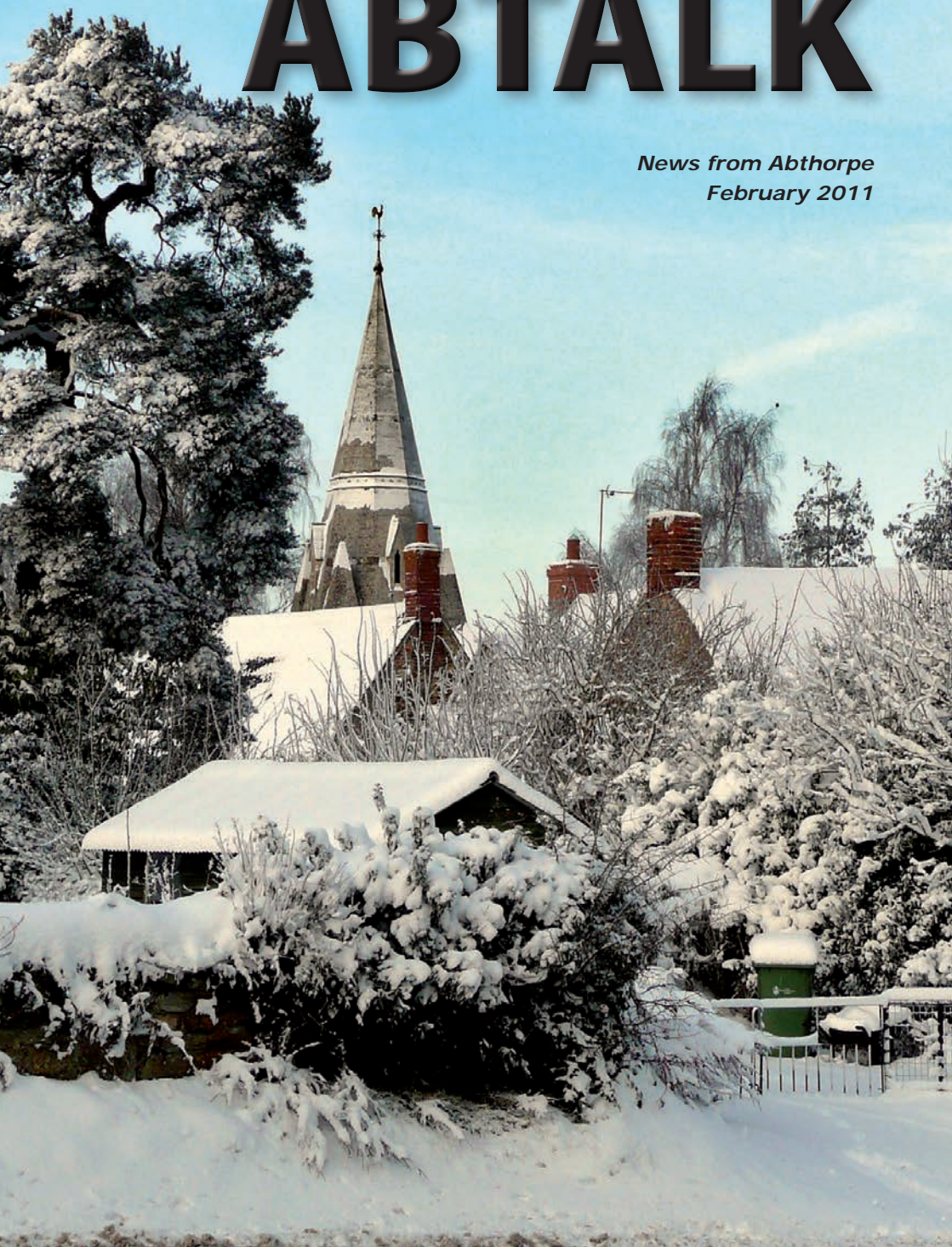


ABTALK

*News from Abthorpe
February 2011*



PARISH COUNCIL ELECTIONS

The four-yearly cycle of Parish Council elections is upon us again this year. The elections should be held on May 5th, although they may be postponed until the first week of June to avoid clashing with the proposed referendum on changing the voting system. There are seven members of the Council. For many years now we have not had any contest because there have been seven or fewer nominations. However that does not stop us having one this year. It is also quite possible that not all existing members will offer themselves for re-election. So if you are interested, now is the time to get in touch with the clerk, Bob Carter (parish.clerk@abthorpe.net; 857753) or speak to any of the existing councillors (listed at www.abthorpe.net) to see what is involved. Nominations have to be submitted about a month before the elections, although there is quite a short window in which to do that.

NEW INN

Rob will shortly be saying farewell to Hannah Beresford-Linnell who has been a linchpin behind the bar. She is going off to pursue an exciting work opportunity in Copenhagen. On 26th February there will be an opportunity to say goodbye to Hannah over a few drinks.

