



Newsletter for King's Thorn, The Birches & Aconbury

A newsletter for the villages of King's Thorn, Little Birch, Much Birch & Aconbury January 2015. First published 1977



**Little Birch
Village Hall
Pantomime
2015**

Peter Pan

(Director and Producer Jane Bolam)

Friday & Saturday February 6th & 7th 7.30 pm

Saturday matinee 2.00pm

Tickets available from:

Jackie 01981 541027

Margaret 01981 540374

Adults £6
Under 14 £4



Donation

Little Birch Village Hall Committee would like to thank the anonymous dog walker who left a generous donation in the post box.

Diary Dates

December

31st New Years Eve Party LBVH

January

7th LB Parish Council LBVH

8th MB parish Council MBCH

13th Whist Drive LBVH

17th Wassailing LBVH

22nd Flicks in the Sticks MBCH

24th Book Exchange LBVH

28th Gardening Club LBVH

February

25th Gardening Club LBVH

We wish a 'Happy New Year' to all readers and thanks the Newsletter team of deliverers, collators and staplers, printers and editors for all their faithful service over the last year and hope they will continue in good health in 2015.

For a Third Year!! A WASSAIL

Taking place in the company of

COMPOST HEAP AND FRIENDS

There will be Wassailing of the Orchard and
the Mummers Play

**SATURDAY, 17TH. JANUARY
LITTLE BIRCH VILLAGE HALL
STARTING 7.30 P.M.**

Just because Christmas is over,

It is no reason not to do silly things

And to raise some money for Charity

Wrap up warm to walk to the
orchard (torches useful)

Back to the Village Hall for songs, food and merriment

Definitely nothing serious!

Tickets: £6 (£3 for U 14) unless you would like to give more!

Includes your supper. Bar available

Book early to avoid disappointment!

Bob Chance 01981 540725

You miss it—you weep!

Please send copy for the February
Newsletter to birchesnews@gmail.com
or written contributions to John
Bryant at Bramley Bungalow, Aconbury
Close by 18th. January

FLICKS IN THE STICKS

at Much Birch Community Hall

Thursday 22nd January 2015 7.30pm –

THE LOVE PUNCH^{12A}

Spanning locations in Paris, London and the French Riviera THE LOVE PUNCH brings together Pierce Brosnan and Emma Thompson for the first time, as ex-husband and wife Richard and Kate whose biting banter suggests that the flames of their former relationship have not been fully extinguished. Unfortunately the same cannot be said for their retirement nest egg which is wiped out when Richard's investment firm is defrauded and the pension fund is siphoned away. Learning that the unscrupulous French financier behind the scheme has just purchased a \$10million diamond for his bride to be, the divorced duo grudgingly agree to set aside their differences, and hatch a plot to gate-crash the wedding and steal the rock.

Refreshments including hot dogs available from 7pm

Tickets £4 (£3 under 16s)

Tickets available in advance or on the door –
for further info or to book tickets
please call Bryony Connolly 01981 580298

For further information about films and
screenings visit www.artsalive.co.uk

ROYAL BRITISH LEGION POPPY APPEAL COLLECTION 2014

House to House Collection	£1827.93
Much Birch Church Collection	£35.00
Much Dewchurch Church Collection	£71.00

Thank you for all your help this year.

Please ring me on 01981 540677

if you would like to help next year.

Gillian Brimacombe

Message to Pedestrians

A concerned local driver asks that anyone walking on unlit roads in the dark is aware of the danger. Recently a woman in dark clothing walking down the Thorn from the bus shelter was very nearly hit by a car. In a similar incident a driver had to brake sharply near Callow village to avoid a dog walker dressed in dark clothing.

These were frightening experiences for the drivers so, pedestrians, please make sure that you can be seen and stay safe. It is advisable to wear a fluorescent jacket and use a torch.

Local News

A very warm welcome is given to **Mr. and Mrs. Neil Wilson**, who have moved into Upper Wrigglebrook Croft and to **Tim and Jill Strange** who have

extended 'Farriers' in Kingsthorpe and we trust they will enjoy their new homes and be happy in this community.

Several adults and babies in our community have been into hospital recently with breathing difficulties but happily they are now back at home and we wish them a speedy recovery.

It is sad to report the death of **Des Clarke** teacher, sportsman and well regarded member of our community. He was born in 1938 in a village near Aylesbury and, after passing his eleven plus went on to Aylesbury grammar school. It soon became evident that he had an aptitude for mathematics and prowess in sporting activities. He achieved high standards at cricket and cross country running.

