

KING'S THORN & THE BIRCHES NEWSLETTER

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

Duchy walk in Aconbury Woods

Geraint Richards, the head forester of the Duchy of Cornwall has kindly offered to lead another walk through Aconbury woods to explain their new 5-year plan for the woods. When he led a previous walk, a large number of people came along and we heard a very interesting explanation as we walked around about what they had done and what they were planning to do. It will be most interesting for the large number of local people who walk the woods regularly to hear what plans they have for the future. We are very fortunate to have such a lovely resource on our doorstep.

The walk will take place on **MONDAY 6TH JULY**. We will meet at Little Birch Village Hall at **6.30pm.** The walk will take between 1½ and 2 hours.

When we return to the village hall there will be a ploughman's supper and liquid refreshment laid on. For those of us who wish to take advantage of this, and we hope you all will, there will be a charge of £5. There will also be an opportunity to talk further to Geraint Richards.

Little Birch Church Fête

This will be held at the Old Rectory, Little Birch (by kind invitation of Helen and Chris Atkinson) on **SATURDAY 11TH JULY** at 2.00pm. There will be fun and games for all the family including target Bowls, Cake, Bottle, Plant, Book and Bric-a-Brac Stalls, a Grand Prize Draw, and live music with Phil Cave, Gospel Blues and Rock Band.

Offers of help, cakes or prizes will be greatly appreciated. Please

DIARY DATES FOR JULY 2009

- 1ST JULY – LBPC Meeting
- 2ND JULY – MBPC Meeting
- 6TH JULY – Duchy Walk in Aconbury Woods
- 11TH JULY – Little Birch Village Fête
- 14TH JULY – Evergreen Club Outing
- 14TH JULY – Whist Drive Little Birch Village Hall
- 21ST JULY – W.I.
- 24TH JULY – Much Birch Village Market

DIARY DATES FOR AUGUST 2009

- 2ND AUGUST – Pork Roast
- 11TH AUGUST – Evergreen Club Outing
- 11TH AUGUST – Whist Drive Little Birch Village Hall
- 18TH AUGUST – W.I.
- 28TH AUGUST – Much Birch Village Market

ADVANCE NOTICES

- 4TH SEPTEMBER – Children's Workshop
- 5TH SEPTEMBER – Annual Horticultural Show
- 24TH SEPTEMBER – Bingo Little Birch Village Hall

contact John Caton 54267, Pauline Rogers 541203, John Bryant 540316, Chris & Helen Atkinson 540054, Janet Gwinnett 540651, Janet Pugh 540662 or James Gould 540676 for any information or offers of help.

Whist Drive

Our next Whist Drive is on **TUESDAY 14TH JULY** 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. **Please note. Date for August Whist Drive is TUESDAY 11TH AUGUST**

The Evergreen Club

On **TUESDAY 14TH JULY** we are going to Weston-Super-Mare. Hopefully the tide will be in and we shall see the sea! The cost is £8 for members, £10 for non-members. The number to ring is **01981 540932**.

The pick-ups are:

Brandon Coach Depot	8.45
Tump Lane (bungalows)	8.55
The Park, Wormelow	9.00
Tump Lane (middle)	9.05
Poor Clares Convent	9.10
Kings Thorn bus shelter	9.15
M. B. Church bus stop	9.20
Axe & Cleaver bus stop	9.25
Merton Hotel	9.40
Fontaine Court	9.45

We are also going to Kings Norton on **TUESDAY 11TH AUGUST**, where we have arranged a guided tour of the restored medieval buildings, then on to Evesham Country Park in the afternoon. The cost will be approx. £11 (inc. tour) – £2 extra for non-members. Pick up points as above.

W.I.

The July meeting takes place in Much Birch Community Hall on **TUESDAY 21ST JULY** at 7.30pm. The speaker will be Vic Harnett, whose subject is 'Antique Silver'.

The August meeting takes place on **TUESDAY 18TH AUGUST**. The speaker will be Selina Wells and the subject is 'Ethnic Musical Instruments'.

