



News from Athorpe March 2009

PARISH CLERK VACANCY

As mentioned in the last issue Gail Coombs is standing down at the end of March and we still need to find a new clerk. We really do want to find someone in the village as this ensures that the clerk knows what is going on locally and can relate to our work. As a reminder, the clerk is responsible for attending council meetings once every 6 weeks, taking minutes and following up actions agreed at the meeting. Correspondence has to be dealt with and the accounts kept up to date. It might sound complicated but it is not that difficult, especially to anyone who has had office or administrative experience. The current salary is £750 per year, which is believed to be reasonable pay for the amount of work involved. If you are interested, talk to Gail on 857901 or any of the councillors.

NEW YEAR'S DAY

The Vintage Sports Car Club again gathered in Abthorpe on 1 January to celebrate the new year, this time using the New Inn car park. The array of pre-war cars was an enthusiast's delight. The bitterly cold weather did not

diminish the turn out, and Barbara and Rob welcomed everyone with hot soup and a barbeque.

The cars speak for themselves, ranging from a left-hand-drive 1916 Model T Ford, a spartan JAP-engined Morgan three-wheeler, to an outrageous Lea Francis with an aircraft engine.



Model T Ford

Leaf Cirrus



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1926 Austin 20



Morgan

NEWS FROM THE NEW INN

Following the success of the recent charity quiz, where the winning team chooses the charity to receive the evening's surplus, this will become a regular feature on the last Tuesday of every month. Teams of four, paying £1.50 per person to include a hot supper, seems pretty good value for an evening's fun. TADD (Towcester Area Door to Door) was the first recipient of £180.

And the newly launched takeaway menu is catching on fast with several dishes available at a reasonable £5.50. Chef Stuart is enjoying the change from working in the Channel Islands and the opportunity to frequently vary the specials on the regular menu.

TELEPHONE KIOSK

BT indicated last summer that they wished to remove the telephone box on the village green. This is part of a national review of telephone boxes, many of which are now very seldom used. This was no surprise to the parish council, who could see no reason to keep the service. However, it was felt that the red box had become such a feature of the village that it should be retained.

The village is now the proud owner of the telephone kiosk. British Telecom has removed the telephone service and sold the box to us for the princely sum of £1. In the near future we will have to organise repainting of the box as it now looks rather sorry.

If anyone has any (practical) ideas about what to use the inside for, please speak up. We have to display a notice showing ownership and also

another one stating that smoking is illegal. One wall is blank so it we might be able to display information about the village.

SILVERSTONE SURGERY

Dr Supple has applied to Northamptonshire Primary Care Trust to close his surgery in Silverstone and move all services to the new surgery being built next to the existing Towcester Medical Centre. Strong opposition has been expressed by residents in Silverstone which has forced the PCT to carry out a public consultation. If you are a patient on Dr Supple's books, you should be asked for your views. The timescale of this survey has not yet been established, but the total consultation period will be 3 months. That will be your opportunity to make your views known.

ABbA

One of the suggestions proffered at the recent ABbA AGM was a series of courses for users to upgrade their computer and digital photography skills. More details next time.

ALZHEIMER'S SOCIETY

If you are a carer of someone suffering from demetia, you may benefit from the meetings held for carers once a month at the Towcester Volunteer Bureau in Moat Lane. Forthcoming dates are 1st April and 6th May. Meetings start at 2pm, preceded by an informal session, starting at 1pm, where

problems can be discussed. You can go along to the 1pm session without staying for the rest of the afternoon. For more details contact Elizabeth Churchill on 01280 823769.

ARTS NEWS

- Paintings by Brian Harrington at Towcester Library until 28th March. From 28th March, paintings by Yolanda Lawrenson.
- Kings Sutton Literary Festival, near Banbury on 7th and 8th March. Call 01295 810108 or see www.kslitfest.co.uk, but tickets are going fast.
- Poems for Pleasure on the theme of 'the fowl in the air and the fish of the sea' on 11th March at Towcester Library. Book in advance at the library.
- Towcester Choral Society on Palm Sunday, 5th April, at St Lawrence Church, 6pm. 01604 850645 or see www.stlawrencechurch.org.uk

NEWS FROM ST JOHN THE BAPTIST

The morning service on 22 February was particularly well attended as it was the occasion of Canon Bridget Smith's last service in Abthorpe before she retires. It was a joyful occasion with happy memories of Bridget's time here mingled with the sadness that she is leaving.

The service started with Bridget presenting Abthorpe church with a lovely Baptism bowl that will be a very welcome asset during future baptisms.



This was gratefully accepted by Churchwarden Jan Miles.

