

The Birches

Community Matters Newsletter

**Kingsthorpe, Much Birch, Little Birch,
Aconbury & Wormelow**

First published 1977



June 2022



Little Birch Jubilee Celebrations



Come to the lighting of the beacon at Little Birch Glebe Field and watch beacons lighting up from the Forest of Dean to May Hill, Linton Ridge, Marcle Ridge and the Malverns

Full details of all Jubilee events on page 2

To celebrate the Queen's 70 years on the throne you are invited to...



eden project



The Big Jubilee Lunch

**When: Sunday 5th June 2022
12:30 - 4.30 p.m.**

Where: Much Birch Community Hall

**'Bring and Share' lunch - bar
raffle - games - quiz**



**Decorate a crown competition
for all ages - bring your
creations along!**

**A community event for everyone -
just bring a plate of food to share!**

Diary Dates and Defibrillator Locations on back page





Village Market

The Summer Village Market will be held on Friday 24th June 2022 from 2.30pm until 4.30pm in Much Birch Community Hall. We will have the usual stalls of cakes, meats, cards, jams, pet foods as well as other stalls. As usual refreshments will also be available. We would welcome any other stallholder and if you are interested would you please contact John or Sylvia Jones on Tel: 01981 540980. Please support this local event by coming along if you can to support Much Birch Community Hall and Much Birch Church as well as the stallholders themselves.

Lent Lunch

Thank you to everybody who donated the delicious soups, bread and cheese for the Lent lunch. Thanks also the people who helped and the people who came along to support the event. £200 was raised for Sight Savers and this has been sent off to help with their essential work.

We also have had a work day at the church, thank you to everybody who came along and cleaned in the church and worked in the churchyard. It looks a lot better and we are most grateful to those who came.

John Caton

Join us at the

Community Café

@ Much Birch Community Hall

Saturday 11 June 2022

10:00 - 12:30

and continuing every 2nd Saturday of the month

9 July

10 September

8 October

(N.B. No café in August)

For more information or if you are in need of transport contact Lydia on 01981 540323 or socialfabric@hotmail.com



A local group who want to bring people together, strengthen community links and provide relaxed and fun events for all ages.

LITTLE BIRCH PLATINUM JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

**Thursday 2nd June on the Glebe Field
opposite Castle Nibole Farm**

Village Dog Show 3pm (entries taken from 2.30 pm)
Tea and Cakes served all afternoon. All welcome. **See P11 for schedule**

Evening Entertainment

Music from 7pm, featuring local artists and musicians, including Bekki Cameron and organiser, Rick Hampton. We welcome Bob and his popular Nightmare Bar.

Jubilee Bugle Solo 9.40pm, performed by local resident, Ceri Middleton, heralds the Lighting of the Beacon at 9.45pm.

EVERYONE WELCOME, please bring chairs, blankets, picnics and enjoy the evening. Let's make it another Jubilee celebration we will all remember!!

There are stunning views from 'The Glebe' with almost 180 degrees of uninterrupted views across the Forest of Dean, May Hill, Linton Ridge, Marcle Ridge and the Malverns.

Saturday 4th June Jubilee Tea

Little Birch Hall from 3pm

Activities including children's fancy dress with the theme "princes and princesses" and a royal quiz. This will be followed by the planting of a Jubilee tree in the parish field.

Best Pudding Competition

Bring any type of pudding to the Jubilee Tea by 3.15pm and put it in the back kitchen for judging. Please leave a note with it to say if you want to take it home or are happy for it to be put on the table for the tea.

FUEL for the BEACON - please nothing nasty! if you have any clean wood, pallets, old doors, window frames etc. please contact Glen Simms, 07715 894196, who will again be in charge of constructing the Little Birch Jubilee Beacon. Huge thanks to him for all the time and effort this will take.

Violette Szabó Centenary Celebrations



The Violette Szabó GC Museum in Wormelow is celebrating 101 years since the birth of Violette Szabó, on 10th July - having had to postpone last year's planned centenary celebration.

With her usual determination and resourcefulness Rosemary Rigby, the Museum's founder, has arranged a splendid event beginning with a parade from the Park to the Rosemary Rigby Millenium Green led by a Highland piper and the Violette Szabo horse, a winner at Beverley races. The RAF is will be joining with a very special fly past which it is hoped will include a Hurricane. People are encouraged to join the parade and to bring picnics.

