

The Birches

Community Matters Newsletter

Kingsthorpe, Much Birch, Little Birch,
Aconbury & Wormelw November 2023



Alison Clarke led a fascinating history walk around Little Birch. See page 7



Fabulously restored floor in Little Birch Hall with silky smooth finish, thanks to Linda Maden and the Village Hall Committee

CHRISTMAS PRIZE BINGO



**LITTLE BIRCH VILLAGE HALL
FRIDAY 15TH DECEMBER
EYES DOWN AT 7:30PM**

Fun for the whole family
Refreshments available

**Wear your Christmas Jumper
Prize for the best one!**

New Year's Celebration

Little Birch Village Hall
8 pm - 1 am



Ticket Only Venue £10
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FLICKS
IN THE
STICKS

at Much Birch
Community Hall

Thursday 16 November - THE UNLIKELY PILGRIMAGE
OF HAROLD FRY 12A

A seemingly unremarkable man in his 60s named Harold one day learns his old friend Queenie is dying. He embarks on a walk, only to keep going for 450 miles until he reaches Queenie's hospice, much to the despair of his wife Maureen. **Starring Jim Broadbent, Penelope Wilton, Monika Gossmann**

Tickets £5 (£4 under 16s)

Refreshments including hot dogs and ice cream
available from 7pm

Also coming this season...

14/12/2023 A MAN CALLED OTTO 15

25/01/2024 MY SAILOR, MY LOVE 12

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 or call 01981 540097

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

Memorial Service

The War Memorial

Millenium Green, Wormelow

Friday 10th November 10.30am

children from Year 6 at Much Birch

School will be laying a wreath

All Welcome



The Birches Community Quiz

The second Community Quiz took place at Much Birch Community Hall on 13th October and was a great success, local teams participated and enjoyed a good evening of quizzing with a break for well received refreshments.

The quiz was won by The High Flying Birds who narrowly beat a team from the Bridge Club by just 1 and a half points. It was a close contest but fought in good spirit and very well done to all who took part. It is hoped to hold another Community Quiz in the Spring.

Join us at the

Community Café

@ Much Birch Community Hall

Saturday 11 November 2023

10:00 - 12:30

and every 2nd Saturday of the month

9 December

13 January

10 February

For more information or if you are in need of transport contact Lydia on 01981 540323 or socialfabric@hotmail.com



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

“If music be the food of love”

I am always struck by how relevant Shakespeare is to our current day! He wrote his plays and sonnets (and yes, he did write them!) from the 1580s onwards until his death in 1616. He was able to speak of the human experience, the dilemmas of power, the growing up of youth, and the power of love in words that struck the hearts of all who heard them.

Well, almost all, there were a few snipers from those who thought him an “upstart crow”.

What made Shakespeare so influential is that the universal themes tackled, he tackled with wit, insight, and humour and made them seem relevant to the very people who were watching or reading.

We might not have the faintest idea who McDuff was,

but when we are about to set out on some event, who has not cried “Lead on, McDuff!”

Being able to reflect on our own actions is one of the things that makes us human. We have perspective, we can see that when we do something that harms others, there is a cost, either to ourselves or to others. Shakespeare, in his plays, shows us these costs. They are quite a good guide to living life! I guess it is why, alongside the Bible, it is one of the books that is given as a gift on Desert Island Discs!

Our ability to reflect is also shown in the Psalms, that other great collection of ancient poetry and praise. All human emotion is there, just like Shakespeare. And, just like him, we can use it as our guide to life. To reflect on what we have done, as a call to action for justice, to be a comfort in sorrow and also a joy in times of celebration.

Revd Mark

Church Services across the Birches Area for November 2023

Sunday 5th November (All Saints Sunday)	9.15 a.m. Llandinabo – Matins 9.15 a.m. Much Dewchurch – Holy Communion 11.00 a.m. Little Birch – Holy Communion 3.00 p.m. Much Birch – All Souls Service
Friday 10th November	10.45 a.m. Wormelow Memorial, Tump Lane, Much Birch – Remembrance Service and laying of wreaths with Y6 from Much Birch C of E Primary School
Sunday 12th November	9.15 a.m. Much Birch – Remembrance with Holy Communion
Remembrance Sunday	9.15 a.m. Much Dewchurch – Morning Worship for Remembrance Sunday with laying of the wreath at the village war memorial 10.50 a.m. Little Birch - Morning Worship with Remembrance and laying of the wreath at the village war memorial 12.30 p.m. Llanwarne – Service of Remembrance at the village war memorial with the laying of wreaths
Sunday 19th November	9.15 a.m. Much Birch – Morning Worship 11.00 a.m. Little Birch – Holy Communion in traditional language
Sunday 26th	9.15 a.m. Llandinabo – Holy Communion in traditional language
Sunday 3rd December	9.15 a.m. Llandinabo – Matins 9.15 a.m. Much Dewchurch – Holy Communion 11.00 a.m. Little Birch – Holy Communion 6.30 p.m. Much Dewchurch – Advent Carol Service & St. Weonards Benefice Benefice