The Christmas quiz on 21st December attracted record numbers who made up 11 teams of more or less equal numbers. The Snow Queens finally prevailed and donated the evening's surplus of £157 to Willen Hospice. A further £11 was raised from a Christmas cake, won in the raffle by Carol Kelcher who



Editors

Jill Tolson

jill.tolson@abthorpe.net; 857320

Keith Fenwick

keith.fenwick@abthorpe.net; 857083

*Stig
and the
Snow
Queens*



generously returned it for auction. There was optional fancy dress for the evening, and the Snow Queens were joined by the Stig for their winners' photo.

So to a cold snowy evening in January, and another £85 raised to be donated by Coolmints (don't ask!) to the Air Ambulance. The quiz evenings continue on 15th February, 29th March and 26th April.

On alternate Tuesday evenings the Open Mic sessions are going down well, with the booked bands being joined by local talent.

The darts season is on a short break but starting back again soon on Monday evenings. On Thursdays the skittles team is centre stage, and holding their own in the league.

SAFARI SUPPER

Plans are afoot for a social event on Saturday 4th June which will hopefully bring together people in the village who don't yet know each other very well: a safari supper.

For those unfamiliar with the concept, each course of dinner is taken at a different house with a changing set of companions.

Starting with pre-dinner drinks for everyone at one venue, guests are then told where to go for starters. At a pre-determined time their host for that course then opens the 'secret envelope' to reveal the location for each couple of their main course. This is then repeated for sweet, with the evening ending by everyone gathering back at another home for coffee. All host venues will be within

safe walking distance in the village.

The logistics of working out who is directed to which dinner table for which course is purely a mathematical exercise, but the success of the whole evening depends on enough hosts coming forward. It may seem at first to be a daunting task, but on reflection we hope that people will see the fun of thinking up a first course, main or sweet for a group, while enjoying some interesting conversation along the way. A generous budget is given to each host for the food, and all wine is provided. Any dietary restrictions are communicated to hosts about two weeks before the event. There is quite a lot of experience on hand to guide you through.

The size of each group will depend on the response to the number of hosts and other guests wanting to participate, but probably around 8 for a main course, with the other courses possibly being slightly larger as they can be buffet-style. However, the more hosts we have the more people can mingle with different companions for each course.

If you are interested in finding out more about taking part, whether as a host or not, please email: safarisupper@abthorpe.net or phone Jill Tolson on 857320. We are anxious to get an initial feel for numbers. Tickets will cost £15 and be on sale from 20th March.

This is a social not a fund-raising event, and will be priced as such, but if any money is left over it will be divided between village groups.

So, don't be surprised to see groups of people on 4th June strolling or scurrying around the village in search of the next course of their meal. If you're having a particularly appetising barbeque, you may just be invaded by mistake!

ANDREA LEADSOM'S STANCE ON THE HS2 RAIL LINK

During the last Prime Minister's Question time of 2010, our local MP Andrea Leadsom quizzed the Prime Minister on High Speed Rail, asking him if he was: "aware of the concern of many people at reports in the press that he plans to support High Speed rail regardless of next year's consultation? Will he spread a bit of Christmas cheer by reassuring my constituents that he will keep an open mind and that he will not be railroading through a railroad?"

On receiving a reassurance that he understood the peoples' concerns and that it would be a "proper consultation", David Cameron went on to say, "I do believe that high-speed rail has a really effective role to play in bringing our country closer together and spreading economic benefit throughout all our country."

Andrea Leadsom says: "... For my own part, whilst I agree that

we desperately need an improved transport infrastructure to support economic growth, I think that this project, with its vast costs and devastating impact on communities, is not the right one."

OLD SCHOOL FACILITIES UPGRADE - THE HARD WORK BEGINS

Julie Dyckhoff chairs the Old School Committee, and has contributed the following piece. You can contact Julie on 858600; jules@dyckhoffonline.co.uk

As most of you are aware, facilities at the Old School have been in need of updating for quite some time. The two main areas requiring attention are the toilets, to bring them in line with current legislation regarding access for disabled people, and the kitchen, which has served us well for over 20 years but is now in dire need of a makeover.

Jackie Taylor of Affinity Architecture in Silverstone has been incredibly helpful drawing up plans for the toilets and we now have a set of plans that remodels the existing space to include a disabled toilet between the ladies and gents. Planning permission is still required and we are in the process of getting quotes from several builders. However our first estimate suggests that the cost could be in the region of £23,000. This sounds a lot, and indeed it is. However, included in this figure are labour and materials (at

approximately £11,500 and £8,000 respectively) for all the necessary structural work (moving walls and a window, creating a new door, etc.), the fixtures, fittings and flooring for the disabled toilet, new toilets and basins for the ladies and gents and tiling and decorating; electrical work (at approximately £1,400) to either reposition or install lighting, a disabled alarm, water heaters and hand dryers; and finally upgrading the access ramp (approximately £2,000).

