

# The Birches

## Community Matters Newsletter

Kingsthorpe, Much Birch, Little Birch,  
Aconbury & Wormelow December 2022



## Carols at The Tump

Wednesday 21 December 2022

6:30 pm

Come and join us for some festive carol singing  
outside The Tump Inn, Wormelow

For more information contact Lydia  
on 01981 540323 or socialfabric@hotmail.com



## CHRISTMAS MARKET

MUCH BIRCH COMMUNITY HALL

Friday, 9<sup>th</sup> December 2 until 4.30pm.

Jams, cards, fruit juices, meats, pies,  
cakes etc

Come and join us

If you would like to book a table contact  
John or Sylvia Jones on 01981 540980

## Christmas Services p11



## Christmas Prize Bingo



LITTLE BIRCH VILLAGE HALL  
FRIDAY 16TH DECEMBER  
EYES DOWN AT 7:30PM

Fun for the whole family  
Refreshments available



## Little Birch

## Mini Christmas Fayre

Saturday 3rd December 2-4pm

Little Birch Village Hall

Tombola, raffle, lucky dip,

refreshments including mince pies

The Elves have confirmed

Father Christmas will be there from 2.30

Come and have fun –donations of refreshments welcome



Remembrance  
Service at the  
Millenium Green  
War Memorial  
in Wormelow.  
See page 3





## Little Birch Parish Footpath Officer

After 5 years of exceptional, dedicated service as Footpath Officer, Angela Middleton has decided to retire. The Parish Council would like to take this opportunity to thank Angela publicly for her outstanding work on behalf of the parish.

As a consequence, there is now a vacancy for the above unpaid post. Should you be interested then Angela has agreed to discuss the role with any prospective candidate. Moreover, she is happy to share her knowledge, experience and resources with whoever eventually accepts the above position.

She can be contacted via Mr Neil Barrington on [lbpcclerk@gmail.com](mailto:lbpcclerk@gmail.com)

**Photo: Angela has led many parish walks in and around the Birches**

**Don't miss out.. Get your PANTO TICKETS Now!  
Watch your favourite village actors in  
**Sleeping Beauty****



**Friday 20th January curtain up at 7:30**

**Saturday 21st Matinee curtain up at 2pm**

**Evening performance at 7:30pm**

**Adults £8.00 Children under 12 £5  
Little Birch Village Hall**

**Ring Geoff and Julie for tickets on 01981 541080**

arts  
alive

FLICKS  
IN THE  
STICKS

at Much Birch  
Community Hall

**Friday 9 December - ELVIS 12**

ELVIS is Oscar-nominated filmmaker Baz Luhrmann's musical drama about the life and music of Elvis Presley, seen through the prism of his complicated relationship with his enigmatic manager, Colonel Tom Parker. The story delves into the complex dynamic between Presley and Parker spanning over 20 years, from Presley's rise to fame to his unprecedented stardom, against the backdrop of the evolving cultural landscape and loss of innocence in America. Central to that journey is one of the most significant and influential people in Elvis's life, Priscilla Presley.

**Tickets £5 (£4 under 16s)**

*Please note new prices from September 2022*

**Refreshments including hot dogs available from 7pm**

**Thursday 26 January - TOP GUN MAVERICK 12A**

After more than thirty years of service as one of the Navy's top aviators, Pete "Maverick" Mitchell is where he belongs, pushing the envelope as a courageous test pilot and dodging the advancement in rank that would ground him. Training a detachment of graduates for a special assignment, Maverick must confront the ghosts of his past and his deepest fears, culminating in a mission that demands the ultimate sacrifice from those who choose to fly it.

*Tickets available in advance or on the door (cash or card payments accepted)- for further info or to book tickets please email [muchbirchflicks@hotmail.com](mailto:muchbirchflicks@hotmail.com) or call 01981 540097*

*For further information about films and screenings visit [www.artsalive.co.uk](http://www.artsalive.co.uk)*

FLICKS IN THE STICKS

FLICKS IN THE STICKS

## Coffee Morning with Book Exchange

**Thursday 1st & Saturday 17th December**

**10.00am - 12.00 noon**

**Little Birch Village Hall**



Come and enjoy a cup of tea or coffee, some cake or biscuits. Make new friends or catch up with old friends. Take a book, leave a book, or both. Exchange recommendations for a good read. Families & well behaved dogs welcome.

*look forward to seeing you*

## Bulbs for Remembrance



The weather was kind to the group assembled on the Millenium Green in Wormelow for the Service of Remembrance. Some people had travelled long distances to pay their respects by laying a wreath. For Rosemary Rigby, founder of the Violette Zsabo Museum, remembrance is especially important, honouring the bravery of all war heroes including Violette who was captured while working for the French resistance.