After graduation from London University he had a choice of National Service or teaching mathematics and physics. He decided to become a teacher and gained a post at Dr Challoners grammar school in Amersham where he taught mathematics in the mornings and sport in the afternoons. In 1970 Des moved to Moreton on Lugg and become head of mathematics at Leominster grammar school (later Minster Comprehensive) where he obviously gained popularity and respect as shown by recent entries on the school Facebook page.

"Have just seen in the Hereford Times that Knobby Clarke the old maths teacher has died. He was my favourite teacher. He was a great bloke."

"Such sad news. The best teacher ever."

"Wasn't he the teacher who used to create maths problems relating to Newcastle Brown Ale?"

Des gave up cricket but regularly played hockey for Hereford. In 1984 his wife died and he was left to bring up two children Tim and Sal. Later he met and married Alison, who had three children of her own, and they all lived in the old School Little Birch. He continued teaching including a short spell at Monmouth school and then 12 years part-time at Hereford Sixth Form College. He continued with his keen interests in beer, and especially beer labels, hill walking, dogs, travel, crosswords and Sudoku. He was an active member of CAMRA and also took an interest in local affairs including officiating at village quizzes and dog shows.

Des was recognised as a highly intelligent, well educated man with an excellent sense of humour. He had a positive approach to life with a very wide range of interests but he did not hesitate to talk

about some strong dislikes including pasta, curry, garlic, loud music, smoking, Christmas, keg beer and lager!

We are sad to report the death of **Leon (Tate) Slater** of King's Thorn at the age of 66 years. Leon was born in Cornwall but the family moved to Ross soon afterwards and he was educated at 2 schools in Hereford. He loved popular music and in his teens had a transistor radio which he took to bed to listen to Radio Caroline. He became an avid Beatles fan and one of their numbers was played on exit from the Crematorium. His first jobs were as a labourer in several spheres including the building trade. He met and married **Sandra Johns** of King's Thorn in 1966 and their son, Lee, was born in 1968. Sandra did not have to move very far as they moved into the wooden bungalow next door, 'Wood Corner'. Leon loved his football and was a skilful midfielder. He played for Little Birch in the Hereford Sunday League in the early 1980's. The team progressed from Div.4 to Div. 1 over 5 years or so and then the team disbanded. He frequently went to see Hereford United play. He loved surfing and father and son took a holiday in California travelling down the coast from San Francisco to Los Angeles. Leon was also keen on quizzing and played regularly at the Axe and Cleaver winning many prizes. He trained as a bricklayer and eventually took down the wooden bungalow and rebuilt it with a new layout in brick with a tiled roof, of which he and the family were very proud. Lee married Vanessa and in due time India and Zac were born making Sandra and Leon very proud grandparents. Lee and Vanessa have lived in London for many years but made frequent visits to King's Thorn.

Leon had not enjoyed good health for several years but Sandra was his 'rock' and looked after him with the utmost care.

Leon's funeral service took place on Dec. 19th at Hereford Crematorium which was crowded with family and many friends and neighbours supporting Sandra and Lee, who gave a moving tribute to his father and we extend to Sandra, Lee and the family our deepest sympathy.. Donations in memory of Leon will be sent to St. Michael's Hospice.

It is with great regret that the death of **Fred Turner** is announced. Fred and brother, Richard, ran the vegetable smallholding on the A49 in Much Birch. A full tribute will be given in the next Newsletter.

Beware-Another Scam

A Little Birch Resident recieved a letter from the "Peoples Postcode Lottery" informing him that he had won £825,000. According to the Internet many other people in the country have received identical letters saying that the money will be released by calling a number and and paying a "processing fee" of £4,200. A copy of the letter and details of the scam can be found on the Internet by typing "UK Security Solution".

Kingsthorpe and Little Birch Gardening Club

On 28th. January, **Sue Russell** will give an illustrated talk of

'How to manage the herbaceous border'.

Helen Picton of the famous **Ballard Nurseries** in Malvern will give a talk about The history, variety and cultivation of Michaelmas Daisies and the development of Old Court Nurseries on Wed. 25th. February. On March 26th., our AGM followed by a short video of the work of the 'Gloucestershire Federation of Gardening Societies'.

New members are always welcome at 7.30pm on the last Wednesday of each month at Little Birch Village Hall.

