

News from Abthorpe

November 2018



ABTALK

PARISH COUNCIL

The two vacancies on the Parish Council have been filled by the appointment of Fi Noble and Mike Greenhalgh. In fact, it is welcome back for Mike who served on the Council a few years ago. This brings the Council up to full strength.

Maintenance work on the wall by the war memorial has been undertaken in advance of Remembrance Day to tidy up its appearance. The seats on the green are showing their age and now only one is suitable to be retained.

NCC has surveyed all the grit bins in the county and estimated the value of each on a points system. The aim was to save money by not filling all of them. Initially the bin at the end of Silver Street was not to be filled but after it was pointed out that older people would be at risk it has now been restored to the list of those to be retained. However the county council did decide to *remove* from the list the bin on the road to Wappenham; they did not realise that this bin was *removed* several years ago.

DOG FOULING

Ask any parish council up and down the land what the most intractable problem is and you will find dog fouling high on the list. Nobody wants to step in dog muck but it seems that there are still dog owners who are not aware of their responsibilities. You must remove any faeces left anywhere in the village. Outside the village you should ensure that it is removed from tracks and paths. Carry a bag with you and take the bag home – don't drop the bag, or worse, hang it in a tree, as we now all know how long it takes plastic to degrade.

NEWS FROM THE OLD SCHOOL

After more than two years of planning the refurbishment and repair of the main hall started at the end of October. Committees over the years have done an excellent job of maintaining this building, which started life 376 years ago, for the village. However, the years take their toll and the current committee felt it was time to undertake the next phase to keep the Old School in good

Editorial Team:

Jill Tolson	<i>jill.tolson@abthorpe.net; 857320</i>
Keith Fenwick	<i>keith.fenwick@abthorpe.net; 857083</i>
Alison Robbins	<i>robbins@abthorpe.net; 857795</i>
Clive Estall	<i>greenman955@yahoo.co.uk; 07810 483761</i>

order to serve the current and future residents for years to come. Equally importantly, increased income is needed to meet the running costs and build a maintenance fund.

A new air source heating system was installed last year which has successfully kept the damp at bay. The causes of the damp cannot be cured so it is a question of managing them.

The two sheds have been removed from behind the Old School and a new base laid by three press-ganged volunteers to take the substantial replacement which went up in the middle of October.

The work on the main hall started on 29th October with a complete stripping out of redundant material. The scheme involves removing all the damp and blown plaster and panelling the lower part of the walls. All the rotting wood sills are being replaced, and the beautiful parquet floor stripped and sealed. The doors will be stripped or replaced as required; and of course the whole room will be redecorated.

Reverberating noise will be suppressed by an acoustic layer applied to the ceiling which will make it easier to hear each other when there is a large gathering. A new application system will ensure that the original lines of the ceiling are not obscured. In fact the whole aim of the refurbishment plan is to retain

and enhance the unique features of this old room.

New lighting will give a wider range of effects to suit every occasion, from full light, for instance for playing bridge, through to a soft party atmosphere.

The refurbishment plan includes building in table and chair storage which will double as additional seating. However, this may have to be fitted later if unexpected problems arise during the main part of the work. Also looking to the near future, the curtains will be replaced with fabric blinds.

It is tempting to pop in to the Old School and see what's going on, but the Committee would ask everyone to restrain themselves from doing so while the work is in progress, remembering that it is a restricted building site. If you have any questions, please ask a member of the Committee or email the chairman, Richard Gladdle: oldschool@abthorpe.net.

The latter part of the summer has been a very busy month for the Old School and it has been a pleasure to see it used so often. Some of the highlights were:

Emily and Tim Hayward-Humphrey kindly opened their doors again for a summer coffee morning. It was a beautiful sunny day with everyone sitting in the garden enjoying homemade cakes and a

chat. £185.70 was raised from the raffle and donations.

'Social Monday' was another inauguration by the Committee, when the Old School opened its doors on Monday 13th July for people to come and enjoy a cup of tea or coffee and a biscuit or two at no cost. It was a taster session to see if the villagers would like this as a more regular event. People enjoyed the chat, looking at the books, and putting the world to rights. The idea will be revisited in the future in the hope that for the villagers who are retired, have more time on their hands or young families will come along and enjoy the chance to catch up with neighbours.

Following the book sale reported in the last issue, a weekend was devoted to the opportunity to browse the remaining books and take any that appealed for a donation. This was in preparation for the start of the refurbishment. On the Saturday afternoon cream teas, with rather yummy scones kindly donated by Andy from Whittlebury Bakery, went down well. The bacon butties were popular for the Sunday morning, some people even had seconds... and dare we say, thirds! The books were whittled down and £160 added to the fundraising total.

Call My Wine Bluff on 20th October attracted a full house. Hosted by Richard Jones of Slurp, a



Call My Wine Bluff in full swing

Men wielding tea towels?!

wine merchants in Banbury and Leamington, Fanny Gladdle, Simon Mckay and Stephen Noble convincingly tried to



persuade the assembled company that their description of each wine they were championing was in fact the true one. Three whites, three reds and a sweet wine were subjected to this rigorous testing before a lasagna supper followed by a cheese selection was served. All the teams showed very mixed ability to be able to identify wines but the most successful was MOTU (Masters of the Universe) whose members predominantly came from Hinton in the Hedges. Apart from being a very enjoyable and light-hearted evening, raising £550 for the hall. The main conclusion seemed to be that Abthorpe is not a village of wine connoisseurs.

Looking forward to the new year Paula LaBaigue is still planning to start Saturday art classes, postponed because of the refurbishment. She will also include sewing lessons,

helping anyone with a project to make.

