

KING'S THORN & THE BIRCHES NEWSLETTER

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

Pancake evening

This is a reminder that this is on **TUESDAY 24TH FEBRUARY** in Little Birch Village Hall at 7 pm. Come and eat yourself to a standstill for £2 for 2 pancakes and 50p for each extra one – wide choice of fillings

Bingo

You may receive this newsletter in time to remind you about **FEBRUARY'S** bingo on Thursday 26th. The next bingo will be on Thursday March 26th at Little Birch Village Hall. 'Eyes down' at 8 pm. There are very good prizes and refreshments will be available.

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.

Whist Drive

Our next Whist Drive is on **TUESDAY 10TH MARCH** 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.

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

DIARY DATES MARCH 2009

10TH MARCH – Evergreen Club
10TH MARCH – Whist Drive
12TH MARCH – David Whitehead Talk
16TH MARCH – Visit to Hereford Museum
16TH MARCH – Rod Mason & his Hot Five
17TH MARCH – W.I.
27TH MARCH – Village Market
31ST MARCH – Little Birch Quiz

local historian – has already talked to us on various 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 7.30 pm and cost £2.50 including light refreshments.

Visit to Hereford Museum

This is being organised by the history group but others are welcome to join us. It will probably be on **MONDAY 16TH MARCH** at 2.00 pm. There will be a small charge. Please ring 01981 540791 to confirm and for more details.

Rod Mason and His Hot Five

Rod Mason's Hot Five, critically acclaimed as Europe's No1 traditional jazz band, is back in the UK and is 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 are £15 from RNC Fundraising on 01432 376372 e-mail marion.lyons@rncfundraising.org.uk or from The Outback, Church Street, Hereford.

W.I.

Members are looking forward to the meeting on **TUESDAY 17TH MARCH** when the speaker is fellow member Gillian Clouder, whose subject for the evening will be 'Growing for Gold – Garden Design at Tatton Park'.

Gillian was involved with the design, growing and planting of the WI Garden at the Tatton Park Garden Show after her WI, then Boothsmere, Cheshire, was one of the winners of a national competition to celebrate 90 years of the WI.

WI meetings take place on the 3rd Tuesday of the month in the Community Hall at 7.30pm.

A warm welcome is extended to visitors and potential new members.

There is a varied programme of talks, to suit most tastes, planned for 2009.

For further details please contact Kath Watts, 01981 540382 or Barbara Wilson, 01432 840559.

Much Birch Village Market

The market takes place in the Community Hall, just off the A49, on the 4th Friday of the month between 2.30pm and 4.30pm.

On **FRIDAY 27TH MARCH**, please come and support local producers of beef, ready meals, pies, pork, sausage (including a Gluten Free option, to order), bacon, cheese, bread, preserves and various crafts. There is also a Fair Trade stall. Usually there is a Police presence too, so, if you would like to ask them any questions regarding security, Smart Water etc. they are pleased to answer your questions. Refreshments are sold in aid of MacMillan Cancer Support. For further details please contact Kath Watts, 01981 540382

Little Birch Quiz

For all you quiz buffs out there, Little Birch Village Hall is instituting a yearly perpetual challenge cup event starting this year on **TUESDAY 31ST MARCH**. The quiz will be played by teams of four and will cost £5 per team. There will be refreshments provided. If you would like to enter a team, please phone Robyn on 01981 540264 by March 24th. The evening will start with booking in at 7.15 and the quiz will begin at 7.30. The winners will receive a cup (to be returned at the end of the year).

Local News

Congratulations are extended to KATE (nee Dymott) and ALAN DAWSON of King's Thorn on the birth of their second son, Peter, a brother for Robert and a grandson for Sally and Colin Dymott.

It is a pleasure to welcome LIN and MICK TUERENA to their new home in King's Thorn. They are no strangers to the area as Mick worked at the Madley Satellite station for 15 years while Lin worked at Chadd's and for the

Admag before they moved to Essex for a number of years. We trust they will be happy in their new home as well as renewing old friendships.

