several witnesses who were able to give good descriptions and supply statements. Thanks to everyone who helped with that one! The male has been bailed while enquiries continue.

ANPR - The New Police Weapon

For several years, police forces across the UK have been developing and investing in ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition) technology. Now Herefordshire Division has acquired its own two ANPR vehicles. The equipment on board can scan numbers in seconds and tell the police crew whether that vehicle is untaxed, uninsured, unregistered or being used by travelling criminals.

The software checks the scanned number against over 100 databases, including those of DVLA, Police National Computer, MIDAS (motor insurers system) and police force throughout the UK - and all within seconds - to identify illegal vehicles or those used by known burglars, drug dealers, disqualified drivers and drink/drivers.

The ANPR team, based at Hereford, has been in operation for just 14 days and the team have already stopped 31 cars for no insurance and seized 22 of those, as well as arrested several for drugs, burglary and 4 for fraud. They have also searched numerous vehicles used by travelling criminals who come into the county to commit crime. At present the team is regularly patrolling the arterial roads into the county (A49, A40, A465 and A438) to send a strong message to travelling criminals that they are not welcome. Such is the effectiveness of ANPR, crews have been kept extremely busy trying to cope with all the work the system generates.

Supt Kevin Purcell, spearheading the ANPR initiative, said, "ANPR is an incredible tool and will make as big an

impact on the police service as fingerprints and DNA have done. I can envisage the time when most, if not all, police vehicles will carry ANPR equipment."

Cash Machine Warning

Be vigilant when using ATM cash machines. At the end of July, Hereford Police recovered card reading devices from three ATM's in the city. The devices, which cover existing panels, read your card as it is put in the slot and a concealed camera records your PIN. The fraudsters remove the panels later and use the info to access your account. To stop them check the ATM before use for unusual panels and cover your hand with your free hand when entering your PIN. Report any suspicions to the police

Figures

Did you know that in the past 5 years, burglary is down 60%, Car crime is down 30%, Total crime is down 15%. Herefordshire is safe, let's keep it that way,

Finally, colleagues at Leominster have brought to our attention a device which has been launched by Business Watch which may help prevent theft of fuel from tanks. It is a wireless transmitter placed inside the screw cap of an oil or petrol tank, and an alarm is triggered if the cap is unscrewed or tampered with. I have to stress that this product has not been endorsed by West Mercia, but if you are interested you can contact Business Watch on 0870 766 3545

Your Officers based at Peterchurch Local Police Officer

PC Andrew Bundy.

Mobile No: 07855 385 844

Email:

andrew.bundy@westmercia.pnn.police.uk

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

Response Policing

PC Roger Bradley

Email:

roger.bradley@westmercia.pnn.police.uk

Hereford Rural South Email

herefordruralsouth.lpt@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

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