Then on March 9th there will be a return of the village quiz, always an occasion for some competitive fun, so make a diary note. Another bridge night is planned for the spring.

SILVERSTONE SCHOOL

A number of children from the village attend Silverstone CE Primary School which moved into its new building in September 2017. Now in its second year, the enlarged school created through the amalgamation of Infant and Junior Schools, seems to be settling down well with 38 children joining the reception class in September. Spaces for other year groups are available and enquiries can be made to Mrs Jayne Capel, the school administrator, on 01327 855100 or

email to office@silverstoneprimary.org.uk. The Christmas fair is on Sunday 2 December from 1pm to 4pm, with some great raffles prizes on offer including tickets for the 2019 F1 grand prix. More details on the facebook page of Friends of Silverstone School.

We now hope to have regular updates and photos of the children's activities in future editions.

VILLAGE DEFIBRILLATOR

For those new to the village or as a reminder to those who need it, the old telephone kiosk on the Green is where the defibrillator is located. The kiosk is not locked so, in case you are ever in the position of having to deal with someone who has had a heart attack, simply enter the telephone box and follow the instructions on the front of the yellow box. You will need your mobile phone to call 999. The Ambulance service will give you the code to unlock the defibrillator.



HARVEST TIME – THEN AND NOW

Due to our unusually hot and dry summer, harvesting of cereals in the fields surrounding Abthorpe came early this year with the combines already out at work in July. While many of us relished the long sunny

days, our local farmers reflect that there are always two sides to a story. Barry Haycock comments that the crops suffered significantly from the lack of rainfall and yields were inevitably lower. However, the harvesting was done quickly with little or no interruption and there

LIFESAVING EQUIPMENT

Call **999** for ambulance

When finding a person in cardiac arrest:

- Check for danger
- Call for help
- Administer CPR
- Open defibrillator
- Follow voice instructions

Ask for key code

- Press 'C'
- Enter code into lock key pad
- Turn knob to access defibrillator
- Take defibrillator to cardiac arrest victim

Box location:

When code and tone are received, lift cover and use device

Ashley Jolly
sad
Sussex Adult Death Syndrome

SADS UK
Sussex Adult Death Syndrome
01277 811215 • www.sadsuk.org

was no need to use the expensive driers to dry the harvested grain. Economics also tells us if production goes down, then prices go up – so the farmers receive more for their produce, while consumers are now seeing price rises in the shops. For those farmers with livestock, Barbara Smith points out that grass stopped growing in the dry months of June and July, so she and Rob were only able to do one cut for fodder instead of the usual two which again has economic consequences. Both farming couples agree that it has been rather a topsy turvy year, but are philosophical about the outcome – farming has always been a risky business, with good years and

bad years, and 2018 was probably somewhere in between.

Since ancient, even pagan, times the harvest season has been a time of celebration with special rituals, customs and traditions. Harvest Festival used to be celebrated at the beginning of the harvest period on August 1st and was called Lammas, meaning 'Loaf Mass'. Loaves of bread were made from the newly harvested wheat and given to the local church to be used in the communion services. The custom ended when Henry VIII broke away from the Catholic Church, and today celebrations take place at the end of the harvest season.

Until a few generations ago at the start of the harvest a village like Abthorpe would appoint a strong and respected man from the community as their 'Lord of the Harvest'. He would be responsible for negotiating the harvest wages and organising the field workers.

There used to be a lovely custom known as 'Calling the Mare'. As the last of the crops were being gathered in, a farmer was keen to show that he had the best team of reapers and had completed the harvest before his neighbour. So the last sheaf of corn



This year's grape harvest in Abthorpe to rival any French vineyard

was roughly shaped into a mare and the men would rush round to their tardy neighbour, throw the straw mare over the hedge and shout "Mare, mare" and then run away. The underlying message? If you don't hurry up and finish your harvest, wild horses will be after your crops. This farmer would now work even faster to gather in the remaining sheaves of corn and if he finished before another farm did, he would throw the mare to them. The farmer who was last to finish had to keep the mare all year and have it on display to show he had been the slowest farmer that year.

Another, even older, custom dating back not hundreds but thousands of years was that of making corn dollies. In Pagan times people believed that a corn goddess lived in their fields of wheat and barley. They feared that she would die when the corn was harvested unless some of it was saved until the following year. The custom therefore grew up that plaited corn dollies were made from the last sheaf of corn for the spirit of the corn goddess to



rest in until the next spring. This ancient custom of making corn dollies only died out with the coming of mechanisation in the 1800s but is now being revived as a fascinating hobby.

In some villages, church bells could be heard ringing out on each day of the harvest, and the horse bringing in the very last cartload would be decorated with garlands of flowers and lots of ribbons. The end of the harvest was celebrated at the farmer's house with a huge feast which the whole village would attend and was known as the Harvest Supper. The Lord of the Harvest would have the honour of sitting at the head of the table. Traditionally a goose stuffed with apples was eaten together with other vegetables. There would be games, music, singing and dancing too.

The tradition of celebrating Harvest Festival in churches actually began less than 200 years ago in 1843 when a vicar in Cornwall invited the local villagers to a special service of thanksgiving for the harvest. Victorian hymns such as 'We plough the fields and scatter', 'Come ye

thankful people, come' and 'All things bright and beautiful' helped spread the popularity of having an annual Harvest Thanksgiving service, when local people would decorate the church with produce from their gardens.