At the end of the service, as the congregation collected at the back of the church for coffee and chocolate cake, Bridget was presented with a card, garden vouchers and a bouquet. During the presentation, churchwarden Richard Tomalin recalled some of the happy and memorable times shared by everyone during Bridget's stay.

Canon Bridget's last service of all in Whittlewood Parishes was on Sunday March 1st in Silverstone. There was also a drop-in reception to say goodbye to Bridget and David in Paulerspury on Friday March 6th.

There will be a service for Mothering Sunday at 10.00 on March 22nd, and the Easter Sunday service on April 12th starts at 9.00am.

Tote winners of £250 in December were Keith and Monica

Plant. The January winner was Eric Malcomson who scooped £242.40, the same amount as Helen Taylor won in February.

VILLAGE FUND

The Village Fund Group met recently to consider what events they may put on during the rest of this year. Three suggestions are being worked on: a summer barn dance, a

music concert given by opera singers whose programme ranges from classical opera extracts to popular musicals, and another race night.

Social events in the village bring all ages together and are an opportunity for newer residents to meet their neighbours. Hopefully we shall have more details in the next issue, or watch out for a flyer through your door.

CHRISTMAS ACTIVITIES : A QUICK REVIEW

A christingle service has become something of a tradition in Abthorpe, and last year was organised by the Village Fund Committee in conjunction with the Parochial Church Council to raise funds for The Children's Society. TCS was founded back in 1881 as the Church of England Waifs and Strays Society with a mission to help disadvantaged children. Canon Bridget led a delightful service that included many

well known Christmas carols and songs. Christingles were distributed to all the children, mums, dads and villagers who attended. This symbolic object, first used in Advent services in the Moravian Church back in 1747, consists of an orange to symbolise our planet, a candle representing Jesus the light of the world and sweets as emblems of the fruits of the earth. In the candle light the church looked beautiful.

The service was followed by a chance to chat with friends and neighbours over mince pies and mulled wine.

Carol singing: after a debate about the wisdom of singing in the rain an intrepid group of singers set out to inflict their carolling on the village, all in the good cause of raising money for Crisis. Barbara made everyone very welcome in the pub at the end of a wet two hours with an offering of mulled wine and mince pies. The phenomenal total of £181 was contributed by very generous villagers and visitors to the pub.

Crisis was delighted with our contribution and in thanking us sent this update on the work the organisation does. Last year, Crisis SmartMove helped 936 people into permanent housing. Changing Lives gave grants totalling £147,00, to aid people in their return to education or employment. Their Skylight activity centre welcomed hundreds of people

through its doors, and Crisis Open Christmas centres helped approximately 1,500 people have a safe and warm Christmas. More details on all their work at www.crisis.org.uk.

The Christmas lunch organised by the Village Fund Group for the older villagers was held in the New Inn's restaurant. Twenty-six of Abthorpe's senior citizens sat down to a magnificent traditional roast beef lunch while members of the Committee acted as waiters. For those elderly people unable to get to the pub, a volunteer team of couriers transported a hot meal to their homes. The wine flowed, the conversation became more animated and at the end everyone agreed that thanks to the efforts of the Committee, landlady Barbara Smith and her staff everyone had a memorable time.

AGE CONCERN

Carers in Abthorpe who are looking after a loved one may not be aware of the Carers' Response Team, a free service from Age Concern which is delivered by trained staff who can be used to offer carers some much needed respite. What the carer chooses to do is not an issue: whether they need the time to have their hair cut, do the shopping without feeling anxious about leaving their loved one alone – or simply going upstairs for some sleep.

The Carers' Response Team will provide help and company for the cared-for person. It is a vital service to those who need to reclaim their lives every now and then.

Anyone wishing to take advantage of the Carers' Response Team or find out more about the service, call 01604 611200.

BULKY RUBBISH

Merrilyn Berry is wondering if anyone would like to share the costs of disposing of large unwanted items. The Council will collect up to six items for £25, and she has one. Contact Merrilyn on 857531 to pool your old stuff.

Perhaps at the same time the Council could be persuaded to remove the three old freezers dumped on the old railway line by Oxbridge (see below) which have been the subject of a long campaign by John Riches. John has spent much time trying to track down the responsible authority, being sent from one contact to

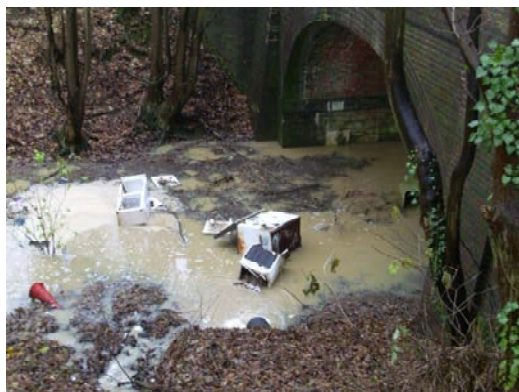
another. It may not be the Council's ultimate responsibility but if they are collecting from the village could these three items be included in the six?