The kitchen makeover will include new cupboards, worktops, sinks, oven and flooring at a cost of around £10,000.

You don't have to be a great mathematician to work out that the Old School Committee needs to find close to £33,000 in order to fund these projects. The good news is that we currently have £8,500 in the bank and Steve Andrews has very kindly offered some of the money from the old Tote funds towards the kitchen, so we are not starting from scratch. We will be applying for every grant we can to raise money towards the toilets and, as we are expecting that any grant will need to be match funded, fundraising is the key to finding the rest - and that's where the hard work begins!

This fundraising is obviously going to mean a lot of work for a relatively small number of people and we are

very grateful to the Abthorpe Fund Committee which has generously offered to lend their support to our efforts. However, if there is anyone else out there who is willing to help, by joining the Old School Committee on an ad hoc basis, or who has experience of organising a particular fundraiser that the village might enjoy, please give me a call. I promise I won't make you do any more than you want to!

If you don't want to get involved on the organisational side, your help can be just as valuable by bringing your friends and family to support our events. We are currently working on a programme that will include a quiz night and fish and chip supper, which we will have finalised by the next issue of *Abtalk*. But in the meantime look out for a flyer through your door advertising our first event.

VILLAGE CRICKET - ALIVE AND WELL IN SOUTH NORTHANTS

Come and join us at Silverstone Cricket Club, writes Philip Berry

Just 2 miles from Abthorpe there is a thriving village cricket club, which plays at the Recreational Ground on the edge of Silverstone Village.

We have two senior teams playing in the South Northants Cricket League. We broke the mould some four years ago when we first selected some ladies to play for the senior

team, with great success. We also have a thriving junior section that meets every week in the summer for coaching and the odd match. Boys and girls, seniors and juniors, of any age, are very welcome.

As summer approaches, we have arranged for our customary indoor nets at Stowe School, to make sure we are fired up and ready to go when the season gets underway at the end of April.

If you are interested in playing, or just want to find out more, contact Philip Berry: 857531; philip.berry@abthorpe.net

WILL ABTHORPE'S BUSES GET THE CHOP?

We already have a sparse public transport service in Abthorpe: a bus to Northampton via Blakesley on Wednesdays (09:44) and Saturdays (11:05), plus one to Banbury for the market on Thursdays (09:44). Additionally there is a shared taxi service to Towcester each Friday.

Although a majority of people in Abthorpe have access to a car and rarely if ever use local buses, some do not. Following the government's comprehensive spending review, Northamptonshire County Council is required to make savings of £68 millions in the next financial year. The Council's proposal to completely cease the rural bus subsidy has been met with trepidation as all our village's

routes are in the fully subsidised category. Private bus companies are paid to keep these routes running as passenger numbers mean that the service is not commercially viable. If the proposals are agreed our buses as they are now are very likely to cease from the beginning of April this year.

As it is accepted that such a decision would have a dramatic impact on the lives of those without personal transport the County Council is retaining £700,000 in its budget to explore new ideas to provide more tailored public transport for communities such as ours. These proposals are currently being drawn up and could include a 'Call Connect' scheme that has been used in rural Lincolnshire and has been pioneered in the north-east of the county where large taxi-like people carriers can be summoned by telephone.

STOCKING FRAME INFORMATION

Traditionally, pubs were run by families where the landlord pursued his own occupation with his wife running the daytime pub service. The husband would often take over again in the evening. It is a recent practice for pubs to be the sole income for a family. It is therefore interesting the wheel is coming full circle with our own pub.