The children from Year 6 at Much Birch School joined Rosemary and Reverend Mark Johnson for the Service. The children had been studying the World Wars and had each written a poem that they read during the service. Their words were inspiring and thoughtful.

### **Bulb Planting**

Rosemary is asking for bulbs to be planted on the Millenium Green and would be delighted to receive any bulbs and offers of help with planting them.

If you would like to donate some bulbs and or help with planting contact her on 01981 540477



## Hope Spring eCards

Anniversaries Birthdays Christmas  
Easter Father's Day Mother's Day  
New Year Valentine's Day

Send greetings for any occasion online  
**INSTANTLY!**

[www.HopeSpringCards.co.uk](http://www.HopeSpringCards.co.uk)

## Christmas Whist

7:30pm on Tuesday 13th December  
Little Birch Village Hall



Much Birch Community Hall

Much Birch Community Hall has a new website!  
Check it out here for information about booking  
the hall and more -

[www.muchbirchcommunityhall.org](http://www.muchbirchcommunityhall.org)

*Join us at the*

**Community Café**  
**@ Much Birch Community Hall**

**Saturday 10 December**

**10:00 - 12:30**

and every 2nd Saturday of the month

**14 January**

**11 February**

**11 March**

For more information or if you are in need of  
transport contact Lydia on 01981 540323 or  
[socialfabric@hotmail.com](mailto:socialfabric@hotmail.com)



*A local group who want to bring people together,  
strengthen community links and provide relaxed and fun  
events for all ages.*

## Trip to Aberaeron October by Eric Joseph

Its coming to the end of October and I am restless. We must get some time away before winter sets in. A few weeks ago we had a great time in Ambleside with our friends, Eileen and Dave. This time we decide choose a nice cottage close to Aberaeron. Sleeps six, sea view, two beds and baths, ideal.

Set off on Monday 31 October weather with overcast sky. After Kington and Rhayader sun peeps out from the cloud. Eileen is interested in the trip because we travel through the country where Doe used to live. We truly live in a fantastic country - amazing scenery. Elan Village for lunch - sun comes out, lighting up the beautiful autumn colours. We're amazed at how low the reservoirs are—need loads of rain to fill this by spring. Get to Hafod around four, really nice bungalow .

**Tuesday 7324steps** First day so we stay local. Drove 3 miles to National Trust place at Llanerchaeron—wet and miserable and closed till Thursday so we drive south to Llangranog where my mother was born. Still miserable weather! We try Newquay, not much better, but had a coffee in the PenWig. This used to be a smart hotel. Now it's a fast food place. Eileen cooked tonight which was nice.

**Wednesday 7825 steps** A tour around today, started at Tregaron Marshes, at least it is dry but very strong wind - walked on the duck boards, couldn't find the sundews that were here last year. On to Strata Florida Abbey, once again the rain caught us up! We drive beyond Devils Bridge up to Nant Y Moch reservoir, white roads, very little traffic, fab drive. Weather improved slightly, probably ten miles till we find white lines in the road at Talybont. Back to Aberystwyth, howling gale, rain in buckets, gigantic waves breaking over the road. I have never seen the sea this wild, did see a few starlings but I doubt if they'd have roosted under the pier tonight. My turn to cook, pork chops in orange sauce.

**Thursday 8643 steps** Clear blue skies, back to Llanerchaeron where we spent a good few hours. It's NT, we are members, so it's free - walked the lake, lovely reflections, then the gardens and around the old farm yard buildings and machinery, then to the house, very informative guide, really very interesting history. The cafe was open, three bacon butties, a cake, three Latte and one tea kept us full till tonight. Drove to Lampeter, then on to Talley abbey, a very interesting place. Because of a massive feud between the White monks and the Cistercians the Abbey was never finished. Off over Brechfa via Llansawel and down to Llandysul where Mum met Dad all those years ago. Blue skies turned to rain and wind. Fish & chips at Aberaeron tonight.

**Friday 10796 steps** First I must find an optician to replace a screw in my glasses -twenty minutes of fiddling and being told the screw that came with it did not fit, so I picked up my glasses and went to another optician who put it right in about a minute. On to Teifi Marshes, fab snack first, then a couple of hours walk. The weather is really good - no rain, no wind and its quite warm. Then on to Cenarth waterfalls - the river in flood after months of no rain, so it was spectacular. We had an ice cream then back home via Newcastle Emlyn. The girls cooked tonight, a fry up.

