

# The Birches

Community Matters Newsletter

Kingsthorpe, Much Birch, Little Birch,  
Aconbury & Wormelw

November 2022



Derek Scrivens and Tim Hedley were joint winners of the Selby Lloyd Shield for the most points overall in Vegetables at King's Thorn and Little Birch Annual Garden Show—the first show for two years. See Lesley Chapman's report, p2.



## The Jolly Gardener

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What was life like in Little Birch during the Second World War? Read Uncle Norman's account of living in Castle Nibole as an evacuee on p12.

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tiddlersandtoddlersmuchbirch@gmail.com

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

## King's Thorn and Little Birch Annual Garden Show 2022

The Garden Club committee and a few lovely, willing volunteers set up Little Birch Village Hall on Friday full of anticipation ready for the Show on the following day. After a break of 2 years we were all excited that we were at last going to have a Show.

During the afternoon on the Friday a few children turned up for the making of vegetable Monsters which was organised and run by the Chair of the Club Janet Gwinnett. Lots of fun was had creating funny monsters made with all sorts of different vegetables!

Well, it didn't rain (as it had done the few days before) and the sun didn't shine first thing on Saturday morning (It came out in the afternoon) and we met at the Hall just after 8am eagerly waiting for people to come and display their Vegetables, Flowers, Cakes, Handicraft items and many, many more wonderful items.

At 9am arrive they did, and, given the recent hot weather then the rain, we were astounded at the variety that people brought with them. There were many floral displays, with excellent Vegetables too. The Domestic section saw a variety of cakes, scones, jams and chutneys, and the Handicraft section saw homemade hats, bags, Christmas decorations and toys.

Children's new class "Invent a sandwich" produced such really weird combinations of flavours that I wonder if they actually did try and eat them to see what they actually tasted like! Glad I wasn't a judge of this one!

The Judges did their usual wonderful job and awarded many 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> prizes. The Wathen Family received the Llewellyn Sutton Cup; Des Wathen won the David Enoch Cup (Best Exhibit in the Show) and the Harold Salisbury Shield (Winner of Class V1 – A selection of six different vegetables).

Tim Headley won the Horticultural Shield (Most points overall in Sections 1 – Veg & Section 2 – Fruit); Janet Gwinnett won the Rose Bowl (Flowers) & Floral Art Shield & the Show Special (New this year); Lesley Chapman won the Domestic Cup; Derek Scrivens & Tim Headley won the Selby Lloyd Shield (Most points overall in Vegetables)

Nichola Salter won the Wilson Cup (Handicraft), the Photographic & Painting Awards; Jemima Webb won the Children's Shield & the Over 8 winners cup; Rosie Meredith won the Anne Thomas Trophy for best entry in the Children's Section and Henry & Jack Hall jointly won the Under 8 Cup.

Although the number of entries was down by a third this year we still had 175 brilliant entries overall from 33 people. Well done and thank you to all of you who

entered and helped launch the Show again. So, now we look forward to 2023 when the Show will be on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> September, with the Children's workshop on the Friday. Put it in your garden diary and start planning your entries!

If you are unable to grow anything then make chutney, Jam, cakes, scones, Welsh Cakes, hats, Cushions, Christmas tree decorations, take photos, paint pictures, plus see what else you can exhibit once you see the schedule.

If you are new to the area, come and join the Garden Club meetings on the last Wednesday of each month in Little Birch Village Hall – meetings start at 7.30pm and usually, after a cup of tea and a biscuit, ends about 9.00pm. A great way to meet new people, and have a chat with other gardeners, with the opportunity to swap ideas & tips. All welcome.

Happy Gardening,

**Lesley Chapman**

**King's Thorn & Little Birch Show & Club Secretary**

### Remembrance Service

**Friday 11th November at 10.50 am**  
**Wormelow War Memorial, Tump Lane**  
**with Year 6 from Much Birch Primary School**  
**Everyone Welcome**

*Join us at the*

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

**Saturday 12 November**

**10:00 - 12:30**

and every 2nd Saturday of the month

**10 December**

**14 January**

**11 February**

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



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

## Bonfire Night: Have Fun & Keep Safe



Keep fireworks in a closed box and use one at a time.

Follow instructions on each firework.