The whole community has been saddened to learn of the death of GEOFF JONES in his 83rd.year. He was born in Little Birch on 11th. Nov. 1926 and lived here for the whole of his life. His mother was Bet Jones and Geoff lived with her and her parents at Green Cottage. The large garden here was always very productive and while Geoff's grandfather was a timber feller, his grandmother sold the fruit and veg. from a stall in the Butter Market. Life was not easy in those early years for Geoff and Bet, who was a single parent. However, the area around Green Cottage and Green Farm was almost a community on its own where everyone helped each other, and Geoff was also supported in many ways by the Paine family at Merrivale Farm. He attended Little Birch School from 1931 - 1940, and there is no mistaking him in the school photographs of 1932 and 1935 as his round face and mischievous smile never changed over the years. (See school photos. in the book, 'Little Birch on Aconbury Hill' where Geoff is mentioned on several pages.) He worked for a while for Mr. John Bibby at the Folly Nurseries close by and here he learned a good deal about growing various crops.

His next job was delivering groceries on a bicycle for David Greig in High Town and he joined the Voluntary Fire Service towards the end of WW2. After the war, he joined Palmers the builders in Hereford for a few years and then went to work on Guy's Hospital Estate. On one occasion, he was working with Charlie Gwynne at Moraston Farm, Little Dewchurch, where the farmhouse stands very tall on the yard side. They were working on the roof when the ladder moved violently and Geoff was hurled off. Most fortunately, he did not land on the concrete but

right in the middle of the manure heap without a scratch, but he had to go home, certainly not 'smelling of roses'. In the late 1940's, he went to work for Sir James and Anthony Acheson at Long Orchard Farm, where he learned to plough with a Ferguson Tractor, which the Achesons would kindly allow him to take home occasionally to plough the land at Green Cottage; where he also kept pigs. Some visitors were being shown around the orchards one day and Geoff was in close attendance. Suddenly, he pushed a young Malcolm Acheson to the ground, which shocked everyone. "Why ever did you do that?" said Anthony Acheson rather crossly. "Well Sir," Geoff replied, "If I had not, he would have fallen in the well" (which was open and unguarded). Geoff was seriously ill for several years and he left Long Orchard Farm to join the Post Office, working in the Supplies and Equipment Dept. in Holmer Road (next door to what now is B & Q.) and he remained there until he retired.

His mother, Bet, who had been organist and Sunday school teacher at the Methodist Chapel for many years, died in the early 1970's, which was a bitter blow for Geoff. However, he knuckled down into a routine and kept his cottage very clean and tidy. He did all his own washing and ironing and on Sunday mornings, all the windows of the cottage were fully opened and Geoff could always be heard whistling the 'Old Rugged Cross' as he cleaned the cottage from top to bottom.

Geoff was taught to drive by his cousin Margery's husband, Bill Garland, and he bought his first vehicle, a 10cwt. Morris van, from Mr. Bibby. This was the first of a long line of vans and cars. Geoff continued growing fruit and veg. at home and sold them in the Butter Market. He picked up a good deal of knowledge from Mr. Sid Powell, who lived at Well Orchard, and from Mr. Tom Davies, who were both excellent gardeners. He sold

other local people's produce, including carrots from Well Orchard and had the reputation of being more than fair in all his dealings. He supported events at the Memorial Hall in King's Thorn and was very active helper at Little Birch Hall for many years after it was opened in 1951. Geoff got on well with the Powell family at Green Farm and when 4 of the children were baptised in 1980, he became godfather to the youngest son, Kier.

After retirement, Geoff continued growing crops at home and helped a number of local folk with their gardens. He was also great help to Margery after she became a widow. He joined the Evergreen Club and the Post Office Veterans, enjoying their outings and holiday trips with the PO Veterans. He also joined the Little Dewchurch Over 60's Club when this was formed and gave lifts to Mrs. Kitchener and Polly Perkins.