On that theme, a relative of the licence-holder of the Stocking Frame

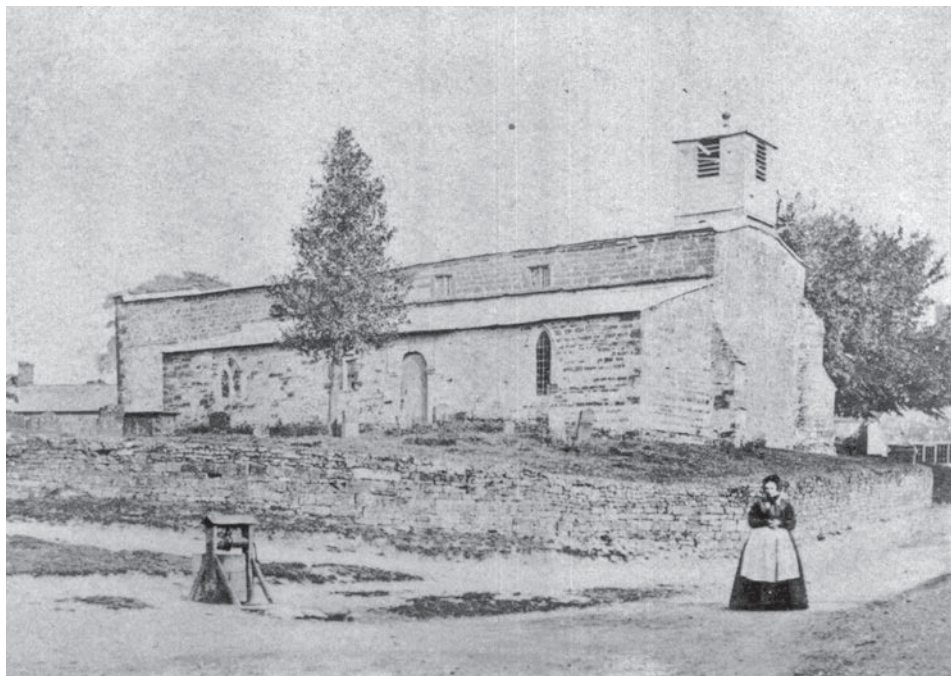
when it was run as a pub is seeking information to aid his family research. In 1881 his relative, James Hinson, was the Wheelright and Victualler resident at the Stocking Frame. (Astute readers will remember Jim's name coming up in David Saint's article published in the last issue.) His wife was Elizabeth, née Chambers, and his sister Maria and granddaughter Emma Belton also lived and worked at the inn. If anyone can fill in any more details, Brian would be delighted and can be contacted by email: bandjh@btinternet.com.

FILM ABTHORPE

Two contrasting films have been on offer by Film Abthorpe recently: *The Kite Runner* and *Support Your Local Sheriff*. The season continues on Thursday 3 March returning to a more thought-provoking, but nonetheless enjoyable, theme with *Midnight Cowboy*, the 1969 classic starring Dustin Hoffman and Jon Voight.

MORE LIGHT SHED ON THE SILK INDUSTRY

The story continues: The Cottage in Main Street was identified last time as the house which used to have a north-facing wall of windows for silk workers. The house had been restored by Bob Cook, a local postman. Via John Lawrence,



An early photograph of Abthorpe Church dating from before 1871, showing the cottage with the large windows on the right hand side

our current postie, Bob enlightened us further. The large opening cut in the wall on the north side facing the church weakened the structure to such an extent that it could not be repaired during renovation. Bob rebuilt



The building in the garden of Stone Cottage in Main Street that was used by three shoe makers

the entire wall to modern building standards.

The house is believed to date from 1864, but there is uncertainty about the occupations of the inhabitants. There was some suggestion that shoe makers inhabited the cottage as at least two sacks of leather offcuts were found under the floor tiles, but as these dated from around 1900 it is more than feasible that the house was lived in by silk workers, lace makers, and shoe makers.

At one time most households in Abthorpe had the men working as agricultural labourers or shoe/boot makers, whilst the women made lace. These lace makers needed as much light as possible, hence the enlarged windows. At night some used a bottle of water in front of a candle to increase the light's intensity. In 1861 Abthorpe man Thomas Flowers had nine children at home aged 1 to 18. He was an agricultural labourer as were his sons aged 13, 12, and 7. His wife was a lace maker and their daughters aged 18, 16 and 10 followed the same occupation. Ten years earlier two of the girls then aged 8 and 6 were already listed in the census as making lace. No wonder the religious census for the country taken a few years earlier by vicars of each parish said of Abthorpe: 'a very poor parish mostly engaged in agriculture'.

The lace from the villages was

collected by lace dealer Leopold Stanton of Maidford who married Rhoda Kendall of Abthorpe in 1861. He travelled round the country selling lace. In the end machine-made lace killed the trade.

The shoe makers worked from home although some teamed up and worked in special huts. The building in the garden of Stone Cottage in Main Street was used by three men. By 1891 two cottages in Silver Street were being used as a boot factory. It was some years later that Abthorpe had its first purpose-built factory also in Silver Street opposite the New Inn.

Silk stockings were made using a process known as framework knitting. Sometimes the operators were called stockingers in the registers. A few people had frames in the village before 1810. After that year one Abthorpe family with the surname of Sherriff, together with some other local people, moved to an early factory in Middleton Cheney run by a woman. Later it moved to Leicester where factories were set up to house the frames and the cottage industries were supplanted by industrial factories.

PROTECT YOUR PRECIOUS OIL

Please be aware that there has been a suspected theft of domestic oil in Slapton. Keep a watch on your tanks.

SNOW

The prolonged snow before Christmas again gives us an opportunity to record sights around the village prompted by the weather and a record low temperature of -16° Celsius.

While on the subject of the weather, congratulations must be passed on to Royal Mail who did not miss a single delivery, and to Tim for delivering the *Chronicle & Echo* every day, although the daily newspapers did not get through from Banbury due to atrocious road conditions.

Unfortunately the carol singing was another casualty of the extreme cold. That's two years running, so let's hope for kinder weather just before Christmas this year.



