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News from Abthorpe

July 2009

PARISH ANNUAL MEETING

The annual Parish Meeting took place on 18 May, presided over by Keith Fenwick who replaced Barry Haycock as Parish Council chairman the previous week. Highlights from his report included the following items: The Forestry Commission had ignored letters about the closure of the car park in Bucknell Wood. The now obsolete iconic Sir Giles Gilbert Scott designed scarlet telephone box that stands on the green has been purchased by the village as an interesting piece of street furniture. A second seat has been bought for the village green. A terrace of three cottages in Main Street has been sympathetically restored by a local developer and two have already been sold. A well-designed terrace of four stone homes is nearing completion on the Wappenham Road. As a result of these developments the population of the village is likely to increase. The Chairman thanked the retiring Parish Clerk Mrs Gail Coombs for her unflappable dedication to duty and announced that Mr Bob Carter would assume her duties in June. In one of her last duties as Clerk, Gail described the Council's current financial

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position, which is very healthy.

Police Community Support Officer Wooliscroft reported that crime remains low in the area. Ashley Warren, our district councillor, gave us an update from SNC, while Ben Smith explained some of the difficulties the county council faces. Mrs Julie Letts the Head of the Silverstone Schools Federation outlined the joys and successes of her schools which continue to develop and improve their facilities. Barbara Malcomson's report for the Parochial Church Council described a very active year and the Parish Path Warden continues to face difficulties in keeping our footpaths clear and useable.

The Village Fund Group introduced their new chairman Mike Partridge who has only lived in

Abthorpe since 2007. The Abthorpe Broadband Association claimed that our local area network founded in 2003 provides a service that is as good as the commercial providers and remains free for yet another year.

Minutes of the meeting will be available in due course on the village website, www.abthorpe.net.

AFTERNOON TEA

Back in June on one of the hottest days of the year, the older residents were invited to afternoon tea courtesy of Joyce and John Riches. Sitting in the garden under the shade of an apple tree, conversation and reminiscences flowed. The Cooperative's community team had generously donated Fairtrade tea, coffee and biscuits, supplemented by delicious home-made cakes. It was



a lovely, relaxed afternoon thoroughly enjoyed by the 23 people who attended, which hopefully will be repeated.

GREENS NORTON MEDICAL CENTRE

The consultation over the proposed merger with Weedon Surgery closed at the end of May and the Northamptonshire PCT is currently preparing a recommendation report. The timescales for its appearance are not yet known, but if approved the merger will go ahead next April.

NORTHAMPTON GENERAL HOSPITAL

On 23 September there will be an opportunity to meet Dr John Hickey, Chairman of NGH, and Paul Forden, Chief Executive, at Towcester Town Hall (7 – 9pm). Dr Robin Kelso, elected Public Governor for Daventry & South Northants, will chair the meeting. He will be accompanied by Governor colleagues from the area.

The open forum will include a presentation about Northampton General Hospital, its priorities, performance and progress, followed by a question and answer session. You will also be able to meet members of the Governors' Council who represent your area, and find out how they can represent your views and concerns.

PLANNING APPLICATION AT MINI FARM

A planning application has been made for three permanent caravans

on Mini Farm beside the road to Blakesley near Oxbridge. There have been a few buildings here for many years, but the site was sold a couple of years ago and is now being lived on. The District Council, as planning authority, has insisted that a retrospective planning application be made and the Parish Council has been consulted in the usual way. The application is made so that the owner, his son and daughter can continue to live on the land they own with the intention of earning their living as far as possible from the land. They will continue to raise ponies, chickens and grass for feeding and hay. All are gypsies/travellers. The applicant has for many years stayed at roadside pull-ins, but not on authorised gypsy sites as he cannot stand the conditions imposed by other residents on those sites. Both the son and daughter find other work as available. A goose is kept as guard dog.

The Parish Council will consider the application at the next meeting on Monday 10th August, so if you would like to air your views come along to the meeting.

NEWS FROM THE NEW INN

TEL: 857306

Following Stuart Pape's accident, the pub is temporarily without a chef which has severely limited their food service. However, Rob is hopeful that a replacement will be in post within

ABbA

This regular feature from Abthorpe Broadband Association gives helpful advice for all members. The contribution is again from Dave Cunningham.

FREWARE OF THE MONTH ~ CCLEANER WWW.CCLEANER.COM

Is your machine a couple of years old? Is it running slow? If so then you won't be amazed at the amount of redundant files and broken registry links that are hiding on your machine. Both of these have a habit of slowing down your computer as will the number of programs that automatically kick off when you start your machine. All of the programs that set themselves up to start automatically, such as Kodak's picture viewer or HP's additional printing features, can be disabled and started through the programs menu when you want to run them.