In 1992, Geoff underwent a hip replacement operation in the General Hospital and there met Geoff Clarke from Ross who was in the same ward. They got on extremely well and this led to a very close friendship with Geoff Clarke and his wife, Mary. Geoff eventually had a second hip operation, which unfortunately did not go so well and his gardening activities were temporarily curtailed. He decided he would exercise more and went to the gym at the Hereford Leisure Centre on most weekdays. He became much fitter again and as a bonus lost a lot of surplus weight. In 2002/3, Geoff decided that the cottage, which he bought in the 1970's, and the garden were now getting a bit too much for him and he obtained planning permission for a bungalow in the garden and this was built by Bailey Brothers. He was very happy in his new home, 'Orchard Green' and created a new garden, laid out with lawns, flower borders, a vegetable plot, a large greenhouse and new fruit trees. Everything seemed to be going

well and he bought a fairly new Wagon-R through Chris Atkinson, who had always serviced his cars and which was easier to enter and disembark.

Suddenly, he lost the use of his legs and had to be taken to the County Hospital. He returned after a while, but never regained the proper use of his legs. He was well looked after by Geoff and Mary Clarke, who visited him several times each week, when Mary would clean the bungalow and do the washing and ironing. His new neighbours, Ifor and Mary Hughes, also kept a good eye on him each day, when they were at home. Unfortunately, his legs 'went again' and he only drove the Wagon-R a few times before he had to sell it. Geoff persevered at home with great difficulty and he was greatly helped by Diane Smith and all of his neighbours were constant visitors. He had Meals on Wheels for a time and these were supplemented by frozen meals from Wiltshire Farm Foods. His cousin's son, Peter, from Newent, came to mow the lawns and his old friend, Bill Sayce, looked after his business affairs. Eventually, Geoff had to have a wheelchair but his physical health deteriorated and after another spell in hospital, where the surgeons tried to restore the use of his legs he decided to move into Hampton Grange Nursing Home. Unfortunately, he had contracted a large bed sore in hospital and this was found to be infected so that it took 18 months to heal. Over this period, Geoff had lie in bed all the while on his side and needed turning every 4 hours. He remained incredibly cheerful, even after the untimely death of his great friend, Bill Sayce. Bill's wife, Margaret and her family have been incredibly good to Geoff and have continued to look after his affairs as well as visiting him almost every day. Vic Townsend, Gerald Prior, 'Bernie' Thompson, Geoff and Mary Clarke and Ifor and Mary Hughes and the Mason family amongst others have continued their visiting

at Hampton Grange and Cath Evans also brought his cousin Margery, both to Little Birch and the Nursing Home to visit Geoff. He had to go into hospital with breathing difficulties but passed away peacefully the next day.

So Little Birch has lost one of its real characters in Geoff, who was a straightforward, honest, hardworking and forthright man. He loved to argue politics over a pint of beer with Mike Morley and the late Dick Penry at the Castle Inn. He also enjoyed a pint at the Axe and Cleaver and the Plough at Little Dewchurch over the years. He could be generous to a fault and kept 'Kitch', Miss Lawrence, Polly Perkins and many others with vegetables, always refusing any payment.

Geoff occasionally referred to his friendship with George Thomas, later to become Speaker of the House of Commons and on retirement, Lord Tonypany. When Geoff as a younger man, he went to stay in the Rhondda Valley for a short time, he found that George Thomas lived in the house next door and they struck up a lasting friendship and George gave Geoff plenty of helpful advice. When Lord Tonypany was ill in hospital with throat cancer, Geoff drove down to Wales to visit him and this elicited the question, "Geoff, why have you come all this way to visit me?" Geoff. Replied "Well, George, I wouldn't me much of a friend if I couldn't make a little effort to come and see you". And that was Geoff all over.

We offer our deepest sympathy to Margery and her family, to cousin Jean and her son, Peter and to Margaret Sayce and all her family and all the many friends and neighbours who have visited and helped Geoff over many years. He will be sadly missed.

