

# The Birches

## Community Matters Newsletter

Kingsthorpe, Much Birch, Little Birch,  
Aconbury & Wormelow January 2023



Happy  
New Year



Photos Gillie Guest

### Little Birch Drama Group

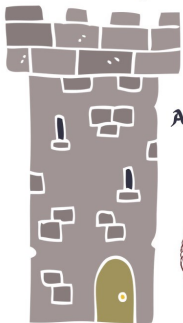
Don't miss out...get your Panto tickets  
now to see your favourite village actors

## in Sleeping Beauty

Little Birch Village Hall

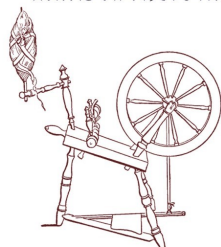
Friday 20th January curtain up at 7:30pm

Saturday 21st January Matinee curtain up at  
2:30pm with evening performance at 7:30pm



Adults: £8.00, Children under  
12 yrs: £5.00

Ring Geoff or Julie for  
tickets on 01981 541080



### WASSAIL RETURNS PAGE 2



## Coffee Morning with Book Exchange

Thursday 5th January 10.00am - 12.00 noon

Little Birch Village Hall

Come and enjoy a cup of tea or coffee, some cake or biscuits. 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

*Revd Mark writes:*

Happy New Year – a peaceful and blessed 2023 to all.

As you know, we get the name of January from the Roman God Janus – the one who looks both forwards and back. Being two-faced is not something that we usually celebrate in our community. We want people to be straightforward, simple to understand and not playing tricks with us. I suppose it is why estate agents and politicians are held in such low esteem.

But then if we commit to total honesty, as in the Jim Carey film “Liar! Liar!” we are just as likely to upset people and drive them away. We have to strike a careful balance, and as my Mum would often say “If you can’t say anything nice, then don’t say anything at all”. It is not a bad code to live by, most of the time. But there will be moments when you have to call out bad behaviour, you have to stand up and be counted.

Some might argue that the “Stop Oil” campaigners have gone too far, others might see it as legitimate protest over something that is coming our way and that we are massively under-prepared for. What is not missing is the passion and commitment!

For 2023 then, like Jesus says, “Let your Yes be Yes and your No be No” (Matthew 5 verse 37) and keep quiet when we can’t be helpful!

With every blessing

**Revd Mark**

### **Services for January 2023**

January 1 <sup>st</sup> (Second Sunday of Christmas)	11.00 a.m. Little Birch – Holy Communion
January 8 <sup>th</sup> Epiphany	9.15 a.m. Much Birch – Family Communion 11.00 a.m. Little Birch – Morning Worship
January 15 <sup>th</sup> Second Sunday of Epiphany	9.15 a.m. Much Birch – Morning Worship 11.00 a.m. Little Birch – Holy Communion in Traditional Language
Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup> Third Sunday of Epiphany	9.15 a.m. Llandinabo – Holy Communion in Traditional Language
Sunday 29 <sup>th</sup> Candlemas	10.30 a.m. Much Birch Village Hall – Celebration of Candlemas and Café (informal) church.

### **Betty Bryant**

Sadly we have to report the passing of Betty Bryant. Betty passed away peacefully at home on the evening of Tuesday, 29th November.

Betty will be greatly missed and we give thanks for all she did at Saint Mary's, Little Birch and in the community.

Betty's funeral will be at Little Birch Church on Tuesday 20th December at 10.30 am.



### **Compost Heap Wassail Returns**

**Saturday 14th January 2023**

Procession leaves Little Birch Village Hall  
at 7pm prompt

Hot dogs included, bar provided, lots of singing  
and the usual daft stuff.

Tickets available from Bob Mason  
at Merrivale Farm

£10 each



## New Year Quiz

1. What is the first country to celebrate the New Year?

A. Tonga

B. Tuvalu

C. Fiji

2. The New Year is the first day of the year on which calendar?

A. Christian calendar

B. Gregorian calendar

C. Lunar calendar

## Hope Spring eCards

Anniversaries Birthdays Christmas  
Easter Father's Day Mother's Day  
New Year Valentine's Day

Send greetings for any occasion online  
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[www.HopeSpringCards.co.uk](http://www.HopeSpringCards.co.uk)

## Little Birch Footpath Officer

The above voluntary position for Little Birch Parish Council remains unfilled. If anyone is interested would they please contact the parish clerk via [lbpcclerk@gmail.com](mailto:lbpcclerk@gmail.com) for more information.