Visitors are always welcome.

Please contact Kath Watts 01981 540382 or Jennifer Jones 01981 540698 if you would like further details.

M.B. Village Market

The market takes place on the 4th Friday of the month...The next two are on **FRIDAYS 24TH JULY AND 28TH AUGUST** in Much Birch Community Hall between 2.30pm and 4.30 pm. **In order to continue, the market needs your support.** Please come along and enjoy browsing the stalls selling locally produced meats, bread, preserves, ice cream (not July) and cheese etc.

There are herbaceous plants and a variety of crafts, also a Fair Trade stand. A good range of refreshments are served and proceeds go to MacMillan Cancer Support. For details of later dates, producers, or to enquire about a stand, please contact Kath Watts 01981 540382

Gardening Club

The July meeting will be an afternoon visit to Lower Hope, Ullingswick. Further details will be given later.

The **ANNUAL SHOW** will take place in Little Birch Village Hall on **SATURDAY 5th SEPTEMBER**. There will be a childrens workshop conducted by Janet Gwinnett on **FRIDAY, 4TH SEPTEMBER**. Show schedules will be attached to the Newsletter and will also be placed in the **Castle Inn, the Axe and Cleaver** and the **Surgery**.

On **WEDNESDAY 30TH SEPTEMBER** there will be a visit to the 'Dragon Orchard' to learn about Herefordshire apples. For further information, contact Helen Fox 541004 or John Bryant 540316.

W.I.

Much Birch WI, supporting the Air Ambulance and MBCH, invite you to their fourth very popular Summer Sunday Pork Roast Lunch [or vegetarian or vegan option if booked] on **SUNDAY, 2ND AUGUST** at 12.30pm at Much Birch Community Hall. There will be Punch on arrival, hot roast pork, stuffing & apple sauce, new potatoes, lots of salads, followed by scrumptious puds. £10 per person £6.00 under 7. Bring along your own drink. Tickets: Caroline 540422, Kate 540382, Jennifer 540698 - Much Birch WI supporting the Community.

Bingo

Due to holidays, there will be no Bingo evenings in July and August. The next Bingo will be held be **THURSDAY 24TH SEPTEMBER** at 8.00pm in Little Birch Village Hall. There are special prizes and refreshments will be available.

Local News

A warm welcome is given to GAIL and HERMAN MITTELHOLZER and family, DIETER, JARRED, ANDREAS and ANYA and not forgetting greyhound, 'Rascal', who have come to live at 'Reform Cottage' and also to MRS. SARAH GOODWIN, living at Bower Cottage. We trust that they will all be very happy in their new homes. It is good to see DEREK SCRIVENS home again and looking very fit after a lengthy spell in hospital. Sadly, OLIVET LEWIS fell and broke the 2 main bones above the wrist and we wish her a speedy recovery.

Au Revoir and Thanks to Kay

On Sunday 17th May Much Birch Church had the honour of hosting the last Benefice Service that Kay officiated at as our Rector. The church was full, representing all age groups from the seven parishes. Despite the sadness of Kay leaving us, the service was a happy one and as you might expect a musical one. After the service a benefice photograph was taken to

mark the special occasion and this was followed by an excellent and enjoyable Bring and Share lunch during which speeches and presentations were made to Kay. First of all the PUFF group had made their own presentation and the Choir sang a tribute to their Choirmaster. Patrick Darling then delivered a thank you speech on behalf of the seven parishes comprising the Wormelow Hundred Benefice. He thanked Kay for her ministry, for her caring and support to us all and for the diplomatic way in which she brought the seven parishes together when the boundaries were realigned. She is leaving behind a group of seven parishes who are working well together and it is a testament to her thoughtfulness, caring and sheer hard work in pulling the parishes together. Kay was presented with designer jewellery of a matching necklace and bracelet by John McKellar, a red laptop computer, an album of photographic memories, a celebration cake, flowers and a cheque of the remainder of the collection for Kay to spend as she wished (a little bird tells me that a new cassock is high on the list of choices). The choir held their own special lunch on the following Tuesday at the home of Lesley Gare when they presented Kay with their own vocal tribute and their own gift.