Light at arm's length with a taper and stand well back.

Keep flames and cigarettes away from fireworks.

Never return to a firework once it has been lit.

Don't put fireworks in pockets or throw them.

Direct rockets away from spectators.

Never use paraffin or petrol on a bonfire.

Make sure the fire is out and made safe at the end

source: RoSPA, safer fireworks

## Hope Spring eCards

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

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Much Birch Community Hall

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

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



### FLICKS IN THE STICKS

## at Much Birch Community Hall

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**Thursday 17 November - BELFAST 12**

BELFAST is a movie straight from Kenneth Branagh's own experience. A nine-year-old boy must chart a path towards adulthood through a world that has suddenly turned upside down. His stable and loving community and everything he thought he understood about life is changed forever but joy, laughter, music and the formative magic of the movies remain.

**Tickets £5 (£4 under 16s)**

*Please note new prices from September 2022*

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

**Coming soon:**

**Friday 9 December - ELVIS 12A**

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

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

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



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# Llanwarne Computer Cafe

Our computer café sessions run every **Thursday**,  
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 [www.ageukhw.org.uk](http://www.ageukhw.org.uk)



## Thought for the month – Revd Mark

We, as human beings, are an odd species – to put it mildly. We celebrate, for example, the oddest things. On Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> we will remember the failure of a plot to blow up Parliament and commit regicide. We have become the people who celebrate failure! Yet we will also remember how Hereford United (as was) defeated the might of Newcastle United in an F.A. Cup tie that was 50 years ago as though it were last week.

One of the things we will remember, though, in this month are those who are no longer with us. This takes two forms. All Souls (traditionally 2<sup>nd</sup> November, following All Saints Day) and Remembrance (November 11<sup>th</sup> and remembered on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup>). Both of these events have a special place for us.

Although All Souls is now not as popular as it once was, it is still a time for us to gather and remember those who have died from our families and friends. With COVID, we expected this to be much worse than it turned out to be. But there is still a great deal to be gained from stopping and reflecting and giving thanks for a life that shaped and formed our own. You can join with others in remembering these people who meant so much at Much Birch Church on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> November at 3.00 p.m.

We will, as a nation, also remember on both the 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> those who have given their lives in war for this and many other countries. It is still a sad thing to do. We seem to have had war and conflict with us for all of human history and, even in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, still don't seem to have found a way not to go to war! The lives of those lost in battle and the civilian casualties still resonate with us today in everything from the parade past the tomb of the Unknown Soldier to the poetry of Wilfred Owen. Let us continue to pray that their sacrifice was not in vain.

### Services for November

#### Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> November (3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday before Advent)

- 11.00 a.m. Little Birch Church – Holy Communion
- 3.00 p.m. Much Birch Church – All Souls Service of Remembrance

#### Friday 11<sup>th</sup> November

- 10.50 a.m. Wormelow War Memorial, Tump Lane – A service of Remembrance with the Y6 from Much Birch Primary School.

#### Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> November (Remembrance Sunday)

- 9.15 a.m. Much Birch Church – Remembrance and Holy Communion
- 10.50 a.m. Little Birch Church – Remembrance and Morning Worship

#### Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> November (Christ the King)

- 9.15 a.m. Much Birch Church – Morning Worship
- 11.00 a.m. Little Birch Church – Holy Communion in Traditional Language

#### Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> November (Advent Sunday)

- 9.15 a.m. Llandinabo – Holy Communion in Traditional Language
- 6.30 p.m. Much Dewchurch – Advent Carol Service

#### Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> December (2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent)

- 11.00 a.m. Little Birch – Holy Communion





## Jobs for the Garden in November

Mice have been causing me a few problems during the last few years. During the summer months they have been raiding our veg patch and gouging out large volumes of beetroot flesh from the developing globes. Two years ago I was able to collect a large quantity of hazel nuts, thanks to the absence of squirrels for whatever reason. They were left in a bowl in the greenhouse. A couple of days later I went to collect them and they were all gone. Indoor and outdoor strawberries have also disappeared. Potatoes stored in sacks in our shed have been raided most years too.