Angela Middleton, our present officer would be very happy to discuss the role and provide information.



at Much Birch  
Community Hall

**Friday 9 December - ELVIS 12**

ELVIS is Oscar-nominated filmmaker Baz Luhrmann's musical drama about the life and music of Elvis Presley, seen through the prism of his complicated relationship with his enigmatic manager, Colonel Tom Parker. The story delves into the complex dynamic between Presley and Parker spanning over 20 years, from Presley's rise to fame to his unprecedented stardom, against the backdrop of the evolving cultural landscape and loss of innocence in America. Central to that journey is one of the most significant and influential people in Elvis's life, Priscilla Presley.

**Tickets £5 (£4 under 16s)**

*Please note new prices from September 2022*

**Refreshments including hot dogs available from 7pm**

**Thursday 26 January - TOP GUN MAVERICK 12A**

After more than thirty years of service as one of the Navy's top aviators, Pete "Maverick" Mitchell is where he belongs, pushing the envelope as a courageous test pilot and dodging the advancement in rank that would ground him. Training a detachment of graduates for a special assignment, Maverick must confront the ghosts of his past and his deepest fears, culminating in a mission that demands the ultimate sacrifice from those who choose to fly it.

*Tickets available in advance or on the door (cash or card payments accepted)- for further info or to book tickets please email [muchbirchflicks@hotmail.com](mailto:muchbirchflicks@hotmail.com) or call 01981 540097*

*For further information about films and screenings visit [www.artsalive.co.uk](http://www.artsalive.co.uk)*



Much Birch Community Hall

Much Birch Community Hall has a new website! Check it out here for information about booking the hall and more -

[www.muchbirchcommunityhall.org](http://www.muchbirchcommunityhall.org)

**Join us at the**

**Community Café**

**@ Much Birch Community Hall**

**Saturday 10 December**

**10:00 - 12:30**

and every 2nd Saturday of the month

**14 January**

**11 February**

**11 March**

For more information or if you are in need of transport contact Lydia on 01981 540323 or [socialfabric@hotmail.com](mailto:socialfabric@hotmail.com)



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



## Jobs in the garden for January

The two cold weeks in mid December certainly brought us down to earth. Margaret and I bubble wrapped the interior of the greenhouse a couple of days before the temperature dropped and subsequently put pots and tubs containing tender plants inside with the heater set to frost protection.

Our potted perennials were put in the cold frames or the other greenhouse. A cloche has been put over the salad leaves out in the garden. We also have a dozen plants growing in a growbag (formerly used for tomatoes) in the greenhouse in reserve.

When we get these short bursts of bitterly cold weather there is a temptation to dispute global warming/climate change, and then you think back to July and August and remember the periods of extreme heat that we experienced, that is when averages come into the equation. The prophecies made a number of years ago, about being able to grow tropical plants in our gardens are still a long way off, as those exotic plants can still be wiped out in one night of severe frost.

### Here are a few things to do

\*Prune young deciduous trees while leafless to improve the structure and with mature trees, thin the branches and, if desired, raise the canopy.

\*Destroy spotted/blotched leaves of Pansy/Viola as this is probably a fungal disease.

\*Cut back the foliage on Hellebores so flowers aren't obscured by old leaves. This will also help to control Hellebore leaf spot disease.

Pinch out tips of Autumn sown sweet peas. Provide protection if adverse weather occurs.

\*Sow summer brassicas – cauliflower calabrese and cabbage – in a propagator or on a warm window sill. Grow on in a frame or greenhouse.

\*Buy seed potatoes and onion sets.

\*If you intend to show large onions (over 9oz) sow seeds at the beginning of the month in a seed tray or cell tray. Place on a warm window sill if you do not have a heated propagator. When germinated and the seedlings have reached the 'crook' stage prick out and plant into individual pots, providing as much light as you possibly can.

\*Begin forcing rhubarb by placing a large inverted receptacle over the crowns.

\*Do the monthly check of stored apples, pears, potatoes and onions, removing any rotten fruits.

