

KING'S THORN & THE BIRCHES NEWSLETTER

A Newsletter for the Villages of King's Thorn, Little Birch & Much Birch – February 2009

Much Birch Village Market

Much Birch Village Market is held on the 4th Friday of the month in Much Birch Community Hall between 2.30pm and 4.30pm. Support Herefordshire producers of beef, pork, lamb, venison, eggs, preserves, cheese, chicken, bread and cakes. Fair Trade stall, local crafts. Refreshments. The next is on **FRIDAY 23RD JANUARY**.

Forward dates are as follows:

27th February, 27th March, 24th April, 22nd May, 26th June, 24th July, 28th August, 25th September, 23rd October, 27th November, and 18th December.

For further details please contact Kath Watts, 01981 540382

Pantomime

"*Dick Turpin and Friends*" invite you to join them at Little Birch Village Hall on **FRIDAY 6TH** and **SATURDAY 7TH FEBRUARY**. Performance times, Friday at 7.30pm. Saturday Matinee at 2.30pm, and evening at 7.30pm. Tickets and reservations, in advance please, from Jackie Morley tel. (01981) 541027. Entrance. Adults £6. Children (under 14) £3.

Whist Drive

Our next Whist Drive is on **TUESDAY 10TH FEBRUARY** at Little Birch Village Hall. We shall start at 7.30pm. The entrance fee is £1.50. Excellent prizes and refreshments will be available. New players are always welcome.

Pancake Night Shrove Tuesday

No time to make your own pancakes then come and join your friends for an evening of Traditional "Home made" pancakes

DIARY DATES FEBRUARY 2009

23RD JANUARY – Village Market
6TH FEBRUARY – Pantomime – Evening Performance
7TH FEBRUARY – Pantomime – Matinee & Evening Performances
10TH FEBRUARY – Whist Drive
16TH FEBRUARY – Kilpeck Art Club term starts
25TH FEBRUARY – King Thorn & Little Birch Gardening Club
27TH FEBRUARY – Village Market
24TH FEBRUARY – Pancake Night
26TH FEBRUARY – Bingo
28TH FEBRUARY – Flicks in the Sticks

ADVANCE NOTICES

10TH MARCH – Evergreen Club
12TH MARCH – David Whitehead Talk
16TH MARCH – Rod Mason & his Hot Five
27TH MARCH – Village Market

on **TUESDAY 24TH FEBRUARY** at 7.00pm. in Little Birch Village Hall. Entrance £2 per person (including 2 pancakes), 50p per additional pancake and a wide choice of fillings! Prize draw.

Gardening Club

The next meeting of the Gardening Club will be on **WEDNESDAY 25TH FEBRUARY** at 7.30pm. in Little Birch Village Hall when the Radio Gardening Guru, Mr. Reg Moule, will be conducting a Question and Answer Session on all aspects of Gardening. Everyone is welcome.

Bingo

The next Bingo will be on **THURSDAY 26TH FEBRUARY** at Little Birch Village Hall. "Eyes down" at 8.00pm. There are very good prizes and refreshments will be available.

Flicks in the Sticks

On **SATURDAY 28TH FEBRUARY** we shall be showing **AND WHEN**

DID YOU LAST SEE YOUR FATHER 12A at Much Birch Community Hall, 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. 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... 28TH March – Borderlines Film Festival Screening (Film TBC)

Much Birch W.I

See Programme overleaf.

Kilpeck Art Club

The club is pleased to announce that its Spring Term will run for 10 Mondays from 16th February to April inclusive – except for Easter Monday 13th April. Meetings are from 2.00 – 4.00pm. at Kilpeck Village Hall.

Much Birch WI
Programme for 2009

January 20 th	Peter Garlick	Pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostella
February 17 th	Katrina Stephens	Chinese Painting
March 17 th	Gillian Clouder	Growing for Gold - Garden Design at Tatton Park
April 21 st	Jo Poole	Virgin Cosmetics
May 19 th		Resolutions
June 16 th	Les Rogers	National Trust & Brockhampton (N. Herefordshire) Estate
July 21 st		Vic Harnett Antique Silver
August 18 th	Selina Wells	Ethnic Musical Instruments
September 15 th	Esther Simpson	Edwardian Hats with Flowers
October 20 th	Hilary Gamble	Decorative Boxes for Christmas
November 17 th		AGM
December 15 th		Member's Christmas Evening

Meetings are held in Much Birch Community Hall on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 7.30pm. Please contact Kath Watts, 01981 540382 or Barbara Wilson 01432 840559 for further details. New members are always welcome.