This year I had 'a cunning plan' (Baldrick in Blackadder). In the shed we have an old kitchen cabinet – you know the sort – 2 sliding glass doors at the top, a drop down work surface in the middle and a double door cupboard at the bottom. I decided to clear the junk out of the bottom cupboard and squeeze my sacks of potatoes in there, cool, dark and inaccessible to the mice!! NOPE.

After they had been in there for about 6 weeks I thought it was time to tip all my *secure* spuds out of their sacks and examine them for rot. There were no rotten potatoes but a number of those at the top of each sack had been sampled to a lesser or greater degree by the little varmints. On close inspection I found that the narrow strip of ventilating mesh at the bottom of the cupboard had parted from the wooden back leaving a tiny gap which was big enough for a mouse, or mice to get through. Another little repair job and try again! Now for November!

### Jobs to Do

- \*Plant Tulip bulbs.
- \*Rake up leaves or use your mower. Compost them or if you have a large quantity compress into empty compost bag(s), tie up the top and puncture the bag. Set aside for a year or so and you will have some good leaf mould.
- \*Raise containers off the ground to prevent water logging.

Use bricks, wooden batons or commercially manufactured feet.

- \*Take care not to over water plants outside, in the greenhouse and indoors. Look over house plants and move to a lighter position.
  - \*Check greenhouse heaters, if used. An electric fan heater has the advantage of keeping the air moving which can help to reduce fungal disease.
  - \*Bubble wrap the interior of the greenhouse at the end of this month to insulate – despite climate change we can still get some very cold nights.
  - \*Empty fuel from mowers and power tools (if you think you aren't going to use them until Spring).
  - \*Plant bare root roses.
  - \*Plant winter bedding.
  - \*Lay new lawn turf.
  - \*Prune grapevine after leaf fall but in any case by the end of December.
  - \*Earth up carrots, parsnips and beet (mini version of potatoes) if over wintering in the garden.
  - \*Plant new rhubarb crowns and divisions of old.
  - \*Net sprouts, kale, cabbage and cauliflower to keep pigeons off them.
  - \*Check stored fruit throwing out rotting items on the ground outside for the birds. Likewise, check for, and discard rotting potatoes.
  - \*Plant bare-root raspberries now until March. Dig a wide trench, add plenty of compost or manure and include some slow release fertilizer. Spread the roots out horizontally when planting canes, cover, tread in lightly and water. Cut canes to within a few cms of the soil surface.
  - \*If you still have a few tomatoes on their vines, pick them, no matter what colour and ripen them indoors or make chutney with the green ones.
  - \*Clean out nest boxes and rehang. Put a bit of straw or hay in the bottom of the box.
  - \*Check bonfires have no hibernating wildlife in them before lighting.
  - \*We are being encouraged not to be too tidy in our gardens these days so leave a pile of sticks, stones or other debris here and there – it does not have to be a 'mountain' – for small creatures to hibernate.
- Clean bird baths and feeders and replenish.
- \*Remove fallen leaves from ponds and thin oxygenating plants. It may be advantageous to oxygenating plants. It may be advantageous to remove pump if there is one, overhaul it and store in the shed.

**Derek Scrivens**

*The Axe &  
Clever  
Much Birch  
Contact us on  
01981 540203*



*or on our Facebook page*



## Holistic I.T. Support for Senior Surfers

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

<https://www.facebook.com/TeaTech>

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

07739953864

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

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

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

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

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

# PILATES

with Alison Allan

**Mondays 10.00 am - Intermediate level**

**11.15 am - Senior Citizens**

**Wednesdays 9.30 am - Beginner level**

**7.00 pm - Intermediate level**

**Little Dewchurch - Village Hall**

**Little Dewchurch - Village Hall**

**Holme Lacy - Village Hall**

**Little Dewchurch - Village Hall**

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

**Pre-booking essential; limit**

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

**01432 840491**

**07947 011707**

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



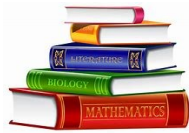
## Coffee Morning with Book Exchange



Thursday 3rd & Saturday 12th November

10.00am - 12.00 noon

Little Birch Village Hall



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

*Look forward to seeing you*

## In My Garden

From the little woodlouse underneath its stone  
And the hedgehog that comes visiting sometimes,  
To the tiny spider spinning a new home  
Or the portly pigeons on the power lines.

