



# ABTALK

News from Abthorpe

April 2006

## **BURIAL GROUND**

Although we took the decision some years ago to purchase the piece of land on Silverstone Road for a new burial ground, progress has been held up by a number of outside factors. One of the conditions of obtaining planning permission is that further tests on groundwater levels have to be carried out; this should be done shortly. Once the legal formalities have been completed, we hope to become owners of the field later this year. After that, a proper entrance has to be made to the field and a stockproof fence erected around it.

Meanwhile, the closure process for the existing burial ground is in abeyance as at least one plot remains. When that is used, further checks will be made and if no plots are found the closure will be completed and the new burial ground will come into use.

## **HOUSING SURVEY**

Many thanks to those who completed the recent Housing Needs Survey. The response of well over 50% was very high compared with similar surveys and much appreciated by the District Council. Further confidential details will now be sought from those who indicated a specific need. From the initial assessment there seems to be a need for four or five homes. There will then be the problem of finding a suitable site and ensuring appropriate development.

*Jill Tolson*

*tel: 857320; [jill.tolson@abthorpe.net](mailto:jill.tolson@abthorpe.net)*

*Keith Fenwick*

*tel: 857083; [keith.fenwick@abthorpe.net](mailto:keith.fenwick@abthorpe.net)*

*Thanks to Richard Tomalin for the new picture (and Mick Walsh for the technology to adapt it for Abtalk)*



## FAREWELL MESSAGE FROM ABTHORPE CHURCH FABRIC FUND

This is probably the last time that this familiar logo will be seen in Abthorpe.



Less than three years ago Abthorpe church was faced with rectifying serious problems in the condition of the building. Drains needed to be rebuilt, windows repaired, part of the floor replaced and most of the external masonry re-pointed. Abthorpe, like most village churches in England, gets almost no help from official sources to look after this part of our country's heritage. A lot of money was needed. Steve Andrews took the lead and recruited a committee of villagers, most of them not church-goers, who were nevertheless concerned about this important building in our village. In the ensuing 2½ years, the Abthorpe Church Fabric Appeal has made it possible for this small village to raise the amazing sum of £24,399.



*Steve with Canon Bridget and the Right Revd Ian Cundy, Bishop of Peterborough, following the dedication of the restoration*

As 2005 came to a close and with it the appeal, all of the repairs to the church had been completed and in addition the whole of the interior had been restored and redecorated. Please take a moment to step into the church and see all the work that YOU have made possible.

The following is a note sent to Steve and the people of Abthorpe from Canon Bridget at the end of December:

"I would like to thank The Fabric Appeal Committee and all the people of Abthorpe for all the hard work, goodwill and enthusiasm over the last two and a half years. Without the leadership of Steve and the committee and the continued support of the people of Abthorpe none of your success would have been achieved. The amount of money raised in the time set is amazing. It has, as you know, been put to good use. The church building is so much more secure, it smells fresh now, no longer damp and musty. The internal decoration cheers all who enter the church as it is so fresh and clean. I send you all a 'thankyou' that no words will truly express."

The tote continues and February's winner was Daryl Cozens (£250). Ian and June Willsher came up trumps in March (£252.50).



## VILLAGE FUND

Strangely enough, no-one seemed to take the quiz too seriously! The level of noise and banter only quietened when mouths were otherwise occupied with supper. The final scores were close with the winning team, attempting to name themselves 'The Cheetahs' but inevitably ending up as 'The Cheaters', just pipping the rest of the field at the post. The losing team seemed more proud of their wooden spoons than the winners their wine, and certainly raised the loudest round of applause. A modest profit of £289.27 was added to the Village Fund.

As trailed in the last newsletter, an Easter egg hunt for children in the village has been arranged for Sunday 16 April. There will be four categories: pre-school,

*Phil Wahwerit proudly displaying his team's wooden spoons*



i n f a n t ,  
junior and  
s e n i o r .  
Every child  
will receive  
a prize;



*Two members of the winning team:  
Julie Dyckhoff and Philip Berry*

entry is free. Be at the New Inn for 2.30 to get your hunting instructions.

Plans have also been finalised for the car treasure hunt on 30 April. Guy Beresford-Linnell has set a course which will take us

round the prettier parts of the local area. The first car will leave the New Inn at 9.30am with the last finishing (unless they take the scenic route!) at around 1.00. The entry fee is £4 per person and includes a snack lunch; free for children under 12. The number of cars participating is restricted to 20, so it's worth getting your entry forms early if you're keen to take part. June Willsher is the keeper of the forms, so contact her on 850575, email: [june.willsher@abthorpe.net](mailto:june.willsher@abthorpe.net), or call at 1 Cadogan Place.