This is your local and long established art club which offers a friendly atmosphere for people to enjoy painting or drawing in company with others. There is a wide range of skills and experience in many media within the club and help and advice is freely given to other members.

New members are most welcome and for more Information please phone: (01981) Michael - 541055 or Sylvia - 540123.

The Evergreen Club

Our Annual General Meeting will be held at Much Birch Community Hall on **TUESDAY 10TH MARCH**, at 2.30pm. New members are always welcome.

Details of the outings for this year will be announced that afternoon and tea and biscuits will be available after the meeting.

Your Committee is grateful for your continued support as we look forward to the year ahead: see you at the AGM.

Talk by David Whitehead

Another talk has been arranged on **THURSDAY 12TH MARCH** in Little Birch Village Hall by David Whitehead. David - a well-known local historian - has already talked to us on several topics and his talks have been much enjoyed. On this occasion he will give an

illustrated talk on 'Castle Green in Hereford' - the topic of his latest book. It should prove a fascinating evening with a wealth of information about an area we all know and can easily visit. The talk will be at 7.30pm. - cost £2.50 including light refreshments.

Rod Mason and His Hot Five

Rod Mason's Hot Five, critically acclaimed as Europe's No1 traditional jazz band, are back in the UK and are playing at the Royal National College for the Blind (RNC), Hereford at 7.30pm, on **MONDAY 16TH MARCH**. Their broad repertoire is firmly rooted in classic jazz, featuring Mason's original arrangements from Louis Armstrong's Hot Five and Seven, King Oliver's Creole Band and Jelly Roll Morton's Red Hot Peppers, plus a wide selection of material from other (sometimes unexpected) sources. Bar, doors open 7pm for 7.30pm start. Tickets £15 from RNC Fundraising on 01432 376372 e-mail

marion.lyons@rncfundraising.org.uk or from The Outback, Church Street, Hereford.

Visit to Hereford Museum

The History Group is thinking of arranging a visit to the museum to be shown and hear about the many archaeological finds from the local

area. This would take place sometime in March and, to gauge numbers so that we can arrange a suitable visit, we would appreciate it if you would let us know if you think you might like to come. There will probably be a limit on

numbers and a small charge may be made. Please ring 01981 540791 if you would like to go.

Tribute to Mike Leigh

In our note of thanks to all those who are involved with the production, printing and distribution of this newsletter a very important name was omitted. Mike Leigh helps Roger Thomas with the printing and with his assistance the process is so much more efficient and the time taken greatly reduced. Thank you very much Mike.

Local News

Special 'Congratulations' go to LUCY GODDING of Little Birch on her outstanding achievement in the recent GCSE A-level German examination, where she obtained the maximum possible marks of 300 out of the possible 300. Her score was the highest in England for which she has been awarded a coveted prize. However, Lucy is in New Zealand at present as part of 'A year out' prior to starting university at St. Andrews. We wish

her well in this overseas trip and for her start at university later in the year.

A warm welcome is extended to DAVID COOK and LUCY HODGES who have come to live at Crossways Cottage at the far end of the Barrack Hill. We hope they will soon settle and be very happy in their new home.

The funeral service to celebrate the life of JEAN HAMILTON took place at Little Birch Church on 6th January and was conducted by the Rev. Preb. Kay Garlick. Jean was aged 83 years, and born in Cannock in 1925 to Annie and Alec Stokes. Her childhood was spent in Cannock and Aberystwyth, where her uncle and aunt owned a shop. She gained valuable experience by working in the shop, which proved invaluable in later life and fuelled her compassion and a strong sense of social duty. She became an active member of the Labour Party while still in her teens and worked alongside Jennie Lee and Aneurin Bevan.

