

King's Thorn & The Birches Newsletter

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

Gardening Club

This month's meeting will be held on **WEDNESDAY 31ST OCTOBER** at Little Birch Hall and will be a talk on 'Some less usual vegetables'.

On **WEDNESDAY 28TH NOVEMBER** members will hear a talk by Mr M. Bracher, the Head Gardener at Burford House on 'Plants for Picking'. Both meetings start at 7.30pm in Little Birch Village Hall new members are always most welcome.

Much Birch Village Market

The first Much Birch Village Market took place in September and was a great success for both sellers and buyers.

There was a great variety of produce for sale including Herefordshire lamb, beef and pork, fresh fruit and vegetables, cheese, preserves, bread and cakes, and ice-cream from Kelsmore Dairy.

Refreshments were on sale, the proceeds of which went to McMillan Cancer Support.

There were also craft stalls selling a variety of crafts, from cards and jewellery, soap and wooden goods to yarn and knitted goods from a local Alpaca herd...ideal for cold, winter weather and an unusual Christmas present!

The October market takes place on **FRIDAY, 26TH OCTOBER** and the next on **FRIDAY, 23RD NOVEMBER**.

The markets are held in **Much Birch Hall between 2.30pm and 4.30pm**.

Please come along to visit us and support Herefordshire producers.

Whist Drive

Little Birch Village Hall on **TUESDAY 13TH NOVEMBER** 7.30pm start, excellent prizes, new players welcome, refreshments available. Entrance fee £1.50 to include refreshments.

DIARY DATES NOVEMBER 2007

31ST OCTOBER – Gardening Club
13TH NOVEMBER – Whist Drive
15TH NOVEMBER – Country Houses & Gardens in South Herefordshire
16TH NOVEMBER – 'A Crude Awakening' - Little Dewchurch
17TH NOVEMBER – Flicks in the Sticks
23RD NOVEMBER – Village Market
28TH NOVEMBER – Gardening Club
29TH NOVEMBER – Christmas Bingo
30TH NOVEMBER & 1ST DECEMBER – Halfway Community Theatre

ADVANCE NOTICES

5TH DECEMBER – Gardening Club Christmas Social
8TH DECEMBER – Much Birch Craft Fair

Country Houses & Gardens

A talk on **Historic Country Houses and Gardens in South Herefordshire** will be given by David Whitehead who has written books and lectured extensively on this and other subjects. The talk will be on **THURSDAY 15TH NOVEMBER** at 7.30 in Little Birch Village Hall. Entry will be £2.50 to include light refreshments. This talk should be fascinating to anyone interested to find out about some of the local big houses which no longer exist such as Rotherwas and Harewood and also to those interested in gardens and the history of garden design

Inconvenient Truth

Little Birch Parish Council arranged the showing of this award winning film on climate change presented by Al Gore on 11th. October in the village hall. Afterwards a member of the Little Dewchurch parish plan group explained plans being made there to audit and reduce energy use.

On **FRIDAY 16TH NOVEMBER**, as a follow up the film, **A Crude Awakening** on what a future with less energy and oil might be like, will be shown at **Little Dewchurch Village Hall at 7.00pm**.

Flicks in the Sticks

in association with Arts Alive

This month's film will be **FLAGS OF OUR FATHERS (15)** at Much Birch

Hall, on **SATURDAY 17TH NOVEMBER**.

Flags of Our Fathers is a WWII film about a man's quest to learn more about his father, a medical corpsman in WWII at the Battle of Iwo Jima. The battle produced one of World War II's most enduring images: a photograph of five Marines and a Navy Corpsman raising an American flag on the top of Mount Suribachi. Based on the book by the same name and directed by **Clint Eastwood**, it tells the story of how the three surviving flag-raisers were used as propaganda tools by the United States government to lift the morale of the American people and raise money for the war effort.

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... Saturday 15th December – **AMAZING GRACE**

WI

Members of Much Birch WI have enjoyed varied speakers during 2007 including, in September, 'The Alternative Fat Ladies on Flower Arranging' when several beautiful flower arrangements were raffled.

TUESDAY 20TH NOVEMBER is the AGM after which there will be a talk about Fire Safety in the Home given by Ms. Karen Brock from Herefordshire Fire

Service. In December we look forward to the member's Christmas Evening.

Once again Much Birch WI Quiz, held in October, was a great success, with the History Group winning for the second year. We meet on the third Tuesday of each month.

Details of 2008 speakers will appear at a later date.