A muntjac deer in Eric Malcomson's garden



Louise, Eleanor and Katharine Gough's snow sculpture of Mary, Joseph and the Christ child on the Green

BEWARE BOGUS CALLERS

South Northants Council is warning of a bogus caller who is making calls to residents in the area telling them they are due a council tax refund. The caller asks for personal details, including bank account information. The Council will never contact residents by phone offering a council tax refund, and strongly advises against giving personal information to callers.

If you receive such a call and can get a telephone number for the caller, forward this, and any other details, onto Consumer Direct on 08454 040506.

And on the subject of security, the Police would like to make people aware of the following report on BBC's 'Watchdog' programme in November. N-Power, Unilever and Talk Talk are among many companies sponsoring a survey that is to be sent out by TNT to over a million homes. The completed questionnaire which details quite a lot of personal information is to be left on your doorstep in an unsealed paper bag for collection on the following day.

The Information Commissioner's Office has said: "These surveys usually require people to provide a large amount of personal information.... Anyone approached to fill in one of these surveys should think twice before leaving information like this on their doorstep and also should understand who will have access to their information and what it will be used for." More advice and information is available from the Watchdog website: www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/watchdog/2010/11/tnt_survey.html. TNT's response is at www.tntpost.co.uk/News_and_Events/7205-11-10_Dropdoor_Media_Statement_to_Watchdog.html.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE RECORD OFFICE

Unbeknown to many residents of Northamptonshire, the Record Office preserves and makes accessible over 800 years of the county's archival heritage. The archives are mainly written on paper or parchment, and reflect all aspects of Northamptonshire's rich history and the people who lived here. The records held include school logbooks, parish records, workhouse records, maps and photographs. The Record Office also has a comprehensive collection of estate records. All of these are preserved and stored on over ten miles of shelving in a purpose built repository, and can be accessed free of charge onsite.

The Record Office has recently appointed a Heritage Outreach Officer,

Babra Ushewekunze, to work with local communities. If you are a member of a society or community group please contact the Record Office for an initial discussion on how they can help you access the county's rich archival heritage. More information: www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/recordoffice; 01604 762129.

ABTHORPE HERITAGE PROJECT

In the last issue we described the Rose of the Shires project carried out across Northamptonshire to gather information on the local historic landscape, buildings and churches.

The project has now ended, and a final presentation of the results of everything that was looked at during 2010 will be given on Wednesday 2nd March at Syresham Village Hall starting at 7.30pm. If you would like to attend it would be helpful for Stuart Taylor, the project manager, to know numbers: stuart@rftrust.org.uk; 01933 625527.

POTENTIAL TO REDUCE YOUR ENERGY BILLS

Local residents can now borrow an energy cost monitor from Towcester library through a scheme operated by Northamptonshire County Council's library service in partnership with South Northamptonshire Council. These are available now by visiting the library who will issue the monitor free of charge on your library card in

the same way as a book withdrawal, for three weeks.

The energy monitor is an electronic device that gives a 'real time' reading about how much energy a household is using and how much this would cost. This means you can identify where you're using energy unnecessarily and can therefore reduce energy bills.

NEWS FROM THE CHURCH

Tote winners since the last issue are Andrew Dancer, who scooped £225 in November, and Rene Balderson, also £225, in December. Merrick Loggin was successful in January, winning £215.

Churchwarden Richard Tomalin adds:

Our new vicar, Rev'd Paul McLeod, is settling in very well. Our services since Rev'd Paul came have reverted to the pre-interregnum pattern and we have had a Holy Communion service on the 1st and 4th Sunday of the month. This will continue until after Easter when there will be a reorganisation of all the Sunday services in Whittlewood Parishes. These changes will be adopted after some consultation; please let me know if you have any comments. If anyone would like to know service times for Abthorpe or the other four parishes there are service cards at the back of the church; please take one, or visit the Benefice website at www.whittlewoodparishes.org.uk.

The Watling Singers' concert in December was very well attended and enjoyed by everyone who came, making a convivial start to the Christmas season.

The carol service on the weekend before Christmas was affected by the terrible weather conditions, and we had neither a vicar nor an organist because of the deep snow. John Riches stepped in to lead the service, which was again very well attended by people clad in wellies and thick coats.

We are now looking forward to working with Rev'd Paul. There will be changes which everyone is positive about. Easter services are yet to be decided and will be announced in the next *Abtalk* and on the church notice board.

richard.tomalin@abthorpe.net; 858316

Vic Read, a retired parish priest, has been helping-out in Abthorpe and the other parishes of the Whittlewood Benefice during the long interregnum that began in March 2009 when Canon Bridget Smith retired. His enormous contribution was recognised recently during a packed Holy Communion service at St Botolph in Slapton. Rev'd Paul introduced Peter Byng the chairman of the committee that co-ordinated activities during the interregnum. Peter spotted Vic right at the back of the church and proceeded down the aisle to thank him and his wife Pat

for being such a tremendous asset. Vic, he went on, ensured that a Holy Communion service was celebrated in the benefice every week and additionally helped out at funeral services and in local schools.