The crematorium was full and many had to stand for Geoff's funeral service, which was conducted by Rev. Preb. Kay Garlick.

A service of Thanksgiving for the Life of NOELINE BRAY was held at St. David's, Much Dewchurch on 6th. February, conducted by Rev. Preb. Kay Garlick. Noeline died on 23rd. January, aged 85 years.

She was born and brought up on the family farm in Braunston, Northants., with her brother, Victor, and their parents. She helped out on the farm while still attending school but, at the age of 15, decided to leave school to train as a hairdresser. At 16, she qualified and had her own round, keeping all the ladies of the village in good trim. She loved music and had a lovely singing voice so she joined the local choir.

When Noeline was 17, WW2 was well under way, most of the farm workers were called into the forces and so she had to spend more time helping on the farm. She worked alongside her father hoeing crops, getting in the harvest, milking the cows and doing the milk round.

A new teacher, Helena, arrived at Braunston School when Noeline was 25 and they became great friends. In the holidays, Helena went home to Saltford, between Keynsham and Bath, and invited Noeline along. The farm next door was being run by George Bray and they were introduced to each other. George was not a man to be rushed- no whirlwind romances for him! Five years later, George arrived with a pearl necklace and proposed marriage. Noeline claimed that she was so surprised that she said 'Yes' without thinking. They started married life on a small dairy farm in Hittisleigh, Devon, where Noeline kept hens, sold eggs, ran the village post office in the front room and welcomed guests for B&B.

When George finished farming, he moved on to land valuation and they moved to the south Midlands, eventually settling in Norton's Point, a remote cottage above Carey. Noeline immediately joined the WI, Mothers Union, the church choir and the Hereford Choral

Society and settled happily into rural village life.

When George retired, they moved to Dovestone in Tump Lane where they immediately made friends and Noeline continued her singing in the choir at Much Dewchurch and was an active member of the Mother's Union. She travelled with her friend and neighbour, Audrey Crowte, to rehearsals at the Hereford Choral Society and sang for a number of years in the Three Choirs Festival, such was the quality of her singing. She was also active in the Hereford and Madley Festivals.

George and Noeline helped for many years in the assembly of the Parish Magazine while Noeline also took round Meals on Wheels with another friend and neighbour, the late Dorothy Davies. She also transported many folk to the Pop in Club.

Although having a busy social life, Noeline also enjoyed her life at home with George. They were both keen gardeners, George growing excellent vegetables while Noeline tended the flower borders. She was an outstanding cook and not to be outdone George was often in the kitchen, baking the bread.

George died in his 90's a few years ago, but Noeline carried on living at Dovestone and continued in all her church and social activities. In recent years, her health deteriorated, and she moved into Charnwood, where she was extremely well cared for by all the staff.

So, she will be affectionately remembered by many, many friends as a busy, charming, committed and loyal Christian lady, who loved singing and who filled the room with laughter whenever she met with friends in whatever situation. She will be very sadly missed and we send our sincere sympathies to her nephews, David and Martin and their families.

We are also very sad to hear of the passing of Audrey (Rae Edmunds) Sheldrake, erstwhile of Tump Lane after a short illness. Audrey was

married just back in October of last year and had moved to live with her new husband, Cyril in Holmer. We send to Cyril and Audrey's sons, David and Roger, our deepest sympathy.

Some long time residents of the parish will be sorry to hear of the death of IVOR TOWNSEND at the age of 93. The Townsend family farmed at New Mills from 1928 and the children were all brought up there. They had a family reunion in Little Dewchurch Village Hall in 2001 and their photograph was published in the local press. Ivor had emigrated, with his family, to Australia in the late 1950's and settled near Sydney. He worked for the Ford Motor Co. there until his retirement. He always kept himself busy in his workshop right up to a few weeks before he died. We send our sincere condolences to his family in Sydney and to his sister, Rosalind, who is now in Brockhampton, Geoffery, still living near New Mills, Victor in King's Thorn and Albert in Ross.

