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News from Abthorpe

May 2009

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Don't forget the Abthorpe Annual Parish meeting on Monday 18 May at 7.45pm. It's a good chance to find out what the parish council has been doing in your name over the past year. County and local councillors, the police and the local school generally give reports, as well as village organisations. Meanwhile, the next regular meeting of the Parish Council is on Monday 11 May, when the chairman for the coming year will be elected.

GREENS NORTON MEDICAL CENTRE

Hot on the heels of the proposal to move the surgery in Silverstone into Towcester comes news that Greens Norton Medical Centre and Weedon Surgery are proposing to merge this October. The consultation period runs until 29 May after which Northamptonshire NHS will make a decision on whether to approve the merger. It appears that neither surgery will close but joining forces will provide enhanced opening hours and services. However, affected patients might like to check on the details themselves by phoning Gina Thompson, Practice Manager at Greens Norton Medical Centre: 01327 358287.

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NEWS FROM THE NEW INN

TEL: 857306

Charity quiz nights continue, the next being on Tuesday 9 June. On 24 March it was won by the Runners Up. No, not a team lacking the killer instinct to win but a group of runners (of the pounding the pavements variety). £90 was raised, and the winning team elected to donate it to Katharine House Hospice near Banbury. Bob Belt and his winning team chose to donate the £70 raised at the last quiz to Macmillan Nurses.

On Easter Monday the weather was ideal for an Easter egg hunt arranged in the pub garden by Barbara and her daughter Sam. The hidden tickets discovered by the children were redeemed for chocolate eggs, with a special large chocolate egg for the finder of the hard boiled hen's egg. And the warm sunshine was conducive to the barbeque laid on by Stuart, the restaurant chef.

The skittles team started their summer league challenge on 7 May with a home game. Anyone interested in joining the team, or just supporting, is very welcome to go along.

There are plans afoot for a steak night on Tuesday 19 May (this date to be confirmed, so check with the pub if you're interested), and also a wine tasting evening with a light supper towards the end of May/beginning of June.

The British Grand Prix weekend is always a highlight of the year. This will be Barbara and Rob's first experience on the other side of the bar for this event, and they will be arranging a barbeque and music on each of the evenings running up to the race – Thursday, Friday and Saturday, 18 – 20 June. No doubt it will be a busy time ahead of the race itself on Sunday 21 June.

Served alongside the evening menu from 6.00 – 9.00pm, the 'Lighter Bite' is proving a very popular addition to the main menu. There is also a more comprehensive lunch menu ranging from starters and light main courses to a good choice of baguettes, sandwiches and jacket potatoes.

LAMMING

The lambs are growing larger and losing their frolicksome ways, but it's interesting to understand the use of technology during such a traditional time on the farm. Using a mobile ultrasound device, ewes are often scanned when their foetuses are likely to be between 7 and 12 weeks to see if they are pregnant. The number of lambs that each ewe is carrying can be determined with a high degree of accuracy. Ewes are colour marked to show whether they are expecting one, two or three lambs and are then housed in groups according to how many they are going to have so that they can be



Barbara was therefore asking for dogs to be kept on leads for the immediate future. The potential value of the lamb was between £65 and £85.

MAY DAY

The first of May was celebrated in traditional style when the Brackley Morris Men danced at noon on the village green, watched and assisted by children from Abthorpe Nursery School. The all-male side, founded in 1623, had already welcomed the dawn of May Day with their traditional dancing in Brackley Market Square at 5.30am, but this was not their last stop as they carried on to another village....

fed the right diet. Ewes expecting triplets get the most food whilst barren ewes are likely to be sold off quickly. Scanning has led to economies that allow farms to be more profitable.

And on that note of profitability, as well as the obvious welfare interests of the sheep, a sign has recently appeared on the footpath stiles around the village: "Due to lamb death following dog bite please keep dogs on a lead." Barbara Smith, who, besides overseeing the New Inn farms at Slapton Manor Farm, explained that a large well-looked after lamb had been found dead in the field with a largish bite that she believed was too big for a fox.



ABbA

This is the first of a regular series of features on using the Internet from Abthorpe Broadband Association. The contribution this time is from Dave Cunningham.

HOT TOPIC: FAMILY SAFETY AND THE WEB

As a parent, you want to make your family's web experiences safer and more secure; this guidance will help.