SPEEDWATCH

For several years now we have taken part in Speedwatch, the scheme where parishioners operate speed cameras and record excessive speeds. Nobody is prosecuted as a result, but drivers going too fast may receive a warning letter from the police and data collected is used to identify where speeding is prevalent. However, the greatest advantage of Speedwatch is its deterrent effect – drivers do slow down when they see someone in a yellow jacket pointing a speed gun at them.

This year we again have the opportunity to take part in Speedwatch in September and October. As before, we will have the equipment for 3 separate weeks, each a week apart. But we need more volunteers as several of those

who have taken part in the past are no longer able to do so. We usually operate for 1 hour each day, mainly at rush hours. Ideally we need another 4 or 5 volunteers who will have to attend a training session beforehand. Can you help? If we can get ourselves organised well in advance, the load on everyone will be that much less. Contact the parish clerk or Keith Fenwick.



Snow

The recent snow brought good and bad to the village: although travel conditions were treacherous, deliveries of milk, mail and newspapers were valiantly continued. And of course playing in such wonderful snow is a rare opportunity and brought out the creative side of the children. Some efforts didn't get captured on camera -



Eleanor Gough's snow sculpture

such is the transitory nature of this art.



Alice and Nick Green's snow penguin

WILDLIFE TRAINING WORKSHOPS

The Wildlife Trust has several workshops on offer in 2009. Most run at weekends between 10am and 4pm and involve an indoor session and a field trip. There are various categories – botany, lower plants and fungi, vertebrates, practical skills, invertebrates, etc. The standard fee is £25, but there are some variations. As an example, 'Flowering Grasses' on 11th June aims to identify common grasses in the field, while 'Soldier Beetles' on 13th June will introduce you to most of the more commonly

encountered larger species; there are 40 in this country. There is also a 4-week series in August on 'Beginning with Digital Photography'. More details can be obtained by contacting Training Workshops, The Wildlife Trust, Lings House, Billings Lane, Northampton NN3 8BE, telephone 01604 784835, www.wildlifebcnp.org.

AIR AMBULANCE

Warwickshire and Northamptonshire Air Ambulance (WNAA) was launched in 2003 and operates 7 days a week covering a population of 1,076,000 and an area of 1,800 square miles. Incredibly, the service is not funded by the Government, nor does it receive any funds from the National Lottery. It therefore relies entirely on local public donations to meet costs of £1.5m per year. WNAA are looking for support through local collections, sponsorship, etc. If you feel you would like to help, or would like to find out more, contact Jo Dean, Community Fundraiser on 0782 5029593. There are more details on www.wnaa.co.uk.

SECURE YOUR BAG!

Northamptonshire Police are having a blitz on handbag and wallet theft, reminding people to look after their bags and wallets when out shopping. To help, handbag and purse alarms are available at £2 each from Towcester police station and the One Stop shop at the Guildhall, Northampton.

PLANT SALE

As we are finally coming out of winter and thinking of blooming gardens later in the year, the plant sale on 23 May from 9 – 12 at Clarissa House, High Street, Wappenham is a date to look forward to. Wappenham are also opening their gardens under the NGS scheme on 14 June.

ST GEORGE'S DAY

Last year we had a plea from John Riches that more is made of St George's Day in Abthorpe. John asked: "Perhaps we should have a concerted campaign next year to make us the English village of the year with every house flying the red and white cross? We've been in Holland on their National Day and that was truly wonderful with windmills going round with flags at the ends of their sails, every house decorated plus lots of cars with coloured streamers. Why can't we do that sort of thing here?" For a national perspective: www.stgeorgesday.com.

Perhaps a traditional meal and St George's Day quiz would be an appropriate celebration – any volunteers? There's still a few weeks to organise it.

THE YOUTH OPPORTUNITY FUND

£100,000 is available to fund activities for 13 – 19 year olds. The Youth Opportunity Fund is run by and for young people with facilities from South Northamptonshire Council, with young people making the application and young people deciding which applications will go forward. If you have a bright idea, go to www.southnorthants.gov.uk/community_living/253.htm

PEOPLE

Dinah Holley, late of Forge Cottage on the Green, died on 9 February aged 89. She had moved to a residential home in Shropshire to be near her eldest son, Patrick. Dinah was of that stalwart generation that faced the new inventions and upheavals of the 20th century head on. She was born in Shipston-on-Stour, attended Kingsley School from 1931-36, and then studied at secretarial college in London before briefly returning to the family estate agency of Bosley and Harper. However Shipston bore no excitement for the young Dinah and after being accepted into the Foreign