Violette Szabó was a courageous young woman who worked for SOE (Special Operations Executive) during World War II in the French Resistance, showing incredible bravery even when captured and taken to Ravensbrück concentration camp, where she was executed just before the end of the war. She was awarded the George Cross and the Croix de Guerre.

Rosemary Rigby founded the Museum behind her house, Cartref, in Wormelow to celebrate this remarkable, courageous woman who had spent many happy childhood holidays in Cartref, where her aunt and uncle lived. A film was made about Violette's life, Carve Her Name with Pride. Violette was played by Virginia McKenna who has visited the museum on a number of occasions.

From the Editor

What glorious spring weather we have had with an abundance of bluebells. In the Birches we are fortunate in having wonderful woodland, Aconbury and Athelstan both of which are popular with walkers of all ages including dog walkers. It is a delight to see young children up to their wellies in mud, and of course horse riders are a frequent sight in the woods and lanes. I received a report recently about a pair of dogs hurtling through Aconbury at great speed in pursuit of a Muntjac deer that was in obvious distress and terrified. By the time this walker had reached the Muntjac it had been savagely killed with no sign of the owner of the dogs.

This is far from being the only incident of uncontrolled dogs. I and others have seen strong young dogs ignoring the attempts of their owners to stop them jumping up at elderly walkers and some dog owners do not even try. You might not believe it but I am a dog lover and enjoy encounters with dogs, especially as I do not have one living with me at the moment. It's sometimes the owners who need training!

It is important that everyone is freely able to walk in the countryside and this is enabled by responsible dog walkers who have trained their dogs to respond to them. It is of little comfort to a vulnerable person to be told 'the dog is friendly' if it is also jumping up and nearly knocking them down.

The other big issue is the Dog Poo Fairy. I am sorry to disillusion those who believe she exists. There is no fairy flying through the woods collecting forgotten bags of poo that are dangling from branches! Nor does she remove the poos that have been deposited in the middle of the path. I am thinking of taking up golf having had so much practice of flicking dog poo into the brambles with a stick! The green lanes are another place where the dog poo fairy is sorely missed. However I think most people behave responsibly when walking their dogs and are careful not to let them harm people or wildlife.

Happy Walking Elisabeth Taylor

The Jolly Gardener
TheJollyGardener2502@gmail.com
Kyle - 07850921889



- * Senior Citizen Discount & Free Quotations
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From Revd Mark

"Water, water, everywhere, nor any drop to drink" – Samuel Taylor Coleridge, The Rime of the Ancient Mariner
If you think we have had a dry spring, which we have with recorded rainfall, about 44% of what we would normally expect for April, spare a thought for those living in the west of the USA, especially those in California, Nevada and surrounding states.

The lack of rainfall and reduced snowfall on the Rockies had meant that a water crisis is happening now. Already water levels are forcing farmers to abandon fields of cotton and alfalfa (which require a large amount of water), dig wells to tap into an already falling water table and reassess what might be economical to grow in years to come. Water use in places like Las Vegas and Southern California is causing concern with towns and cities saying you can only water your garden once a week and some are going so far as to say you can't water your lawns at all.

It reminds us that water is a precious resource. We have been rather remiss in caring for it in our own country because so much falls out of the sky. Yet, if we look at the water quality for the Wye and the streams that lead into it, we see that pollution, sewage and phosphate run-off are causing great harm to our wildlife and the local ecology. Hopefully, we won't get to the stage of being banned from watering our lawns but unless we take seriously the threat to the Wye, we will be left with a much-depleted eco-system and the loss of wildlife and biodiversity that will blight our generation and the ones that are to come.

Tim Loughman

Tim was a long-time resident of Little Birch, living in his place on Little Birch Road with his wife, Jean and two children, Guy and Mark, from the mid-1960s until he moved to Ross Road, Hereford, after Jean's death.