\*Keep bird feeders stocked with fresh food, clean birdbaths and provide fresh water. Thoroughly clean out and re-hang your nesting boxes.

\*Attract Woodpeckers by suspending shop bought suet cakes, or drill some holes in a short log and fill holes with suet or peanuts.

### Derek Scrivens



### Art and Craft Space

There will be a meeting about the Art and Craft Space at Janet Gwinnett's House on Thursday 26th January at 2pm.

To find out more contact Sally,  
sally.nichol@btinternet.com or call 07803 032928  
or 01981 540001.

*The Axe &  
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Much Birch  
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*or on our Facebook page*



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## New Year's Resolutions



The Babylonians were probably the first to make New Year resolutions. 4000 years ago they celebrated New Year - though their New Year began in mid March when crops were planted. They held a 12 day festival called Akitu during which they renewed their loyalty to the King and promised to pay all debts and return anything they had borrowed, believing that the gods would then treat them kindly.

In medieval times knights took the 'peacock vow' at the end of the Christmas season to re-affirm their commitment to chivalry. During 1740s England clergyman, John Wesley, created the *Covenant Renewal Service* during which people renewed their vows on New Year's day in his Methodist Church.

New Year's resolutions started to become more secular, rather than spiritual, during the materialistic 19th century. The first recorded use of the phrase "new year resolution" appeared in a Boston newspaper in 1813.

For the last 3 years health and fitness have been the number 1 New Year's resolution in the UK. The most frequent are:-

1. Exercise more
2. Lose weight
3. Get organized
4. Learn a new skill or hobby
5. Live life to the fullest
6. Save more money / spend less money
7. Quit smoking
8. Spend more time with family and friends
9. Travel more
10. Read more

Others include be kinder, volunteer, get outside, live more sustainably, spend less time on social media, be compassionate, feed the birds... the list, of course, is endless. Will you make any resolutions this year? If you do, will you remember to be kind to yourself when you forget or fail to keep them?



## I've Plucked the Berry

By William Motherwell

I've plucked the berry from the bush, the brown nut from the tree,  
But heart of happy little bird ne'er broken was by me;  
I saw them in their curious nests, close crouching, slyly peer,  
With their wild eyes, like glittering beads, to note if harm were near:  
I passed them by, and blessed them all; I felt that it was good  
To leave unmoved the creatures small whose home is in the wood.  
  
And here, even now, above my head, a lusty rogue doth sing,  
He pecks his swelling breast and neck, and trims his little wing,  
He will not fly; he knows full well, while chirping on that spray,  
I would not harm him for a world, or interrupt his lay;  
Sing on, sing on, blythe bird! And fill my heart with summer gladness,  
It has been aching many a day with measures full of sadness!

*eve lomas*  
*therapies*

Nutritional Therapy  
Acupuncture  
Tui Na Massage

EASE TENSION



RELIEVE PAIN



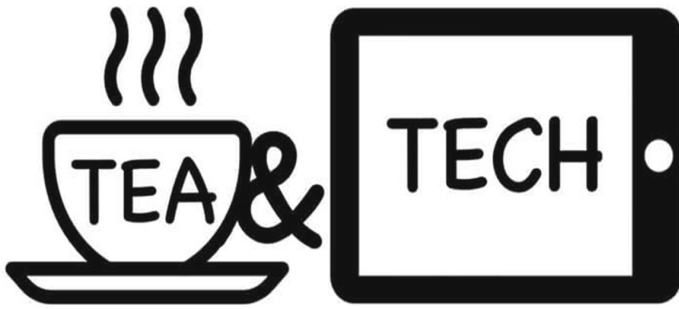
RESTORE BALANCE

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## Holistic I.T. Support for Senior Surfers

[www.teaandtech.co.uk](http://www.teaandtech.co.uk)

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

[richard@teaandtech.co.uk](mailto: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](mailto:Alisonpilates2016@gmail.com)**

**01432 840491**

**07947 011707**

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



## Much Birch Parish Meeting

At the Parish Council Meeting held in Much Birch Community Hall on the 8<sup>th</sup> December the Parish Council discussed and agreed to comment in support of two local planning applications. The Community Speed Watch initiative progress had been followed up. The Parish Council were awaiting an update regarding any potential authority to proceed with the speed watch and this would again be followed up in the New Year.