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Jobs for the Garden in November

We had our little 'Indian Summer' and then in mid October we were lashed with a few thundery showers, followed by a couple of frosty nights, the latter sending me in search of some fleece to cover our orange tree (it's a small bush really). Our sweet peas continued their fantastic display for far longer than ever before albeit the stems got shorter as time passed. Tomatoes continued to ripen through October and the mini cucumbers finally stopped developing in the third week.

We enjoyed the Harvest Festival service at the Church. This year, virtually all flowers had gone over by this time and this was evidenced by their absence on the Church window ledges. It was more than compensated for by displays of all sorts of fruit and vegetables, so we were celebrating the harvesting of our edible crops which we are so fortunate to be able to grow in the fertile soil that we have had provided for us in this country.

Now for November

- *Plant tulip bulbs.
 - *Rake up leaves or use your mower. Either 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 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 other power tools (if you think you aren't going to use them again until Spring).
 - *Water lilies and other pond plants can still be divided.
 - *Plant winter bedding.
 - *Lay new lawn turf.
- Prune grapevine after leaf fall but in any case by the end of December.
- *Plant new rhubarb crowns and divisions of existing.
 - *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.

*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 remove pump if there is one, overhaul it and store in the shed.

*Treat hard surfaces and decking to remove algae to avoid risk of slipping.



Derek Scrivens



**WALKER'S WALKS
AND PET CARE**

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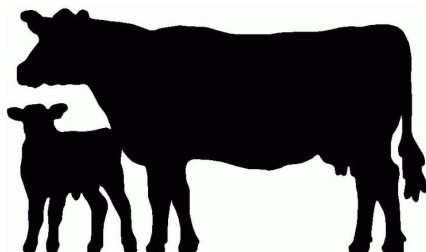
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Items for **December** newsletter to
editorial@birchesnews.org.uk or paper
copy to Elisabeth Taylor 07854 629193 by

14th November

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HOME VISITS ALSO AVAILABLE.

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Anita Phillips mobile 07930145273

Little Birch History Walk

It was a lovely Sunday afternoon when Alison Clarke led a group of twenty or so people on a ramble round the village, stopping from time to time to tell us about the fascinating history of Little Birch .

From the village hall we walked to the Primitive Methodist Chapel, built in 1834 with a cottage occupied by John Morgan, a sawyer and Primitive Methodist preacher.



The original wooden building was replaced by a larger stone chapel in 1858 and had a thriving Sunday School until 1986. More recently it was used as the village library and is now privately owned.

We continued down towards Model Cottages, stopping to look across the field on our left which was part of the old commons. The commons had originally covered a large amount of land throughout the village and there had been houses built on it. At the time of the enclosure land from the commons was allocated to villagers, the amount being based on wealth—those who owned most received the largest amount of land.

We stopped at Model Cottages, so called because these two back to backs are an example of early social housing—as we would call it today. The Revd Stephen Thackwell, vicar at Little Birch, had inherited wealth and used some of it to build these two houses for the poor of the parish and a new school as well as enlarging the rectory. We continued down the hill to the Old Schoolhouse, which has been Alison’s home for many years, but was originally a school with two classrooms divided by a folding door. The pupils were from 3 up to 14 years old, at which point they would go to work.

We then walked up the green lane leading to the Wesleyan chapel, now a converted and extended house, Saddlebow View. From here we went down the road past the farm ruins on the right and then Crows Nest on the left before taking the green lane to Higgins Well where Alison told us the story of exasperated Mr Higgins who, tired of people crossing his land to get water, built a magnificent well for all to use. It still flows today.



Continued from P7

Walking up the stony track from Higgins Well we arrived at Little Birch Church and the Rectory both rebuilt by Revd Stephen Thackwell in the 19th century.

At that time this was the centre of Little Birch with cottages right up to the church wall and would have been a bustling place with four farms. Now most of the farm land belongs to the only remaining Church Farm.

Heading back North we passed the site of the huge tythe barn, built to house the tythes to the vicar from parishioners, but now fallen down.

Turning right we headed downhill again pausing beyond the houses on the left to see the pump room (a shed) that had pumped water from a bore hole to supply several well off families who had created it. Other villagers were able to pay for water piped to their houses. All mod cons!