The dual tradition of having a Harvest Supper for the whole village and a Harvest Thanksgiving service in the Church continues to this very day in Abthorpe. This year the Harvest Supper was well attended by a lovely mixture of young and old, both newcomers to the village as well as long term residents. There was a lively buzz of conversation and laughter, and a traditional fare of home-made pies and puddings, although not a goose in sight. The service of Thanksgiving in church

was an equally uplifting occasion with the windowsills beautifully decorated with autumnal displays of flowers as well as home-grown produce or goods donated with a little help from Tesco or Waitrose. All the produce is taken to the Hope Centre in Northampton to provide food for the homeless.

NOT EVERYONE HAS ENOUGH.....

As we celebrate and enjoy the produce of this year's harvest, we may give a passing thought to those who do not have enough to eat. We probably have a picture in our mind's eye of some faraway place, perhaps in Asia or Africa, where drought or civil war has meant that this year's harvest has failed and malnutrition or even starvation threatens. But the food box at the back of our church, which many Abthorpe residents donate to generously and regularly, is a salutary reminder that lack of sufficient food affects people much closer to home – in fact, people and families in our local community.

For those new to the village, or others who do not know about Towcester Foodbank, here is a some



background information which may open our eyes a little to what is going on on our very doorstep. The first myth to dispel is that Towcester Foodbank is not simply a place where people who can't be bothered to go to Tesco can pop in for a free meal. Families can only use the foodbank if they have reached a crisis point in their lives and have sought help – perhaps via the Citizens Advice Bureau, social services or a local charity. If appropriate a food voucher will be issued which can be taken to the foodbank where a warm drink will be offered and a trained volunteer will exchange the voucher for a parcel of 3 days' emergency food and also talk about what other support can be offered. It takes a lot of courage to acknowledge the need for help and the volunteers at the foodbank are sensitive to this and aim to create a friendly non-judgemental environment at this difficult point in people's lives.



The Clockmeister resetting the church clock to GMT on Sunday 28th October, an opportunity to also put it back on to British rather than Abthorpe time.

Towcester Foodbank was established 6 years ago and has been a lifeline to numerous families. All the food in the Food Bank is donated by local people and community groups. It is based in St John Ambulance hall in Islington Road and is open twice a week. It is part of a nationwide network of foodbanks supported by the Trussell Trust which last year handed out 1,332,952 three-day emergency food parcels.

If you would like to donate to Towcester foodbank, simply pop your food donation in the large blue plastic box in the back of the church. The church is open every day during daylight hours. The food you donate could be breakfast cereals, soup, tinned meat or fish, tinned fruit or vegetables, pasta sauce, rice, tea bags, instant coffee, milk (UHT or powdered) , sugar (500g bags), tinned sponge puddings, jam, biscuits or snack bars. At present Towcester

food bank has sufficient pasta and baked beans, but would welcome any other donations.

As Christmas approaches, the foodbank will put out a request for specialised items so please look at their website (www.towcester.foodbank.org.uk) to see what they suggest. The website also has details of how to become a volunteer or a trustee if you are interested.

NEWS FROM THE NEW INN

The New Inn is gearing up for Christmas, with a festive menu being served between the 1st and 23rd December. Bookings are now being taken; one course is £12.95, two, £17.95 and a full three courses £21.95.

The popular beer and carols evening, started a couple of years ago, has become a season's tradition, so gather at 7pm on Wednesday 9th December for a good sing and refreshments.

Christmas Eve will see the bar open and the restaurant serving pub classic food between 12.00 and 3.00. On Christmas Day itself just the bar will be open from 12.00 to 2.00 and all day on Boxing Day again with the restaurant offering the pub classic menu over lunchtime.

Then before you know it it will be New Year's Eve and party night with a pig roast. The bar will then be open again all day on New Year's

Day (plucky staff).

Before all this, there's always Tuesday steak night to look forward to.

Planning permission for the proposed extension has had to be resubmitted and hopefully all should now be resolved by the spring. The Parish Council is very supportive of the application and keen to see the work go ahead.

Recent quiz evenings have raised extraordinary sums for charity, and just as importantly have been very entertaining. The winners in July have been Tows on Tour and their chosen charity was Alzheimer's Society, but August saw No Eye Deer donate £150 to TADD with September's exceptional winnings of £240 going to Cynthia Spencer Hospice, suggested by Tows on Tour. In October the Bards from the Crown put on a spurt to leap clear at the finish. £120 was donated to the Hyperemesis UK, a charity started by a friend of one team member to support women through this serious condition of pregnancy. The last Sunday in the month is the day if you fancy having a lighthearted evening with supper included for just £3 a head. Be there for 7.30. November's quiz is on 25th, with the bumper Christmas edition on Sunday 23rd December.

The second Sunday afternoon in the month hosts the open mic

session which is attracting some good local talent. All equipment is provided if you'd like to turn up and play or sing, or just come and listen.

And continuing the social theme of this pub which we're so fortunate to have on our doorstep, the darts team deserves a mention. They play in the local Monday Darts League, more or less successfully, and always having good fun. They have around 10 members but with work commitments taking players away from time to time they would welcome more members, male or female. Regardless of how long it is since you've played (or never), you would be made very welcome in the New Inn on a Monday evening at 7.30.

The announcement in the last issue of the Trip Advisor's recognition of a Certificate of Excellence for 2018 prompted thoughts of how far the New Inn has come in the last half century.

Forty-five years ago 'Nobby' Coles acted as the landlord although his wife Vi was the licensee. She was rarely seen in the pub and lived in a cottage opposite.

Besides operating the pub Nobby ran a business from the yard dealing in old railway sleepers, for which at the time there was a great need. It really was a traditional English tavern where the clientele, almost entirely men, supped their pints of Hooky, smoked, kept warm round an ancient tortoise stove and generally put the world to rights.