The dates for the forthcoming meetings, in the year 2023, are as advised below:  
Jan 5<sup>th</sup>, Feb 2<sup>nd</sup>, March 2<sup>nd</sup>, April 6<sup>th</sup>, May 11<sup>th</sup>, June 8<sup>th</sup>, July 6<sup>th</sup>, No meeting in August, Sept 7<sup>th</sup>, Oct 5<sup>th</sup>, Nov 9<sup>th</sup> and Dec 7<sup>th</sup>

The next ordinary Parish Council Meeting of the Much Birch Parish Council will be held on **Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2023 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.

### Much Birch Parish Councillors

**Cllr Alison Cook** (Chair) Jasmine Cottage, Wrigglebrook Lane, Kingsthorpe, HR2 8AW, [thecooks@wyenet.co.uk](mailto:thecooks@wyenet.co.uk)

01981 540703; **Cllr Andrew Crum** Anfield House, Barrack Hill, Kingsthorpe HR2 8AX, [a.crum@btinternet.com](mailto:a.crum@btinternet.com) 01981 540002;

**Cllr Roisin Burge** The Old Hall, Barrack Hill, Little Birch HR2 8AX [roisinburge@hotmail.com](mailto:roisinburge@hotmail.com) 01981 540724;

**Cllr David Baldwin** Perry House, Much Birch, HR2 8HS [baldwin79@btinternet.com](mailto:baldwin79@btinternet.com) 01981 541198;

**Cllr Chris Pickering-Grey** 4 Court Farm Barns, Much Birch HR28HT [chris@pickering-grey.uk](mailto:chris@pickering-grey.uk) 07712 813218;

**Cllr Joseph Goldsmith** Quantock House, Hollybush Lane, Much Birch, HR2 8HX [josephagoldsmith@hotmail.com](mailto:josephagoldsmith@hotmail.com) 07967 728590

Much Birch Footpath Officer David Irwin [david.irwin13@btinternet.com](mailto:david.irwin13@btinternet.com)

**Parish Clerk Mrs Alison Wright** Longfield House Gooses Foot, Kingstone HR2 9NE

[muchbirchclerk@gmail.com](mailto:muchbirchclerk@gmail.com) 01981 250860 Minutes of the meetings and information are on the Parish Council website following the link.

[www.muchbirchparish.org.uk](http://www.muchbirchparish.org.uk). You can also find us on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/MuchBirchPC> and Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/>

**The next meeting of Little Birch Parish Council is on Wednesday January 4th at 7pm**



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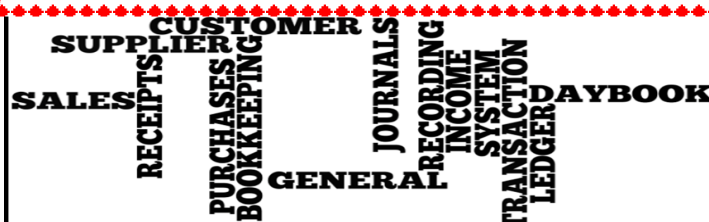
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[emmadeer@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:emmadeer@hotmail.co.uk)

Emma Partington has over 10 years experience in the finance

### Little Birch Parish Councillors

Cllr Kate Dillon, Cllr Michael Davies,

Cllr Kate Robbins, Cllr Chris Atkinson,

Neil Barrington Clerk [lbpcclerk@gmail.com](mailto:lbpcclerk@gmail.com)

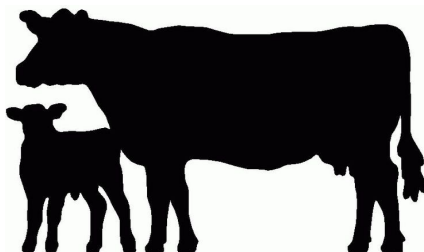
website [www.littlebirchparishcouncil.org](http://www.littlebirchparishcouncil.org)

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Merrivale Farm Little Birch  
Hereford HR2 8BA



Items for February newsletter to  
[editorial@birchesnews.org.uk](mailto:editorial@birchesnews.org.uk) or paper  
copy to Elisabeth Taylor 07854 629193 by  
**14th January**

## Ping's Hairdressing & Barbers



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ments and further information  
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Or Home 01981 540876

## Tiddlers, Toddlers & StoryTellers

@Much Birch Community Hall

A parent, child, and community group  
- All are welcome!