CCleaner is a free application that finds and removes junk from Internet Explorer, Windows Explorer and many other areas of your system. It also targets installed applications such as Firefox, Microsoft Office, Google Earth, Spybot and Windows Media Player. You can choose exactly what you want it to focus on by ticking or un-ticking the various choices on offer. It is unlikely to delete anything it shouldn't but it is worth reviewing the list of items it finds before removing them, just to be on the safe side.

The program also has a built-in Registry checker, which can fix and find errors in Windows. This is quite cautious, so it shouldn't cause you problems, and CCleaner will offer to back up the Registry before making any changes anyway. You can choose which parts of the database to scan and which to ignore.

Impressively the Tools section includes a handy uninstaller and a start-up manager for configuring which programs and services start with Windows.

COURSES

A session for beginners in Photoshop is being arranged. Please get in touch with Keith Fenwick (keith.fenwick@abthorpe.net; 857083) if you would like to participate.

a couple of weeks. Our very good wishes go to Stuart, who is in a stable condition in hospital.

All the menus and other information about the pub and b&b at Slapton Manor Farm can be found on the website: www.newinnatabthorpe.co.uk

The charity quiz nights continue throughout the summer, with the Barflies triumphing in July and contributing £35.50 to the Towcester Youth Coffee Shop. The next quiz is on 25 August with another towards the end of September. Plans are afoot for a grand Christmas quiz, probably in the second week of December.

The Grand Prix weekend saw the usual high number of visitors from all parts of the country and abroad. It was all hands to the pump to serve a record number of meals: 105 on Friday, topped by 128 on Saturday. Unusually, the Sunday evening also continued to be busy, so a satisfactory outcome for Barbara, Rob, Sam, Stuart and all their helpers.

For those not attending the Grand Prix there was the spectacle of the Red Arrows' performance to be watched from the garden. It will be interesting to follow the Formula One negotiations about where the race will be held next year. If it is to be Donnington, the motorcycle grand prix, announced in January to be returning to Silverstone, should be more than an adequate replacement – or addition.

And it's worth reporting that the skittles and darts teams are doing well in their respective leagues.

CHILDREN'S SUMMER ACTIVITIES

Children's play activities provided by South Northants Council have been arranged for the two Mondays, 3 and 17 August, at Wappenham recreation ground (village hall if wet), 10.30 – 12.30.

Phone 01327 322335 for details of the SNC's summer SPLAT programme for children – only summary details appear to be on their website. Other local activities can be found at www.northamptonshire.childrensservicedirectory.org.uk; 01604 236236

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST

The next sponsored cycle ride/walk of Northamptonshire Historic Churches Trust takes place on Saturday 12 September. This annual event is an excellent way of raising funds for our local church as well as the Trust as 50% of the money raised by each participant is returned to the church of their choice. In addition, there is the opportunity to visit and admire some of the wonderful churches in the area. Walking is an alternative option. Choose your own

route according to how many churches you wish to visit on the day, our church being one of those open. For full information: www.nhct.org.uk/index.php/bicycle_ride

ROCK AND ROLL DANCE

The organisers of the dance can congratulate themselves on an excellent evening at Slapton Manor Farm on 11 July. Despite the rain, 250 people bopped to The Montanas and the Neil Taylor disco into the early hours. They also managed to consume the whole of a 191lb pig, roasted by Bunny and his team. Some dancers captured the spirit of the evening, dressing in appropriate costume – winkle-pickers and all. Unfortunately we don't have a picture of Fi Noble in all her glory.

The event made a profit of £1,200 towards the replacement village hall at Blakesley, which will be supplemented by a substantial donation from Santander. Raising this amount of money was made possible because Barbara and Rob generously made available their farm (they also ran the bar), and various sponsors contributed to essential equipment. Organiser Doug Blake passes on his thanks to everyone for making the evening so enjoyable and profitable.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS?

If you have any archaeological finds which you would like identified and recorded, the Northamptonshire

Finds Liaison Officer, Julie Cassidy, will be holding a Finds Surgery at the Council Offices, Springfields, on 18 September and again on 20 November from 11.00 – 1.00.

jucassidy@northamptonshire.gov.uk

THE VILLAGE FUND COMMITTEE

Another success to report was last month's barn dance. Over 100 villagers and their friends walked along the lanes to Highfield Farm, where Elizabeth and Barry Haycock had kindly allowed the village to use one of their large grain storage barns. Often the success of the dancing depends on the caller, and Bricks and Brussels had found an excellent one, ensuring everyone kept in some sort of order. Bunny and his team roasted a whole pig over a roaring barbecue (he's been busy this year!), whilst Dave Cunningham concentrated on ensuring that the sausages and burgers were cooked to perfection, to be enjoyed with delicious salads, all washed down with Hooky, wine and soft drinks. Chairman Mike Partridge and the rest of the committee must have been satisfied with the success of the evening, which made a profit of around £350.