Office in London in 1939, she seized the opportunity to go Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) in 1944 to work on Lord Louis Mountbatten's staff as a private confidential secretary. Her work took her to Singapore in 1945 then on to British North Borneo (now Sabba) where she met Stephen Holley. They married in 1947 and had three sons, Patrick, Neville and Michael. After returning to the UK, Steve helped develop the new town of Washington which is where he and Dinah spent the next 20 years before moving to Abthorpe. And it was in this village that they lived the longest settled period of their married life. Dinah is fondly remembered by those who knew her as a lady full of good sense but never slow to put her views in her inimitable forthright manner, the last of a generation who lived through a very interesting period and made the most of it.

Our very best wishes got to Elsie Kelcher for her continued recovery and return to the village before too long. Elsie has been in hospital since early January and has now progressed to the rehabilitation unit.

Many will remember David Pont who emigrated to Canada with his family a couple of years ago. David has continued his budding acting career with a well reviewed part in 'The True Adventures of Robin Hood' which won the Outstanding Comedy award for 2009 in Ontario. The review is at theatreinlondon.ca/2008/06/the-true-adventures-of-robin-hood-re-view/

STEVE HOLLEY'S POEMS

It seems an appropriate issue in which to reprint two of Steve Holley's poems which were published in *Godverse and Oddverse* in 1998. Steve's life was remembered in Abtalk, July 2005 and on the website at www.abthorpe.net/archive.htm. It is difficult to pick just one poem from such a varied collection that epitomises Steve's wonderful outlook on life, but hopefully the following will give a flavour.

The first is from a series written as letters to his grandson, Alistair:

Thank you for the cup of tea that you prepared for Gran and me.
 I hope you'll come to tea with us. Just take a 97 bus
 That starts off by the dragon's den, and goes to Waterloo, and then
 Catch the thirteen twenty-two that goes to Birmingham and Crewe.
 At Crewe you leave the diesel train and catch a Boeing aeroplane
 That flies on bright and silver wings to Melbourne, Perth and Alice Springs.
 By camel train, a full mile long, you go via China to Hong Kong
 To catch the London plane that night, arriving Heathrow at first light.
 At INFORMATION you enquire if there's an elephant for hire
 And when you've got it, sally forth and follow signs for M1 North.
 At Milton Keynes I think it best to give the elephant a rest.
 It should stay there for half a day with beer and buns and bales of hay.
 So, catch a bus that goes exactly to the market town of Brackley
 And if you're travelling alone, just thumb a lift to Silverstone
 Go straight up to the Members' bar to borrow Nigel Mansell's car.
 First, check to see the plugs are clean, then drive to Abthorpe Village Green.
 A helicopter waiting there will take you at a special fare
 Into our garden by the tree where we've arranged to have our tea.

The Importance of Grammar

'Don't stop', pleaded Peggy. Her lover obeyed
 So now the young lady's no longer a maid.

(It is surely a fact that this sad situation
 Need not have been so with correct punctuation.)

'Don't! Stop!', cried young Emma. Her lover obeyed
 So lovely young Emma remains a young maid.

PEOPLE - CONTINUED

Vicki Jackson and Ian Wilkinson decided that Northampton no longer held the same charm as country life and moved to 1 The Green just before Christmas. They both agree that they made the right choice and love living in Abthorpe. Ian sells Twinings and Jackson teas and has a little hoard of samples squirrelled in their house (tea drinkers note!); unlike Vicki who markets Evian and Volvic waters but doesn't carry bottles around with her. Welcome to them, and we hope they continue to enjoy village life.

EVENTS*Wednesday 11 March*

Poems for Pleasure on the theme of 'the fowl in the air and the fish of the sea'. Towcester library; book in advance at the library

Saturday 14 March

Quiz night and fish supper, Wappenham Village Hall, 7.30pm. Tickets in advance from the shop

Sunday 22 March

Mothering Sunday service, 10.00

Until 28 March

Paintings by Brian Harrington at Towcester Library

From 28 March

Paintings by Yolanda Lawrenson at Towcester Library

Weekends in March

Lambing at Old Dairy Farm Craft Centre, Upper Stowe; 340525

Sunday 5 April

Palm Sunday concert, Towcester Choral Society, St Lawrence Church, 6pm. Details: 01604 850645

Sunday 12 April

Easter Sunday service, St John the Baptist, 9.00

Monday 18 May

Annual Parish Meeting, Old School, 7.45pm. This is the meeting for everyone in the village.

Saturday 23 May

Plant sale at Clarissa House, High Street, Wappenham, 9 - 12

Sunday 14 June

Wappenham Open Gardens