Jean attended Stafford Girls High School in 1936 but left in 1941 at the age of 16 having achieved excellent exam results. She joined the Inland Revenue and rapidly climbed the ranks in the civil service, becoming one of the youngest women ever to be appointed an Inspector of Taxes. She was an enthusiastic amateur actress with the Cannock Chase Amateur Dramatic Society and became a single parent with John. Life was not easy in the late 1950's and 60's, when she braved the social attitudes of that time towards a single working parent. Jean met Gordon Hamilton whilst on holiday in 1963. They were married in 1964 and moved to Surrey. Ian was born in 1965 and Sarah in 1966. Gordon's work took him abroad for long periods, but Jean became a 'freelance' accountant to finance her family through school and university and was very proud of each of the children in their academic achievements. She made sure the

family did not miss out on holidays and regularly drove 200 miles each way for caravan holidays in Wales.

In Surrey, Jean was an active member of the community being treasurer of the Parish Council and assistant organist at the Church. Gordon and Jean retired to Herefordshire in 1995 and took the advice of a good friend, who said: "If you are asked to play the church organ or take on the accounts, just say you have never played an instrument in your life and you can't add up". Consequently, she led a much quieter life in Little Birch although she was a member of St. Mary's Guild and did help out by occasionally playing for church services. Gordon died suddenly in 2001 and Jean never really came to terms with his death and the good health she had always enjoyed, gradually deteriorated. She was a highly intelligent lady, a great reader and would complete the Guardian crossword in minutes. She will be sadly missed by her friends and family and we send to John, Ian and Sarah and their families our deepest sympathy.

One of the community's older residents, BILL GIBBONS has died at the age of 92 years. Bill was born near Hay on Wye and lived his early life on a farm as one of 11 children. On leaving school, he worked on a sheep farm before serving in the RAF for 12 years. His service took him to Crete, Greece, Burma and China. He became very emotional when talking about the war and all the good friends that were lost. He was a member of the British Legion and attended the Remembrance Day services whenever possible. On moving to London, he met and subsequently married Maud. He became a stonemason and steeplejack and worked on Windsor Castle, Salisbury Cathedral and many other churches. He came with Maud to live in Waterloo Cottage at the bottom of Barrack Hill in 1986. They were members of the Evergreen Club and

maintained a very good garden, which was very much admired by local folk and passers by. Bill grew outstanding vegetables and flowers, and often won prizes for his onions and shallots at the Builth Wells show. The bank facing Little Birch road was a real sight in the spring showing a blanket of primroses. Sadly, Maud died after a fall in 1988 but Bill carried on with his garden and enjoyed the company of others, including Geoff Jones at the pub and on the Evergreen Outings and it was on one of these that he got to know Eunice Wooles, who was a widow and they married 2 years later. Suddenly, Bill who had no children of his own, inherited a large, ready grown family. Sadly, Eunice also died some 9 years ago but Bill resilient as ever carried on living alone with the support of several of Eunice's family and kind neighbours including the Willis family and Paul Bishop. He would often go off for the day with Bob Willis in the lorry and would point out the churches he had worked on, particularly in Hampshire. Chris and Peter Dowsett were regular visitors and kept him well supplied with eggs and cakes. Bill kept his 'trademark' broad smile right to the very end and he will be very sadly missed by his two surviving sisters and one brother. We send to them all our deepest sympathy.

It is sad to report the sudden death of John Hyde-Smith of Llanwarne, who was also well known in this area. John studied at Cambridge and during two of the long vacations, came down to work on a farm at Ullingswick. He fell in love with the county and after graduating, came to work as a chemist for Bulmers. He stayed with Bulmers for the whole of his working life, mainly working on the development of pectin and this work took him to many countries. He married Anne in 1969 and settled at Ridgehill, where Laura and Richard were born. The family later moved to Llanwarne where Anne and John became active in

he community. He was treasurer of the PCC and a churchwarden for many years, where his attention to detail which was a feature of his work at Bulmers, shone through. Everything had to be right! He was also treasurer of the Herefordshire branch of the Motor Neurone Disease Association for 12 years. He was well supported by Anne, who has also been involved with Deals on Wheels for over 25 years. John loved cricket and was a member of MCC all his adult life. After retiring from Bulmers, Anne and John enjoyed holidays in New Zealand, Chile and Canada. John also became an avid gardener and spent many happy hours in the greenhouse, which was a retirement gift. Christ Church at Lanwarne was full and overflowing, such was the esteem in which John was held, by a very wide circle of friends. We send to Anne, Laura and Richard our deepest sympathies.