The Three Castles

John Kinross continues his contrubutions on local castles

Skenfrith, White Castle and Grosmont are all about five miles from each other in a large triangle. They were brought into one ownership by King Stephen in 1138. They were administered by the Sheriff of Herefordshire so that the area between the river Wye and the Black Mountains could be kept under Crown control. The Welsh raiders were a constant menace and one sheriff was killed at Dingestow (a few miles south of Skenfrith) in 1182. Ralph of Grosmont was a military engineer who strengthened all 3 castles at this time. King John granted all 3 castles to Hubert de Burgh and later, Hugh acquired Montgomery, Cardigan and Carmarthen castles.

Skenfrith lies close to the river Monnow as the river filled the moat. It is a polygonal shape with corner round towers and a circular keep. Waleran, the German who was Constable of the three, built a chapel at Skenfrith. In 1241, a receipt survives showing that crossbows and quarrels were purchased from St. Briavels castle where they were made as well as wax for the chapel candles and pans for the three kitchens. In 1254, Prince

Edward was given the castles but he passed them to the Earl of Lancaster and they remained crown property. Grosmont is a much securer castle than Skenfrith with a strong gatehouse, large Hall area, strong corner towers, a deep moat and bank beyond. There is evidence that like Goodrich, this castle was adapted for more luxurious living in less troubled times.

White Castle, isolated on a hill off the Skenfrith to Abergavenny road, is built with soldiers in mind. It has a huge 13th. century outer ward with large walls where an army could camp and a further bailey on the other side or hornwork also surrounded by the moat. Pevesner suggests that the Sheriff of Herefordshire paid £128.16s on this castle between 1184 and 1186. The other improvements took place in the 13th. century when Llewelyn ap Gruffudd was threatening the area. The last Governor of the three castles was John Morgan, whose tomb is in Skenfrith Church, dated 1557. After a brief period of private ownership, the three castles are in the hands of CADW and for anyone reading this who speaks Welsh, I will send them a copy of the last two pages of my Skenfrith Guidebook (dated 1970) which are in Welsh.

Much Birch Parish Council

Parish Clerk Mrs Alison Wright Longfield House
Gooses Foot, Kingstone Herefordshire HR2 9NE
Tel. 01981 250860

Email: muchbirchclerk@hotmail.co.uk

PARISH MEETING – at the Parish Council Meeting held on the 4th December at the Much Birch Community Hall. The Parish Council heard updates on local road and highways issues from the Balfour Beatty Locality Steward. He advised that roads had been repaired, gullies emptied and pot holes filled. Works were continuing. There was also some information about the play equipment in Tump Lane. This had been removed, by Herefordshire Housing, due to it not passing a safety inspection. The Parish Council had requested that they be kept informed about the replacement schedule for any repaired or new play equipment for the location.

The Parish Plan review was ongoing and an invitation to get involved with this is still available. Please contact your local councillor for further details.

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be on Thursday 8th January 2015 at 7.30pm - at The Much Birch Community Hall. Please see notice

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

A reminder that:-

Your Much Birch Parish Councillors are:-

Cllr Alison Cook (Chair) Jasmine Cottage,
Wrigglebrook Lane, Kingsthorpe, Hereford, HR2 8AW, e mail thecooks@wyenet.co.uk Tel. 01981 540703

Cllr Steve Turner (Vice Chair) The Underhills,
Hollybush Lane, Much Birch, Hereford, HR2 8HX,
e mail turnersofcrossways@btinternet.com and
Tel. 01981 540090

Cllr Andrew Crum Anfield House, Barrack Hill,
Kingsthorpe, Hereford, HR2 8AX, e mail
a.crum@btinternet.com
Tel. 01981 540002

Cllr Jon Norris Whitewells, Laskett Lane,
Much Birch, Hereford, HR2 8HZ, e mail
jon@jonnorris.co.uk Tel. 07944 301250

Cllr Keith James The Slinget, Tump Lane,
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keithjamesphotos@btinternet.com Tel 01981 540171

Cllr Tim Jones Swiss Cottage, Wrigglebrook,
Kingsthorpe, Hereford, HR2 8AW e mail
tjsj@me.com Tel. 01981 540242

Full minutes of the meetings and information etc. can be found on the Parish Council website following the link found in this summary. www.muchbirchparish.org.uk.

Little Birch Village Hall Committee

Community Book Exchange/Lending Library

The first meeting in the New Year of the LBVH "Book Exchange" will be in the morning of Saturday 24 January at Little Birch Village Hall.

All members of the community are invited to join us for this enjoyable monthly event which offers not only a wide range of books and DVDs (to suit all ages and interests,) but also an opportunity to meet others and exchange recommendations for "a good read".