Tim was a native of Hereford, having been born in Bewell Street, and saw action during his days of National Service in Malaya, where he was injured in action. He worked for Phillips Structures as a steel erector and for Trueman Flooring. Always good with his hands, he loved the countryside, his dogs and going rabbiting. After Jean had a heart attack, Tim became her full-time carer and retired and they would often head off to Blackpool for a week's holiday.

Tim was grandfather to five, Todd, Liam, Lauren, Zoe and Holly (who died very young) and great grandad to Isla, Indie and Jaxson.

He was buried after a service at St. Mary's, in the churchyard with his wife Jean. Our thoughts and prayers are with Guy, Mark and the family.

Revd Mark

Menna Swift

We were very sorry to hear the sad death of the erstwhile resident of Kingsthorpe, Menna Swift. Menna was born in Abergynolwyn mid Wales in 1935. At the age of 11 she and her family moved to Birmingham. She did well at school, passing her 11+ and then training as a secretary. She was efficient and very hard-working and became P.A. to The Chief of Rothmans International, a varied job she loved. It included lots of travel all around the world which she particularly enjoyed.

She met Colin and married in 1955, and they had two daughters, Jill and Susan. Upon retirement they moved to Jabiru, Kingsthorpe in August 1999 to be closer to her sister, Eryl, and brother-in-law Rob in Parish Lane. Menna was always busy and was soon volunteering to help readers at Much Birch School something she and the children loved. She also became a volunteer for the Witness Support Service in Hereford Magistrates Court and she served on Much Birch Parish Council for a number of years.

Colin became ill and she took great care of him until he sadly died. Unfortunately, Menna's health started to decline. In June 2019 she moved to a nursing home in Jesmond, Newcastle to be near to her daughter Susan. She still enjoyed days out with her family whenever she could. Menna sadly died at the age of 86, peacefully, at the beginning of April. We would like to send our sincere condolences to Rob, her two daughters Susan and Jill and all the family.

John and Sylvia Jones

Sunday Services in June **Sunday 5th June**

Little Birch Holy Communion at 11am.

Sunday 12th June

Much Birch Holy Communion

Little Birch Morning Worship at 11am.

Sunday 19th June

Much Birch Morning Worship 9.15am.

Little Birch Holy Communion in Traditional Language at 11am.

Jobs for the Garden in June

Derek Scrivens

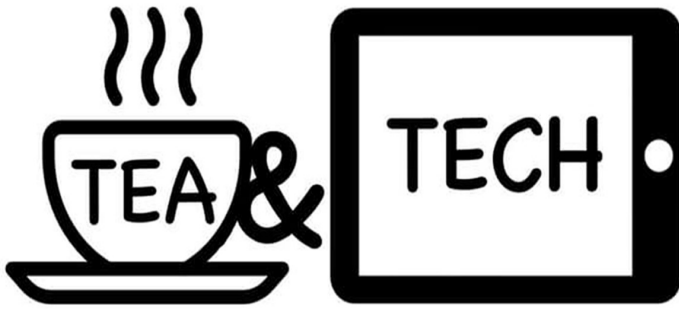


It seems that the Cuckoo was first heard by several people, including myself, in Little Birch on the evening of 20th April, as always, a welcome sound. That same evening, whilst feeding the tops of my spent Brussels Sprouts to Dillon's cows on the other side of the hedge, I saw one solitary Swallow flying a few feet above the grass. Since then I have only seen two flying past. Of equal concern, I have yet to see any House Martins in our location. In previous years large numbers were regularly seen swirling around..

For the last few years, Spring has been very dry and this year is no exception (it does happen to be raining as I write this !!) – not the best conditions for starting flowers and vegetables. It emphasizes the need for making compost and either digging it into the soil or mulching and leaving the rest to the worms. This month the flower garden should be starting to 'light up' with plenty of colour, so as well as a number of routine jobs, spend time enjoying what you and nature have created.

A little plug for the annual Horticultural Show – don't be shy, we are not expecting flowers and vegetables like those you saw at Malvern. Get hold of a schedule and walk round your garden with it near the September date. If you find anything that meets the criteria of items in the schedule, don't worry as to whether it is good enough, just put it on the show bench. We were reminded by Janet Gwinnett at the last garden Club meeting that a local lady entered 3 carrots, in the show a few years ago, that were each a couple of inches long and won second prize.