From the wary woodmouse watching for the owl  
In the moonlight when we're all asleep in bed,  
To the hungry vixen on her nightly prowl,  
And the bats that skit and flutter overhead.

From the beetles busy beetling about  
In amongst the slugs and snails in fallen logs,  
To the slow worm you may sometimes see pop out,  
Not to mention Mr Toad and smaller frogs.

From the dragonflies and butterflies and bees  
And the sparrows and the robin and the wren,  
To the swifts and swallows nesting in the eaves  
And the bigger birds that fly by now and then.

Big or small there's only one way to regard them:  
All God's creatures – always welcome in my garden!

**Charlotte McBee**



## The Birches Car Club

COMMUNITY CAR SHARE  
IN ASSOCIATION WITH MALVERN HILLS CAR CLUBS

Helpline 07706 365018  
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**Roasted Chestnuts** Carefully cut a slit in each chestnut  
and put them on a baking tray. Cook at 200 degrees for 20 minutes



## MUCH BIRCH PARISH MEETING

At the Parish Council Meeting held in the Much Birch Community Hall on the 6<sup>th</sup> October 2022 the Parish Council discussed and agreed comments on a local planning application. The Parish Council also discussed the presence of an information sign that had been placed near the play area in Tump Lane. Enquiries had been made as to who had placed it. There was a discussion about speeding and the Community Speed Watch initiative was progressing.

The next ordinary Parish Council Meeting, of the Much Birch Parish Council, will be held on **Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> November 2022 from 7.30pm** at the Much Birch Community Hall. All are welcome to attend.

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

### Much Birch Parish Councillors

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

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

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

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

**Cllr Joseph Goldsmith** Quantock House, Hollybush Lane, Much Birch, HR2 8HX [josephagoldsmith@hotmail.com](mailto:josephagoldsmith@hotmail.com) 07967 728590

Much Birch Footpath Officer David Irwin [david.irwin13@btinternet.com](mailto:david.irwin13@btinternet.com)

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

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

[www.muchbirchparish.org.uk](http://www.muchbirchparish.org.uk). You can also find us on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/MuchBirchPC> and Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/>



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### Little Birch Parish Councillors

Cllr Kate Dillon, Cllr Michael Davies,

Cllr Kate Robbins, Cllr Chris Atkinson, Angela Middleton  
Volunteer Footpath Officer, Neil Barrington Clerk  
[lbpcclerk@gmail.com](mailto:lbpcclerk@gmail.com) [www.littlebirchparishcouncil.org](http://www.littlebirchparishcouncil.org)

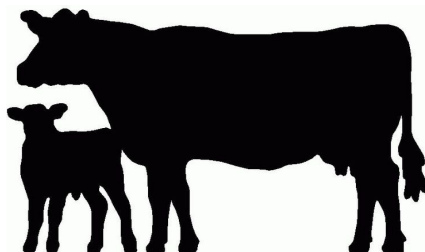


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Merrivale Farm Little Birch  
Hereford HR2 8BA**



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

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



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



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

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

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

## Do you have something to share in Birches Newsletter?

Do you have something you would like to write about—this month we have memoirs, from Kate Dillon’s Uncle Norman who was evacuated here during World War II and another from Mel who moved to the village a year ago - or you might have a skill or hobby, a story of travels, a delicious recipe, a poem (there is one from Charlotte McBee this month), photographs or artwork, anything you think would interest others. Do you have tips for keeping warm and saving on energy and household costs? Let us know. If you are not keen on writing we could do an interview. We look forward to your contributions.



**Elisabeth Taylor Editor**

### Little Birch Mini Christmas Fayre

**Saturday 3rd December 2-4pm**



After twice having to postpone the Little Birch Summer Fair we are delighted to announce the Mini Christmas Fayre in Little Birch Village Hall. There will be Tombola, raffle, lucky dip, refreshments including mince pies and the Elves have confirmed that Father Christmas will there from 2.30. Come along and have fun.

### CHRISTMAS MARKET



**MUCH BIRCH COMMUNITY HALL** will be holding their Christmas Village Market on Friday, 9<sup>th</sup> December 2022 from 2pm until 4.30pm. The usual stalls such as jams, cards, fruit juices, meats, pies, cakes, pet foods etc will be present but we would welcome anyone who would like to have a stall to join us for this special market at £5.00 per table. If you are interested, would you please contact John or Sylvia Jones on tel: 01981 540980 to reserve your space.