Peter presented Vic with a piece of plastic that he admitted at first sight looked like a measly reward for 19 months servitude. But, Peter added, it would allow Pat and Vic to enjoy several days staying away at good hotels. Hopefully Vic will continue his support, but less intensively in the future.

In response, Vic mentioned that during the interregnum from March 2009 to November 2010 he had officiated at 86 Holy Communion services, 13 evensongs, 16 baptisms, 7 weddings, 15 funerals and 12 visits to schools. He emphasised that he used these statistics to illustrate the scale of the task Rev'd Paul is undertaking in addition to a large number of other pastoral duties.

ABbA

The AGM in January heard a satisfactory report from the chairman, Eric Malcomson, and the treasurer, Dave Cunningham. The current account had £1,900 in hand so with 60 active members the annual charge of £60 is being maintained. The committee, which was re-elected without a vote, was thanked for its work and responsiveness to

problems. In general the network is operating satisfactorily. In answer to a question, there is little prospect of faster speeds in the foreseeable future. Any increase requires investment by BT in improving the connections to the village rather than in ABbA's infrastructure.

Following the successful photographic competition held last summer, another one is planned for next year (2012).

NATALIE AND THE BALLON D'OR

Tricia and Phil Holmes exhibited a picture of their daughter, Natalie, in the 'People' category at the ABbA photographic exhibition reported in the last issue. What many didn't realise at the time was that the person sitting next to Natalie in the photograph was the international

Argentinean footballer Lionel Messi. He was being presented, for the second time, with FIFA's Ballon d'Or confirming their opinion he is the best footballer in the world. Natalie's vital contribution was as translator at the press conference. Having started her Spanish at Sponne School, her work with the primera liga club Levante UD meant she was fluent in 'football' Spanish as well.

VILLAGE FUND

Well over 100 villagers and guests enjoyed another successful event for the Village Fund before Christmas with the return of Cameo Opera, a group of four professional singers from Kent. The programme was a varied blend of well known songs from opera plus sacred music. This being Christmastide they also sang



some carols. The canapés and other delicacies prepared for the interval break in the Old School were enjoyed by audience and singers alike.

This year the committee preferred to offer the older residents individual presents rather than the Christmas dinner of recent years.

June Willsher has decided to step down as chair of the Fund committee for personal reasons. The remaining members, Jan Miles, Tim Pope, Fi Noble, Lynn Neasham and Francesca Wright, will be meeting later this month to decide the future direction of the Fund.

DIGITAL SWITCHOVER HELP SCHEME

TV signals are going digital in our area in March and April. Everyone should have received a leaflet describing what will happen and what you need to do if you want to continue receiving TV signals. If you have a satellite dish (Sky or Freesat) you will not be affected at all. If you already have a digital receiver

(Freeview) then you will have to retune at some stage, but you do not need any more equipment.

However, if you still have any TV sets which use the analogue signals you will need to purchase a Freeview box. There are cheap and simple ones as well as expensive ones with more features. You will need one box for each TV if you want to receive different programmes at the same time.

A help scheme has been set up by the BBC under an agreement with the government to provide support and advice during the switchover for those who need it. Northamptonshire ACRE has been asked to help those who may not be aware of what they need to do when the Sandy Heath analogue transmitter is switched off on the 30th March.

Initially ACRE is seeking to identify people who will need support when the switchover begins and they need volunteers to help identify these people.

PEOPLE

A warm welcome is extended to Tina and Darren Emberton who have moved into Rozel in Main Street. This is the culmination of a two year search for their ideal property, having decided that Abthorpe was the village in which they wanted to live. Tina works for Tesco at their head office, while Darren is a prison officer. Their son, 19-year old Jack, has moved with them from Towcester, while older son Ben lives in London.

Help is available if someone fulfils any of the following criteria: 75 or over; receive or could get disability living, attendance or constant attendance allowance, or mobility supplement; registered blind or partially sighted. Please contact ACRE if you know of anyone who requires assistance: 01604 702444.

There are also opportunities for volunteers to help to deliver the project itself. If you would like to volunteer in any way, please contact South Northants Volunteer Bureau on 358264.

WAPPENHAM SHOP CLOSURE

Following the closure of the shop in Wappenham on 30th November an Action Group has been formed to see if there is sufficient support to open a community shop and Post Office. A public meeting in the Village Hall will be held at 7.00pm on Monday February 28th. The speakers will include Andrea Leadsom, MP for South Northamptonshire, and a representative from the Sulgrave Community Shop. Residents from Abthorpe and other villages are encouraged to attend.

