

ABTALK



80th Anniversary of D-Day

Villagers walking through the centre of Abthorpe in the first two weeks of June may notice 'Tommy', the soldier silhouette standing in the churchyard. Given to the village by the Wappenham and District Royal British Legion, this is an act of Remembrance to recognise the 80th Anniversary of D-Day, a momentous event that took place on June 6th 1944. It was the largest invasion ever assembled and involved the landing of 156,000 Allied troops by sea and air on five beaches in Normandy, France.

By the end of 11th June 1944 (D+5) 326,547 troops, 54,186 vehicles and 104,428 tons of supplies had been landed on the beaches.

D-Day marked the start of Allied operations which would ultimately liberate Western Europe, defeat Nazi Germany and end the Second World War. Not something to be forgotten.

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Phil Berry

Since the last edition of Abtalk we have held the Parish Council AGM, two Council meetings and hosted the Annual Village Meeting, so it has been a very busy period. At the AGM Philip Berry was elected as the Council Chair, while Mike Greenhalgh stepped down a rung to become Vice Chair. The Council was unanimous in its thanks to Mike for his hard work as the Chair, as it was to Emily Humphrey who has resigned as a councillor after serving for three years. We also signed off our Annual Governance and Accountability Return, which is available on our website.

The Council discussed our response to a consultation by West Northants Council (WNC) for the new Local Plan. We proposed no significant change with perhaps limited local development within the existing village envelope. With no obvious land available for allotments, provision might be linked to any future limited housing development. We raised the issue of parking in the village and charging electric vehicles in a village where a significant proportion of properties do not have individual off-road parking. Guidance, financial and logistical support will be required. It seems clear from the local plan exhibition that toured the county that WNC does not see Abthorpe as an area for any significant development.

Brackley Lane has been the centre of much of the Council's discussion. An area of land stretching south from Snelson's Orchard up to and then behind the established houses on the east side of Brackley Lane has been cleared and surveyors have been seen on the property. The land lies outside the existing village envelope/confines.

We have been waiting since February for a WNC planning officer to inspect the activity taking place at the old open shed in the field south of the end of Withymore Lane. It has now been scheduled for the first week in June, but in the meantime a new planning application has been made to just about double the size of the existing structure. The application is for a "Lawful Development Certificate", which allows expansion of the building without any planning consent. We will discuss it in detail at our next meeting on 25th June. The application can be viewed and commented on at the WNC website. Planning Application - 2024/2679/LDP. The Council believes the land owners have asked for a quote to connect water to the site. The development of the site is of concern, being adjacent to SSSIs and is in an area of four or five square miles where there is no other development.

Our Annual Parish meeting on 30th May was well attended. Reports from a wide range of village groups were received and discussions covered a several topics, with the developments at the top of Brackley Lane being to the fore.

The annual litter pick took place on 2nd March. We collected about ten large bags of rubbish and what seemed like the best part of half a car. It would be good to have some fresh faces to join us next March. We have also struggled to get volunteers to help with the Community Speed Watch, so for the time being we have taken the decision NOT to participate. We know that vehicles speeding through the village are of concern to many, so if you would like to volunteer please contact any of the councillors or the clerk, and put your name forward.

After another accident at the crossroads east of the village, a site meeting was held with the Highways Officer. She proposed a 40mph restriction approaching the junction. The signage for the junction will hopefully be renewed and an additional finger post installed. All this should provide extra warning of the junction.

The next Parish Council Meeting is on 25th June at 7pm in the Old School.

CHURCH NEWS

Anne's follow-up visit to Sri Lanka

For those of you who attended the Harvest Supper talk by Anne Baldwin, or read about it in the Autumn edition of Abtalk, here is some up-to-date news of what Anne has been doing since then.

As a result of Anne's inspiring talk and slide show about her life as a 21st century missionary in Sri Lanka, Abthorpe PCC gave her a share of the Harvest Supper profits to allocate as she thought fit but with the specific purpose of improving the lives of some of the women and children in the part of the country where she was based. This February, Anne – now well into her 80s – returned to Sri Lanka and spent some time travelling around, visiting three projects that have been set up and which she feels would benefit most from some financial help. One of these is based in a rural village near Matur on the east coast of the island, badly affected by the Boxing Day tsunami. The project aims to enhance the lives of some of the most deprived and vulnerable children and raise their self esteem. Activities at the centre will involve games and sharing food and the children are to be provided with exercise books for school. Anne also visited the Shalom Project, based near Trincomalee, which has been working with widows and

children for several years. A widow (of which there are many due to the 26 year-long civil war which ran from 1983 to 2009) is given a small grant to help her set up a simple business, and once this gets underway and she starts to earn some money, she is able to help another widow with starting up her business.