### Art and Craft Space

Everyone welcome to our friendly and low key sessions. These are mainly self-directed. Please bring your own materials. Art includes drawing, watercolours, acrylics, pastels. Craft; knitting, sewing, crocheting and any other craft.

Fortnightly at Little Birch Village Hall on Thursday afternoons 2 until 4-30. £3. Dates 3rd & 17th November, 1st & 15th December.

On Thursday 3rd November we have Artist Kathy Priddis doing a still life with us. Please bring objects or plants, fruits, flowers, vegetables to draw and paint and art materials. (extra charge £4 )

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

Please do come and join us at any of our sessions. To find out more contact Sally, [sally.nichol@btinternet.com](mailto:sally.nichol@btinternet.com) or call 07803 032928 or 01981 540001.

## DECOR SOLUTIONS

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## Uncle Norman's Wartime Memories of Little Birch

*The following "memories" were recently sent to Kate Dillon, whose grandparents, Mr and Mrs Dyke, took in evacuees during World War II. One young evacuee, who she called 'Uncle Norman' became life-long friends with her mother, Maggie Mullins, and Kate remembers lots of visits through the years from both Norman and also from his mother, such was the bond formed between the families through those war years.*

I was born in March 1932 so when war was declared during our summer holiday in Salcombe, I have vivid memories of the Town Cryer in robes walking the streets shouting, "Have you got your Gas Masks?"

After our return to South London (Forest Hill) my father's office was transferred to Bristol under the delusion that the Avonmouth docks and oil refinery and British Aircraft factory would not interest the Luftwaffe!! I remember the distinctive pulsating engine note of the Junkers 88 bombers and the very first bombs hitting the city, where we were living in a rented flat. 1939/1940 experienced a very hard winter and the coal we relied upon for heating was so short that we queued in the railway sidings with an old perambulator to have it unloaded direct from the wagons. Meanwhile we relied on the gas oven with the door left open (with the gas lit!) for warmth.

Soon after the bombing started my father put us on a bus for a couple of weeks holiday on a farm he knew of in Herefordshire, where the fortnight turned out to be a stay of three years! When we got off the bus at Much Birch we had little idea of where we were, but my mother and I were met by Mr Dyke, the farmer, and taken up a maze of lanes to the cottage where we were to stay temporarily until they had room for us, as they already had paying guests in the farmhouse. This was quite an eye opener as the cottage, whilst being very clean, had no mains water, gas, electricity or drainage, just oil lamps, candles and an outside 'earth closet' with a very distinct aroma!

The farmhouse turned out to be a large place formerly owned by the Southey family and used as a weekend retreat and grandly named Castle Nibole, no one seems to know why, as there was never a castle there, although there were a few token crenellations on the bay windows. There we had the luxury of very limited plumbing and a sparse water supply caught in underground tanks from the roof and pumped up by hand. The house was one of just a few in the village with mains electricity. We couldn't have baths, and washing was done by an open fire or

from jugs on the bedroom washstand. The house was very cold and draughty!

Meanwhile my father stayed in Bristol while it was bombed and insisted on wearing his bowler hat when fire watching on his office roof as he maintained, probably correctly, that he might as well be warm as his tin hat would not be much protection!

Life on the farm in the scattered parish of Little Birch was a world away from Forest Hill and was almost mediaeval by comparison. The parish then consisted of just a scattering of small farms and cottages, a church, a Primitive Methodist Chapel and a pub mysteriously known as the Pendant, but properly called the Castle Inn. (The farm Castle Nibole was known as the Castle at that time.)

The 'Pendant' was located at the top of the Pendant Pitch, 'pitch' being the local description of any short steep hill. Other local words were 'glat' for a gap in a hedge and 'tump' for a small, isolated hill. At one end of the parish there was a well with a pump, and a spring fitted with doors at the other to supply drinking water. It was common to see locals using yokes to carry two buckets of water hung from chains and held away from their legs by a rectangular wooden frame. I don't suppose they washed too much!! One of our childhood pastimes was damming streams and on one occasion we were severely reprimanded by a very angry gentleman chasing us and shouting 'you have cut my water off!'