A roll of music tapes was recently found in the Castle Nibole Farm area. For further information, ring John Bryant 540316

'Friends of Dick Turpin'

A message from Paul...

Mr Bishop would like to thank everyone who helped out with the recent panto, the cast for their splendid performances and the audiences who were like an extra man at a rugby match. Thank you one and all.

Paul Bishop

The pantomime was a great success, enjoyed by audiences and cast alike. The enjoyment was evident from both with much hilarity and response. Bess was a particular hit amongst the younger members of the audience. It was disappointing that the bad weather cause the cancellation of the Friday night performance but the 'Dunkirk spirit' carried through the Saturday's performances and an extra one on Sunday. The very funny script, the splendid singing and sound effects and the confident

performances of the young troupe of highwaymen all combined to create an excellent production. Congratulations to one and all.

LBPC

Report on Annual Meeting held on Wednesday 14th January

No interests were declared.

The minutes of the meeting held on the 12th November 2008 were read and signed as a true record.

Matters Arising

From previous minutes – A reply has been received from BT concerning the phone box adjacent to Little Birch Village Hall which says that as the payphone is currently on a list for potential closure, BT will not repair it. Clerk to forward correspondence to the Parish Liaison Officer at Herefordshire Council. Clerk to speak to Lynda Wilcox in regards to attending a Parish Council Meeting to discuss HALC subscription as no reply has been received from two emails. Mr. and Mrs. Rogers are the only residents to offer views on the future of the Parish Field. Both to be contacted and invited to the next Parish Council Meeting to formulate a plan for the future of the Parish Field.

Village Hall – A grant has been awarded to refurbish the ladies and disabled toilets as well as another grant to replace the external doors. Further projects will be discussed during the next Management Committee Meeting to take place on 15th January 2009.

Parish Lengthsman Scheme – Parish Councillors to investigate the source of flooding in School Lane. Work to be continued by the lengthsman in and around Higgins Well to enable easier passage. The full 2008/2009 Lengthsman Scheme has been received.

Parish Initiative – No further defects reported. Clerk to contact Herefordshire Council to request feedback on the status of the existing reported defects.

Financial Report – 1 cheque written and 1 cheque received.

Correspondence – A detailed list of

all correspondence was given to the Parish Council and noted.

Planning – Planning permission granted to The Castle Inn, for the enlargement of existing kitchen/storage area, no. DCSW2008/2410/F and Highland Cottage for the erection of a conservatory no. DCSW2008/2546/F.

Any Other Business

The Parish Council questioned Cllr. Smith on the revising of the Small Holding Policy. Cllr. Smith agreed to report any feedback during the next Parish Council Meeting. Cllr. Smith also discussed the current planning issues in regards to affordable housing within Little Birch. He also agreed to chase the results of the recent survey completed within Little Birch by Herefordshire Council. Clerk to request information on Herefordshire Council's Finances for discussion during the next Parish Council Meeting.

Date of Next Meeting – WEDNESDAY 4TH MARCH.

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

Belmont Library

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

M.B.P.C

Report on MBPC meeting of Thursday 6th November 2008

The report also includes items from the draft minutes of the Parish Council meeting on Thursday 5th February 2009

MB School Parking & Traffic Congestion

A site visit has taken place with HFDC regarding the parking problems & traffic congestion outside Much Birch Primary School. The Stage Coach Bus Company are to change the time that the buses pass through the

area of the school so that they are not meeting outside the school which has caused problems of blocking the highway as the buses are not able to reverse. Parish Council are awaiting proposals from HFDC to help to minimise the parking problems & traffic congestion shortly.

Speeding Problems in Kings Thorn

HFDC Highways Officer has visited the site and the Parish Council are waiting for more information from HFDC on a way forward to address this issue

Speed indicator Devices

During the month of January the Parish Council hired 3 SID's from HFDC which were placed in the following locations:- Much Birch School, Tump Lane and the top of Barrack Hill.