Anne wants to thank everyone who came to her talk and thus contributed to the donation and wants to assure us that the money will be used wisely. It is humbling to realise how even a very small amount of money can make a big difference to the lives of people who are living in poverty and/or difficult circumstances.

Goodbye to George

It is with sadness that we say goodbye to the Rev. George Frost, the Curate of our church and the other four churches in the Benefice for the past 3 years. George has now completed his training and is a fully fledged priest so will very shortly be taking up his new position as Rector of the Astwick Vale Benefice, comprising the parishes of Aynho, Evenley, Hinton-in-the-Hedges, Croughton and Farthinghoe.

Through his self-deprecating manner, sense of humour, willingness to get involved and natural affinity with people, George has endeared himself to all who have had come across him and he will be greatly missed. We wish him well as he prepares to move to Aynho – our loss is Astwick Vale's gain!

George will give his final service in our benefice at 10am on Sunday 29th June in St Michael's, Silverstone, no doubt to a packed church. In the evening of the same day, starting at 5pm, there will be a farewell event for George at Paulerspury Village Hall. All the parishes are combining to provide a variety of refreshments and will present George with a farewell gift and cheque. All who know George are welcome to attend.

Church improvements

After 8 years of discussion, planning and delays, the re-ordering of the North aisle of the church into a café area is virtually complete. "Virtually" because the final phase – the connection of the water supply from the church to the mains – has been stalled by a huge, totally unexpected, last-minute hike in the cost demanded by Anglian Water. At the time of Abtalk going to press, the issue has not been resolved so the church still remains without a water supply. Our project manager, Richard Tomalin, is leaving no stone unturned in his efforts to make Anglian Water stick to their original

quote – meanwhile, we still have to carry water up to the church in plastic containers.....and the fund raising goes on.

Other church news

Thank you, as ever, to all those who support the Tote, half the money raised being spent on maintaining the fabric of our church and the other half on 2 monthly prizes. Recent winners are:

- In February: Tina & Steve Clews and Graham Foster each won £123.75
- In March: Eric & Barbara Malcomson and Janet Dancer each won £122.50
- In April: David & Alison Symmers and Peter Newcombe each won £122.50
- In May: Leah Abbott and Nick Green each won £122.50.

Food Bank

Please remember that there is a food box at the back of the church for your donations to Towcester Food Bank. The church is open every day during normal working hours. Currently, most in demand are: Deodorant, orange juice, jams/spreads, biscuits, coffee, household cleaning products, hot chocolate, rice, laundry powder, shower gel, sponge puddings. They have plenty of adult toothbrushes and do not need donations of tampons.

OLD SCHOOL NEWS

Due to unforeseen circumstances we have not been able to organise any events since the Abthorpe Myths and Legends evening in February. However, we continue to raise income through our regular hirers and private bookings including Yoga, Pilates, the Bridge club, and various retreats, as well as birthday celebrations for the young and old.

We had to postpone our March AGM but managed to hold it at the beginning of May. For anyone who missed the information, please email oldschool@abthorpe.net and a copy of the annual accounts can be sent to you. The AGM next year is pencilled in for the 3rd March 2025.

It was a quiet 2nd May when the Old School was used as a polling station for local elections. However, with the General Election now quickly looming, the Old School will once again be used as the polling station. It will be open from 7am until 10pm on Thursday 4th July 2024.

But, after a lull in activities, things are about to change for a village Family Day – the June Jolly – is rapidly approaching; the poster overleaf gives details. Proceeds from the day will be split between the church and the Old School and your support will be much appreciated. It will be a good

St John the Baptist Church and Abthorpe Old School

A June Jolly for all the Family

Saturday June 22nd from 2.30pm
In the Old School and on the Green

Games for the children



Live Music by Terry

Refreshments

With Coffee, Tea and Cake/savouries
Bar with Beer, Wine and Pimms

Donations welcome please...

Donations of **Jigsaws** and for the **Tombola**
from now, other donations to be brought
Friday pm or Sat am

Contacts...