If customers asked for food the height of his culinary offering was likely to be a bag of crisps and if you were really lucky, pork scratchings.



Nobby and Vi

Proper food was noticeable by its absence. Sadly Nobby died in 1977 and John and Barbara Powell took over. They dabbled at primitive catering but it wasn't until Falklands War veteran Sergeant Major Fred Huggins and his wife Dianne arrived that things started to improve. Dianne became famous in these parts for her home-baked ham which she served with eggs and chips.

Successive landlords made gradual improvements to the food being offered to customers but it wasn't until Rob Smith took over the tenancy approaching eleven years ago that the pub's catering really got better. Rob has since bought the pub from the Hook Norton Brewery and teamed up with Abthorpe man Stuart Jones whose catering company operates the kitchens and Chef Steve produces the food that earned the Certificate of Excellence.

HONEY BEES AND THEIR YEAR

This is the final part of David Robbins' fascinating account of keeping bees. Hopefully we are now more appreciative of these industrious little creatures. These articles were not commissioned as a marketing exercise but independently the editors wanted to let you know that David has honey to sell at 4 Wappenham Road, a perfect local natural product.

No-one can have failed to notice the unusual weather we have had this year. The *Abtalk* articles aimed to trace a typical beekeeping year,

but have ended up recording one of our most unusual beekeeping years for a very long while. The cold late winter and short spring that resulted meant that my bees mostly missed the spring nectar flow such as it was; yet as summer progressed from one glorious day to the next many of the colonies caught up. In the end 2018 will go down in the history books as a better than average year for the honey crop, at least in this area.

The honey crop arrives home in 'supers', shallow boxes of frames from which the queen has been excluded so they contain no brood. When full a super contains about 30lbs of honey. My honey crop of almost 550lbs this year was spread over about 30 supers and so 300 individual frames. The basic equipment includes a machine to spin the honey out of the frames, a coarse sieve and settling tank, strainers to remove fine bits of wax and other debris, and buckets for bulk storage of the final product. For most hobbyist beekeepers like me the kitchen has to be converted for a brief period each year. This is where a tolerant partner/family is a necessity. Honey and propolis (the resinous glue bees use to stick things together) 'travel' all too readily. Need I say more.

August is almost the end of the year as far as the bees are concerned and now the beekeeper moves into a



Frames need to be uncapped ready for extraction.

different gear, setting the colonies up for the winter. Bee numbers decline steadily from their peak of about 40,000 per colony as the summer bees die and are replaced by the winter bees which are slightly larger and fatter. These bees will live for about 3 to 6 months, but come the return of spring a new generation of honey bees will have replaced them; and so it goes on.

A major concern at this time of year is the presence of the varroa mite in honey bee colonies. It is a parasite of both the adult bees and the larvae and compared to a bee is relatively large, about 1mm across and easily visible to the naked eye. Varroa first arrived in the UK in 1992 and turned beekeeping on its head. At first varroa were ruthless, killing colonies in as little as two seasons if untreated. More recently anecdotal evidence suggests that

the parasite has become less virulent and the bees better housekeepers, but it is still a major pest and without treatment most colonies will succumb. I monitor the numbers of varroa in a colony throughout the year in order to work out when treatment is necessary,

and nowadays a range of treatments is available to keep numbers under control.

One downside of an open, globalised economy is the arrival of many unwanted parasites and diseases for which local inhabitants have no defence. We only have to think of Dutch elm disease. For bees varroa was the first, but there are others waiting in the wings. Asian hornets can kill honey bee colonies very quickly. Think of them as the Challenger Tanks of the insect world. Heavily armoured, yet fast, strong and fairly manoeuvrable, with a powerful sting and a voracious appetite for other insects. Since it arrived in France just over a decade ago, the Asian hornet has caused devastation to French beekeeping, and having reached the channel

coast is now showing up in the UK, so all beekeepers are on the lookout

Anti-varroa treatments can be given once the honey has been removed, and also feeding with sugar syrup to top up reserves and replace the honey harvested. At this end of the year ivy is an important source of pollen in this area, and on the occasional warm days of late September and October you will still see the bees out and about topping up their winter stores for themselves. A simple level of colony improvement can be implemented at this time of year by removing queens heading colonies with undesirable characteristics such as stinging the beekeeper and/or following him or her back to their car. Colonies can be joined up by removing an unwanted queen and letting the two colonies get to know each other through a sheet of newspaper; that way fighting is avoided.

This year the weather has been kind and October has provided a couple of warm weeks to finish off the last of these operations.

The green woodpecker can be a nuisance in hard winters. Their strong beaks can make easy work of a cedar hive and soon generate holes so that they can feed on the bees or any larvae that happen to be around. Each hive needs to be netted with chicken wire for protection. The bees soon get used to this defensive shield.

So now in October 2018 my beekeeping year has come full circle. All my colonies have a promising queen with a good temperament, and have sufficient reserves to see them through to next spring. It is dangerous to the bees if they are forced to break their winter cluster for any reason so they are best left in peace as we beekeepers begin to look forward to 2019 and whatever that might bring.



*The deeply unattractive
Asian Hornet*

BATTLE'S OVER



A NATION'S TRIBUTE
11TH NOVEMBER 2018
100 YEARS OF REMEMBRANCE

Battle's Over

Battle's Over is a unique series of events in the morning and evening involving organisations and communities the length and breadth of our nation and in many countries abroad.

Abthorpe is playing its part in Battle's Over with a special ceremony at the war memorial, followed by a short service in church with readings, poems and hymns. Then in the evening it's time to celebrate with the lighting of a beacon and ringing of bells.

There But Not There

"There But Not There" is a commemorative campaign launched to mark 100 years since the end of WWI.