Helen and Tim Pope came back from Connemara with some impressive times following a very hard marathon run with 15mph winds, pouring rain all the way and more mountains than Abthorpe (check out the topographical profile at [www.connemarathon.com/profile](http://www.connemarathon.com/profile)). Helen came 4th in her category in 3:53:38 (13th woman overall) and Tim ran 4:43:33 (36th in category and 205 male overall). Well done to both of them. The light-hearted competition to guess their combined finishing times was won by John Sandford who was only 20 seconds out. Tim and Helen had donated a first prize of £100, and



£82 was raised for the Fund. Pictures and more information can be found at [www.connemarathon.com](http://www.connemarathon.com).

Another key date to note is 9 September. A super Fun Day is being organised in place of a village fete - for this year only. The fete is normally held during June and the lengthy World Cup competition starts its final rounds towards the end of that month. This, along with the lead in time required to organise a good event, has lead the committee to decide that a Fun Day for all, but especially for the children, is more manageable this year and they will start early planning on a bigger and better fete for next year.

### **FOOTPATHS AND THE PARISH PATH WARDEN**

*by David Robbins*

There are about 1,800 miles of footpaths and byways in Northamptonshire, of which over 15 miles are in the Parish of Abthorpe. For those of a statistical bent, the Parish is 8.74 miles in circumference, contains a 180ft height difference which I certainly notice when running up Brackley Lane, and an area of 2,015 acres. The rights of way network provides easy access to some beautiful countryside which can be enjoyed by all provided the pathways are free from obstruction and clearly marked, and that is where the Parish Path Warden has a part to play.

The Parish Path Warden (a voluntary position, of course) is part of the Rights of Way (RoW) team run by Northamptonshire County Council. Colin Wicks is the current RoW Officer and then there is me, one of the many PPWs active in South Northants. Although my appointment as path warden in 1998 was first proposed by the Abthorpe Parish Council, actually I 'work' for NCC, but give a brief report to the AGM of the Abthorpe Parish Council once a year.

My responsibility, at minimum, is simply to walk the parish path network on a regular basis, perhaps once a year for all paths, and report any problems to the RoW team. With (bridle)way markers, a few nails and a definitive map of the Parish I can also ensure that off-road the route is clearly indicated. There is of course considerable latitude for much greater personal involvement and armed with my trusty Council-issue secateurs and sturdy gloves 'clearing' of a more general nature is strongly encouraged. Where the landowner is known and the RoW officer informed, this could extend to maintenance of steps, gates and drainage. However, obstructions such as crops, fences and other physical objects are simply reported and have to be dealt with by the RoW co-ordinator.

An illustration of how things go is the case of the RA20 (all walking reports are a string of meaningless numbers unless you have the map) which runs



along the NW edge of Bucknell Woods to their western corner. This narrow strip of land had been waterlogged for many years but was passable in dry weather. At the parish AGM of 2002 villagers raised concerns about the continuing deterioration of this route. My enquiries at the RoW office determined that the field was an SSSI and as such effectively untouchable. Imagine my surprise when out running three years later I found that the whole route had been upgraded, extensively drained, hedged, hardcore put down and many new gates erected. I made another 'phone call to find that NCC had indeed been busy, with the permission of English Nature, and the whole route restored to easy use. This was something of a test case it emerged and English Nature are reported to be very pleased with the outcome, so opening the way for many other jobs in the future.

As further encouragement to parishoners to get out and about I hope later in the year to publish one or two 'local routes' in AbTalk; perhaps some of you may be tempted to try them.



*with thanks to Ben  
Robbins for this  
interesting view of  
our parish*

### **INTER-VILLAGE CRICKET MATCH**

*Philip Berry*

The annual Abthorpe vs Blakesley, or rather the New Inn vs the Bartholomew Arms, cricket match began its life when Fred and Di Huggins were running the pub here in Abthorpe and in its first year, 1998, resulted in an astonishing victory for the men and boys of Abthorpe. [Could Philip Berry's 100(ish) on that day have been the winning contribution? - Ed.] Since then, the fixture has seen a number of wins for the Bartholomew Arms and its professional



team, while the New Inn amateurs have failed to capitalise on their early promise.

To commemorate the first match, and rub in our victory, Fred and Di presented our neighbours with a tasteful portrait of the winning team. The compliment was returned the following year when Chris Shepherd from Blakesley gave our pub a poster size photo of our team who, I have to say, look as happy in defeat as they did in victory the year before, thus confirming the maxim that it is the taking part that really counts, as well as how much beer has been consumed.

There have been a number of memorable moments since we began the fixture: Dave Wilmott stopping the ball, but at the same time dislocating his finger and allowing the opposition to run at least 6 runs; Tim Pope managing to put his pint down just in time and for long enough to take a magnificent catch to win the first game; Dave Hastie facing at least 4 overs without hitting the ball at all.

The New Inn team is already in training for this year's fixture on 14 May, 2.30 at Blakesley cricket ground, and we are confident of regaining the crown as the best pub team between here and Blakesley. It will be worth turning out to support.