All the older residents were recently invited out to lunch by the Group and twelve set out in a small convoy of cars for Manor Farm at Catthorpe in Leicestershire. Bob Jones spoke for them all when he and

PEOPLE

Cecily Rogers who lived in Abthorpe virtually all her life has sadly died at the age of 83 after a short time in an old people's home in Newport Pagnell. Siss, as she was affectionately known, was a real village girl having been born in a cottage overlooking the village green in 1925. Her primary years were happily spent at Abthorpe School and at the age of eleven she transferred to Silverstone where secondary age pupils were educated in those days.

When she began work she was employed here in the village at the boot and shoe factory as an under-trimmer preparing uppers. She worked alongside her sister Margaret who still lives in the village with husband John Bunting. Siss attended the church and was a member of the choir for some years. In 1949 she married Blakesley man John Rogers – an engineer who successively worked at the former Groom and Tattersall's foundry in nearby Towcester and at the Plessey factory. She is sadly missed by all those who knew her, especially her daughter Clare, grandchildren Nicola, Gemma and Rachael and of course her sister Margaret and John Bunting.

Our very best wishes go to Stuart Pape, chef at the New Inn, who is said to be in a stable condition in hospital following his motor cycle accident.

And all good wishes also to Bob Carter for a speedy recovery after his recent spell in hospital.

Tina said what a good time they had had, and how much they appreciated these opportunities to go out with friends they know. Most of the ingredients for the traditional roast beef lunch followed by strawberries and cream were sourced from the

farm itself. Although Melanina Guiliani was the only person brave enough to venture into the polytunnels to pick strawberries as she was determined to make jam, the farm shop held sufficient interest for the others. Hopefully another of these

outings to a different venue can be arranged in the not too distant future.

COUNTY COUNCIL AND EUROPEAN ELECTIONS

The results from the two elections in May show that the County Council has 56 Conservative councillors, 9 Liberal Democrats and 6 Labour, with 2 independent seats. Ben Smith held the Greens Norton seat for the Conservatives with 2,268 votes (68.0%).

The European voting system remains opaque, but the results for the main parties in the East Midlands region were: Conservative 370,275, Labour 206,945, UK Independence Party 201,984 Liberal Democrats 151,428, British National Party 106,319.

NOTES FROM OUR CHURCH

The summer BBQ on 12 July was another resounding success, with 95 people enjoying the usual BBQ favourites of steaks, burgers, sausages and veggie-burgers served by Eric Malcolmson and Bob Carter accompanied by the array of delicious salads prepared by Barbara Malcolmson, Carolyn Tomalin and other ladies of the congregation. The weather was kind enough for tables to spread into the Old School yard as well as inside the school.

The churchyard extension has been cleared by a team led by Fi Noble and now looks much better

than it has for years. The grass has been mown and strimmed and looks much tidier. But the PCC, that has responsibility for the churchyard, realised that during the summer vegetation would grow rapidly and need constant attention. After some discussion and a lot of thought they decided to enlist the help of a flock of Elizabeth and Barry Haycock's sheep. They made short work of their job and have now been returned to their field – possibly to make periodic returns.

Forthcoming Sunday services:

23 August:

Holy Communion - 10.00am

13 September:

Morning Prayer - 9.15am

27 September:

Holy Communion - 10.00am

4 October:

Harvest Thanksgiving - 10.00am

The Harvest Supper will be held at the Old School on Saturday 3 October, 7.00 for 7.30.

The latest tote winners are Mark Snelson in May who won £227.50, and Caroline Kellner scooped £230 in June.

SPARROW

Those of us on Abthorpe broadband will have followed the story of the rescued baby sparrow. Eleanor Gough had taken in a fledgling sparrow who seemed to have been abandoned and was about to

become cat food. Jack, for so he was called, settled in to a large hamster cage and Eleanor's intention was to release him the following week. However, a weekend away meant he went on holiday to the Cunninghams who kept him fed, watered and away from cats and dogs. It was a good learning curve for Jack as he quickly got to know what four cats look like. By Monday morning he was able to fly competently so was released from Eleanor's bedroom window and flew into a nearby tree. As Eleanor's mother, Louise, reports: "Although he was very tame when we first took him in, by the time he left he was

beginning to be quite wary of us and was ready to go. We think we have spotted him with his feathery companions hopping about on the lawn and fence and plotting the next raid on our chicken food! I just hope he can fend for himself now and manages to stay out of trouble, unlike his fictional namesake!"