**Saturday 4286 steps** probably the longest driving day, bad forecast but this morning looked better. the plan was to drive to Machynlleth, Mallwyd, Dinas Mawddwy and on a white road over the highest pass in Wales, Bwlch y Groes, then down to Llanuwchllyn on to another white road to Bronaber, Dolgellau, the Talyllyn lake and Tyn y Cornel, hotel where Doe and I planted over a 1000 heathers for a chap I used to work for ( it has been sold quite awhile ago), then down to Tywyn and home.

The day started well, with some sun but gradually turned to wind and rain. From Machynlleth on A70 we looked for a small shop or woollen mill we knew - lots of Welsh crafts and a nice cafe. Weather so bad we can only see a third of Wales the other two thirds are in the cloud, so, we head for Tyn y Cornell ( the hotel set in the corner of Lake Tal Y Llyn ). I have fed fish in this lake like sharks, but today, the lake is overflowing, the hotel is busy, the heathers that Doe and I planted all those years ago are overgrown with birch trees and bramble and to cap it all it's monsoon weather, so off to Tywyn, the first time this week we set foot on sand. The rain has stopped, thank goodness.

**Sunday Sunny!** If only we had done yesterday's trip today. We stroll around Aberaeron, a quaint place, with houses painted in pastel shades. Coffee at our little cafe in the main street ( oops, there *is* only one street) then the rain came back with a vengeance, so played Rhumikub all afternoon, Doe and I cooked the final meal, Chicken.

**Monday** Final day. It has been a lovely place if only there was a decent shower that gave more than a trickle! Our route home is via Tregaron and over the mountain to Abergwesin, Beulah, Builth, quite straightforward. The road is single track , mostly open hill, it's so beautiful with autumn colours, What a journey, up hill and down dale with only one road off down to the Llynbrianne reservoir and Llandovery. A fantastic trip, must do this in the spring when all the oak woods would be full of bluebells.



## Jobs to do in the garden during December

Last Autumn was mild but this year it has been even warmer. Leaves had started to fall from the trees because of the drought but then the rain arrived and those that had not fallen seem to be hanging on waiting for a frost. The rain that has fallen has swollen my carrots, beetroot and parsnips which a few weeks ago were very slender specimens. It is said that nature evens things out and this appears to be the case.

It looks like the lawns will need a trim before Christmas. We have managed to do a number of tidying up jobs during this warm period, some of which are long overdue.

### What can we do in December?

- \*In mild dry weather, and only if necessary, cut the lawn with blades high, leaving 35 – 50 mm of grass.
- \*Dahlias and Agapanthus left in the ground to overwinter will need a thick mulch of compost and/or chipped bark.
- \*Move Orchids to an East facing window. Other indoor plants benefit from being in a lighter position but away from radiators.
- \*Tender potted plants need to be in a greenhouse or shed now.
- \*If not already done bubble wrap the inside of the greenhouse at the beginning of the month.
- \*Prune climbing roses.
- \*Protect Figs with fleece.
- \*Garlic can still be planted.
- \*Vent the greenhouse on warmer days to reduce condensation.
- \*Rhubarb can be split. Leave the crowns on the surface so that they get frosted and then plant out in early Spring.
- \*Plant blueberries into large tubs containing ericaceous compost and drainage material. Blueberries need a ph of around 4.5.
- \*Prune blackcurrants removing one third of branches at base.
- \*Salad crops can be sown in a greenhouse but will be slow growing due to the low light levels. Watch out for slugs.
- \*Check stored potatoes and apples. Dispose of rotten potatoes and put rotting apples out for the birds.
- \*Put out a variety of food for birds – seeds, fat balls, stale cheese and pieces of apple and pears.
- \*If you have nest boxes, clean out any previous nests or thatch and put a small amount of hay, straw or wood shavings in the bottom before securely re-hanging them.

Derek Scrivens

## Christmas Lights

When we envisage festive lights  
We think of those on Christmas trees  
That twinkle in amidst the tinsel  
And the chocolate novelties.

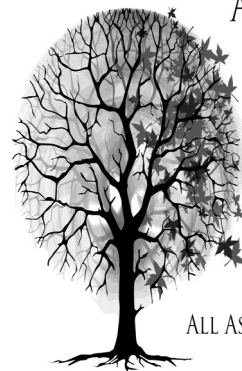
Or those along a village street,  
In bright-lit windows and above,  
That always look so magical –  
A part of Christmas we all love.

A shimmering suburban semi's  
Something we see more and more;  
Even a modest bungalow  
Ablaze like a department store!

The flickering of candlelight's  
A warm glow welcome anywhere:  
There on a neighbour's windowsill  
For everybody else to share.

But there's another Christmas light  
Far greater than the rest of them -  
The brightly shining star that led  
The Three Wise Men to Bethlehem.