Early years, SEND, and foster care experience available.  
Trained breastfeeding support.

Every Friday 9:30-11:30

Free play, interest tables, optional music and  
movement session, crafts and activities for all ages!

Contact: 07762518925  
[tiddlersandtoddlersmuchbirch@gmail.com](mailto:tiddlersandtoddlersmuchbirch@gmail.com)

**£1 per  
person**

Facebook: Tiddlers, Toddlers, and Story Tellers - Much Birch



# South Hereford Repair Café

Hello, everyone

With the support of Herefordshire County Council (HCC), we at Dinedor Village Hall are exploring the opportunities to establish a Repair Café at our hall in early 2023.

Repair Café is a community initiative which brings together people with the skills to repair with those who have items to repair. It is intended as a fun, social, community event that values the expertise of volunteer craftspeople and helps to reduce waste and consumption.

The international Repair Café movement began in Amsterdam in 2009 and now there are over 2,200 repair cafes around the world. The nearest to us currently are in Ledbury and Malvern and they, believe it or not, in a two-and-a-half to three hour session on a Saturday once a month handle between 35 and 75 repairs!

Repairs are undertaken free-of-charge, although spare parts are usually charged for, and refreshments for visitors and volunteers are also provided free-of-charge. Visitors are then encouraged to make a donation to the Repair Café for the work undertaken and the refreshment received. Our objective is to become fully self-sufficient within 4-6 months.

The concept we have agreed with HCC is that the South Hereford Repair Café will operate within a catchment area up to 7-8 miles from Dinedor. This means that we will include Belmont, Newton Farm, Lower Bullingham, Hampton Bishop and Mordiford to the north, Fownhope to the east, Ballingham, Bolstone, Carey, Little Dewchurch, Little Birch, Kings Thorn and Much Birch to the south, and Callow, Grafton and Twyford to the west.

## Limericks

Inspired by Charlotte Mc Bee's suggestion in the December newsletter

There was an old man from the Birches	A badger one day said to his cub
Who had pigeons he kept on perches	'I'm off for a pint in the pub'
He was sorry one day	The youngster said 'fine'
When they flew away	Then drank his dad's wine
Now all he has left are his lurchers	And fell fast asleep in the tub

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

A girl who lived in Kingsthorpe	The bells rang in the New Year
Took up playing the French horn	The night was frosty and clear
The neighbours went mad	The vicar cried 'yikes'
And phoned up her dad	As he slipped off his bike
	And landed hard on his rear

We do hope that you will support our efforts and help us to promote this green initiative throughout your area. Our initial task is to pull together from across this catchment area a team of **volunteers**

- to repair household items
- to serve refreshments and
- to manage each session

In this respect we shall appreciate your assistance in reaching out to potential volunteers. This may be through your parish newsletter, your website, your Facebook page, through posters put up in your village or community hall and around your parish, or just by word of mouth.

If you will kindly provide us with the name and contact details (preferably including an e-mail address), (or if you prefer to ask them to contact us directly): this will be an important first step in our launch campaign and enable us to direct publicity material to them for distribution. At the same time, the Waste Transformation and Talk Community Hub teams at HCC will also publicise the service.

Repairing, recycling and reducing waste have become a priority for many of us: and we shall welcome this information from you shortly to help us from early 2023 to significantly increase what we do repair in South Hereford.

If you should in the meantime have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us

Many thanks

Allan Simnett

Dinedor Talk Community Hub & Repair Café Coordinator



# Uncle Norman's Wartime Memories

## Part 2

The farm was mainly dairy, with arable crops and employed several men and boys, as it was unmechanised and labour intensive. There was no refrigeration and in hot weather so churns were suspended by chains in the underground water tanks to keep the milk fresh. Any not needed for local sale was left out for daily collection by Cadbury's. Milk chocolate (rationed) was the real thing then; now you don't even know where it is made. My mother who had hardly ever seen a cow before was roped in to help with the twice daily milking and suffered lifelong arthritis after having a galvanised milking pail flattened against the back of her knee by a cow called Blossom. "Kickers" usually had their back legs tied together.