Christmas Bingo

Little Birch Village Hall on **THURSDAY 29TH NOVEMBER**, eyes down at 8.00pm. Excellent prizes and festive refreshments available.

Halfway Community Theatre

The Halfway Community Theatre is delighted to announce it will be Presenting Gilbert and Sullivan's 'The Mikado' (concert version) on **FRIDAY 30th NOVEMBER** and **SATURDAY 1st DECEMBER** in Much Birch Hall. We begin at 7.00p.m. (not 7.30 this time).

Tickets are £8.00, to include a delicious supper (bring your own wine) and can be booked through Beverley Webb on 01981 540406. Don't miss out on our first ever costumed and colourful extravaganza.

Christmas Social

On **WEDNESDAY 5TH DECEMBER** The Gardening Club will hold their Christmas Social at Little Birch Village Hall. Proceedings will start at 7.30pm. For tickets and further information please see Committee members or contact the Secretary- Helen Fox tel: 01981 541004. This event is open to members and non-members.

Thinking Ahead

The Much Birch Christmas and Craft Fayre is to be held in Much Birch Community Hall on **SATURDAY, 8TH DECEMBER** between 10.30am and 4pm. There will be a variety of Craft stalls and Christmas goods. Tea, coffee and light lunches will be on sale. Hopefully Father Christmas will be making a visit.

Local News

It is possible that soon after this Newsletter is published, BRENDA and JOHN STARTIN will have moved to Walford and before they go, the community would like to thank them most sincerely for all the work they have done and all the support they have given, especially to Little Birch. They moved from London into 'Conifers' some 35 years ago with their 2 sons, Nick and Chris, who attended Much Birch School

and then went on to higher education. Brenda was a teacher at the John Kyrle School in Ross while John was appointed a Senior Social Worker in Hereford. When asked about his work, he sometimes said he dealt with 'the mad, the bad and the sad'. John served on the Parish Council for 30 years and on the Village Hall Committee for some 20 years after the Hall was re-opened in 1977 - a fine record. Brenda sadly suffered a stroke some years ago but together they battled on and happily, Brenda made a pretty good recovery. John meanwhile had a heart attack about a year ago which meant giving up driving; this was a bitter blow. They have therefore taken the wise decision to move to a bungalow on a bus route and we wish them all the very best in their new home. John says that they are not going to abandon Little Birch altogether as there is a bus that comes this way and they wish to keep up with their friends in the area.

Congratulations are extended to JOAN and TIM DILLON, who their Golden Wedding Anniversary on 27th. September, and to HELEN and BOB TOMKINS who celebrated their 'Golden' during the last week of October, and to BILL GIBBONS on the occasion of his 91st. birthday.

SHARON GILLESPIE retired as 'Brown Owl' some 3 months ago and our thanks go to her for all her hard work over the years, leaving the Brownie pack in very good order. The good news is that TONIA PETERS has now taken over with the assistance of KATY HODGES and EMMA REYNOLDS and the Brownies meet every Monday evening at Little Birch Hall. Tonia would welcome anyone else who would like to help her and her colleagues on Monday evenings.

A Service to Celebrate the life of LYNNE BAKER was held on Monday, 15th October at Much Birch Church conducted by the Rev. Kay Garlick and readings were given by members of the family.

Lynne was born in Norfolk and had a sister, Pat. They were educated at the Masonic School in London and Lynne proved to be a fine athlete as well as a very bright pupil. Unfortunately, her athletics career was cut short by a serious foot injury. She completed her education at college where she was found to have a high IQ and finished the top student in the country in the RSA examinations. As a result, she entered the banking profession and held a senior post in Lombard's Bank, which involved travelling the country to pick out potential sites for new branches as well as interviewing potential staff. She was given a free hand to choose a car and being Lynne, selected a Triumph Stag. It's not hard to imagine her driving around

with the top down and her hair flying in the wind! She met and married Roger Baker and they had 2 children, Clive and Victoria. When the children were in their mid teens the marriage unfortunately broke down which badly affected Lynne, and ill health dogged her for the rest of her life. She came to live in Much Birch to be housekeeper to Terry Mock and the family have always been grateful to him for sticking by her in good times and bad. In her good times she was a good debater and in meetings was never afraid to ask pertinent questions which many of us would have avoided. She was well read and her taste in music was very catholic. Her faith in God was absolute even in her dark days when she spent lengthy spells in the Stonebow Unit. The Garlicks and the Dinnens stood by her at times when it could be very frustrating to understand her personality changes which, of course, were part and parcel of her illness. She was a real character and we send to Clive and Victoria and their families and to her sister, Pat, our deepest sympathies. Her body was cremated on Friday 12th October and her ashes were interred at Much Birch on Monday after the service.