Local community groups, such as schools, businesses, places of worship and village halls have been given the opportunity to host their own 'silhouette installations'.

The silhouettes are designed to fit into seated spaces and were inspired by an art installation by Martin Baroud at Penshurst Church in Kent in 2016. The local Penshurst war memorial, Abthorpe has two of the silhouettes which represent the names of the fallen from our village. They are planned to be sited inside and outside the church at different times during the day.

Ring Out For Peace

Church bells across the UK remained silent throughout the course of the war and only rang freely once Armistice was declared on 11 November 1918.

1000 cathedrals and churches will ring out their bells across the nation, and beyond, in celebration of Peace and Abthorpe will join in during the evening.

Programme

Commemoration

Remembering those killed and injured in all conflict

Ceremony at Abthorpe war memorial

10.45am

Wreath laying, 2 minutes silence, Last Post and Reveille

Followed by a short remembrance service in church with readings, poems and hymns.

Celebration

Marking the centenary of the end of World War One

Evening event - outside church

6.55pm

The Last Post

Coinciding with individual Buglers sounding this historic tribute at WW1 Beacons of Light locations across the Nation and UK Overseas Territories.

WW1 Beacons of Light

We will light our own modest beacon along with over 1000 Beacons of Light across the country symbolising an end to the darkness of war and a return to the light of peace.

7.00pm

Ring Out For Peace

Cathedrals and churches will ring out their bells across the nation, and beyond, in celebration of Peace and we will join them with our own church bell. Bring your own bells with you and make some noise!!

7.10pm

A Toast to Peace

We will have wine and soft drinks so that everyone can drink to peace in the world.

CHURCH NEWS

Barbara Malcomson
malcomson@abthorpe.net

Our Harvest celebrations were held on the weekend 12th/14th October – see page 9.



Corn and wheat from Liz and Barry Haycock

Tea and Piece: These monthly informal events, the last of which took place on 21st October, have been very much enjoyed over the summer and have been reasonably well attended by people enjoying a cup of tea or coffee, a slice of cake and a good natter. Thank you to everyone who has supported these and also to those who have donated cakes. By popular request we intend

to resume holding the events next spring.

Remembrance Day: This year, as it is the centenary of the end of the First World War, the Remembrance celebrations are a little different. Details of the day are described on the page opposite.

Christmas Coffee Morning and Bring and Buy: We are holding this on Saturday 8th December from 10am to 12 at the home of Jill and Mike Greenhalgh, 17 Wappenham Road. Have a break from the busy Christmas preparations and relax with more tea or coffee and cake! You never know, you may just find that gift you have been looking for.

Christmas Tree and Lights event: This was hugely successful last year and it even snowed on the day, making it all quite magical. This year it will take place on Sunday 9th December starting at 4.30pm. The lights on the Christmas Tree will be lit, there will be games for the children, a raffle, mulled wine, hot chocolate, tea and coffee, Christmas treats to eat and of course a rousing singing of Christmas carols and songs.

Winter Church Clean: If you can spare a little time please come along on Saturday 12th December from 10am to 12 with your duster and polish and make the church beautiful for Christmas. Your reward will be coffee and mince pies. It really is a

case of more hands make light work.

Christmas Services: The Christingle/Carol Service will once again be held on Christmas Eve starting at 4pm. It is a lovely start to the festive season. We will be making the christingles on Saturday 22nd December at the home of Jill Greenhalgh, 17 Wappenham Road, starting at 10am. Children (and adults) are more than welcome to help us with this and there will be refreshments for all who turn up to help.

Christmas Day Holy Eucharist Service starts at 9.30am.

Food Bank: Thank you once again to John Riches who has done an magnificent job of regularly taking our food box into the Food Bank at Towcester. He took 14kg in on 28th August, making our cumulative total 1394 kg. Thank you also to all who contribute to the box. More on the Food Bank is found in the article about Harvest, page 9.

Tote: The lucky winners since the last issue were Mrs A Hitchings who won £197.50 in July, and the same amount in August by Peter Newcombe. In September Lucy Jones won £200, while the October winners, Tim and Emily Humphrey, collected £200. We hope you all enjoyed your little windfall and thank you to everyone who takes part in this. The money raised from the tote is used solely to maintain the fabric of the church and provides our main source of income so if you do not already belong to the tote, please consider joining. If you would like to be in with a chance in 2019, please contact me. The odds are a lot better than the national lottery!

The churchwarden and PCC members wish you all a Happy Christmas and a peaceful 2019.

ANOTHER SGT ANDREW MALSBURY MYSTERY

During the remembrance service in 2014 which focussed on the start of the First World War the story of Sergeant Andrew Malsbury was related by Claire West one of his relatives. The full report can be found in the December 2014 edition of Abtalk.

Andrew Malsbury was born in Abthorpe and married Ellen in the Hardingstone district of Northampton. He was a groom and no doubt that expertise led him to enlist in the Royal Army Veterinary Corps. He survived the Great War and was posted to Ireland during their War of Independence where sadly he was killed and his death registered in Dundalk, Ireland on 3rd March 1919. By this time his parents were living in Cadogan Place, Abthorpe.

In 2014 it was thought his body may never have been brought back from

*Sgt Malsbury's
name on
Abthorpe war
memorial*



Ireland although an official memorial stone had been erected in the Abthorpe churchyard extension and

his name listed on our war memorial. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission confirms that: "As Serjeant Malsbury is commemorated with a Commission headstone in Abthorpe Church Cemetery, that is where he is buried" . Apparently there could not be a headstone without a burial. Yet there is definitely no burial record for Andrew Malsbury in 1919 or any other year. The gravestone is also the wrong way round with the inscription facing west rather than east like all the other gravestones.