Charlotte McBee



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### **The Winter Garden's 12 days of Christmas**

On the first day of Christmas my garden gave to me  
some mistletoe from our pear tree

On the second day of Christmas my garden gave to me  
Two muntjac deer and  
some mistletoe from our pear tree

On the third day of Christmas my garden gave to me  
Three cock pheasants  
Two muntjac deer and  
some mistletoe from our pear tree

On the fourth day of Christmas my garden gave to me  
Four heads of broccoli  
Three cock pheasants  
Two muntjac deer, and  
some mistletoe from our pear tree

On the fifth day of Christmas my garden gave to me  
Five roses red  
Four heads of broccoli  
Three cock pheasants  
Two muntjac deer and  
some mistletoe from our pear tree

On the sixth day of Christmas my garden gave to me  
Six sprigs of holly  
Five roses red  
Four heads of broccoli  
Three cock pheasants  
Two muntjac deer and  
some mistletoe from our pear tree

On the seventh day of Christmas my garden gave to me  
Seven tits a pecking  
Six sprigs of holly  
Five roses red  
Four heads of broccoli  
Three cock pheasants  
Two muntjac deer and  
some mistletoe from our pear tree

On the eighth day of Christmas my garden gave to me  
Eight trails of ivy  
Seven tits a pecking  
Six sprigs of holly  
Five roses red  
Four heads of broccoli  
Three cock pheasants  
Two muntjac deer and  
some mistletoe from our pear tree

On the ninth day of Christmas my garden gave to me  
Nine ravens croaking  
Eight trails of ivy  
Seven tits a pecking  
Six sprigs of holly  
Five roses red  
Four heads of broccoli  
Three cock pheasants  
Two muntjac deer and  
Some mistletoe from our pear tree

On the tenth day of Christmas my garden gave to me  
Ten leeks a growing  
Nine ravens croaking  
Eight trails of ivy  
Seven tits a pecking  
Six sprigs of holly  
Five roses red  
Four heads of broccoli  
Three cock pheasants  
Two muntjac deer and  
some mistletoe from our pear tree

On the eleventh day of Christmas my garden gave to me  
Eleven sprouts for picking  
Ten leeks a growing  
Nine ravens croaking  
Eight trails of ivy  
Seven tits a pecking  
Six sprigs of holly  
Five roses red  
Four heads of broccoli  
Three cock pheasants  
Two muntjac deer and  
some mistletoe from our pear tree

On the twelfth day of Christmas my garden gave to me  
Twelve finches golden  
Eleven sprouts for picking  
Ten leeks a growing  
Nine ravens croaking  
Eight trails of ivy  
Seven tits a pecking  
Six sprigs of holly  
Five roses red  
Four heads of broccoli  
Three cock pheasants  
Two muntjac deer and  
some mistletoe from our pear tree

*Devised from the joy my garden gives me  
both in produce and visitors*

# DECOR SOLUTIONS

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[richard@teaandtech.co.uk](mailto:richard@teaandtech.co.uk)

07739953864

I'm Richard, and I offer IT tech support around rural Hereford. I have 25 years' experience of working within technology, supporting a vast range of people, from technophobes to technogeeks!

I aim to specifically support the more senior users within our community, who often appreciate a completely different approach. I won't burden anyone with jargon and will offer only gentle and compassionate support. This can help the user feel more comfortable with tackling technology and lead to a growing confidence. Sometimes, the tech issue might be the initial reason for contact and all that's really required is someone to sit patiently and share a cuppa. I can do that too, I'm a great listener!

I can support you with many problems (here's a sample):

- General tips and advice
- Fault finding
- Software support
- New PC Installation / Setup
- Virus & Malware Removal
- Email Troubleshooting & Setup
- Broadband Internet & Router Setup
- Wi-Fi Range Issues
- Software Installation
- Windows Reinstall / Refresh
- Slow Computer Clean-up
- Printer Installation / Troubleshooting
- Backup Advice & Solutions
- Solid State Drive (SSD) Upgrades
- Data Recovery
- Laptop Battery Replacement
- PC & Laptop Upgrades & Advice

If you need a friendly chat over a cuppa, while I sort out your IT issues, please get in touch using the info above.