- *Dead head roses regularly cutting to a leaf beneath the flower.
- *Feed tubs and other containers, and hanging baskets with high potash fertilizer (tomato feed is fine).
- *Spend some time dead heading all flowers as this will encourage them to provide a display for longer.
- *Support sweet peas which should be well under way now – again, cut flowers for indoor use and dead head, not giving that little pea pod a chance to form.
- *Foliage from fading bulbs will be yellowing by now and if not done already it can be cut off.
- *Tomatoes grown as cordons should be tied to supports and side shoots should be pinched out. Allow 7 trusses on indoor tomatoes and 4 outside before pinching out the growing tip. Harden off and plant out tender crops such as aubergines, courgettes, sweet corn, squashes and tomatoes.
- *For succession keep sowing small quantities of radish, salad leaves, Spring onions, French beans, kohlrabi, beet and mangetout.
- *If early potatoes are growing in some form of container or in the ground wait until the flowers open and then carefully examine a root to see how the potatoes are progressing. I think for best results they should not exceed the size of a hen's egg.
- *Remove blanket weed from ponds, leave on the side for 24 hours to give creatures within it an opportunity to get back in the water. The weed can then be composted.
- *Keep the bird bath topped up with fresh water.
- *One for the children – record the wildlife in the garden and note the plants that insects visit. This will help in choosing future plants.
- *Many herbs produce flowers that are particularly attractive to bees. These include oregano, thyme, chives and borage. As well as their popularity in culinary use, the flowers are attractive and they provide bees with much needed supplies for the hive/nest.



Holistic I.T. Support for Senior Surfers

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<https://www.facebook.com/TeaTech>

richard@teaandtech.co.uk

07739953864

I'm Richard, and I offer IT tech support around rural Hereford. I have 25 years' experience of working within technology, supporting a vast range of people, from technophobes to technogeeks!

I aim to specifically support the more senior users within our community, who often appreciate a completely different approach. I won't burden anyone with jargon and will offer only gentle and compassionate support. This can help the user feel more comfortable with tackling technology and lead to a growing confidence. Sometimes, the tech issue might be the initial reason for contact and all that's really required is someone to sit patiently and share a cuppa. I can do that too, I'm a great listener!

I can support you with many problems (here's a sample):

- General tips and advice
- Fault finding
- Software support
- New PC Installation / Setup
- Virus & Malware Removal
- Email Troubleshooting & Setup
- Broadband Internet & Router Setup
- Wi-Fi Range Issues
- Software Installation
- Windows Reinstall / Refresh
- Slow Computer Clean-up
- Printer Installation / Troubleshooting
- Backup Advice & Solutions
- Solid State Drive (SSD) Upgrades
- Data Recovery
- Laptop Battery Replacement
- PC & Laptop Upgrades & Advice

If you need a friendly chat over a cuppa, while I sort out your IT issues, please get in touch using the info above.

PILETES with Alison Allan

Mondays 10.00 am - Intermediate level

11.15 am - Senior Citizens

Wednesdays 9.30 am - Beginner level

7.00 pm - Intermediate level

Little Dewchurch - Village Hall

Little Dewchurch - Village Hall

Holme Lacy - Village Hall

Little Dewchurch - Village Hall

Individual sessions, by appointment, at The Studio, Little Dewchurch

Pre-booking essential; limit

Alisonpilates2016@gmail.com

01432 840491

07947 011707

[Facebook.com/PilateswithAlisonA](https://www.facebook.com/PilateswithAlisonA)



Herefordshire Walking Festival 2022

20th Anniversary!

Saturday 18th – Sunday 26th June.

Working in partnership with Visit Herefordshire, this year walkers can take part in experiencing one of county's finest gems, the Herefordshire Trail, as well as a great variety of other walks including: Duchy Woodland, Orchards, Cider, Hops, Wildlife, River walks, Suffragettes, History, City walks, Church visits, WW1 Memorial Walks, dog friendly walks and 20+ mile Challenges ...To name a few.