Alison Robbins - alrobbins@abthorpe.net

Lynn Neasham - lynn.neasham@abthorpe.net

Jill Greenhalgh - jill.greenhalgh@abthorpe.net

Jan Miles - jan.miles@abthorpe.net

Stalls

Jigsaws
Tombola
Plants



opportunity to meet up with neighbours and friends in the village and put this long, wet spring behind us!

On Saturday 21st September, a Big Breakfast morning is planned – again a combined village event with the church – with a slightly different slant to previous occasions (think Breakfast Baps, Croissants, Yogurt and Berries with local Honey!).

Later in the year, we plan a Bridge Night and possibly a Race Night, and in November, Marna Perrigo and her team of enthusiastic ladies, are organising a rather different event! Come along and support them.

SALE OF PRE-OWNED
NIFTY THRIFTY FINERY

Saturday 16 November 2024: 12 Noon – 4PM

The Old School, Abthorpe



Get something new to wear

Save money - Save the Planet - Recycle

Buy your next Christmas outfit from our wide range of good quality, pre-owned clothing and accessories.

Sell unwanted clothing, shoes, hats, bags, beads with us.

A one-day sale of pre-owned apparel in good condition to suit men, women, and teens.

Many new, unworn items with brand labels intact.

Stylish, sporty, designer, dinner, day and party wear.

Watch Abtalk, Facebook, Abthorpe Noticeboard, The Old School page for further information about this event.

email:finery@abthorpe.net

NEW INN NEWS

It's all Good News at the New Inn! Not only has our favourite local received the award on the right:

But also this:



And, the icing on the cake -



Needless to say landlord Rob, manager Sarah ('Sweet') and chef Jake, plus all the rest of the New Inn staff, are very proud of their well deserved achievements.

Events at the New Inn:

The ever popular Quiz Night held on the last Sunday of the month continues to draw in teams not just from Abthorpe but from the surrounding area as well. This has now been running for 16 years and, with the winning team traditionally handing their winnings over to a charity of their choice, it has been estimated that in that time over £25,000 has been raised for charity.

The Open Mic sessions take place on

the second Sunday of each month, with the next one due on 9th June. As the recent message on Facebook says..... "We love to see old and new faces. If you need backing, our top man Craig can play almost any song you can think of. Or you can plug in your Guitar, Ukulele, Mandolin, phone or laptop....We encourage and make welcome any first timers."

For the moment the Chef's Nights and the Fish Nights are "under review" – they may start up again in the autumn – or something a bit different. Meanwhile, Jake has just brought out some mouth-watering new Chef's Specials.....and the Fish Boxes continue to be popular but more support is always welcome!

TOVE VALLEY BROADBAND

The AGM on 15th May was well attended. Finances are healthy with no rise in subscriptions anticipated in the foreseeable future. The roll-out of fibre has been completed in Abthorpe while some work remains to be done in Weston and Lois Weedon. Tim Newton continues to be funded to provide first line support.

Thoughts are turning to future work on the network. The fibre network is much more reliable than the wireless connections it replaced but many members outside Abthorpe are still served by wireless; we will be upgrading the original wireless equipment which has been in service for several years.

Watch out for a series of workshops which will be organised over the coming months, starting with one on telephone services over the Internet.

IRENE BALDERSON

In April, the sad news spread through the village that Rene, as she was known to all of us, had passed away, having reached her 100th birthday last September. As her son Paul said in his eulogy to his mother, "For Mum, Abthorpe was part of her DNA. She was born in Abthorpe, lived all her 100 year life in Abthorpe, and, as she had fervently hoped, passed away in peace, at home, in Abthorpe".

It is hard for us, in 2024, to imagine what life was like in the village when Rene and her siblings, Elsie, Edmund (Shen) and John (more often known as Bill), were children. In the 1920s and 30s Abthorpe was a largely agricultural village, with no electricity or sewerage, water was collected from the village pump, and only one or two of the bigger houses had a telephone. If you were a widow bringing up four young children on your own – as Rene's mother was – it was a hard life, where all the children had to

help with the household chores and money was generally short. But in spite of this, Rene's tales of her early life dwelt far more on the loving atmosphere she was brought up in rather than any hardships.

Those of us who knew Rene will not be surprised to hear that, at the age of 11, she won a place at Towcester Grammar School, and gained high marks in her school certificate examinations. But, in spite of this, at age 14, she left school to start work in the Abthorpe shoe factory as her Mum needed the extra money that an additional wage earner in the household would bring.



Rene was also quite a good athlete in her youth, winning the 110 yards hurdles at the school sports day and in doing so, setting a new record. It was a source of great pride to her that the record she set remained unbroken for some 25 years.