# PILETES

with Alison Allan

**Mondays 10.00 am - Intermediate level**

**11.15 am - Senior Citizens**

**Wednesdays 9.30 am - Beginner level**

**7.00 pm - Intermediate level**

**Little Dewchurch - Village Hall**

**Little Dewchurch - Village Hall**

**Holme Lacy - Village Hall**

**Little Dewchurch - Village Hall**

**Individual sessions, by appointment, at The Studio, Little Dewchurch**

**Pre-booking essential; limit**

**[Alisonpilates2016@gmail.com](mailto:Alisonpilates2016@gmail.com)**

**01432 840491**

**07947 011707**

**[Facebook.com/PilateswithAlisonA](https://www.facebook.com/PilateswithAlisonA)**



**MUCH BIRCH PARISH MEETING**

At the Parish Council Meeting held in the Much Birch Community Hall on the 10<sup>th</sup> November 2022 the Parish Council discussed and agreed the precept request for 2023 – 2024. It was resolved that there would be no increase in the precept, and the amount would remain as in 2022–2023. The Parish Council heard an update on the budget negotiations for the Herefordshire Council.

The Ward Councillor explained about the revenue budget and capital budget and how different grants were applied for to be used on specified projects.

There was a discussion about speeding and the Community Speed Watch initiative progress would be followed up.

The next ordinary Parish Council Meeting of the Much Birch Parish Council, will be held on **Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2022 from 7.30pm** at the Much Birch Community Hall. All are welcome to attend.

Please see notice boards and website for agendas. As always the public and press are more than welcome to attend the meeting and will have the opportunity to speak directly to their representatives.

**Much Birch Parish Councillors**

**Cllr Alison Cook** (Chair) Jasmine Cottage, Wrigglebrook Lane, Kingsthorpe, HR2 8AW, [thecooks@wyenet.co.uk](mailto:thecooks@wyenet.co.uk) 01981 540703; **Cllr Andrew Crum** Anfield House, Barrack Hill, Kingsthorpe HR2 8AX, [a.crum@btinternet.com](mailto:a.crum@btinternet.com) 01981 540002;

**Cllr Roisin Burge** The Old Hall, Barrack Hill, Little Birch HR2 8AX [roisinburge@hotmail.com](mailto:roisinburge@hotmail.com) 01981 540724;

**Cllr David Baldwin** Perry House, Much Birch, HR2 8HS [baldwin79@btinternet.com](mailto:baldwin79@btinternet.com) 01981 541198;

**Cllr Chris Pickering-Grey** 4 Court Farm Barns, Much Birch HR28HT [chris@pickering-grey.uk](mailto:chris@pickering-grey.uk) 07712 813218;

**Cllr Joseph Goldsmith** Quantock House, Hollybush Lane, Much Birch, HR2 8HX

[josephagoldsmith@hotmail.com](mailto:josephagoldsmith@hotmail.com) 07967 728590

Much Birch Footpath Officer David Irwin

[david.irwin13@btinternet.com](mailto:david.irwin13@btinternet.com)

**Parish Clerk Mrs Alison Wright** Longfield House Gooses Foot, Kingstone HR2 9NE

[muchbirchclerk@gmail.com](mailto:muchbirchclerk@gmail.com) 01981 250860 Minutes of the meetings and information are on the Parish Council website following the link.

[www.muchbirchparish.org.uk](http://www.muchbirchparish.org.uk). You can also find us on

Twitter at <https://twitter.com/MuchBirchPC> and

Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/>



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**Little Birch Parish Councillors**

**Cllr Kate Dillon, Cllr Michael Davies,**

**Cllr Kate Robbins, Cllr Chris Atkinson,**

**Neil Barrington Clerk [lbpcclerk@gmail.com](mailto:lbpcclerk@gmail.com)**

**website [www.littlebirchparishcouncil.org](http://www.littlebirchparishcouncil.org)**

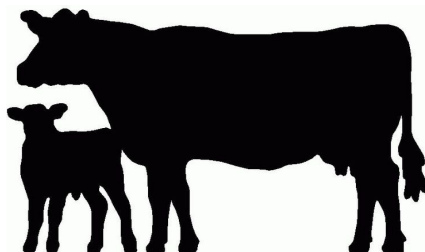


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Merrivale Farm Little Birch  
Hereford HR2 8BA**



Items for January newsletter to  
[editorial@birchesnews.org.uk](mailto:editorial@birchesnews.org.uk) or paper  
copy to Elisabeth Taylor 07854 629193 by  
**14th December**

## **Ping's Hairdressing & Barbers**



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## **LITTLE BIRCH VILLAGE HALL DRAMA GROUP**



Now that the  
Covid restrictions have been lifted, the  
committee are actively searching for any  
established or new residents that would be  
interested in joining a team of enthusiastic  
people to assist in putting on theatrical  
events.

We are looking for ALL disciplines – Actors,  
behind the scenes personnel, technical  
assistants, set builders, front of house,  
wardrobe, prompts, Directors and writers.