Kay and Peter came to live in Much Birch in 1976, and after a year went to live in Llanwarne for 10 years before moving to Birch Lodge. Kay directed the Much Birch Church Choir from 1981 and of course in recent years has had much to do with the combined choir. She was Deaconed in 1990 and there is a lovely photograph in the album of one of her first tasks, which was sweeping the floor of the Community Hall in her robes (and a somewhat different hair style from today!). She was Priested in 1994 and was one of the group of the first woman priests in the area. She then

worked in the Birch Group of parishes for six years as a non-stipendiary minister and continued these duties for a further six years during which time she was also the music teacher and Chaplain at Hereford Sixth Form College. In 2003 she became the Priest-in-Charge of the new Wormelow Hundred Group and became Rector when the Archenfield Group was formed. Kay also became involved with some national work when she was elected to the General Synod in 1995 and when in 2005 she was elected to the Archbishop's Council, from which she was also appointed as Chair of the Business Committee of General Synod. She will continue this national work alongside that of her new appointment at the Cathedral.

Peter retired in April 2008 and increasingly since then they felt they wanted to spend more time together than the ministering to seven parishes would allow and to have time to spend with the grandchildren. Kay therefore decided to take up the offer of a new non-stipendiary appointment as Cathedral Chaplain at Hereford Cathedral. This means generally working on Sundays plus three days a week for most of the year but for five fortnights she will be full time "Canon in Residence"

This appointment gives Kay particular responsibility for volunteers working at the Cathedral and for the Pastoral team which cares for the sick and housebound (i.e. Home Communion etc.) and she will also have responsibility for the team of summer Chaplains. As part of the role Kay has been asked to begin a new monthly Sunday Evening Service to be conducted in a less formal style than other worship at the Cathedral, using perhaps the Taizé and Iona forms of liturgy and music. There will be also be an opportunity to accommodate some experimental forms of worship and another area of responsibility will be to chair meetings of the Cathedral's pastoral group. She is

going to be quite busy!! Family members and many friends from the Benefice were present in the Cathedral on Saturday 13th June for the Licensing of Kay by the Bishop of Hereford to this new appointment.

We hope that Kay and Peter are able to enjoy their semi-retirement but above all we thank Kay for all that she has done for us in this Benefice over the years and particularly for her work with the children and young people. We must not forget too that Peter has quietly supported Kay in the background and we thank him for that and look forward to his continued presence amongst us. We shall miss Kay hugely but we wish her well in her new appointment and pray for her as she sets out on this new form of ministry.

The Wye Valley Walk & Talk

We were pleased to have Heather Hurley back to talk to us about the study she took part in of the Wye Valley from Home Lacy to Bridstow and about Hentland and Pengethley in particular. As before, she gave us a fascinating and well-illustrated account. Firstly she explained about the project which involved all the parishes lying alongside the Wye in the project area and about how communities were invited to take part in various activities, learning new skills and researching the area. They were helped in their task by experts in the various fields and with grants from various sources. This culminated in the production of a book – *Landscape Origins of the Wye Valley*.

The group studied the geology, archaeology, old documents and old maps. From these, together with investigations on the ground, they were able to study landscape and agricultural change, woodlands, buildings, industries and mills, old tracks, river and rail transport and river crossings. From this enormous range, dealt with in the book, Heather picked out a few

items of particular interest including a forge at Carey island in the seventeenth century, using wood for charcoal from Athelstan's Wood. She told us about their investigation of a possible Roman crossing of the river at Red Rail (a continuation of Caple Street in Kings Caple) where they found evidence of a much later crossing but did not excavate deeply enough to find Roman remains. She also told us about a dig in fields on Gillow lands where interesting markings on aerial photos were spotted. The dig revealed Romano-British finds and evidence of a ring ditch also slag suggesting possible iron-working. A canoe trip down the Wye revealed the remains of many wharves used in the past for loading and unloading goods and animals. The Wye was used for navigation from 1680 to 1855. Barges, using sails where possible, moved up and down, usually needing to be towed upstream, by men and, later, horses. River traffic stopped abruptly with the opening of the Hereford to Ross railway in 1855. (It closed in 1964.)