However, research for the 100th anniversary by a group in Denton, a village to the east of Hardingstone, reveals that Sgt Malsbury's name is shown on their village Roll of Honour but his name does not appear on the war memorial. He is listed as coming from Abthorpe.

So the real story behind the discrepancies has still to be solved. Why is he listed in Denton? Was he really buried in Abthorpe?

CarKRAFT DRIVING SESSIONS

CarKraft run free events for youngsters aged 15+ who want to get a taster for driving in a safe environment with a DSA approved instructor, and separate sessions for 17-30 year olds with a licence who would like to improve their skills. Locally they are held at Silverstone circuit.

Run by Northamptonshire Police Safer Roads Team and Northamptonshire Highways, CarKraft was launched in 2001 in response to the disproportionate numbers of young drivers killed or seriously injured on the county's roads. For more information, to book or register an interest for future events, please visit www.carkraft.info

PEOPLE**ABTHORPE'S TRIBUTE TO JOYCE RICHES**

*"simply a
truly lovely
lady"*



*"Joyce was so kind and
generous"*

*"kind and gentle – a true
Christian"*

As most people will be aware, Joyce Riches, a long term resident of Abthorpe, died earlier in October. Her memorial service was a poignant yet uplifting occasion and the church was packed with family, friends and neighbours from near and far, former colleagues and college friends, and many others whose lives Joyce had touched. Both her daughter Jane and son David gave moving tributes to their mother and no-one can have failed to appreciate what a much loved person she was.

Joyce was born just before the Second World War broke out – a hefty 11 lb baby. She spent much of her childhood being evacuated so her early years were a disruptive period in her life. Joyce won a place at her local grammar school, and on completing secondary school went on to Whitelands teacher training college in Putney, London. It was there she met and fell in love with a tall – very tall

– young man called John, whom she married: it was to be a love-match that lasted 57 years.

Their separate teaching careers brought John and Joyce to Northamptonshire where Joyce worked in Greens Norton primary school. She was a popular teacher both with her colleagues and with those she taught. Joyce had an affinity with all children but her particular skill was in helping those who struggled with their reading and other forms of learning. But although Joyce loved her job, she was always a mum first. She loved sport and encouraged Jane with her swimming and David with his football and cricket, the latter sport becoming a real passion of Joyce's particularly at Test Match level.

Joyce's other great interest was her quilt making at which she excelled. She made a wonderful quilt for her son David and his bride Gill as their wedding present which they treasure, and other members of the family as well as friends and neighbours also cherish her quilts and wall-hangings. Joyce was a much loved member of the local quilting group, Tove Quilters, and they will be the beneficiaries of all Joyce's store of materials which they intend to use to make quilts for Danetre Hospital where Joyce spent her final weeks.

John and Joyce were great Europhiles, frequently travelling abroad, both with their children when they were growing up, but also once they had both retired. David recalls that they were the only family he knew who chose to spend their summer holidays in communist East Germany! On another occasion, Joyce agreed to travel to Austria with John on the back of his motorbike.

Joyce may be gone but she leaves some wonderful legacies – the generations of children she helped on their way, the friends she supported, the quilts she made and the sports she encouraged. She felt very blessed to have a wonderful marriage, two much loved children, a son- and daughter-in-law, and five grandchildren whom she adored as much as they adored their Nana. One thing that has certainly passed through the generations is the height gene – as David said in Joyce's memorial service, it made a nice change for the Riches not to have to sit at the back!

"Joyce did not have to strive to
be kind or compassionate – she
just was – always"

"Joyce – the word that springs to
mind is 'gracious'"

Joyce: In Memorium

Dear Joyce, you have gone, at last we have lost you,
But as John kept his vigil and told us the truth
As Autumn's strong winds knock the last apples down,
We waited and watched, no more could be done.
We had learned you were ill but it did not seem fatal;
The end was in sight; you would not survive.
When last we saw you it still was not sure.
Your precious life failing, all hope disappeared.

No more will your quilting thrill all your friends;
We mourn for you daily and miss you so much,
The joys that you brought us, the riches as well
Patchworker par excellence, John's other half.
O Joyce you were lovely, a lady like none
So kind and considerate, kept John on his course.
We think of the good times we'll never forget
As we grieve at your passing and turn to help John.

(written by Tony Mitchell, a long time friend of John and Joyce)

"a truly wonderful person and a real
friend"

"a brilliant listener and incredibly
interesting"

"Joyce was a lovely, kind, thoughtful lady"

PEOPLE CONTINUED

A warm welcome to Daryl and Emma Nichols have moved in to to Snelson's Orchard with their daughter Avia, who is nearly one year old. Both work locally and came here from Milton Malsor.

On a sadder note, Dianne Huggins, who was landlady of the New Inn for many years, died in October. Since leaving Abthorpe, she returned to her home city of Liverpool and worked for a time at the University before retiring. There is more about her on page 13.

CHARITY BAG DOORSTEP COLLECTIONS

In September we were made aware on the *Abthorpe Alert* circulation that some organisations – in this case Breast Cancer Research Aid – are not licensed to carry out door step collections in this area. It is worth checking before putting out charity bags for collection that the charity named should be receiving your gifts thus depriving bona fide charities of funds.

A few simple steps will help you:

- Check to see if the collection says it is supporting a genuine UK registered charity. Look for the charity's registration number on the leaflet or bag – don't confuse this with phrases like 'company numbers' or 'export numbers'
- Check if the collection organiser is signed up to the Institute of Fundraising and the Fundraising

Regulator's Code of Conduct or bears accepted kitemarks, such as the FRSB tick or the ACS/IOF membership logo.