If you would like further information please  
contact either Jane Bolam (07508 345879),  
Bob Barnett (07890 206201) or David  
Baldwin (07768 150150)

## Limericks

I'm appearing in panto this year,  
Though the part I'll be given's not clear;  
I am game for the Dame  
Or the Prince (whatsisname),  
Or the pantomime horse, front or rear.

The humble limerick is one of our most popular verse forms—five rhyming lines following a simple AABBA pattern. Limericks are either in or, as seems to be the case at the moment, out of fashion.

High time then that they enjoyed a renewal in popularity. And why shouldn't that begin here in The Birches, and beyond?

Lets collect enough new, particularly clever or funny (or both) limericks and put them together in a little book that might ultimately be sold for a deserving local cause or causes - and to inspire others.

Anybody any age can write a limerick if they put their mind to it. So why not have a go. And send something in to the newsletter. Watch out for an update of how things are going.in the next issue.

## LUKE ATKINSON PHOTOGRAPHY

**I AM A PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHER AND VIDEOGRAPHER BASED IN HEREFORDSHIRE.**

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## Tiddlers, Toddlers & StoryTellers

@Much Birch Community Hall

A parent, child, and community group  
- All are welcome!

Early years, SEND, and foster care experience available.  
Trained breastfeeding support.

Every Friday 9:30-11:30

Free play, interest tables, optional music and movement session, crafts and activities for all ages!

Contact: 07762518925  
tiddlersandtoddlersmuchbirch@gmail.com

£1 per  
person

Facebook: Tiddlers, Toddlers, and Story Tellers - Much Birch



Did you know—I did not—that mistletoe is the county flower of Herefordshire?



## The Birches Car Club

COMMUNITY CAR SHARE  
IN ASSOCIATION WITH MALVERN HILLS CAR CLUBS

Helpline 07706 365018  
contact@thebirchescarclub.co.uk  
malvern-hills-carclubs.org.uk

## From Revd Mark

Why do atheists celebrate Christmas? It is a question I have pondered from time to time. As a Christian, it is obvious why I celebrate the festival but why do atheists? Surely, they would be less hypocritical if they could find something around that time of the year to celebrate.

For example, on 25<sup>th</sup> December in 1066, William 1<sup>st</sup> was crowned King of England. This was the last time England was successfully invaded! Or how about 1492 – on Christmas Day Christopher Columbus’ flag ship, the Santa Maria, ran aground on the north coast of Hispaniola. Or Christiaan Huygens, astronomer and after whom the spacecraft that went to Titan in 2005 was named, who created the first pendulum clock.

Each of these could have a wonderful celebration! For the crowning of William, we could eat items from the coronation feast! No turkey, obviously, but duck, chicken, beef, pork etc. No potatoes but you could have pigs in blankets! For the sinking of the Santa Maria, we could have ships biscuits, and food from the Caribbean, such as papaya and bananas. And, for the invention of the pendulum clock, what better than After Eights!



Ok, this is not entirely serious. But if we are to take Christmas seriously, then let us at least do it honestly and admit that we don’t actually know the date of Jesus’ birth and we did take an existing Roman or Pagan festival and make it Christian. Lets enjoy the food and the company and everything else that goes with it, also remembering the reason for the season.

**Wishing you all a happy and blessed Christmas**

## Services in December

4th -2nd Sunday+ Advent	9.15am	Llandinabo	Matins
	9.15am	Much Dewchurch	Holy Communion
	11am	Dewsall	Holy Communion
	11am	Little Birch	Holy Communion
11th -3rd Sunday Advent	9.15am	Much Birch	Family Communion
	9.15am	Much Dewchurch	Morning Worship
	11am	Little Birch	Morning Worship
	4pm	Little Dewchurch	Carols for Christmas
17th Saturday	4pm	Much Dewchurch	Christingle
18th - 4th Sunday Advent	4pm	Little Birch	Carols and Christingle
20th Tuesday	6pm	Dinedor	Carol Service
21st Wednesday	6.30pm	Dewsall	Carol Service
24th Christmas Eve	3pm	Much Birch	Crib Service
	5pm	Llanwarne	Christingle and Carols
	11.30pm	Dewsall	Midnight Mass
25th Christmas Day	9.15am	Much Dewchurch	Holy Communion
	11am	Little Birch	Holy Communion
	11am	Little Dewchurch	Holy Communion



## Art and Craft Space Christmas Craft Sessions

**Little Birch Village Hall 2 until 4-30. £3.**

Thursday 1st December will be Christmas cards and decorations. Janet Gwinnett will lead a wreath making session on Thursday 15th December. Cost £10. Numbers limited to 12 so please let me know if you want to come. Materials provided. Bring scissors or secateurs.