Heather then told us about the history of the Hentland/Pengethley area which we later visited and walked around. Hentland church sits in a most attractive and now almost forgotten valley but would have been on or near an important route in Roman times or earlier. The remains of several old hollow ways are to be found radiating from here and it is thought that a Roman road passed nearby linking two main north/south routes. St Dubricius/Dyfrig, to whom Hentland (from *henllan* – old church) church is dedicated, was probably active here in the 5th/6th century and maybe founded a monastery at Llanfrother, about a mile from the church. The site of the church possibly preceded that, Heather showed us a spring or well rising just below the church on an area known as Parson's Common. Many churches were established near holy wells thought to have healing

properties. The present Hentland church dates from the 14th century but has been much altered later. Still visible on the south side is the filled in remains of the old main doorway giving access to the church from a medieval settlement on the south side of the church. Unevenness of the ground still indicates the house platforms beneath. We then walked into Pengethley park alongside a hollow way which led from Hentland to Gillow (a medieval manor). The park, now in National Trust ownership (left to it by the last owner), contains a number of fine trees and was a deer park in the 1600s. By 1819, the then owner, Col Symonds, felled a large number of the trees to pay for his election expenses! The house was originally a Tudor fortified manor house with a fine hall. At the end of the 1500s it was lived in by the Powell family who married into the Symonds family. They lived there until the last member of the family, a Miss Caroline Symonds died in 1940 leaving the park to the National Trust. The house then became a hotel. The original Tudor house was burnt down in 1820 and replaced with the Regency house we see today. All that remains of the old house is part of the cellars visible in the garden.

After visiting the vineyard (established 1993) Heather took us past Upper Pengethley Farm, once part of the estate and possibly the dower house, with its splendid range of newly converted barns. We then turned downhill and, surprisingly quickly, found ourselves back at Hentland church.

Dog Walkers Litter Bags

The Litter Bin at the Bus Shelter is monitored and emptied regularly by volunteers who are very unhappy that dog walkers are depositing their dog litter bags in this bin. It would be much appreciated if dog walkers would take the litter home please and deposit them in their own litter bins. Thank you.

L.B.P.C. Annual Meeting

Report of the Little Birch Parish Council Annual Meeting and Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 6th May 2009.

No interests were declared.

Mr. J. Dillon was duly re-elected as chairman. Mr. J. Dillon gave a summary of the Council's activities for the past year including a summary of the latest Village Hall refurbishment projects. He thanked Cllr. Richard Smith and CSO Fiona Witcher for their continued support.

Minutes of the AM held on 7th May 2008 and Parish Council Meeting held on 4th March 2009 were read and signed as true records.

Annual Financial Report - The Parish Council's books were available for inspection and the Clerk issued details of the 2008/2009 accounts. There have been Lengthsman's costs of £1394.68 in this financial year, £606.76 has been received from Herefordshire Council and a balance of £982.26 was carried forward from the previous financial year. This leaves a balance of £194.34 for the Lengthsman scheme for the 2009/2010 financial year. The balance available to the Parish Council for the 2009/2010 financial year is £1187.74. The 2008/2009 figures were agreed by the Parish Council.

Update on Village Hall - It was reported that the Village Hall has had a very good year with fund raising activities and completing several projects to further refurbish the hall. With the huge success of the Christmas pantomime, further plans are to stage a summer pantomime to raise more funds. The Chairman expressed special thanks to the members of the Village Hall Management Committee for their continued hard work. Little Birch Parish Council nominated Sue Jones and Alison Clarke to continue representing the Parish Council on the Village Hall Management Committee. Further refurbishment plans include replacing the current

guttering and fascia boards and installing an outside light.

Matters Arising from previous minutes - Mr. Morley and the Clerk attended an informal meeting with Little Dewchurch Parish Council and other invited neighbouring Parish Councils. The outcome of which to be discussed during the next Parish Council meeting together with the Affordable Housing Survey results.