On going to press, the death of Geoff Jones at the age of 83 years, has just been announced. A full tribute to Geoff will be given in the next newsletter.

Domestic Bulk LPG Orders

In July 2004 the Office of Fair Trading asked the Competition Commission to report on the supply of domestic bulk LPG. In June 2006 the report "Market investigation into supply of bulk liquefied Petroleum Gas for domestic use" was duly published. As a result of this report, the Competition Commission has issued the following:- "Domestic Bulk Liquefied Petroleum Gas Market Investigation Order 2008, which comes into force on 13th April 2009.

What this means for those of us in the community who buy bulk LPG is that it should now be easier for us to shop around for a competitive price for our gas, and to switch supplier if we choose. The issue of the gas tank itself, which had previously made it difficult to change supplier, has been dealt

with in this order, as has the length of time that people are 'locked into' contracts with their suppliers.

Full details of this order are available on the internet and a good place to start is the link below. Please note that in order to fit the link into this column, it has been split. If you use it, remember to type it in as one continuous line. http://www.offt.gov.uk/shared_offt/monopolies/lpg-faqs.pdf. Happy negotiating!

Belmont Library

The Library will be closed for refurbishment from Tuesday 3rd February until Tuesday 3rd March.

LBPC

Parish Clerk

Please contact the Parish Clerk with any issues concerning Little Birch Parish. Contact details are: Liz Callwood on 01981 540081 or lizcallwood@tiscali.co.uk

M.B.P.C

Parish Clerk If you have any queries on Parish Council matters please telephone the Clerk on 01432 870874, or write to: Mrs. Kath Greenow, Hackford House, Dinedor, Hereford HR2 6PD

Much Birch 100 Club Draw

The May draw took place on **Tuesday, 13th January** at Much Birch Community Hall at 7pm. The winners were:

1. No 4 - Mrs. S. Prout, Hereford
2. No.38 - Mrs. P. Bamford, Much Birch

The next draw will take place on 13th February 2009 at 12MD in Much Birch Community Hall

John Jones, Chairman/Promoter.

A Voice From The Past

Whilst browsing the internet I chanced upon the road map of Kings Thorn, the village where I was born in June 1940 and where I spent my childhood and teenage years. I was astounded to see that the lane on which my childhood

home, Yew Tree Bungalow, originally stood has now been named Pages Pitch.

As children my sister, Hazel and I knew it just as 'The Lane' up or down which I road my bike to the Ruffets or even further afield when accompanied by my father, and roamed the country lanes to Much and Little Birch across fields and tracks. The reason for my surprise is that it would appear the lane has been named after my father (and/or family) Harold Henry Page born 1891 and deceased July 1981. I would very much like to know who chose the name, why and when - in fact any detail you can supply as it would really mean a great deal to me if you are able to help or point me in the right direction.

You may be interested to know that my father served in the First World War in the 24th Regiment of the South Wales Borders, he enlisted on 4th August 1914 aged nineteen and served with the Colours for over seven years, transferring to the Army Reserve in November 1921. He fought at Gallipoli and was awarded the 1915 Star General Service Victor Distinguished Conduct Medal for bravery where he carried ammunition whilst wounded to the line ahead of him which had run out of ammunition. From June 1940 to December 1944 he served in the 6h (Harewood End) Bn Home Guard.

I have many happy memories of the village - of attending the Methodist chapel at the top of the Barracks to be taught by Mr Watkins, or carrying fresh water from the well on the Thorn on an old pram chassis as we had no running water, of my father offering half a crown to one of the Verry girls to teach me to ride my bike, - I was a late starter in this respect, of Mrs Strong the infants teacher at Much Birch school and dear Miss Lawrence who helped me so much; and many more.

Maggie Gibbs (nee Margaret Page)
(email address given but not published)

Happy New Year From The Webbs

Having been down in Sussex (almost by the sea!) for a year now, we would just like to thank everyone for their good wishes and reciprocate for the start of 2009 and hope it is not going to be as bad as predicted.

Beverley had to take a quick trip into Tunbridge Wells Intensive Care Assessment Unit for 24 hours to check on her ticker but came out with a clean bill of health so that was a good start to 2009. Pete found a £10 note in the car park, which paid for his car parking and breakfast on the day she was rushed in which was a stroke of luck, but then he spent the whole of the Christmas week in bed with a nasty virus.