To find out more contact Sally,  
sally.nichol@btinternet.com  
or call 07803 032928 or 01981 540001.

## The Masons at Merrivale

I last wrote an entry for the newsletter in mid April. My last line was 'Lets enjoy the lovely weather while it's here and hope it continues for some time'. Well, well. Who is it that says be careful what you wish for?

I look at Merrivale now, with it's lush green grass. What a comparison to the brown green fields of the summer. The drought has had a huge impact on the farm. We managed to take our first silage cut on 10<sup>th</sup> May which produced a lovely crop of high quality food. We also made hay, something we seldom do, but with the hot weather guaranteed it was an obvious choice and meant we could avoid the cost and need of plastic bale & wrap.

We scraped three more silage cuts producing nowhere near our usual quantities. We did however, make a big pit full of whole crop silage and amazingly the fodder beet survived the drought well enough to produce a good crop. Two cuts of silage have been used up to feed the

cattle during the summer as there was no grass and we are now buying in hay to eke out our food supplies until, we hope, an early spring. The cows always went out every day during the summer to pick away at any grass there. The main decision was to find them paddocks with plenty of shade when it was so hot. We could then send them out at night to paddocks without any. They were given plenty of food inside during this time while they waited to be milked.

Having taken on some extra ground last year, we have also had a crop of wheat which is still in store on the farm waiting to be sold. We can't use it ourselves for feed as the land is in it's first year of organic conversion. It takes two years before the ground can be certified as organic. During that time the effect of any previous artificial fertiliser or pesticides will be lost.

The Milk Hut has been busy throughout the summer and is proving to be a great success. Bob & I somehow managed to keep the veg side going during the drought, mainly due to lots of watering when planting, hot work in the sun.

Meeting the folks who visit the hut is a delight. Their enthusiasm & support is a great positive for the family. We are slowly adding to products on offer as you will see from our social media pages and I don't think we can add too much more now with the space that we have. We are hoping to put a coffee machine in, which we think will be popular but that is for the future.

The big aim on the farm for the future is to reduce our carbon footprint and emissions. This will involve covering our slurry lagoon, applying the slurry on the land with new equipment and feeding the cows to produce less methane.

Lots of experimental work is being undertaken at the moment and I'm sure huge improvements will be made in the next few years so we can reach our target. The world is a strange place at the moment but the need for us to produce the food we require for ourselves and other countries can never be underestimated.

Early seasons greetings to you all and let's hope for a better 2023 for everyone. Sue.

### **Aconbury Shepherd Huts**



**Our huts are hand built to the highest of standards. Our standard hut includes insulation, double glazing, electrics and decoration**

**Uses include craft room, play house, sleep over's etc.**

**Come and see our display hut or request our new brochure**

**We also build stables, field shelters, garden sheds, play houses, garden features and bespoke gates. Please ring for our dedicated brochure**

**Stephen Turner. The Underhills, Hollybush Lane, Much Birch, Herefordshire. HR2 8HX.**

**Telephone: Office 01981 540090  
Mobile 07768 206296  
[www.aconburyshepherdhuts.co.uk](http://www.aconburyshepherdhuts.co.uk)**

### **Paper Free Newsletter?**

You can read The Birches Newsletter online at [www.littlebirchparishcouncil.org](http://www.littlebirchparishcouncil.org)

Send an email to [editorial@birchesnews.org.uk](mailto:editorial@birchesnews.org.uk) to cancel your paper copy and receive an email link to the newsletter

# **LOCAL GROWN CHRISTMAS TREES**

Traditional Norway Spruce  
and Nordman Fir  
Assorted sizes freshly cut

Follow Signs in Little Dewchurch  
from 1st December

Or

Phone 01432 840826 to come and select a  
growing tree for cutting  
closer to Christmas.



## Diary Dates November

**Art & Craft Space** Thurs 1st December LBVH  
**Coffee & Books** Thurs 1st December 10-12 LBVH  
**LB Mini Christmas Fayre** Saturday 3rd Dec 2-4 LBVH  
**MBPC Meeting** Thurs 8th December 7.30 MBCH  
**Christmas Market** Friday 9th December 2-4.30 MBCH  
**Flicks in the Sticks** Friday 9th Dec 7.30 MBVH  
**Community Café** Saturday 10th Dec 10-12.30 MBCH  
**Art & Craft Space** Thursday 15th Dec 2-4.30 LBVH  
**Christmas Bingo** Friday 16th December 7.30 LBVH  
**Coffee & Books** Saturday 17th December LBVH  
**Carols at the Tump** Wednesday 21st 6.3