We then continued to the holy thorn, which is said to have come from the holy thorn at Glastonbury and allegedly flowers on Christmas Day. Walking up we came back to the road at the top of Pendant Pitch and passed Castle Nibole on the left, the grandest house in the village and still a working farm.

Not far now and we were back at the village hall for a welcome cup of tea.

Many thanks to Alison for sharing her historical knowledge on this fascinating walk.

Elisabeth Taylor

**Photos P7 Primitive Methodist Chapel, Schoolhouse
P8 Little Birch Church:** Chris Fowler, Mike Leigh

LOCAL GROWN CHRISTMAS TREES

**Traditional Norway Spruce
and Nordman Fir
Assorted sizes freshly cut**

**Follow Signs in Little Dewchurch
from 1st December**

Or

**Phone 01432 840826 to come and select a
growing tree for cutting
closer to Christmas.**



Much Birch Parish Council

At Much Birch Parish Council Meeting held in Much Birch Community Hall on 7th September the Parish Council discussed and agreed to comments in regard to two local planning applications: Planning Consultation 232379 – Wenallt, Kingsthorne, Herefordshire, HR2 8AL, this being for proposed change of levels at the rear garden formed by gabions (part retrospective) and Consultation 232316 – Land at Hollybush Lane, Much Birch being for reserved matters on a previous application. The parish council resolved to comment that there were no objections from the parish council, in respect of both the applications. The parish council also heard concerns about the sale of three local land parcels near Hollybush Lane. The council had made enquiries and established that the sales related to land for agricultural or equestrian purpose. There did not appear to be any evidence of plans to alter usage.

The dates for the forthcoming meetings are **9th November and 7th Dec from 7.30pm** at Much Birch Community Hall. All are welcome.

Much Birch Parish Councillors

Cllr Alison Cook (Chair) Jasmine Cottage, Wrigglebrook Lane, Kingsthorne HR2 8AW, thecooks@wyenet.co.uk 01981 540703

Cllr Andrew Crum Tan-y-coed, Barrack Hill, Kingsthorne, HR2 8AX, a.crum@btinternet.com 01981 540002

Cllr Roisin Burge The Old Hall, Barrack Hill, Little Birch HR2 8AX roisinburge@hotmail.com 01981 540724

Cllr Chris Pickering-Grey 4 Court Farm Barns, Much Birch HR28HT chris@pickering-grey.uk 07712 813218

Cllr Joseph Goldsmith Quantock House, Hollybush Lane, Much Birch, HR2 josephgoldsmith@hotmail.com 07967 728590

Cllr Michael Agyeman Little Willow, Wrigglebrook, Kingsthorne HR2 8AU 01981 540840

Parish Clerk Mrs Alison Wright Longfield House, Gooses Foot, Kingstone HR2 9NE muchbirchclerk@gmail.com 01981 250860

Minutes of meetings www.muchbirchparish.org.uk.
<https://twitter.com/MuchBirchPC>
<https://www.facebook.co/groups/Much.Birch.Parish>

Little Birch Parish Council

- For a matter of an hour or so LBPC had a full number of councillors. Thanks to Mr Steve Coles for agreeing to be co-opted onto the committee. However, Dr Mike Davies resigned as chair at the end of the meeting as he is moving to North Herefordshire. May we again ask anyone with an interest in serving our community to come forward please - your parish needs you!
- Autumn is upon us and may we remind parishioners of their riparian responsibilities regarding keeping water-courses and ditches through their own and adjacent to their properties clear please.
- The PC is to consider delegating some responsibilities to the Parish Clerk. This will be formalised over the next few PC meetings.

Little Birch Parish Councillors

Cllr Steve Coles Cllr Tom Palfrey
Cllr Chris Atkinson Cllr Nick Deacon
Neil Barrington, clerk lbpcclerk@gmail.com
Website www.littlebirchparishcouncil.org
Next meeting Wednesday 1st November 7.30pm

Safer Fireworks

- * Keep fireworks in a closed box. Use them one at a time.
- * Read and follow the instructions on each firework using a torch if necessary.
- * Light firework at arm's length with a taper. Stand well back.
- * Keep naked flames, including cigarettes, away from fireworks.
- * Never return to a firework once it has been lit.
- * Don't put fireworks in pockets and never throw them.
- * Direct any rocket fireworks well away from spectators.
- * Never use paraffin or petrol on a bonfire.
- * Make sure that the fire is out and surroundings are made safe before leaving.

Tips from RoSPA

Remember, remember! the fifth of November, gunpowder treason and plot!

I know of no reason why Gunpowder treason should ever be forgot!