In Abthorpe, our nearest services are now at Silverstone. There is a Post Office and Croft's shop sells a wide range of groceries, newspapers and other essentials.

If transport is a problem, these

alternatives were gathered by the editor of the Wappenham Newsletter.

Newspaper delivery: Smiths Newsagents deliver daily newspapers; call 01295 268499 or email info@smithsnewsagents.co.uk. For the *Chronicle and Echo*, talk to Chron Direct on 01604 467000.

Dairy: Dairycrest 'Milk and More' deliver not just milk but a large selection of groceries, household items, garden and pet supplies. Martin Bethell delivers here Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Order online up to 9pm for next day delivery. 0845 6063606; <http://www.milkandmore.co.uk>.

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable deliveries: Gary Penn who has a regular stall behind Elliotts the butcher is starting a round in this area. Telephone 01295 760824 or email g.penn2@btconnect.com for a weekly price list or see www.garrypennltd.co.uk/daily_deliveries/.

Wholefoods and special diets: Daily Bread delivers every 1-2 months to Wappenham so they could probably include Abthorpe on their way from Northampton - 01604 621531/www.ecofair.co.uk.

Fish: James delivers fresh (sustainable) and smoked fish in Wappenham on Tuesdays, as well as fishcakes, seafood and free range eggs. He'll be leafleting Wappenham shortly so we shall attempt to get

hold of the details to share - or does anyone with friends in Wappenham already have the information?

Co-op: Free deliveries for orders over £25 if you order and pay in store.

And of course there's the internet: Tesco, Ocado (mainly Waitrose), Sainsbury, among others. Please share any other suggestions for everyday home shopping.

John Riches looks back to different shopping times in Abthorpe: "Back in the 1970s when we first moved into the village, Reg Chapman ran the post office from his thatched cottage on the village green. The village shop located in what is now known as Porterhouse had long since closed, but Mr Clarke delivered the newspapers and Browns of Blakesley came with fresh bread from their bakery in nearby Woodend. Ted Bearman made sure the milk was delivered from his base in Wappenham. Our tradesmen usually visited us personally on Saturday to collect their money and gave an opportunity to chat and put the world to rights."

SAFE 'N' SOUND PROJECT

Coordinated by South Northants Volunteer Bureau, the scheme brings together many partners to advise on all facets of safety, health, home repairs, independent living and financial, welfare and benefit concerns. Contact them on 01280

841250 if you want advice or need a service. In addition SNVB recruits volunteers and has day to day contact with a wide range of services beyond the limits of the project.

OPEN GARDENS

Wappenham will be opening five gardens for the National Gardens Scheme on 12th June. A lovely thought to sustain us through the long winter.

A WALK IN THE PAST - AROUND THE QUARRIES

Travelling toward Towcester past Foscote farms down Bluebell Hill there seems nothing of interest in the surrounding landscape, yet a few dead trees and elder bushes at the Delf hide a quarry dating back to the times when the Roman villa was built in the adjacent windmill field. (see *Abtalk* : November 2009 : Mileoak Villa) Did the Romans choose to build there because it was close to a visible quarry or did they find the stone through trial excavations? They needed fresh water too and as the windmill was not sunk until the 1900s there must have been a visible spring. The current road cuts right through the villa site.

When Towcester church was rebuilt the King gave permission for Handley stone to be used. Baker, published 1828, said 'The quarry from which the tower and aisles of

Towcester church were rebuilt by the bounty of King Edward IV is not now worked but is known as the Delfe'.

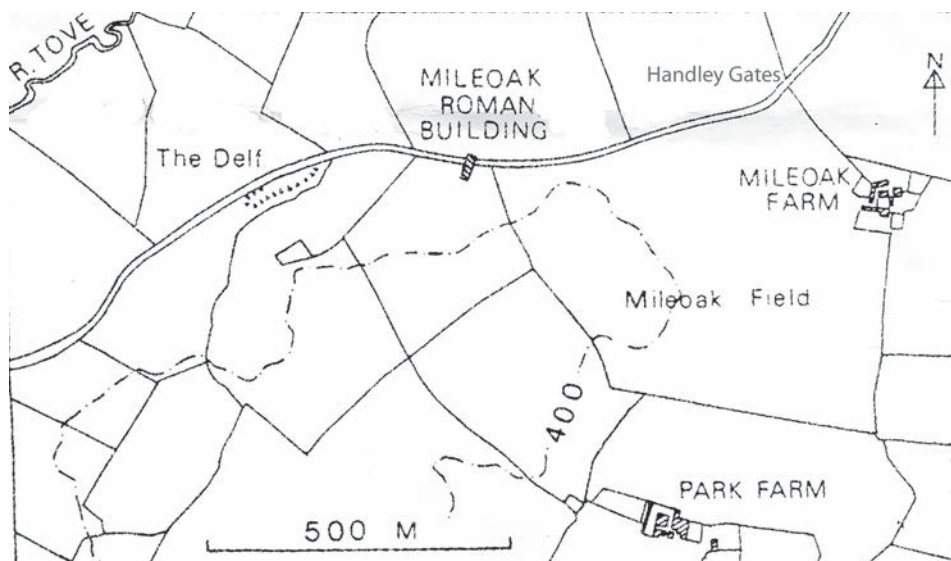
The Abthorpe/Towcester parish boundary by the Delf is adjacent to the old royal deer park at Handley. In 1628 King Charles I sold this Handley Walk to Bennet of Beachhampton who left it in his will to University College, Oxford. According to Pettit, Royal Forests of Northamptonshire, there were 2,500 oaks on the 500 acres at the 1564 Crown coppices survey. The disgruntled widow Bennet, who resented her husband leaving Handley Park to the Oxford college instead of to her or her son, sold all the oaks and underwood and converted the ground to arable. There remain only two or three oak trees in Mile Oak field adjacent to