The general feeling from reports received from councillors & parishioners were that the SID'S had helped to slow the traffic down to the speed limit in place at these locations. The Parish Council are awaiting speed data information collected by HFDC from the equipment.

The Parish Council have made a request to HFDC to hire 2 SIDs at 2 locations during April and another 2 at two different locations during May.

Parish Lane

Due to a reshuffle in the public Rights of Way office, no further action has been taken regarding maintenance along part of the lane as HFDC are awaiting a quote from Amey, the contractors.

Publication Scheme

The Model Publication Scheme document was adopted by the Parish Council as required by the Information Commission and the information will be placed on the Parish website shortly.

Lengthsman work

Further ditching work to be carried out along Barrack Hill

Planning – 06/11/08

Applications for comment

DCSW2008/2546/F Highland Cottage, Parish Lane, Hereford HR2 8AT

Description: Proposed conservatory
Application Type: Full
Council Comment - Application Supported

Planning Permissions

DCSW2008/2032/F-Kimberly Cottage, Hereford HR2 8AL

Description: Alterations with first floor extension to North West elevation

DCSW2008/2025/F- The Cabin, Much Birch VC School, Much Birch Hereford

Description: Retention of timber building within the grounds of Much Birch Primary School for the purpose of providing before & after school care and a nursery class

DCSW2008/2186/F- The Chalice, King's Thorn, Herefordshire

Description: Alterations and single story extension to existing dwelling
Application Type: Full

DCSW2008/2245/F -Court Farm, Much Birch, Hereford,

Description: Convert existing farm house into two four bed dwellings: convert existing garage to one bedroom dwelling

Applications for comment

Application DCSW2009/0091/F

Site: Replace seven ageing poultry units (in two different locations on the farm) with four modern poultry units. Application Type: Full

Council Comment - Application supported

Planning Permissions

DCSW2008/2546/F Highland Cottage, Parish Lane, Hereford HR2 8AT
Description: Proposed conservatory. Application Type: Full

Modify or Discharge a Planning Obligation

Land adjacent to Wynds Point, Kings Thorn Hereford

Discharge of Section 106 agreement

Correspondence

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

Parish Council Meetings

The Parish Council meets on the first Thursday of each month (excluding August & January) at 7.30pm in the Community Hall.

Local residents are very welcome to attend and air their views in the Open Discussion.

Next meeting - **THURSDAY 5TH MARCH** at 7.30pm.

For information on Much Birch Parish Council please visit our website

www.muchbirchparish.org.uk

Parish Councillors of Much Birch

John Jones- Chairman, Dave Davies -Vice Chairman, Glenn Simms - Footpaths Officer
Menna Swift, Vivien Short, Alison Cook

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 Parish Council information is supplied by the clerk and no alterations to this report must be made without prior written agreement before the newsletter is published.

Much Birch 100 Club Draw

The February draw took place on Friday, 13th February in Much Birch Community Hall at noon

The winners were:

1. No. 20 - Mrs. P. Rogers, Little Birch
2. No. 30 - Mr. D. Cook, King's Thorn. The next draw will take place on Friday, 6th March 2009 at 12.30 pm in Much Birch Community Hall.

John Jones, Chairman/Promoter

John Jones, Chairman/Promoter

Neighbourhood Watch

There are a couple of incidents to bring to your attention today.

Yesterday, Tuesday 3rd February, between 8.00am. and 12 noon, a single axle 4 berth caravan was stolen from a driveway in Wormelow. This was a very 'cheeky' theft, as it was in broad daylight, and although enquiries have been made with surrounding properties, no-one seems to have seen it go. Unfortunately, at this time, we do not have a better description of the caravan.