If you use Windows Vista there are built-in family safety tools. If you use Windows XP, Windows Live Family Safety is a web-based service available from <https://fss.live.com/safety/default.aspx> that allows parents to control the browsing activity of their children. Other packages are available but WLFS is free. The American Academy of Paediatricians (www.safetynet.aap.org) helped Microsoft develop age-based guidance for Internet use that's included in this application, but if you don't want to adopt strict control you can set it up so that the child controls their own destiny but you have an overriding supervisory role that allows you to look at the history of their web browsing and who they have been talking with through social sites such as MSN Messenger.

The application can be configured for each child suitable to their age. For example, if you have a nine year old you may wish to adopt strict controls whereby you need to authorise each site visited, but for a fourteen year old you may wish to grant some latitude and block gambling or adult content sites but allow the child to browse freely elsewhere. By using Windows Live Family Safety you can still review where the fourteen year old has been. If the nine year old wishes to visit a new site and it is blocked they can send you an email that allows you to preview the site before granting access; you can do this remotely as it is all web based.

TIP OF THE MONTH

Have you just bought a new camera? Did it come with its own picture editing suite as FREE software? Did you install it? In all likelihood we have all bought cameras or printers or other devices that come with free software of one sort or other. We then merrily install the software

and after a while wonder why our machine take ages to boot up. Well the answer is simple, most of these gadgets install software that is designed to run when you switch your machine on but have the effect of slowing down the start up process. Many of these applications are used on rare occasions and really don't need to run at start up. Go to Start-All Programs-Startup and you will see some but not all programs that invoke when you switch your machine on. To get the full picture you will need a utility such as CCleaner, another bit of free software, that lets you look in detail at what's in the boot process..... more of CCleaner next issue.

FREWARE OF THE MONTH

Don't fork out £30 for Norton when you can get Avast or AVG for free but remember don't run more than one antivirus suite at a time. If you have a limited licence for Norton uninstall it before installing Avast or AVG!!

BARGAIN CORNER

Need a new laptop? eBuyer are offering an HP 6735s with 4Gb of memory, built in WiFi and Bluetooth, 320Gb hard drive all for £420 including VAT and delivery.

THE VILLAGE FUND COMMITTEE

The committee held a very successful fish and chip supper in April with an excellent quiz run by Roger Tolson. This was won by the Pope family together with Angela and David Darling and their grandson Ollie. The evening made a splendid profit of £375.

The next event is a barn dance to be held on Saturday 13 June at Highfield Farm by kind permission of Barry and Elizabeth Haycock. The evening festivities start at 7.30pm with dancing to Bricks and Brussels and there will be a pig roast, barbecue and bar. The barn holds around 250 people so bring your friends. Tickets are £10 for adults and £5 for children and will be on sale shortly.

At the last meeting of the committee elections were held for the posts of chair, treasurer and secretary. Mike Partridge was elected to the chair with

June Willsher as vice chair. Tim Pope remains as treasurer with Lynn Neasham as vice treasurer and Jan Miles has returned to the post of secretary with Fi Noble as vice secretary with help from Lynn Neasham.

After the barn dance, Cameo Opera are booked for 26 September and there will also be the usual Christmas activities. Other events are yet to be planned.

Jan Miles

AFTERNOON TEA

Joyce and John Riches are organising an afternoon tea for older retired people in the village on Tuesday 2 June. It is being sponsored by the Cooperative, with Fairtrade tea and biscuits. Individual invitations will be issued but you may want to put a note in your diary, and if your invitation doesn't arrive by any chance and you'd like to go, do call John on 857703. Transport will be provided for those who need help.

COUNTY COUNCIL AND EUROPEAN ELECTIONS

Thursday 4 June is voting day for both County Councillors and MEPs. The County Council candidates will be announced on 11 May; the European Parliament candidates have also still to be announced (check www.europarl.org.uk nearer the time).

Abthorpe is currently represented on Northamptonshire CC by Ben Smith, Conservative, elected in 2005. His additional duties to being a Council member are Deputy Chair of Cabinet and member of the Milton Keynes Council and Northamptonshire CC Joint Waste Disposal Committee.

The sitting MEPs for the East Midlands region are:

Mr Roger Helmer, Conservative, Non Attached

Mr Robert Kilroy-Silk, Independent, Non Attached

Mrs Glenis Willmott, Labour, Party of the European Socialists (PES)

Mr Christopher Heaton-Harris, Conservative, European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats (EPP-ED)

Mr Derek Clark, UK Independence Party, Independence and Democracy (IND-DEM)

Mr Bill Newton Dunn, Liberal Democrat, Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE)

PEOPLE

A warm welcome to another new family who has moved into 1 Fosscote Cottages. Sylvia and Will Ronan and their 14 year-old son Jack previously lived in Towcester, so they are already familiar with the area but are enjoying a slightly more rural location.