Village Hall - Clerk to contact Much Birch Parish Council concerning the Communications Group and newsletter.

Parish Lengthsman Scheme - Invoice received for completed work. Mr. Clarke, Mr. Morley and Mr. Powell to complete a walk around the parish to identify possible future work for the Lengthsman and/or Parish Initiative.

Parish Initiative - Parish Councillors assigned to identify possible defects. Clerk to chase progress of existing reported defects.

Parish Field - A quote has been received to cut the bordering hedge and trees of the parish field, further quotes to be obtained.

Financial Report - 2 cheques received, 5 cheques written

Correspondence - A detailed list of all correspondence was given to the Parish Council and noted with any responses detailed under 'Any Other Business'.

Planning - Planning refused for The Crickets Croft no. DCCE2009/0309/F - Retrospective application for ancillary accommodation for elderly parents.

Any Other Business

A resident reported several areas of concern in regards to culverts and ditches. All areas to be examined further when the Parish Councillors complete their annual inspection.

It was reported that Little Birch Church vestry had been broken into although nothing seems to have been stolen.

Correspondence received from two parishioners concerning the sizes

of HGV lorries delivering goods to Crows Nest Lane residents.

A couple of sheep worrying incidents have occurred within the Parish. Dog owners have been contacted directly.

A report was read by the Clerk, on behalf of Councillor Richard Smith, summarising his and Hereford Council's achievements.

Date of Next Meeting

WEDNESDAY 1ST JULY, where HALC representative Lynda Wilcox will be giving a talk on subscribing to HALC.

Parish Clerk

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

M.B.P.C

Synopsis of approved minutes from Annual Parish Council Meeting on 7th May 2009.

John Jones was elected Chairman and Dave Davies was elected Vice Chairman.

Lengthsman work

Grass cutting will continue in identified areas of the parish. A number of pot holes have appeared on some of the roads in the parish. Clerk to contact HFDC to request that they be repaired .

Footpaths Report

Over the last year a good start has been made on inspecting the condition of the footpaths. This is an ongoing process that will take many more months to complete. Our intention is that, at the end of that process, we will have an accurate and up-to-date survey of the condition of all the footpaths in the parish.

We are pleased to confirm that work has been carried out to MB23, but have to say that, although there is a considerable improvement on the previous dangerous condition of the entrance to the path, the quality of the work was not very good. Perhaps this was an example of something that might have been carried out with more care and

pride in the work, had it been executed under the Parish Paths Partnership Scheme.

We wish to encourage all walkers, whether parishioners, or visitors, to report any problems they encounter when walking the footpaths of this parish. With this in mind, we would like to suggest that there are regular reminders placed both in the newsletter and on the website, in which people are asked to report any problems to Cllr. Glen Sims on his home telephone number - 01981 540052 in the evenings.

Planning

No applications for comment

Correspondence.

Parish councillors had previously been given the correspondence list which was noted.

Sandbags

The Parish Council would like to hear from parishioners regarding the matter of acquiring sandbags from Herefordshire Council for the parish and possible suitable areas for them to be stored to allow easy access for parishioners to collect them if required during times of flooding.

Date of Next Meeting

THURSDAY 2ND JULY at 7.30pm.

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.

For information on Much Birch Parish please visit our website www.muchbirchparish.org.uk where you will also find the Annual Footpaths Report.

Neighbourhood Watch

Please note the new number for contacting West Mercia Police (if you can't get hold of us on our mobile phones) is

0300 333 3000

Crime Trends

There have been a few incidents of which we would like to make you aware.

On 31st May a member of the public saw what he believed to be a male

siphoning diesel from an industrial tank In Kingstone. When the offender realised he was being watched he left the seen at speed. Possible Reg was W***WOM. The offenders did not get away with much diesel. If you see any vehicles with a similar reg please let us know and also keep an eye on the levels of your heating fuel.