Meals on Wheels

At a Meals on Wheels Coffee Morning held at Little Birch Hall, Claire Price from the Hereford Office presented Long Service Certificates to the following helpers. Years of service in brackets:-

Anne Hyde-Smith of Llanwarne - (31+),

Edna Thomas - (29+)

Roger Thomas - (25+),

Betty Bryant - (24+),

Caroline Peill of Orcop - (22+),

Jill Davies of Orcop - (21+),

Gillian Porter - (19+),

John Bryant - (19+),

Fleur Davies of Much Dewchurch - (17+),

Margaret and John Pearl of Much Birch - (13+),

Mary Hill - (13+),

Mary Newman - (13+),

Jean and Dennis Mason - (12+),

Dr's Maureen and Patrick Beauchamp - (10+)

Several of our older deliverers of meals are older than many of the recipients and there comes a time when they feel that they have to retire, so there is always a need for more volunteers to deliver the meals. This involves picking up the insulated meal boxes from WRVS at Rockfield Road near Hereford Railway Station at around 11.10am delivering at the moment in Little Dewchurch, Hoarwithy, Much Dewchurch, Much Birch and Little Birch. Currently, there are 7 meals to deliver and so this means everyone can finish and be back home

between 12.45 and 1pm. By keeping up the number of volunteers, each volunteer is called upon every 10 weeks ie. about 5 times per year.

Normally, 2 people make up a team and so if you feel that you might be interested in this service to the community, please contact either Roger Thomas (540736) or Mary Newman (540671) or John Bryant (540316) and they would be pleased to give more details or answer any questions. On the other hand, if you know of anyone who might find it useful to receive Meals on Wheels even if only for a short time, please give their names to one of the organisers named above. Meals are delivered on Wednesdays and Fridays.

Horticultural Show

On **Saturday 1st September** Kings Thorn and Little Birch Gardening Club held their Annual Horticultural Show. Despite a poor summer competitors used all their skills and know-how to produce an abundance of produce to support the event. This year there was a record entry in the Children's sections resulting in keen competition in all the categories.

The winners of the competitions were:

The Llewellyn Sutton Cup for the person or family with the most points overall - **The Hodges Family**

The David Enoch Cup for best exhibit in show - **Owen Davies**

Horticultural Shield - **Des Wathen**

Rose Bowl - **Des Wathen**

Floral Art Shield - **Margaret Pearl**

Domestic Cup - **Robyn Hodges**

Children's Shield - **Heather Anderson**

Thanks to all the organising committee and everyone who attended and who made the show such a success.

Little Birch on Aconbury Hill A history of the parish and its people

Copies of this fascinating book are still available for those of you who missed out last year and for that Christmas present for friends and family who know the area and maybe, now, are far away. Copies can be obtained from John Bryant, Mike Morley or Alison Clarke (01981 540791). They can also be obtained at the Castle Inn and from local booksellers. Price is £10.

Much Birch 100 Club Draw

The **October** draw took place on Friday, 12th October in Much Birch Community Hall at 10.15am

The winners were:

1. No. 26

Mr J.B. Willis, Much Birch

2. No. 33

Mrs P.M. Paige, Kings Thorn

John Jones, *Chairman/Promoter*

Fern Gwinnett

Many of you have supported Fern in her fundraising towards the Expedition to Borneo and have asked how it all went. Fern has had a particularly busy summer. After finishing her GCSE exams she set off (on the wettest of wet July weekends) for Borneo. One member of the group was unable to get through the floods to join the party and the journey to Heathrow was eventful with floods deep enough to get into the luggage compartment of the coach and a U turn being necessary on a flooded dual carriage way. The expedition part of the trip involved exploring a tropical valley called Danum Valley where they encountered leeches in embarrassing places, showered in rain storms and had to sleep in a tropical storm.

The group were also involved with aspects of conservation and gained a deep insight into the problems of deforestation for logging and palm oil plantations. They visited the Sepilok Orangutan sanctuary and were also lucky enough to see these amazing creatures in the wild.

The main part of the expedition was working with a very remote village who have been badly affected by deforestation and they have no resources to make basic progress. The group split into two, some of them helping to rebuild a bridge which was the only way into and out of this isolated community and the others (Fern's group) helped to install a water supply and a public bath for the mothers to collect water and wash their children. Fern learned many new skills including building block walls and concreting. She worked with the locals and visited their homes which was a real privilege. The experience was fantastic and Fern would like to thank all of you who helped her along the way and enabled her to take part.