- Find out if the named collector is a member of the Textile Recycling Association – an up-to-date list of members can be found at www.textile-recycling.org.uk/membership-list-of-the-tra/

For those unaware of the *Abthorpe Alert* email list, it is a community messaging system used to pass on information to subscribers in Abthorpe from the police, Neighbourhood Watch or other residents about suspicious activity or anything which will keep the village safe, although there is not much crime here. An example could be if you receive a bogus charity bag. If you would like to sign up go to www.abthorpe.net and click on the Abthorpe Alert text on the left hand side.

TADD

Given the ongoing uncertainty about public transport services for Abthorpe, it is worth mentioning TADD - Towcester Area Door to Door. This is a local voluntary transport service, focussing on helping those without their own transport to get to and from their health-related appointments. Several people in Abthorpe rely on these services. Additional drivers are required for both regular and ad-hoc bookings to maintain the valuable TADD service. Whether you can spare an hour a week or a few times a month, there are always bookings to suit your

availability. Volunteers use their own cars and are paid mileage costs; no extra insurance is required. For more information contact TADD on 01327 810300 or tadd@btconnect.com.

A CHAMPION IN OUR MIDST

Vic Deane, who lives in Church Lane, has been competing in the 500 Owners' Association Speed Hill Climb series during this season, and has clinched the 2018 championship title after a fierce battle with his closest rival. Congratulations.

The '500s' began in 1946 as a way for 'impecunious enthusiasts' to go motor racing using 500 cc motorbike



Vic, in the 1955 Cooper Jap Mk 9 in which he competed all year, on the run at Prescott in October that sealed the title.

engines instead of the larger capacity engines that prevailed prior to the war.

GROCERY DELIVERIES

Mumfords of Culworth visit Abthorpe each Tuesday, stopping on the Green or at your address by prior arrangement, at about 12.30pm. They carry a range of fresh meat, homemade sausages and burgers as well as fruit, vegetables, eggs, cheese and basic groceries. They can be contacted on 01295 760212 to place orders or, if you use social media, their Facebook page.

APPRENTICESHIPS AND WORK EXPERIENCE

Andrea Leadsom, the local MP for South Northamptonshire, has two opportunities in prospect. She is looking for an Apprentice Caseworker to help in her offices from August next year. The role, which is full time, paid above the national apprenticeship wage and lasts for twelve months, will be advertised shortly after Christmas but in the meantime you can find out more at www.andrealeadsom.com/contactmp/.

A work experience placement is also available to a student of 16 or over living or studying in South Northants to join Andrea Leadsom's offices for a week: two days in

Towcester, two in Westminster. Again, information is available at www.andrealeadsom.com/work-experience.

ABTHORPE BROADBAND

It was good to welcome a couple of new members from the village recently. Although not everyone in the village will be served as some people prefer not to be connected, if you are still using a slow, old fashioned connection remember Tove Valley Broadband offers the cheapest and fastest service available. Find all the details at www.tovevalley.com

ABMAIL

It has long been an ambition to set up an email contact group for the village where members who have signed up to receive messages can share information such as upcoming events, offer lifts to neighbours now the bus service has been withdrawn, advertise items to sell or wanted, or dispose of for free, and give detail events that can't wait for the next issue of *Abtalk*. It's a very simple process to receive and distribute information.

Alison Robbins has put her head above the parapet and offered to act as co-ordinator. So please think about signing up – just send an email to abmail@abthorpe.net to show your interest.

J. COY.

BUILDER, CARPENTER, DECORATOR,
WHEELWRIGHT & UNDERTAKER,
SYRESHAM, BRACKLEY.

Enquiries Invited. :: :: Estimates Free.

OFTEN BUTTERED—
BUT NEVER BETTERED!

**CORY'S BREAD,
SYRESHAM.**

Daily Deliveries in this District. Give us a Trial.

LAWRENCE'S**BUS SERVICES**

WESTON, LOIS WEEDON, WAPPENHAM, ABTHORPE, TOWCESTER
AND NORTHAMPTON.

	Wednesday.		Saturday.		Sunday.	
Weston dep.	9.15	11.50	9.15	11.50	9.15	8.55
Lois Weedon	9.30	11.55	9.30	11.55	9.30	9.00
Wappenham	9.40	12.05	9.40	12.05	9.40	9.10
Slapton Bridge	9.50	12.15	9.50	12.15	9.50	9.20
Abthorpe	10.00	12.25	10.00	12.25	10.00	9.30
Handley Gate	10.10	12.35	10.10	12.35	10.10	9.40
Towcester	10.20	12.45	10.20	12.45	10.20	9.50
Northampton arr.	10.30	12.55	10.30	12.55	10.30	10.00
Return Buses leave Plough Hotel on:						
Wednesdays at 11.55 a.m., 3.0, 6.0, 8.0 and 11 p.m.						
Saturdays at 11.55 a.m., 3.0, 6.0, 8.0 and 11 p.m.						
Sundays at 2.40 p.m. and 10.15 p.m.						

WAPPENHAM, GREENS NORTON, TOWCESTER and NORTHAMPTON.
Thursday Night Only.—Leave Wappenham 7.0 p.m., Slapton 7.5, Abthorpe 7.10, Bradden 7.15, Greens Norton 7.25 and Towcester 7.30 p.m. for Northampton. Leave Northampton (Market Sq.) 11.5 p.m. for Milton, Blisworth, Towcester, Greens Norton, Bradden, Slapton and Wappenham. This Service does not pick up on the A43 between Towcester and Northampton on the inward journey, but picks up and sets down on the homeward journey all the way.