John Milton 1626, commemorating the failed plot of 1605 to blow up the Houses of Parliament

Beginners class
 Little Dewchurch
 Wednesday 8pm
 Starting 26th April

Pilates with Alison Allan

My number: 07947 011707
 Email: alisonpilates2016@gmail.com



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 promote your local business, advertise a local event
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 village and surrounding area. *Little Birch Parish
 Group on Facebook*

Footpath Officers

If you have any queries about footpaths, contact:
Little Birch and Aconbury: Chris Fowler
chrisfowler1@hotmail.co.uk 07931 292998

Much Birch including Kingsthorpe: David Irwin
david.irwin13@btinternet.com 07766 135068



Autumn News

Well, after a very confused summer we have now welcomed autumn and the fast approaching winter. The leaves are delighting us with their showy colour palette and the garden is looking sorry for itself with dying stems and seed heads in most borders. Plump berries still adorn the hedgerows, waiting for the hungry fieldfares and redwings, wood pigeons and blackbirds, to descend and consume in minimal time.

Despite the varied temperature changes in September there was a good harvest and the pantry is full of this year's produce, including jams, chutneys, dried foods, bottled fruit and veg and the freezer is bursting. We just have to hope the winter does not give us too many power cuts!

Two of my favourite store cupboard recipes are squash marmalade and tomato marmalade. Both are delicious and keep well (as long as I make enough!!!) However I didn't win any prizes for them at the wonderful local flower and produce show – some people have no taste!! However I did get a second prize for my 'As near as Branston chutney as you can get'. It was my first attempt and I had not even tried it before entering it. I was very pleased with it - great in cheese sandwiches!

I have heard of a few unusual bird sightings earlier this year, and we were lucky enough to have had a redstart visit us back in August. It landed right outside our French windows and stared at me for a moment, flicking its tail, a giveaway to its breed. At first I thought it was a young robin, of which we had quite a few this year. It only stayed a minute or so, hoovering up a few bugs on the patio, and then flew off. I was so excited. My trusty bird book confirmed it was a female redstart – another bird ticked off the list.

Our glorious green woodpecker has been extremely vocal since the end of summer, his (or her) laughing cry echoing around, announcing its arrival on our telegraph pole. Then there is five minutes of peek-a-boo before flying off to explore somewhere else. Nowhere near as annoying as this year's supply of cuckoos. In all my years I have never seen a cuckoo so many times or heard it to the point of being tempted to buy a gun!!!

One day he was in next door's garden, loudly proclaiming how wonderful he was when all hell broke loose as two mistle thrushes bombarded him unmercifully until he decided that discretion was the better part of valour and made a hasty retreat before any damage was done!! It was quite a spectacle.

The garden has provided much in the way of produce and flowers but I am finding it more and more

difficult to keep it as I would wish. I have contemplated offering some of it to a keen gardener as an allotment, in exchange for a little help with my area, but it is always a worry that you will get someone who does not look upon the wildlife and insects as friends as I do.

I have grown a great many 'weeds' this year and believing in "waste not, want not", I started making my own balms and ointments from them. This has been a great eye-opener as I would never have previously believed that the most useful plants are the "weeds". Plantain, especially, has so many medicinal uses and I have been using the salve I made to ease all the itching I get every year from midges and other insect bites and minor injuries to the skin.

I have dried quite a lot of different plant leaves to use during the dark months to make other concoctions. I am learning so much – who knew that a simple tea made from the silk from corn on the cob could help with kidney problems and UTI's?

The world is a wonderful place. It provides so many useful things, if only we know where to look.



Mel Thomas



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Diary Dates November

LBPC meeting Wed 1st 7.30 LBVH	p9
Coffee & Books 2nd 10-12 LBVH	p12
MBPC meeting Thurs 9th 7.30 MBCH	p9
Community Café Saturday 11th MBCH	p2
Flicks in the Sticks Thurs 16th	p2
Christmas Bingo Fri 15th Dec 7.30 LBVH	p1
Coffee & Books 18th 10-12 LBVH	p12

MBVH Much Birch Village Hall
LBVH Little Birch Village Hall

Coffee Morning

With Book Exchange

**Thursday 2nd & Saturday 18th
November 10.00am-12.00 noon**

Little Birch Village Hall

Come and enjoy a cup of tea or coffee, some cake or biscuits.

Make new friends or catch up with old friends. Take a book, leave a book, or both. Exchange recommendations for a good read. Families and well behaved dogs all welcome

We look forward to seeing you

Compost for free!

A lot of waste material has accumulated in Much Birch Churchyard e.g. grass etc. in the front churchyard under the trees to the left of the shed. If you would like some free compost please do bring your own bags and shovel and help yourselves.

Advertising Rates

11 editions per year (no August newsletter)

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

1/8th 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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Defibrillator Locations

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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

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