The funeral of Dr Vince Sanger was held in Greens Norton on 5 May, attended by many people from Abthorpe. Dr Sanger practised in Towcester and lived in School Lane before moving to the Reading Room on the green. Latterly he had been living in Bradden. He is fondly remembered as a very caring doctor, with a wide range of interests and accomplishments, which included playing the violin, wood turning, painting and even building an extension on his house. In the mid-1970s he was one of the organisers of the country fairs held in the village. But his lasting contribution to Abthorpe was his efforts, when chairman of the Parish Council, to get the ownership of the village green registered to the Parish and preserve our rights to use it. He is summed up as "a lovely man".

NOTES FROM OUR CHURCH

Easter in Abthorpe was celebrated in a traditional manner, and the Easter Day service was led by Rev Arthur Hughes, officiating to a large congregation during the interregnum.

The March tote winner was Bet Rush who won £230, as did Eileen Vielvoe in April.

ROCK AND ROLL DANCE

Blakesley and Woodend are fund raising for a new community centre, and a key event will be a Rock and Roll evening at Slapton Manor Farm on 11 July. The Montanas will

galvanise the proceedings with their live music, interspersed with Neil Taylor's discotheque. The licensed bar and pig roast will intriguingly accompany 'Who can tame the wild bull?'. Worth going to find that out. Suitable dress is not mentioned, but what an opportunity to revive those teddy boy drapes and organza petticoats. Tickets £8 in advance (£10 on the door) from the New Inn.

VANDALISM

Vandalism in Abthorpe is an extremely rare occurrence. Sadly in the very early hours of Saturday 14

March vandals smashed the windows of two cars parked along Main Street and another two in the cul-de-sac off Wappenham Road. The front door of one home was also damaged. Police investigations so far have not yielded the culprit(s).

FILM EVENING

The inaugural gathering of the those intrigued by the Film Abthorpe flyer was attended by about 25 villagers who converged on the Old School clutching bottles and flasks to enjoy an informal evening watching two films in convivial atmosphere. The Elizabethan was a non-stop steam train service between London and Edinburgh in the 50s, recalling memories for many of those very different days – not least the lack of strict food standards (but nobody died!). Brief Encounter, with a corny overlay, nevertheless delivered a thoughtful message. And there wasn't a tissue in sight.

It was generally agreed that a reprise of the evening would be a good thing, so two more films will be chosen for Thursday 18 June. Watch out for the flyer.

VILLAGERS AT WORK

– AN OCCASIONAL LOOK AT WHAT OUR NEIGHBOURS DO FOR A LIVING

This is a slight digression from the title of this feature as it is Eileen Vielvoye's 'other' (unpaid) job; nonetheless hard work alongside the fun.

"Twice a year over the last 25 years I have driven north with my Gordon Setters and taken part in 'Grouse Counting with dogs'. How do your dogs count grouse - my friends ask... trying not to giggle at the picture it paints...

HOW DO WE DO IT – HOW DO OUR DOGS COUNT GROUSE?

We have teams of bird dogs – Setters and Pointers - and set them off on a designated 'block' of heather. They cover the ground running from side to side (quartering) and under control of our whistle. When they have a 'find' they come on 'point' (see pictures) indicating they have grouse ahead. They move forward on our command and the grouse fly. We count each grouse the dogs produce, on each of the blocks of the grouse moor.

We count the birds, note their sex, age, size and general condition, watch where they land and continue. We move across the block being as thorough as possible, noting what we see. Each block is up to 250 acres. We attempt to make the process as scientific as possible covering the same blocks each year and using the same numbers of dogs, Gordon Setters and English

Pointers.

WHY DO WE DO IT?

We are carrying out scientific research to ensure data is taken in exactly the same way each time. 'Block' grouse counting was developed by the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust



as it is not feasible to cover the whole moor.

Eileen with Duke on point

Grouse counting with dogs is very much part of the management of the grouse population in the UK. Grouse are not artificially reared and although territorial are also not evenly distributed across the heather. Our work helps to indicate the health of the ground and the wildlife and shooting potential for the coming season. Both the Manager and the Owner share a passion for the land and all wildlife on it and grouse counting is very much part of sustainable wildlife management and conservation.

Grouse production is the best way of maintaining heather moorland biodiversity and grouse shooting provides the economic benefits. The moors



we work on are a classic environment for birds such as golden plover, curlew, lapwing, snipe, dunlin and dotterel which would not be there if there were not grouse.

Caillie on point

AND....FINALLY...