### REGULAR EVENTS

**Tiddlers and Toddlers** Fridays 9.30-11.30 MBCH  
**Table Tennis** 1st Tuesday 7-9pm LBVH  
**Venues MBCH** Much Birch Community Hall  
**LBVH** Little Birch Village Hall

## Footpath Officers

If you have any queries about footpaths, contact

**Little Birch: new officer to be appointed**

**Aconbury:** Mike Leigh 01981 540698

**MuchBirch** including **Kingsthorpe:**

David Irwin 07766 135068

david.irwin 13@btinternet.com

## Little Birch Parish Facebook Group



Find the latest news, events

and business listings all in one place. You are welcome to promote your local business, advertise a local event or post news or information of interest to the village and surrounding area. Search for *Little Birch Parish Group* on Facebook

## Advertising Rates

11 editions per year (no August newsletter)

1/16 page £3.50 per issue or £35 per year

1/8<sup>th</sup> page £4.00 per issue or £40 per year

¼ page £4.50 per issue or £45 per year

½ page £8 per issue or £80 per year

Payment by BACS through Santander

Account Name **Little Birch Village Hall**

Sort Code **09-01-54** A/C No. **65493289**

## Defibrillator Locations

### IN A LIFE THREATENING EMERGENCY CALL 999

AEDs available to use locally for those experiencing sudden cardiac arrest. A defibrillator is an easy to use, medical device that analyses the heart's rhythm and, if needed, delivers an electrical shock (defibrillation) to help the heart establish an effective rhythm.

**Allensmore** Locks Garage

**Backney** on the garage wall at Market Gardens Cottage

**Bridstow** on the outside of the village hall

**Garway** on the wall outside the Garway Moon pub

**Harewood End** at Harewood End Inn on outside of the pub at the back in the beer garden.

**Little Birch** on the outside of the village hall

**Llanwarne** on the wall by steps leading up to the village hall

**Much Birch** on the outside of the church hall

**Much Dewchurch** outside Steiner School, first building after the church

**Peterstow** at the Yew Tree pub

**Sellack** on the outside of the parish hall (key code needed)

**St Weonards** old BT phone box off the A466 between the church and Forge Cottage

**Wormelow** at the Cricket Club & Carrot & Wine shop

**Wilton** on wall at the BP garage on the roundabout

## January issue

### Uncle Norman's Wartime Memories

#### Part 2

The farm was mainly dairy, with arable crops and employed several men and boys, as it was unmechanised and labour intensive. There was no refrigeration and in hot weather so churns were suspended by chains in the underground water tanks to keep the milk fresh. Any not needed for local sale was left out for daily collection by Cadbury's. Milk chocolate (rationed) was the real thing then; now you don't even know where it is made. My mother who had hardly ever seen a cow before was roped in to help with the twice daily milking and suffered lifelong arthritis after having a galvanised milking pail flattened against the back of her knee by a cow called Blossom. "Kickers" usually had their back legs tied together.

Food was strictly rationed but we illegally and secretly churned butter from the cream taken off the milk; no one noticed as the milk was so rich! The butter churner lived in Mr and Mrs Dykes' bedroom where this weekly secret event took place. However, we were allowed to kill a pig for home consumption - if the whole household gave up their meagre bacon ration. So we able enjoyed delicious thick cut home cured fat bacon and ham!

I remember we had great fun helping with the milk round as the milk float had springs and pneumatic tyres and, at a canter, would bounce crazily along the unmetalled lanes, sending milk crates crashing up and down in a very satisfying manner! Although our attempt at replacing some of the spilt milk with well water was noticed by a very angry lady who did not appreciate a layer of sand at the bottom of her daily pinta!

There has been publicity about a network of secret bunkers that Churchill initiated as bases for saboteurs in the event of invasion. We unknowingly discovered one of these when exploring Aconbury Woods, the site of an Iron Age Fort overlooking Hereford. It was made of a timber-lined shaft with a lid covered with earth and vegetation. This was kept very secret and we beat a hasty retreat. I could still locate the approximate site but there is probably no trace of it now.

When Coventry was blitzed we saw the glow from the sky from 60 miles away but were kept in the dark

While all this was going on Margaret Dyke, about my age, and I taught ourselves to ride on an aptly named pony, Paddy, and the off-duty milk round horse Mick, a fast trotter, but not at all keen on galloping or jumping. I remember we later followed the South Herefordshire Hunt, and I was treated to language as colourful as her complexion when I impeded the progress of the Master on my very unimpressive mount Blackberry – the farm carthorse. She was an extremely crafty horse and learnt to simulate lameness if she saw anyone approaching with a halter intending to making her work. She was also particularly partial to cattle cake and worked out how to operate the latch on the door of the shed where it was kept!