If you would like to join us and would like to find out more, please visit the Herefordshire Walking Festival website –

www.herefordshirewalkingfestival.co.uk

For further information please contact

Liz Hill 01432 370514

info@herefordshirewalkingfestival.co.uk

www.herefordshirewalkingfestival.co.uk



Arts and Crafts Space



No sessions over the summer

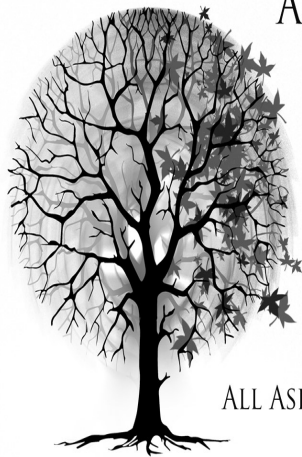
Starting in September afresh with ideas

Contact Sally for information

sally.nichol@btinternet.com

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Find the latest news, events

and business listings all in one place. You are welcome to promote your local business, advertise a local event or post news or information of interest to the village and surrounding area. Search for *Little Birch Parish Group* on Facebook

Little Birch Parish Councillors

Cllr Kate Dillon

Cllr Michael Davies

Cllr Kate Robbins

Chris Atkinson

Angela Middleton Volunteer Footpath Officer,

Neil Barrington Clerk lbpcclerk@gmail.com

Much Birch Parish Council Meeting

At the Annual Parish and Annual Statutory Parish Council Meetings held, consecutively, in the Much Birch Community Hall on the 5th May 2022 from 7.30 pm the Parish Council looked at further planning applications for the parish, and one for a neighbouring parish, and made their comments.

Dates for forthcoming meetings in 2022 are June 9, July 7, September 8, October 6, November 10 and December 8. No meeting in August.

The next ordinary Parish Council Meeting of Much Birch Parish Council, will be held on Thursday 9th June 2022 from 7.30pm at the Much Birch Community Hall. All are welcome to attend. Please see notice boards and website for agendas. As always the public and press are more than welcome to attend the meeting and will have the opportunity to speak directly to their representatives.

Your Much Birch Parish Councillors are:-

Cllr Alison Cook (Chair) Jasmine Cottage, Wrigglebrook Lane, Kingsthorpe, HR2 8AW, thecooks@wyenet.co.uk 01981 540703

Cllr Andrew Crum Anfield House, Barrack Hill, Kingsthorpe HR2 8AX, a.crum@btinternet.com 01981 540002

Cllr Roisin Burge The Old Hall, Barrack Hill, Little Birch HR2 8AX roisinburge@hotmail.com 01981 540724

Cllr David Baldwin Perry House, Much Birch, HR2 8HS baldwin79@btinternet.com 01981 541198

✓ **Cllr Chris Pickering-Grey** 4 Court Farm Barns, Much Birch HR2 8HT chris@pickering-grey.uk 07712 813218

Cllr Joseph Goldsmith Quantock House, Hollybush Lane, Much Birch, HR2 8HX josephagoldsmith@hotmail.com 07967 728590

Parish Clerk Mrs Alison Wright Longfield House Gooses Foot, Kingstone HR2 9NE muchbirchclerk@gmail.com 01981 250860



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emmadeer@hotmail.co.uk

Emma Partington has over 10 years experience in the finance

Full minutes of the meetings and information etc. can be found on the Parish Council website following the link found in this summary www.muchbirchparish.org.uk.

You can also find us on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/MuchBirchPC> and Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Much.Birch.Parish>



The Queen's Jubilee Beacons A Song for the Commonwealth

A Life Lived With Grace by Lucy Kiely

When the world has turned to darkness
And there's troubled seas ahead
There's a light that leads the ship back home to shore.

A life lived with grace
A heart filled with love
Peace on earth and harmony in the heavens above.

When the day is slowly breaking
And the dawn can't find its way
There's a sun that shines upon the world heralding a
brand-new day.

A life lived with grace
A heart filled with love
Peace on earth and harmony in the heavens above.

When the night has come a-calling
And the daylight starts to fade
There's a reason why the world rejoices
singing all as one today.

A life lived with grace
A heart filled with love
Peace on earth and harmony in the heavens above.