We love seeing our dogs work; they are bred to work and watching them gallop across the heather at pace, taking the wind, finding and producing birds, is both exciting and exhilarating. It is a beautiful sight. We watch and help them develop from puppies to mature experienced dogs, in itself hugely rewarding. We love being on the moorland, we love the team work and the satisfaction of making a contribution to the environment. It is at times demanding work both for us and our dogs especially in certain weather conditions, and we are aware at all times of the irreparable damage that could be done with untrained dogs. It is a privilege and it is special: sitting in the heather amongst the rich flora and fauna sharing our lunches is also most welcome as is the dram of whisky shared in the evenings after our hard day's work.



SNVB

Volunteering is the most basic act of goodwill. Voluntary work should be fun, and volunteering is something that everyone can do. Visiting the South Northants Volunteer Bureau website at www.snvb.org.uk is a good first step.

NEW POLICE CONTACT NUMBER

Northamptonshire Police has launched a new non-emergency telephone number: 03000 111 222.

This is the new single countywide telephone number to call Northamptonshire Police for all non-emergency matters, the Safer Community Team or to seek advice on any police matter, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

ROSE OF THE SHIRES - PROPOSED HERITAGE LOTTERY PROJECT 2010

We had a somewhat puzzling email from the Heritage Project Co-ordinator of the Rockingham Forest Trust since Abthorpe is a fair way from Rockingham. However, it turns out that the Trust is a charity making a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund to run a project called The Rose of the Shires to look at the landscape, settlements and social history of North-amptonshire.

Stuart Taylor, the Co-ordinator, writes:

"Following earlier project work Northamptonshire now has historic data available that is unique in the UK, reconstructing the medieval and post-medieval landscapes as well as looking at the 19th century and modern landcapes. The work raises awareness and understanding of how the landscape and settlements have evolved over the past 700

years, enables assessment and recording of the survival of features such as woodland, earthworks, hedgerows, field patterns/enclosures as well as the plan form of each settlement and its buildings. The Rose of the Shires project intends to make this publicly available for the first time and work with six selected areas of the County to achieve this.

If the project is successful in obtaining funding Abthorpe will be in one of the areas where a programme of activities will be delivered by specialists including an historian and two landscape archaeologists. This is intended to build upon the existing historic knowledge already held by local groups and individuals.

There will be opportunities to have an active role in recording the survival of Abthorpe's historic landscape and in recording buildings and other structures that are not protected by Grade I or II listing but which are valued by residents. The project will also be looking at social history.

The programme would include presentations on the history and development of local settlements and landscapes by Dr Glenn Foard (former County Archaeologist); guided heritage walks to visit features outlined in the presentation;

involving groups in assessing and recording their historic environment; discovering the social and industrial past of each area; and involving schools in exploring their local history.

The results of the studies will be written up as a report and also included on the Trust's online Heritage Resource Centre (www.rockingham-forest-trust.org.uk). This ensures that the information can be used by your community and the wider public in the future."

If you feel you would like to support this project in any small way contact Stuart Taylor, Heritage Project Co-ordinator, Rockingham Forest Trust: stuart@rftrust.org.uk, tel 01832 274278. Time is short as the bid has to be in towards the end of May.

BLUEBELLS

I know we've mentioned these before, but the bluebells in Bucknell Woods have been particularly vibrant this year, possibly because of the clearing that the Forestry Commission has been doing lately. If you hurry you may enjoy a last glimpse of them.

Note: If anyone would like to populate a corner of their garden with bluebells, I have lots to spare.
Jill Tolson

EVENTS

Monday 11 May

Parish Council Meeting, 7.45, the Old School

Monday 18 May

Annual Parish Meeting, 7.45, the Old School

Tuesday 19 May (to be confirmed)

Steak night, the New Inn

Saturday 23 May

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

Tuesday 2 June

Tea for older residents, 12 Wappenham Road

Thursday 4 June

County Council and European Parliamentary elections

Tuesday 9 June

Charity quiz night, 7.30, the New Inn

Saturday 13 June

Grand Barn Dance with Pig Roast, Highfields Farm, 7.30. £10 adults, £5 children

Sunday 14 June

Wappenham Open Gardens

Thursday 18 June

Film Abthorpe, 7.30, the Old School

Thursday-Saturday, 18-20 June

BBQ and music, evenings, the New Inn

Saturday 11 July

Rock and Roll evening. Live music featuring 'The Montanas' (rock and roll), Slapton Manor Farm, 7.30. £8 from the New Inn; £10 on the door

Saturday 26 September

Cameo Opera, with cheese and wine