When Rene was about 18 she met an eligible bachelor by the name of Fred Balderson and 3 years later in 1944, after Fred had completed his basic training for the army, they were married in our village church. No sooner were they married than Fred was posted to India, where he was to remain for the next two and a half years, initially with the British army and then with the Indian army. During this time Rene only saw Fred for about 2 weeks when he came home on a short leave during 1946. In 1947 Fred was finally demobbed back to the UK, to return to his job at Groom and Tatersalls in Towcester, and to married life in Abthorpe, where he and Rene had been fortunate to get one of the new, and at the time very modern, Council houses in Stanhill Row.

In 1948 Robert was born, followed 6 years later by Paul. Then in 1960 the family all moved to 20 Brackley Lane where Rene remained for the rest of her life.

As was the norm for many married women at the time, Rene did not work

but devoted her life to raising her children and 'looking after' her extended family of elderly aunts and uncles, all living in Abthorpe and nearby villages, by helping with the washing, cleaning and shopping. At first, the visiting was done by bike, but in time Rene progressed to a moped. Apparently, it was quite a sight to see Rene perched on top of this sturdy machine in a headscarf doing about 40 miles an hour with a couple of bags of washing hanging from the handlebars and a box of groceries on the pannier.

In addition to all this Rene was also a churchwarden and was very active in fundraising for the church, being a stalwart of village life and supporting the various church fetes and bazaars with her sewing stall. Rene was a great seamstress. Out of fabric remnants bought cheaply from Northampton market she turned out vast quantities of peg bags, oven gloves, string holders, beautifully smocked little girl's dresses, and baby clothes and, on a number of occasions, made elaborate wedding dresses, bridesmaids dresses and pageboy suits, all of the highest quality.

Once her boys were old enough, Rene went back to work – this time at the Lotus shoe factory in Towcester. The extra money she earned enabled her and Fred to own their first ever new car and then to purchase 20 Brackley Lane. Having always, as a child, had to live either with relatives or in cramped rented accommodation, owning their own home was a great source of pride to Rene.

Rene and Fred then settled into retirement and enjoyed many happy years together, regularly visiting their children and granddaughters, Sarah and Kate. As Fred's health declined Rene became increasingly reluctant to travel, and for the last few years she was content to stay in the village.

Despite the deaths of Fred and all her three siblings between 2008 and 2010, Rene remained cheerful and determined to live out the remainder of her time at home in Abthorpe. She had a steely determination that she would live out her final days in the home that she loved, and that she wouldn't in her words, "be a burden". And to this end she tried to stay fit by never using the stair lift that was installed in the house for Fred's last few years – so, despite her increasing frailty, she continued to regularly climb up and down the stairs each day, to care for herself, and do her own housework; this she did right up to the last few days before she died aged 100 and a half years old. At the end she achieved her heartfelt desire and passed away peacefully, in her own bed surrounded by the people she loved and who loved her.

Goodbye Rene – Abthorpe won't be the same without you.

DIARY OF FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Sunday 9th June	4pm	New Inn	Open Mic
Sunday 16th June	10.00am	Church	Holy Eucharist
Sunday 16th June	3.00-4.30pm	Church	Tea and Piece
Saturday 22nd June	2.30pm	Village Green	June Jolly
Sunday 30th June	7.30pm	New Inn	Quiz Night
Thursday 4th July	7.00am-10.00pm	Old School	Election
Sunday 14th July	4pm	New Inn	Open Mic
Sunday 21st July	10.00am	Church	Holy Eucharist
Sunday 21st July	3.00-4.30pm	Church	Tea and Piece
Sunday 28th July	7.30pm	New Inn	Quiz Night
Sunday 11th August	4pm	New Inn	Open Mic
Sunday 18th August	10.00am	Church	Holy Eucharist
Sunday 18th August	3.00-4.30pm	Church	Tea and Piece
Sunday 25th August	7.30pm	New Inn	Quiz Night
Sunday 8th September	4pm	New Inn	Open Mic
Sunday 15th September	10.00am	Church	Harvest Festival
Sunday 15th September	3.00-4.30pm	Church	Tea and Piece
Saturday 21st September	9.30-11.30am	Old School	Big Breakfast
Sunday 29th September	7.30pm	New Inn	Quiz Night

A taste of the Big Breakfast in the Old School on Saturday 21st September. If you have not been before come along and you will be impressed.



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