*One of three winners in the Song for the
Commonwealth Competition
For the Queen's Platinum Jubilee*

Items for July newsletter to
editorial@birchesnews.org.uk or paper
copy to Elisabeth Taylor 07854 629193 by
14th June

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LITTLE BIRCH VILLAGE HALL DRAMA GROUP



Now that the
Covid restrictions have been lifted, the
committee are actively searching for any
established or new residents that would be
interested in joining a team of enthusiastic
people to assist in putting on theatrical
events.

We are looking for ALL disciplines – Actors,
behind the scenes personnel, technical
assistants, set builders, front of house,
wardrobe, prompts, Directors and writers.

If you would like further information please
contact either Jane Bolam (07508 345879),
Bob Barnett (07890 206201) or David
Baldwin (07768 150150)

*The Axe &
Clever
Much Birch
Contact us on
01981 540203*



or on our Facebook page

Little Birch Parish Facebook Group

Find the latest news, events



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and business listings all in one place. You are welcome to promote your local business, advertise a local event or post news or information of interest to the village and surrounding area. Search for *Little Birch Parish Group* on Facebook

Much Birch

**Parent, Baby and
Toddler Group**

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fun for all

Snack

Drink lots of
Tea or Coffee!

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Activities

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indoor toys
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friends

Friendly
and Re-



For more information please contact:
Karen 07817716137 or Lucy
lcook8910@gmail.com

Kingsthorpe and Little Birch Gardening Club

Wednesday 29th June

Evening visit to two gardens
in Goodrich

Contact Janet Gwinnett for
more information

01981 540651
and leave a message



MUCH DEWCHURCH VILLAGE HALL



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Trouble with Footpaths? Contacts

Aconbury - Mike Leigh 01981 540698

Much Birch - including Kingsthorpe Al Davies
07872 548440 or alanrcd@gmail.com

Little Birch - Angela Middleton 01981 540377



LITTLE BIRCH JUBILEE COMPANION DOG SHOW



THURSDAY 2ND JUNE 2022
CASTLE NIBOLE FARM, LITTLE BIRCH, HR2 8BB
COMMENCING AT 3.00 P.M.
JUDGE MRS A. GUNSON



SCHEDULE

CLASSES 1-4 PEDIGREE BREEDS ONLY

CLASS 1 - A.V. Puppy - age from 6 months to 1yr on day of show

CLASS 2 - A.V. Sporting

CLASS 3 - A.V. Non-Sporting

CLASS 4 - A.V. Open

BEST IN SHOW WILL BE FROM UNBEATEN DOGS FROM CLASSES 1 - 4

NOVELTY CLASSES - OPEN TO ALL

CLASS 5 - Dog in Best Condition

CLASS 6 - Best Crossbreed

CLASS 7 - Prettiest Bitch

CLASS 8 - Most Handsome Dog

CLASS 9 - Best Child Handler - split to 10 & under, 11 & over if entries allow

CLASS 10 - Best Local Dog - resident of Little Birch and Kingsthorpe

CLASS 11 - Dog with the Waggiest Tail

CLASS 12 - Dog with the Best Trick/Treat Catcher

CLASS 13 - Dog with Best Movement

CLASS 14 - Best Veteran - 8 yrs and over

CLASS 15 - Dog Judge Would Like to Take Home

CLASS 16 - BEST JUBILEE FANCY DRESS - Dog, Handler & Both!!

ENTRY FEES: CLASSES 1-4, £2.00. CLASSES 5-16, £1.50, per class

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Hereford Cathedral Events

Homo Sapiens: All the Same, All Different? A Talk by Dr Audrey Nunn Tuesday 7 June, 7pm £10

The Mappa Mundi has strange figures and monsters on its periphery expressing fear of the unknown. But are we any different today as we marginalise groups and cultures 'not like us'? What can we learn if we listen to the wisdom of strangers? Dr Audrey Nunn is a Social Anthropologist, and inveterate traveller.

Open Gardens Wednesday 8 June, bookable sessions

Explore the Chapter House, Cloister garden, Canon's garden, Dean's garden and the Bishop's garden at leisure with our team of volunteer garden guides on hand. **£5**

Cathedral Lego Club Wed 8 June 3.30pm – 4.30pm free

Create crazy constructions with Lego in the South Transept with thousands of bricks and hundreds of mini figures, learn techniques and make friends! **8 to 14.**

The Sixteen: Choral Pilgrimage Thurs 9 June, 7.30

A powerful and emotional programme of English choral music. Centred around Hubert Parry's heartfelt Songs of Farewell, the tour also explores music by Campion, Howells, and award-winning composer Cecilia McDowall. Deeply affected by the First World War, Parry sought poetry that would reflect not only peace and unity and the search for a better world, but also an escape from the horrors of war.