Food was strictly rationed but we illegally and secretly churned butter from the cream taken off the milk; no one noticed as the milk was so rich! The butter churner lived in Mr and Mrs Dykes' bedroom where this weekly secret event took place. However, we were allowed to kill a pig for home consumption - if the whole household gave up their meagre bacon ration. So we able enjoyed delicious thick cut home cured fat bacon and ham!

I remember we had great fun helping with the milk round as the milk float had springs and pneumatic tyres and, at a canter, would bounce crazily along the unmetalled lanes, sending milk crates crashing up and down in a very satisfying manner! Although our attempt at replacing some of the spilt milk with well water was noticed by a very angry lady who did not appreciate a layer of sand at the bottom of her daily pinta!

There has been publicity about a network of secret bunkers that Churchill initiated as bases for saboteurs in the event of invasion. We unknowingly discovered one of these when exploring Aconbury Woods, the site of an Iron Age Fort overlooking Hereford. It was made of a timber-lined shaft with a lid covered with earth and vegetation. This was kept very secret and we beat a hasty retreat. I could still locate the approximate site but there is probably no trace of it now.

When Coventry was blitzed we saw the glow from the sky from 60 miles away but were kept in the dark about the source of that glow for some time due to strict censorship.

While all this was going on Margaret Dyke, about my age, and I taught ourselves to ride on an aptly named pony, Paddy, and the off-duty milk round horse Mick, a fast trotter, but not at all keen on galloping or jumping. I remember we later followed the South Herefordshire Hunt, and I was treated to language as colourful as her complexion when I impeded the progress of the Master on my very unimpressive mount Blackberry - the farm carthorse. She was an extremely crafty horse and learnt to simulate lameness if she saw anyone approaching with a halter intending to making her work. She was also particularly partial to cattle cake and worked out how to operate the latch on the door of the shed where it was kept!

I was lucky to witness a local farmer still using a horse to pull around a massive millstone in a trough to crush the cider apples before they were layered in old sacks for the juice to be finally all squeezed out: the real stuff. Local lore had it that when the fermenting vat was emptied the skeletons of drowned rats would be found - but I doubt its veracity!

*Uncle Norman was an evacuee at Castle Nibole during WWII*

### LITTLE BIRCH VILLAGE HALL ADVANCE NOTICES

Pancake Evening  
at Little Birch Village Hall  
on Tuesday 21st February



Pub Night at Little Birch Village  
Hall on Saturday 25th February



**FULL DETAILS NEXT MONTH**

## Money Saving Tips

Many of us are having to find ways to save money at the moment. When I discovered that old light bulbs use much more electricity than LED lights I changed my bulbs.



I have also been cooking on top of the woodburner rather than using the electric cooker. That way I am warm and fed from one source of energy and use less electricity.

Switching off routers chargers and electric appliances when you are not using them saves energy too.

Do you have tips to share about how to save money and energy? We would love to hear from you and will publish your tips in the next edition of the newsletter. Email [editorial@birchesnews.org](mailto:editorial@birchesnews.org) or phone 07854 629193 **Elisabeth Taylor, Editor**