*the other
Jack
Sparrow*



Eleanor and Jack

CRICKET MATCH

The annual cricket match against Blakesley took place on 12 July with Jeremy Pope captaining the Abthorpe team. Dad, Tim, valiantly agreed to make up the numbers on the opposing side. Of the match itself, probably least said is best: not one of the glory years for Abthorpe. But there must have been some good aiming during the afternoon as one boundary found its mark directly on a spectator's bottle of cider.

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

When Neighbourhood Watch was originally set up about 20 years ago there was widespread support throughout the village. The aim was to enable any suspicious activities to be reported and for details of local crimes to be circulated so that evidence could be gathered and people became aware of current dangers. A system of distributing information by hand was established but that depended both on receiving relevant information from the police and on the willingness of volunteers to pass on the details. Things have moved on since then. The information we now receive relates to crimes over a wider area and seems to take longer to reach us. However, the police are keen that the system continues, so if there is support in the village we need to get ourselves properly organised.

Recently, there was a distraction burglary (one where one person engages the occupants of a house and another person slips in unnoticed to steal). The response by the police was excellent and within an hour they were knocking at nearby houses to see if anyone had noticed anything. At the same time, it was possible to email all those on Abthorpe Broadband to warn them of the intrusion and seek help from anyone who might have seen anything suspicious. Can we work on the principle here to develop a better system of circulating crime reports? We can set up a more general email distribution to include those not on Abthorpe Broadband but we also need to revive the manual circulation for those who do not have a computer. Are you willing to help?

Once the main holiday season is over a public meeting will be organised to discuss this, but in the meantime if you have any views or want to help please contact me on 857083 or keith.fenwick@abthorpe.net.

Keith

Coincidentally, Northamptonshire West police burglary team is relaunching Operation Renegade, a previous operation that proved so successful – and so unpopular with burglars. They will be homing in on prolific offenders and focussing their attention solely on dealing with

burglary and known burglars. There will be an increased emphasis on gathering intelligence about prolific burglars, checking their whereabouts and letting them know that they are being watched. The team will also act rapidly to arrest people who fall under suspicion of involvement in these crimes.

Northamptonshire Police are asking that we are sensible about our home security, to make things more difficult for opportunist criminals.

LIFE IN THE 1500s

Some phrases in current usage had their origins in the 1500s.

Did you know that?:

Most people got married in June because they took their annual bath in May and were still smelling quite good. However, the odours were beginning to become noticeable so brides carried a posy of flowers to mask the fact that they weren't too sweet. Hence the custom of the bride's bouquet.

Most house floors were only dirt; only the wealthy had proper floors. Hence the saying 'dirt poor'.

Pork was a special treat and to be shown off to visitors. It was a sign of wealth that a man could 'bring home the bacon'. They would cut off a little to share with guests and would all sit around and 'chew the fat'.

Baths consisted of a big tub filled

with hot water. The man of the house had the privilege of the clean water, then in descending order the other sons and men would bathe, followed by the women and children, and finally the baby. By this time the water was pretty dirty - hence the saying 'don't throw the baby out with the bath water'.

MOBILE LIBRARY

The library stops on the Green between 1.40 and 1.55 every three weeks. Next dates are:

August 3 and 24

September 14

October 5 and 26

November 16

December 7 and 28

BADMINTON

Is there anyone in the village who would like to play badminton with a very rusty, unfit player? I have been unable to find a local class to join, have little interest in a competitive club, but would love to start playing again.

Jill - 857320

FILM ABTHORPE

A second film evening was arranged on 18 June, when *The Blob* arrived in Abthorpe. This 1958 classic starred a young Steve McQueen in his first major role, saving the town from an alien creature! As a short supporting feature, John Betjeman ruminated on

a country rail journey.

These evenings are proving to be an enjoyable light mid-week distraction, and it is hoped to arrange another in September.

EDITORIAL MISSION STATEMENT

Another day done
All targets met
All systems fully operational
All customers satisfied
All staff keen and well-motivated
All pigs fed and ready to fly

EVENTS

Monday 3 and 17 August

Children's Play Activities provided by South Northants Council, Wappenham recreation ground (village hall if wet), 10.30 – 12.30

Monday 10th August

Parish Council Meeting, the Old School, 7.45pm

Tuesday 25 August

Charity quiz at the New Inn, 7.45

Saturday 5 September

Wappenham Village Fete, 2 – 4.30, Old Rectory Garden

Saturday 12 September

Sponsored cycle ride/walk, Northamptonshire Historic Churches Trust

Wednesday 23 September

Northampton General Hospital meeting, Towcester Town Hall, 7 – 9pm

Saturday 26 September

Cameo Opera, with cheese and wine

Saturday 3 October

Harvest Supper, the Old School, 7.00 for 7.30