Creative Cloisters: Photography Monday 13 June, 12pm

The Cloisters have been a source of inspiration for centuries and now we are inviting individuals to explore their own creativity in this tranquil, beautiful space. Open to creative professionals, amateurs and complete beginners, a chance to create a poem or capture a photograph. **£5 in advance**

Summer Music by Candlelight Wed 15 June, 8pm

Ex Cathedra return to Hereford Cathedral for their annual concert Summer Music by Candlelight. As a long summer day fades to dusk, and candles flicker in the twilight, we present an enchanting programme of seasonal music and readings inspired by nature, summer holidays, sea and sunshine. **Advance booking essential.**

Creative Cloisters: Poetry Monday 20 June, 10am

Using extracts from existing poems as a starting point, visitors can wander through the Cloisters, writing their own pieces of poetry. **£5 advance booking essential.**

NGS Garden Opening Saturday 25 June £5 Advance booking.

Discover the cathedral's historic and beautiful gardens. Book a timed session and visit the Chapter House, Cloister, Canons, Dean's and Bishop's Gardens at your own pace.

Details of all events: www.herefordcathedral.org

Coffee Morning with Book Exchange

**Thursday 2nd June
& Saturday 18th June
10.00am - 12.00 noon**

Little Birch Village Hall

Come and enjoy a cup of tea or coffee, some cake or biscuit. Make new friends or catch up with old friends. Take a book, leave a book, or both. Exchange recommendations for a good read. Families & well behaved dogs welcome.

look forward to seeing you



THE MASONS AT MERRIVALE

Firstly, a big thank you to everyone who supported the Dawn Chorus walk from Merrivale. Donations raised £250 which we have given to two charities, The Farm Community Network and We are Farming Minds. Two charities that are the 'Samaritans' of the farming world.

Hasn't the spring weather been wonderful. Over the last month the spring field work has been completed. We have sown 90 acres of both spring barley and a mix of spring barley and peas which we under sow with grass seed. The barley will be combined for feed and the barley and peas will be cut in July to make whole crop silage that will be fed to the cows in the winter. The under sown grass is then ready to be cut for silage in September and will stay as a grass silage ley for the following 3 years. We just have 12 acres left to plant with fodder beet which provides a high energy feed for the cows during the winter.

The cows went out to grass in the daytime on March 21st which is 2 days earlier than last year. However they were out day and night by this time last year. The weather this year has been colder meaning grass growth has been slower, hopefully that's all about to change.

When the cows have grazed all the grass paddocks once, we then fertilise them. Being organic, we don't use artificial fertiliser but rely on recycling the cows slurry and manure. We have a piece of equipment called a 'slurry separator' which does exactly that, it separates the liquid slurry from the solids. We can then irrigate the dirty water over the grass paddocks and spread the solids on the silage fields after we have cut them. After being separated, the solid manure breaks down much faster than unseparated muck, removing the risk of tainting the grass. Using clover in our grass leys also produces nitrogen to help growth. As ever, we are also heavily reliant on rainfall for crop growth but that is the part we can't control.

This year we are particularly fortunate not to be reliant on artificial fertilisers. With everything that is happening in the economy at the moment, fertiliser costs have more than trebled. This has had a huge effect on the costs of production on conventional farms, together with the hike in fuel and feed costs which are affecting us all. It is providing some serious challenges for our industry this year. We intend to put most of the youngstock out soon. This will make a huge difference to the workload as they will not need to be cleaned out, fed and bedded daily. This will be a particular help this year as our daughter Lucy has just had a little girl so we're a team member down for the time being.

We have been surprised at how popular the organic vegetables have been in the milk hut. Most of the seasons veg are now over and there will be a gap in supply until June. We've just planted our first broccoli, cauliflower and cabbage and intend to plant batches every 2 weeks until July to keep a continuous supply. We are also doubling the amount we grow so we have plenty.