Dear 'Uncle Norman' very sadly died of old age at the end of September, at the age of 92. He had recently written his memoirs which have been published in his local magazine 'The Brasted Diary'. As these passages show, he had a very clear mind and could still recall lots of wonderful childhood memories of his time in Little Birch.

**Kate Dillon**

*Uncle Norman's Wartime Memories Part 2 will be in the next edition of the Newsletter.*

## Nearly a year on! Life is still good!

By Mel Thomas

Doesn't time fly. It is nearly a year since we moved to our little cottage and the rose tinted spectacles are still firmly in place! The work, unsurprisingly, has progressed more slowly than anticipated, but I can certainly see a change. The cottage now has electric heating, a new woodburner, a log store by the house filled with dry logs and solar panels. I am happy.

Unfortunately the lovely builder we hoped would be able to transform the kitchen/utility/corridor area into a glorious kitchen/diner was taken ill the day before he was due to start, back in May, and has, as yet, been unable to make a start. We are hopeful that he will be up to the job in the new year. It is surprising how quickly you can get used to chaos and accept it without question. Cardboard boxes still clutter the lounge and bedrooms and you have to give yourself at least an extra half an hour to find anything you do not use every day!! Loss of memory doesn't help. I guess this is why we retire – to give ourselves time to find things!!

I planned an orchard before we moved here and ordered all the trees and planted them back in December on wires to train in the espalier fashion so no ladders would be involved in later years. Unfortunately, due to our excessively dry summer, the poor things have just sat looking sad and putting on hardly any growth. I have watered, but nowhere near as much as I would normally, due to the dire water shortage warnings. They are all still alive, but certainly not kicking. Hopefully next year they will begin to prosper; that is if they are not washed away during this winter!!

The cats have settled in well. Our plump, matronly lady has summoned up the bravery to go outside on her own, but the door must be left open. Having forgotten one day I heard a strange noise at the door and when I opened it found that half the wood had been torn off. She looked at me with such disdain and marched into the house with tail in the air. The previous owner had done a good job of painting over the rot; she had done a good job of ripping it out!! Needless to say a new door was immediately ordered.

We had four wasps nests in the roof at the beginning of the summer, but the hot weather put paid to them. Sadly it also seemed to kill off a hornets' nest, which was obviously nearby, but exact location had not been established. Beautiful things and apparently quite docile, although rather frightening if they come to meet you at close quarters!

Our major nuisance, the moles, are still plaguing our lives. The mole catcher came out and caught one. A very interesting and informed man, who told me that our mole was a "squibbler" or "squibbling" mole, or something like that; a demented juvenile mole, that was digging runs with no organization all over (or under) the flower beds, creating chaos. I absolutely understood this having had children! Just our luck. I learned a lot about moles and have to admit I have quite a regard for these little creatures.. However I wish my cat would learn how to catch them rather than just sit on a mole hill only following them with just a head movement.

The polytunnel and greenhouse produced the best part of 100lbs of delicious tomatoes this year and fruit and veg exchange has been abundant between neighbours. Jars of delicious jams and chutneys have been made and exchanged and I have even trialled tomato marmalade, which I am quite impressed with. There are rumours that one of our neighbours is trying to make alcohol with strawberries – I will investigate further, however this information may not be shared! Certainly life is never dull.

### **Aconbury Shepherd Huts**



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

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Mobile 07768 206296  
www.aconburyshepherdhuts.co.uk**

## Walking and Dogs - Elisabeth Taylor

Many of us have been enjoying the autumn colour in Aconbury woods. Such a peaceful and beautiful place and also popular for walking dogs. But it is not always so peaceful. Recently there have been reports of a few incidents..

An unprovoked attack on a walker by a dog resulted in a serious bite to her arm. A pair of dogs chased and killed a muntjac within sight of a woman walking with young grandchildren, and a dog was attacked by another dog and suffered a large bite that required a number of stitches. All very distressing for those who were affected.