A vehicle to keep an eye out for - a silver Ford Transit panel van, DN53*BE was seen acting suspiciously in the late evening of Monday 2nd February in the Lower Bullingham area. The vehicle was stopped by police shortly afterwards, and both the driver and passenger were well known to police, and have been spotted in other vehicles on our patch in the recent past. Although nothing untoward was found in the vehicle, it is highly likely they were up to no good, so please report any sightings to us straight away, you could prevent a crime!

Recently a red Honda Quad bike was stolen from a farm building in Harewood End. The doors to the shed were new and had heavy duty padlocks fitted on them. Two panels of the door had been smashed, and the thieves had smashed off the padlocks using an axe and sledge hammer taken from another building.

With the ever present incidents of distraction burglaries, albeit still rare in Herefordshire, we are asking for your assistance to identify any vulnerable residential properties in your community whose occupants may benefit from assistance from us and our partner agencies. We fully appreciate that not everyone will wish to be helped, and we would not pass on any details without the consent of the occupier first.

Finally, another batch of 'Thieves Beware, SmartWater is in this area' signs have arrived, so if you're interested on behalf of your community/Parish Council etc, the signs are £15 each, but buy 2 and get 1 free, so in effect, for £30 you can have 3 signs.

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**

Crash Course

In 2008, 16 people died on the county's roads, with 76 suffering serious injury and 634 slight injuries. The A49 was cited as the most collision-prone road with the

A438 and A465 bringing up 2nd and 3rd place.

Statistics show that in Herefordshire failure to look properly (19%) was the most common cause of injury collisions, with slippery roads (due to weather conditions - 13%) 2nd and loss of control (12%) 3rd.

Police officers attending a collision report have ordered priorities they must follow to maximise safety and deal with the incident efficiently and effectively.

Firstly they must protect the scene, through the positioning of police vehicles, cones, signs and lights. If another car hits the crash site, problems are multiplied.

Secondly, they need to deal with any casualties and assist the Ambulance and Fire & Rescue services. Thirdly, obtain details of all those involved, record brief accounts of what happened and collect evidence. Lastly, remove vehicles and open roads if closed. All drivers will be given a breath test, irrespective of whether they have been drinking or not. Some may be issued with a ticket to produce their driving documents at a police station.

Officers have a number of specialists they can call on to assist, apart from Fire and Ambulance. Amey Mouchel, contracted to the Council, can put diversions in place. When there's a risk of someone dying, Police Collision Investigators are called out to determine how the crash happened. It can be very inconvenient if roads are closed for several hours but if someone has or is likely to die, the site is regarded as a crime scene and the work of the crash investigators is meticulous and painstaking as they gather evidence.

Specialist recovery firms are skilled at righting large vehicles or recovering others from awkward spots. Police Family Liaison Officers are appointed to those families who have lost a relative in a collision. They give support and

keep the family in touch with any investigation.

Once police have resumed from a crash scene, the officer will submit a report to the Justice Support Unit outlining the circumstances and detail any offences that may have been committed, who then decide whether to prosecute or not.

Officers are shortly to give new forms to those involved in collisions to improve the service we provide. The form provides contact details of officers and garages as well as explaining procedures and practices.

Protecting Our Post Offices

The tragic events at Fairfield Post Office near Bromsgrove recently has emphasised the vulnerability of such premises. To increase the security around them and reassure those working there, Herefordshire Division's response has been an initiative where officers are now paying regular visits to rural post offices and shops.

You too can help. Like the ever-vigilant meerkat, you and your neighbours can keep an eye on your local Post Office or village shop, reporting any suspicious vehicle, persons or activity to police as soon as possible.

By using regular police visits, CCTV cameras on site and around the county and with local residents keeping a watching brief on the premises, we aim to keep staff reassured and our neighbourhood safe.

Any suspicious activity should be reported to police on the 999 system if it's an emergency and on 0300 333 3000 if all other cases.

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 APRIL 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 MARCH

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Please mark your envelope
"Kings Thorn Newsletter"

**There are
new
advertisers in
this issue
&
Aquassist has
a new
telephone
number**