MERRIVALE FARM MILK HUT

**Selling fresh Organic Milk,
Milkshakes, Vegetables, Cakes,
Wagyu Beef and eggs**

open 7am to 7pm Monday to Saturday, 9am to 7pm on Sunday

Available directly from our self service Farm Shop on the family farm where they are produced. Our organic, grass fed Wagyu Cross beef has been born and raised at Merrivale Farm. The Wagyu breed is known for its beautiful marbling which gives a delicious flavour and texture to the meat. Available in mixed boxes starting at £65.

Also individual cuts & packs.

**Contact Lucy for more information
on 07974 053804**

**or email lucymason@hotmail.com
Merrivale Farm Little Birch
Hereford HR2 8BA**

Sales of milk in the hut have also exceeded our expectations, the support we have had from the local area has been fantastic and we can't thank you enough. Exciting times for the summer and Ben, Emily and Lucy are planning some new additions.

It's strange how at this time of year, having just come out of winter, we are busy planting & planning for next winter, always making sure we have enough to feed the cows over the winter months.

As with everyone, our thoughts are with the people of Ukraine. Seeing cows wandering around lost as their farm has been bombed is heart wrenching, I've no idea how people are coping under these circumstances. We just carry on with our day to day & hope for peace, though food & energy supplies will never be the same again. Enough for now, lets enjoy the lovely weather while its here & hope it continues for some time.



Diary Dates June

Coffee & Books Thurs 2nd 10-12 LBVH p12

Little Birch Jubilee Celebrations Thurs 2nd
from 3pm, Glebe Field, Castle Nibole p2

Dog Show Thurs 2nd 3pm, Glebe Field p2

Little Birch Jubilee Celebrations Sat 4th p2

Big Jubilee Lunch Sun 5th 12.30pm MBCH p1

MBPC Meeting Thurs 9th 7.30pm MBCH

Community Café Sat 11th 10-12.30 MBCH p2

Coffee & Books Sat 11th 10-12 LBVH p12

Village Market Fri 24th 10. 2.30-4.30 MBCH p2

Kingsthorpe & Little Birch Gardening Club

Wed 29th 7.30 LBVH p10

Parent and Toddlers Fridays 9.30-11.30 MBCH

Table Tennis 1st Tuesday 7-9pm LBVH

MBCH Much Birch Community Hall

LBVH Little Birch Village Hall

Parish Walks

Bluebell Walk Sunday 8 May

The bluebells in both Aconbury and Athelstan's wood on Sunday 8th May were really quite beautiful. After thinking that the bluebells were past their peak, they were brilliant on the hill fort. The paths were lined with bluebells, stitchwort and the occasional cluster of pink campions. There were about 10 walkers and the sun shone most of the time so we were pleased to be under the shade of the trees.



Walks planned for July and August are a **Pub Walk** and a **Cream Tea Walk** - watch this space! **Angela**

Defibrillator Locations

IN A LIFE THREATENING EMERGENCY CALL 999

AEDs available to use locally for those experiencing sudden cardiac arrest. A defibrillator is an easy to use, medical device that analyses the heart's rhythm and, if needed, delivers an electrical shock (defibrillation) to help the heart establish an effective rhythm.

Allensmore Locks Garage

Backney on the garage wall at Market Gardens Cottage

Bridstow on the outside of the village hall

Garway on the wall outside the Garway Moon pub

Harewood End at Harewood End Inn on outside of the pub at the back in the beer garden.

Little Birch on the outside of the village hall

Llanwarne on the wall by steps leading up to the village hall

Much Birch on the outside of the church hall

Much Dewchurch outside Steiner School, first building after the church

Peterstow at the Yew Tree pub

Sellack on the outside of the parish hall
(key code needed)

St Weonards old BT phone box off the A466
between the church and Forge Cottage

Wormelow at the Cricket Club & Carrot & Wine shop

Wilton on wall at the BP garage on the roundabout

Advertising Rates

11 editions per year (no August newsletter)

1/16 page £3.50 per issue or £35 per year

1/8th page £4.00 per issue or £40 per year

¼ page £4.50 per issue or £45 per year

½ page £8 per issue or £80 per year

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