It is important that everyone feels safe to walk in the woods. The Ramblers Association Dog Walking Code dog asks owners to keep their dogs in sight and be able to control them. If a large bouncy dog comes running up to a small child or someone who is perhaps a bit wobbly on their feet they may feel fearful. There has been a rise in the number of dog owners and there certainly seem to be more in Aconbury. I am delighted to meet dogs on my walks, but do expect owners to behave responsibly not just call from a distance "he's very friendly" Unlike me, some people are nervous of dogs and it may not be reassured especially if the dog is jumping up. Most dog owners probably already follow the guidelines below. Please read them and share with others so everyone can enjoy the peace of the woods.

### **The Dog Walking Code For safe and happy walks with your dog, and to avoid causing problems for others:**

#### **1. Ensure your dog is under effective control, which means:**

\*You have a short lead with you and use it when needed (e.g. around livestock, near cliff edges or where signage requests it)

\*You do not let your dog off the lead unless you keep it in sight and close enough to come back to you on command

#### **2. Prevent your dog from approaching horse riders, cyclists, or other people and their dogs uninvited.**

#### **3. Keep your dog with you on paths or access land and don't let it stray into crops including fields of grass, fruit and vegetables.**

#### **4. Never let your dog worry or chase wildlife or livestock. Follow advice on local signs to reduce disturbance to plants and animals.**

#### **5. Stay SAFE around farm animals and horses:**

**\*Stop, look and listen before entering a field; be aware of any animals present .**

\*Always keep your dog on a short lead | Find the safest route around animals, giving them plenty of space and using paths or access land where possible.

\*Exit the area calmly and quickly if threatened, releasing your dog to make it easier for you both to reach safety.

#### **6. Always bag and bin your dog's poo wherever you are. You can use any public waste bin or your bin at home.**

#### **7. Never leave bags of dog poo lying around, even if you intend to pick them up later. Containers and deodorised bags can make them easier to carry.**

#### **8. Ensure your details are on your dog's collar and it is microchipped, so you can be reunited quickly if it is lost.**

#### **9. Keep your dog's vaccinations and worming up to date. Ask your vet for more information.**

#### **10. Contact your local authority, or look out for signs, to get more information about what to do and where to go in your area.**

This is general advice for dog walkers developed with input from: Natural England, Natural Resources Wales, Kennel Club, Forestry Commission, National Farmers' Union, NFU Cymru, Ramblers, Ramblers Cymru, National Trust, Country Land and Business Association, Hampshire County Council, The British Horse Society and the British Mountaineering Council.



## Diary Dates November

**Art & Craft Space** Thurs 3rd November 2-4.30 LBVH

**Coffee & Books** Thurs 3rd November 10-12 LBVH

**MBPC Meeting** Thurs 10th November 7.30 MBCH

Remembrance Friday 11th Nov Memorial Tump Lane

**Coffee & Books** Saturday 12th November LBVH

**Community Café** Thursday 17 Nov 10-12.30 MBCH

**Art & Craft Space** Thursday 17 Nov 2-4.30 LBVH

**Flicks in the Sticks** Thursday 17th Nov 7.30 MBVH

**Art & Craft Space** Thurs 1st December 2-4.30 LBVH

**LB Mini Christmas Fayre Saturday 3rd Dec 2-4 LBVH**

**Christmas Market** Friday 9th December 2-4.30 MBCH

### Regular Events

**Tiddlers and Toddlers** Fridays 9.30-11.30 MBCH

**Table Tennis** 1st Tuesday 7-9pm LBVH

## Footpaths

If you have any queries about footpaths, contact

**Little Birch** Footpath Officer - Angela Middleton  
01981 540377 [ajbmiddleton@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:ajbmiddleton@hotmail.co.uk)

**Aconbury** Mike Leigh 01981 540698

**Much Birch** including **Kingsthorpe** Footpath Officer  
David Irwin 07766 135068  
[david.irwin\\_13@btinternet.com](mailto:david.irwin_13@btinternet.com)

## Little Birch Parish Facebook Group



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

## Advertising Rates

11 editions per year (no August newsletter)

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

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

¼ page £4.50 per issue or £45 per year

½ page £8 per issue or £80 per year

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Account Name **Little Birch Village Hall**

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## Defibrillator Locations

### IN A LIFE THREATENING EMERGENCY CALL 999

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

**Allensmore** Locks Garage

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Peterstow** at the Yew Tree pub

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

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

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

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