Apparently Crowborough is in direct line with Siberia and the cold winds, which blow here, really are arctic, as we are very high up. We were at the highest point before Christmas helping to serve soup at the Open Air Market and it was bitterly cold but it made some money for St Michael's Church where we have been welcomed into the choir.

I am sure the year will go better than the start and as the nights are getting lighter one's spirits soar with the prospect of spring when our garden will be full of azaleas and rhododendrons but not much else. We are waiting to see what bulbs etc. come up in the spring and then we can decide what to take out or replace with plants of our own choice.

Grass cutting here is only one lawn and a small strip so it's less than an hour's job.

Best wishes to all our friends and we hope to pay a visit some time in the spring when we might catch up with some of you. We understand Halfway is still going strong and also The Evergreens so we have left a little of our efforts in Hereford for the benefit of what is a wonderful community.

Peter and Beverley Webb

Neighbourhood Watch

The New Year is a time of starting anew, of resolutions and promises. For 2009, West Mercia Constabulary intends to do just that with our Policing Pledge.

The national Policing Pledge comes into being on 1st January and covers a range of policing activities which all forces will be required to meet. The aim is to deliver an even better service to the communities we serve.

There are ten elements, or standards of service, in the Pledge, which are listed under three core themes - community engagement & consultation, contact management & response and victim, witness and customer care. West Mercia meets many of these standards already.

The Pledge promises to supply information on Local Policing Teams, PACT meetings and surgeries as well as monthly crime maps and a range of performance and criminal justice information, together with details of work with our partners.

The Pledge also details minimum response times to calls and messages to both our Call Management Centre and Local Policing Teams across the three counties.

West Mercia Constabulary also pledges to treat people fairly, with dignity and respect and to ensure fair access to our services when it is reasonable and suitable to you. We also aim to keep victims of crime informed of case progress at intervals to suit you and by whatever reasonable means you wish.

Further and more detailed information on the Policing Pledge will be available shortly from the front counters of police stations across the force, at local PACT meetings and on the website.

Help Us Catch The Golf

In recent weeks, police across the West Midlands region have seen an increase in distraction burglaries when callers posing as water board staff, TV engineers and the like,

charm their way into the houses of the vulnerable and distract them, whilst their accomplices slip into the property unseen and remove cash and valuables. The main caller them makes his excuses and leaves.

Whilst the numbers of these burglaries are low, common to many of them is the sighting of a silver Mk 5 Volkswagen Golf car. Police believe the same car is being used but with different number plates on it each time.

If you see a silver VW Golf with two or more men in it, parked near the house of someone who is elderly or vulnerable or if you see such a car in other suspicious circumstances, you are urged to contact the police on 0300 333 3000 as soon as possible or ring 999 in an emergency.

Crime Trends

On 27/12/08 a garage at premises in Much Birch was broken into. Various items were stolen.

Just off our patch, an Ifor Williams 8 x 4 plant trailer was stolen overnight last night from an estate in Vowchurch. The yard is in the middle of a wood and is locked, but the thieves managed to get through the back of the yard area and steal the trailer, worth £1,300.

Trailer thefts continue to be a problem in the rural areas, if you have one make sure it is well secured, preferably out of sight, and mark it so that it can be positively identified if recovered. SmartWater is ideal for this, please ask for more details if you are interested.

There have been a number of burglaries in the north of Herefordshire. The area has had extra patrols and there are fears that this may cause the suspects to change areas. One of the suspected vehicles is a blue Ford transit van registered number Y84***. If you see a vehicle fitting this description day or night can you please call us.

Results

An 18yr old male from Kingstone has been interviewed about two offences of criminal damage and an

offence of assault that occurred at Much Dewchurch.

SmartWater

If anyone would like a SMARTWATER kit we have just had a new delivery.

Your Officers based at Peterchurch
Local Police Officer

PC Andrew Bundy.

Mobile No: 07855 385 844

Email:

andrew.bundy@westmercia.pnn.police.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

Items/Copy

Please may I have items for the MARCH issue via email attachment in Word format to sarah.mathews@tiscali.co.uk or by hand or post to Mrs. S.E. Mathews, Folly Cottage, Little Birch, HR2 8BD. by

* * * * *
18TH FEBRUARY

* * * * *
Please mark your envelope
"Kings Thorn Newsletter"