Upon her return Fern had to quickly prepare for her next major adventure. Many of you know that Fern was one of two British students selected by United World Colleges to spend two years studying at the Mahindra United World College of India which is 40 miles from Pune. Fern has now been in India for 6 weeks and has already had some amazing experiences. Although she has been quite unwell for over month she has already been on hikes, climbed a mountain, spent a weekend in Bombay (Mumbai), visited the Ellora and Ajanta caves and 'the poor mans Taj Mahal', which are all spectacular cultural sights. However, it's definitely not a holiday. The academic study is intense and demanding, with all of the students being very intelligent. The competition is stiff and Fern is finding that many students from other countries have studied the subjects at greater depth than we do. She is learning Hindi so that she can communicate with the locals when she does her community and charity work.

Fern has to share a room with three other students, all of whom are from different continents. This is quite a challenge for someone who has always had their own bedroom. The students at the college are from all over the world all contributing their cultural differences to college life. In addition to the subjects that Fern has to take for the

International Baccalaureate (A level equivalent) she also has to study global issues and this is India, which keeps them up to date on Indian issues and culture.

The college campus is built on a mountain side with far reaching spectacular views. They are restoring the tropical rain forest that once existed where the college stands and there is a large nature reserve within the campus. One of the unusual aspects of living there is the snakes. There are 9 species of snake on campus including deadly Cobras and Vipers so students have to be informed of what to do if the worst should happen.

Thank you to all of you who continue to be interested in Fern's adventures. She will be looking for a job next summer from June – August to help out with her costs so if any of you have any ideas let us know.

Neighbourhood Watch Safety

On a safety note, the nights are starting to draw in and for those who walk or cycle in the area it is time to check whether you are safe on the roads.

Cyclists.

- At night you must have front and rear lights lit. The cycle must also be fitted with a red rear reflector and amber pedal reflectors. White front reflectors and wheel reflectors will also help.
- Light coloured and reflective clothing should also be worn. Reflective belts, arm and ankle bands are also suggested.

Pedestrians.

- Avoid walking with your back to the traffic.
- Wear or carry something light or reflective.

For more information refer to the Highway Code.

As mentioned in last month's newsletter simple precautions can be taken to reduce the chances of being a victim of car crime.



We are still able to offer laminated copies of the above notice with red writing on a very bright yellow background that, if left visibly on display in your car, may prevent you being a victim of a car crime. For copies of the notice please contact your local policing team.

Secure Your Fertiliser

A 'Secure Your Fertiliser' website aimed at the farming and growing community has been launched by the National Counter Terrorism Security Office (NaCTSO). For many years terrorist groups have misused fertilisers to

make explosive devices and this new website offers practical, cost-effective advice about how to keep supplies of fertiliser secure.

For more information visit www.secureyourfertiliser.gov.uk

If you have information relating to *Halloween* Copies of a poster indicating that **Trick or Treat visits are not welcome** can also be obtained from your local policing team for Halloween. Please obtain one if you want to deter callers.

fertiliser misuse or crime in your area, you can report it to West Mercia Constabulary on 08457 444 888.

East

JOHN BULBECK - 540178

Central

BOB PETERS - 540670

West

BETTY PHILPOTT - 540614

Bus Timetable

See next page.

Items/Copy

CHANGE OF DATE

PLEASE NOTE

Please may I have items for the **DECEMBER** issue via post to

Mrs. S.E. Mathews, Folly Cottage, Little Birch, HR2 8BD; or left in the post box at 'Bramleys' or by email attachment in Word format to:

sarah.mathews@tiscali.co.uk by

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15TH NOVEMBER

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NEED SOME HELP?

Strong, trustworthy gentleman available immediately for all types of work : gardening, labouring, cleaning, shopping, painting, rubbish clearance and odd jobs.

NO JOB TOO SMALL.

References available

Call Mark on 01981

540225

Or Mob: 07812842141

ENVIRONMENTAL INTERIORS

Need a Decorator and want to be environmentally friendly?
Not sure about colours?

We may be the ladies for you. Together we can come up with ideas, using colour charts from eco-friendly paint suppliers.

As well as decorating we can add the finishing touches, making curtains and cushion covers to order.

Photos of previous work available.

Initial consultation **Free**

Tel: Christine Murphy

01989 730496