W. R. LAWRENCE, Proprietor, Wappenham.

There are many good reasons for drinking.
And one has just entered my head:
If a man can't drink, he can't be a man.
How the fact can be drunk when he's dead?

Visit the
"ROBIN HOOD," Buffers Holt, Buckingham

(Fully Licensed).

A.B.C. Noted Ales. Teas. Refreshments.

Accommodation, Fishing and Shooting.

R. Paxton, Proprietor.

MRS. NEWMAN,

Extends a warm welcome to Old Friends and New, to

THE BUTCHERS ARMS,

(Fully Licensed)

GREENS NORTON.

HOPCRAFT & NORRIS'S FAMOUS ALES.

A Warm Welcome always, at

THE BELL INN - - SYRESHAM

(Fully Licensed).

Hopcraft & Norris's Celebrated Ales and Stout.

Any meal can be obtained at short notice.

Accommodation, Parties Catered for.

Registered C.T.C., N.C.U.

A. H. Wilks, Proprietor.

Lunches, Teas. Bed and Breakfast.

Own Farm Produce.

Large or Small Parties Catered for by

appointment.

Mrs. M. M. Holdom, Proprietress.

**WAPPENHAM, SLAPTON, BRADDEN, GREENS NORTON,
TOWCESTER and NORTHAMPTON.**

	Wednesday Service.		Saturday Service.	
Wappenham dep.	9.10	9.10	9.10	9.10
Slapton	9.15	1.5	4.15	4.15
Bradden	9.20	1.10	4.20	6.10
Greens Norton	9.30	1.20	4.30	6.20
Towcester	9.35	1.25	4.35	6.25
Northampton arr.	10.0	1.50	5.0	6.50

Return Buses leave Plough Hotel on Wednesdays at 12 noon, 3 and 5.30 p.m. Saturdays at 12 noon, 3, 5.30 and 7.30 p.m. On Saturdays only also departs Towcester at 8.30 and 10.30 p.m. for Greens Norton, Bradden and Slapton. **TOWCESTER, ABTHORPE, WAPPENHAM, HELMDON, SULGRAVE, THORPE MANDERVILLE AND BANBURY.**

Thursday Service.

Towcester dep.	9.10	9.15
Abthorpe	9.20	9.30
Wappenham	9.30	9.40
Helmdon	9.40	9.45
Sulgrave	9.50	9.55
Thorpe Manderville	9.55	10.0
Banbury arr.	10.5	11.0
Leave Banbury	11.50 a.m., 3.10, 4.30 p.m., (6.0 p.m. to Northampton),	
Leave Banbury	11.10 a.m. (to Sulgrave only), and 3.30 p.m.	

HOT, CLEAN and LASTING COALS supplied by

G. T. CHESTER, Wappenham.

Estimates Free. Enginists' Firms.

Visit the "BULL INN" for **HOPCRAFT & NORRIS'S FAMOUS ALES**

Car and Lorry for Hire.

The Acclaim of old drink water to cold,

But the people round here drink Chester's Beer,

And flourish like flowers in May.

LOCAL BUS SERVICE – NOW AND THEN

We have previously reported on the transport issues now that the County Connect service has been withdrawn. Unfortunately, the situation remains unresolved, but the Parish Council continues to keep abreast of a number of suggestions. In the longer term, a group called 'Ability Direct' has been set up with the aim of establishing community minibuses in South Northants See www.abilitycic.org.uk for details.

Before cars became the ubiquitous mode of transport for people living in rural communities, local buses were able to offer a fairly comprehensive service. Looking at the timetable opposite, published by Lawrence's Bus Services of Wappenham, you'll see that there are four Wednesday buses serving Abthorpe, five on Saturday and two on Sunday, although the return times are interesting in that they don't leave much opportunity to do a great deal in Northampton. The Thursday Banbury service is presumably for market day, but what happened in Northampton on Thursday evening to make a special journey - cinema night perhaps?

The surrounding advertisements make great reading, especially the strap lines and ditties: 'bread that's often buttered but never bettered', and

'The ancients of old drank water so cold
And very soon withered away
But the people round here drink Chester's Beer
And flourish like flowers in May.'

Perhaps this could become a New Inn motto for Hook Norton beer.



A nocturnal visitor is having fun rooting up the grass in Church Lane and around the churchyard wall. Looks like Mr Badger is finding our grubs appetising

DIARY*Sunday 11 November*

Remembrance service including wreath-laying, last post, reveille,
War Memorial, 10.45

Last Post, outside the church, 6.55 pm

Lighting the beacon, 7.00

Ring out for peace, 7.05

A toast to peace, 7.10

Sunday 25 November

Charity quiz, the New Inn, 7.30

Saturday 8 December

Coffee morning and bring and buy, 17 Wappenham Road, 10.00 -
12.00

Sunday 9 December

Christmas tree and lights, outside the church, 4.30

Saturday 12 December

Winter church clean, 10.00 – 12.00

Wednesday 19 December

Beer and carols, the New Inn, 7.30

Saturday 22 December

Christingle-making, 17 Wappenham Road, 10.00

Sunday 23 December

Charity quiz, the New Inn, 7.30

Monday 24 December

Christingle/carol service, in the church, 4.00

New Inn restaurant, 12.00 – 3.00

Christmas Day

Holy Eucharist Service, 9.30

New Inn bar open 12.00 - 2.00

Monday 31 December

New Year's Eve pig roast, the New Inn

Monday 7 January

Parish Council meeting, the Old School, 7.30

Saturday 9 March

Village quiz, the Old School, 7.30