### **NEWS FROM THE NEW INN**

Events are coming thick and fast from Jane and Robbie: something for all.

The Easter Sunday/Jane's 40th birthday celebrations will have the mediaeval theme promised in the last issue. Activities will kick off at 12.00 and throughout the day there will be a bouncy castle, pig roast and BBQ, mead to drink and karaoke. Most importantly, there will be a mediaeval fancy dress competition. This should provide rich pickings for photographs for future issues.

St George's Day (23 April) this year falls on a Sunday and Jane has arranged a fun quiz in the evening, starting at 8.00. Teams of 4; free entry.

Undoubtedly the inter-village cricket match on 14 May will see the Abthorpe team celebrating or drowning its sorrows in the New Inn.

The tug o' war challenge with Silverstone on 17 June still needs more muscle on the Abthorpe side. Ladies as well as men are wanted, so do sign up for your place on the rope.

And of course there will be a full programme of events supporting the British Grand Prix weekend of 10-11 June.

### **DEMISE OF THE LEYLANDII**

When the Council built the bungalows at Cadogan Place, they thoughtfully planted a leylandii hedge between the car park for the bungalows and the pub garden. These have now grown out of control and the Council feels the time has



come to tackle these unfriendly trees. It has arranged for this hedge to be taken down before it gets completely carried away. However, the need for a security and noise barrier is still there, so it will be replaced by mature laurels which hopefully will grow quickly but be more manageable.

### HEALTH WALKS

Tying in neatly with David's article on the Path Warden scheme, SNC in partnership with the local Primary Care Trust, offer group walks led by two volunteer Walk Leaders on a variety of local routes. The aim is to provide opportunities for social walks for people who probably don't take too much exercise. The walks are free and you need no special equipment - just suitably comfortable shoes and clothing. There are a number around the area: in Towcester they leave from Waitrose at 10.00 on Fridays and 10.30 on Sundays. Walks around Brackley are every Wednesday at 10.00. There is no need to book, just turn up, but if you would like further information, call Colin Hull at South Northants Council on 322337; [colin.hull@southnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:colin.hull@southnorthants.gov.uk).

Last year there were walks from Wappenham which may be programmed in again this year, and also the scheme organisers are hoping to include Greatworth. The programme depends on volunteers,

so if you fancy offering your help regularly or ad-hoc, Colin would be delighted to hear from you.

There are also themed walks, such as a history walk of Towcester leaving Waitrose at 2.00 on Friday 28 April (free), a guided tour of the gardens at Castle Ashby on Thursday 18 May from the car park there at 2.00 (£3.80), a bug walk of Salcey Forest meeting at the cafe on



### PEOPLE



Weddings in a small village such as Abthorpe are something of a rarity, so that of Robert McCallum and Kelly Mills on 25 March is to be celebrated. We add our congratulations to all those already showered on them.

Eileen Vielvoye has moved from Stable Cottage to her delightful new home, Westward, on Wappenham Road. We hope she'll be very happy there.



Tuesday 20 June at 10.30 (£1), and a guided tour of Sulgrave Manor and gardens on Wednesday 12 June at 2.00 in the car park (£5). These are turn up, first come, first served, but you can also book with Colin (details above).

.... And don't forget the **village tidying** on 29 April - all hands welcome to clear the ravages of the winter. Please bring tools and bin liners; and BBQ supplies for afterwards....

### EVENTS

#### *Monday 10 April*

Parish Council Meeting, 7.45 in the Old School - parishoners welcome to attend.

#### *Sunday 16 April*

Easter egg hunt starting at the New Inn at 2.30

Easter and Birthday celebrations at The New Inn from 12.00 noon: mediaeval fancy dress competition, bouncy castle, pig roast, BBQ, karaoke

#### *Sunday 23 April*

St George's Day fun quiz, 8.00pm at the New Inn. Free entry

#### *Saturday 29 April*

Tidying the Village - meet on the Green at 2pm, all very welcome.

#### *Sunday 30 April*

Car treasure hunt for all the family. 9.30am from the New Inn. £4 per person including light lunch. Entry forms: June Willsher, 850575

#### *Sunday 14 May*

Inter-village cricket match, Blakesley -v- Abthorpe. 2.30 Blakesley cricket ground.

#### *Monday 15 May*

Parish Council Annual General Meeting, 7.45 in the Old School.

#### *Monday 22 May*

Annual Parish Meeting, 7.45 in the Old School - please do come and hear reports from all sections of the community.

#### *Sunday 11 June*

British Grand Prix at Silverstone

#### *Saturday 17 June*

Silverstone/Abthorpe tug of war challenge: Silverstone fete

#### *Saturday 1 July*

Slapton fete, including challenge to Abthorpe to a tug of war

*Plus - various walks as detailed on page 7*