Overnight 31st May/1st June a Portaloo was stolen from Tina's Snack Bar on the A465 Wormbridge. The portaloo is worth about £600. If you can remember seeing anything suspicious in this area at these times please let us know.

On 1st May a property in St Weonards found 2 males having a look around the outbuildings set away from the house. They were seen leaving in a white Transit style van with a reg similar to Y***NUF. Any sightings of vehicles with a similar reg please let us know.

Thefts of scrap metal are again becoming more and more popular. Please secure/hide any items and try to keep outbuildings secure also. Please report to us any suspicious vehicles or people to one of us via numbers below or call the incident line 03003333000.

Speed Enforcement

The role of the local police officer is to address issues raised by the public. One of the main concerns mentioned in many villages is speeding traffic. To address this problem it has been decided that we will conduct a rolling programme of speed enforcement in all the villages which are subject to 30, 40 and 50mph limits. The community support officers are also going to be trained in the use of the speed devices.

Whilst we are in the villages and if you are out and about, come and have a chat and we can show you what we do.

Policing The Priorities

We all need to make priorities in life - it helps us to deal with the things that are most important. West Mercia Police is no different

in this respect. There are certain things that get immediate attention – murders, rapes, road crashes and missing children, for example.

We also have issues that we believe should have a very high priority, not just in our eyes but for all the communities we serve. Readers of previous issues will know that this year the force's main thrust in relation to crime is towards house burglaries because of the huge impact it can have on victims. In addition to crime, all staff will be focused on improving satisfaction and confidence in the services we provide.

At a day-to-day level, people may not be too concerned about serious crimes because they know that the police are sighted on these and will deal with them professionally. But there can be local issues needing a greater focus to reduce the impact on communities.

This is where the Partners & Communities Together (PACT) process comes in. The PACT system gets local agencies (police, housing, health, transport etc) together with local communities to find out what concerns need addressing. Such issues may include anti-social behaviour, parking, speeding, nuisance dogs or litter.

Every three months, PACT meetings decide what are the priorities for a given area. All these are published amongst other places on the Local Policing pages of the West Mercia Police website (www.westmercia.police.uk) and detail the priority and who is dealing with it.

Our Local Policing Teams take these priorities very seriously because these are the things that really concern their local communities. On top of our main priorities, these are the issues the public want to see us deal with. To outsiders, some may seem trivial but they do affect the

quality of life of local people so they are dealt with.

In Wigmore, PC Andy Varden and CSO Zoe Brown (Leominster Rural) are being asked to deal with the problem of youths congregating outside Wigmore Church and causing a nuisance. Regular visits and engagement with those youths will hopefully resolve the problem.

In Hereford City Centre, Sgt Dave Evans and his team are targeting drivers using East Street as a rat run and contravening the No-Vehicles sign, as residents have complained about the high number of vehicles using the narrow road, contrary to the regulations. Public education and Warnings and prosecutions will sort this issue out for them.

In the Peterchurch area, villagers complain of speeding cars in Much Birch, Callow, Clehonger and Peterchurch breaking the 30mph and 40mph limits. So PC Andy Bundy from Peterchurch regularly takes out his speed gun to detect errant motorists at those locations and gives warnings and tickets where appropriate.

If you have an issue that concerns you, which police or partner agencies can deal with, please go along to the next PACT meeting in your area or contact your Local Policing Team on 0300 333 3000 and tell them what you think needs addressing.

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 **SEPTEMBER** issue via email attachment in Word format to semathews@btinternet.com or by hand or post to Mrs. S.E. Mathews, Folly Cottage, Little Birch, HR2 8BD. by

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18TH AUGUST
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Please mark your envelope
“Kings Thorn Newsletter”



LEARN TO PLAY BRIDGE

**Two new Beginners' Courses
on Monday mornings &
evenings starting on :**

**Monday 7th September
10.00am. – 12 noon**

AND

7.00pm. – 9.00pm.

Classes are limited in number so if you are interested please make early contact to avoid disappointment.

For further details:

**Sarah Mathews
01981 540274**

(Member of the EBU Teachers Association)