A warm welcome, tea, coffee and refreshments will be provided and we look forward to meeting up with regular and new visitors to the Book exchange.

There is a charge of £1 per adult towards the cost of the hire of hall and refreshments. We look forward to seeing you on 24 January.

Whist Drive

Our next Whist Drive is on Tuesday 13 January at Little Birch Village Hall. We shall start at 7.30.p.m. The entrance fee is £2.00.

We are always on the 'look out' for new members including those who are new to Whist and others who may not have played for some time. A warm welcome, good company and enjoyment of an evening of Whist may be just what you need! Excellent prizes and refreshments will be available.

Police Reports

Can I please make you aware of an incident that occurred last night in to the early hours of this morning (18 December). Police were called with reference to some suspicious males reported to be making off from a lorry which had arrived in the Much Dewchurch area from Calais. We are looking to locate two males, suspected of being here illegally, unfortunately we have no descriptions. However we would urge you to keep an eye on all of your outbuildings, ensuring they are secured as best possible. If you notice a change in any outbuildings, or see any suspicious males loitering, possibly asking for directions, please call us on 101 and quote the incident reference number - 0745S/ 171214.

BROADOAK

225S/ 011214 – Between Mon 1st December 09:00 and 11:30, a blue Yamaha quad bike, with keys, and a single axle Ifor Williams quad bike trailer were stolen.

GARWAY

375S/ 161114 – Between Sat 15th November 23:00 and Sun 16th 04:00, a padlock has been forced to a storage container and plant machinery stolen.

HOARWITHY

534S/ 131214 – Between Fri 15th December 17:00 and Sat 13th 15:30, entry has been made through the rear door to a property, all rooms searched and numerous items taken.

KENTCHURCH ***Missed from last briefing***

275S/ 061114 – 27 sheep stolen from a field within the area.

MUCH BIRCH

177S/ 031214 – Between Tue 2nd December 12:30 and Wed 3rd 08:00, persons unknown have entered a field and stolen a blue horse rung from off one of the horses.

156S/ 111214 & 112S/ 111214 – Between Wed 10th December 19:30 and Thur 11th 08:15, two separate vehicles have had the catalytic converters removed from them.

ORCOP

401S/ 221114 – Between Thur 20th November 22:00 and Sat 22nd 14:00. Persons unknown have dragged a mini digger across the front of a property, seemingly attempting to steal it. Having been unsuccessful in this, they have then proceeded to take an Ifor Williams trailer, and an amount of cable.

ST WEONARDS

080S/ 131114 – Between Wed 12th November 06:00 and Thur 13th. A black Landrover 110 has been stolen, registration number DG54 5NR.

POSITIVE POLICING NEWS

04/12/2014 – A male was arrested late in the evening after local officers happened upon him in a rural area, he is currently on bail for poaching offences.

After reports of speeding / careless driving through Hoarwithy, the local team has been carrying out speed enforcement within the area. **We are happy to report that there were no persons noted to be breaking the speed limit, nor driving in a careless manner.**

Lastly, from everyone in the Hereford City and South Team, we would like to thank you for your continued support and information. Have a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

PCSO 40041 **Jim Preece** Hereford City, Southside & Rural Warwickshire and West Mercia Police

Hereford Tel; 101. Ext; 4730

Email; james.preece@westmercia.pnn.police.uk

Twitter; @southsidecops

Church Services in January 2015

Sun Jan 4th

11am	L. Birch	CW Communion
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Sun Jan 11th

9.15am	M. Birch	Family Communion
11am	L. Birch	Morning Worship

Sun Jan 18th

10.30am	King's Cople	Benefice Service
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Sun Jan 25th

9.15am	M. Birch	Matins
11am	L. Birch	Family Worship

And Finally

A man sent ten different puns to friends, with the hope that at least one of the puns would make them laugh.....unfortunately, no pun in ten did.

Advertising rates from Jan 1st. 2015

1/16th page £3.50 per issue or £35 per annum

1/8th page £4.00 per issue or £40 per annum

1/4 page £4.50 per issue or £45 per annum

1/2 page £8.00 per issue or £80 per annum

Classifieds

Single insertion £3.00

6 months £15.00

1 year £30.00

Send copy to the Editor at

birchesnews@gmail.com' in bold black type

Cheques to be made payable to

Little Birch Hall Management Committee and send to Mrs. R. Hodges, 'Wendover' King's Thorn, Hereford, HR2 8AU