Handley gates.

There was a quarry man who lived in a cottage by the Delf supplying building stone as well as the rough stone needed to repair the churchyard wall which regularly fell down.

In the early 1900s blacksmith Matthews regularly collected sand from Foscoate Haymoor Hill to top his forge fire.

The Delf remained open until Towcester rural district council used it as a rubbish tip, an ignominious end after supplying top quality building stone: both sandstone and limestone were in the two quarries in the field. Travelling men of the road camped there on their wanderings, as they did at Oxbridge. Passing the Delf on a dark night feels very eerie, even more unsettling than being in



Bucknells Wood at night when the foxes scream and the undergrowth is filled with strange rustling. The Romans came and went, as did the deer poachers in the park. What long past inhabitant left that imprint of fear?

When Gilbert Scott designed the Workhouse at Towcester in 1835 he requested that Foscote stone should be used. The Duke of Grafton granted a licence to quarry stone from Foscote land. He also sold gravel rights from the flood meadows when the railway from Blisworth through Towcester toward Banbury was built between 1866 and 1872. The landlords of

the New Inn made enough money from the navvies to build Cadogan Terrace, since demolished to build Cadogan Place, with the proceeds.

In 1839, when the Duke was having new farm houses built one of the tenants, William Amos, was paid £40 for digging sand and stone at Challock for the new house there. Moretons sunk a well there for £3.10s.0d but it had to be deepened at the extra cost of a guinea to find good water. The Gold Diggings field on the road was quarried for materials to build the road from the crossroads to Challock around 1800 to 1820. *M E H*

FLY-TIPPING

In Northamptonshire, around 1,000 incidents of fly tipping are reported to district and borough councils every month and it's estimated that clearing this illegally dumped waste costs the county in excess of £650,000 a year - a bill that ends up being picked up by householders through higher council tax or by landowners on whose land rubbish is dumped.

The Councils are working together to crack down on this. A fly tipping enforcement co-ordinator based within the county council's trading standards service is working to investigate and prosecute people who fly tip. Measures will include using SmartWater to trace fly tipped rubbish back to its source and using CCTV to catch fly tippers in the act.

Residents will also be made aware of their responsibilities when disposing of waste, or paying someone to remove it for them, as if they do not use a registered waste carrier, they risk fines of up to £5,000. People who fly tip anywhere face fines of up to £50,000.

Anyone who sees fly tipped rubbish or who sees fly tipping happening is encouraged to report it to their local district or borough council. For more information about fly tipping and how to dispose of waste people can visit www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/flytipping.

SLAPTON AND WAPPENHAM CHAPELS

Everyone is warmly invited to the services held every Sunday at Wappenham 10.45am and Slapton 6pm, with Sunday School 3pm at Wappenham. A Bible Study and Fellowship meeting is held weekly on Tuesday evenings at Wappenham 7.30pm. Ladies' Meetings resume on March 9th at 2pm in Wappenham and then every second Wednesday of each month up to and including November. Transport can be provided; please ring Jane Callow on 857114 to arrange. For more information ring Peter Lawrence, 860053.

DIARY

Tuesday 15 February

Quiz at the pub, 8.00, £3 per person including supper

Thursday 3 March

Film Abthorpe, 7.30 at the Old School

Monday 7 March

Parish Council meeting, 7.45, the Old School - all welcome

Wednesday 9 March

Wappenham Chapel Ladies' Meetings resume

Sunday 27 March

BST begins

Tuesday 29 March

Quiz at the pub, 8.00, £3 per person including supper

Monday 18 April

Parish Council meeting, 7.45, the Old School - all welcome

Tuesday 26 April

Quiz at the pub, 8.00, £3 per person including supper

Sunday 12 June

Wappenham gardens open for the National Gardens Scheme

Saturday 4 June

Safari Supper

Saturday 6 August

Blakesley Agricultural Show