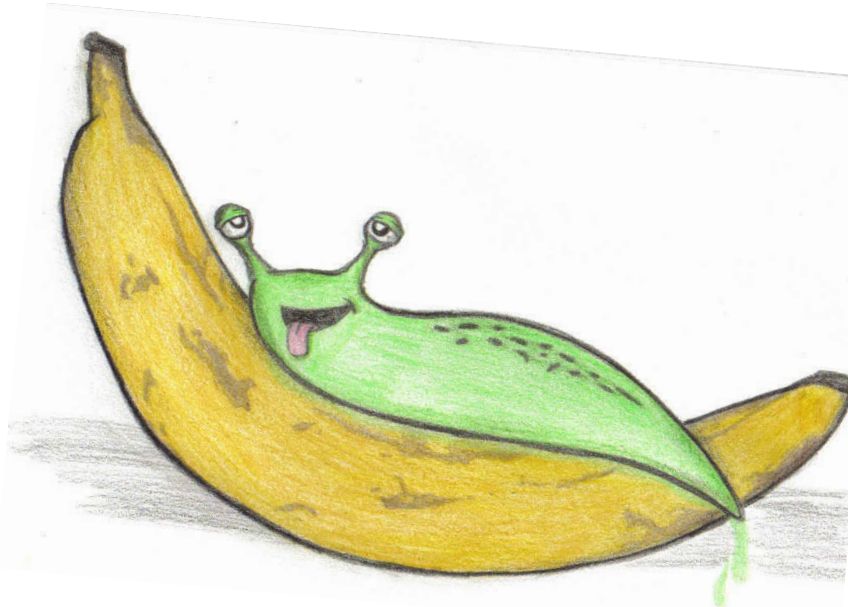
## Sharing

I am the slug on the lettuce.  
I am the ant in the jam.  
I am the wasp in the fruit juice.  
I am the fly on the flan.

We are those unwelcome visitors  
Eagerly tasting your food;  
We wouldn't blame you for thinking  
We were uncommonly rude.

But, don't be too quick to condemn us;  
We're not all that unlike you.  
Although there may be a shortage,  
We do get hungry too

**Charlotte McBee.**



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your paper copy and receive an email link to the newsletter  
as it is published



# Camping at Newhouse farm near Martley

## Sunday 4th September

It's Sunday morning, we want to go camping, but not found a site yet, left two messages with site owners. It's getting late so its first in that gets us. I picked out a CL no 1616. RA Cross, Newhouse Farm, Hope house lane, Martley. WR6 6QF. £15 including electric. Tel, 01886888284. It's a drive of 29.8 miles. Just within minutes of booking this site the other option rang to say that we would be welcome there, So must go there next time. We arrived just after one, a nice clean level site, we are on our own, the weather was not bad, had lunch, then set off on our bikes. Let's check out the locality, down to Martley, just a mile away. Loads of blackberries in the hedgerows.

Where the hell is Martley, well this is it. Passed a lovely church, found the only shop and filling station, looks very much like a small convenience shop. As we cruised around the locality we passed a mother and child walking, child shouts Hello. What a happy pretty little girl, we encountered them about four times and each time the hellos got louder, so we did stop to have a chat with them both. It turns out that it's not the mother and the child was a boy ( with hair in a bun) but a really nice meeting. Back to Martley church, very old ( aren't they all) red sand stone building. Inside parts of the walls had revealed paintings( in poor condition) of really great age. On one side was an effigy of Sir Hugh Mortimer from 1400ish. There was an amazing stained glass window depicting vivid autumn colours, quite special.

Alongside the church was a millennium green, open space for all and sundry. We chose to walk around the field. There were a few really fruitful pear trees, of course we had to pick quite a few hoping that they will fully ripen later on. As well as the pears there were loads of blackberries just waiting to be picked. Which we intend to do later on. As we walked back through the church yard we met a lovely lady ( probably in her early fifties) Apparently she used to live here but moved away to London about two years ago. She was writing a book about her life. She was really very interesting, jovial and we talked for at least half an hour. She gave us some good tips about local walks. She was also an author and a ghost writer. No, she wasn't interested in hosting my stories!

With all that we headed back to our site, spent the afternoon playing " Rummitub" and reading. Doe cooked a lasagne and salad, finished off a bottle of white. We were in bed by 9.30. And we thought that would be that, but around twelve we were rocked by a mega lightning flash followed five seconds later by terrific thunder, this continued for about an hour. I have carried a rain gauge with us for years, where is it now, in the box underneath, how frustrating. That really was it for the night.

## Monday 5th September

What a night that was, we wake to a bright sunny morning. Actually we were still in bed at 9.30am Today, it's a round trip. It turned out to be about ten miles, mainly flat country. As we ride along we are amazed at the amount of blackberries in the hedges, we have some containers with us so that we can pick some. There are damsons in abundance, we've seen plums, apples and pears. We pass quite a few cider apple orchards, one was for Bulmers. I have yet to see anybody out picking natures harvest of blackberries, what they are missing? We end up back at the church in Martley, here we take advantage of the free blackberries, in no time we pick to big tubs full, surprisingly after last night thunder and rain they don't seem to be affected. While in the millennium field I took advantage and picked another load of pears. Would you believe it as we were leaving the car park Doe ( the squirrel) spots some nuts that must have blown down last night. They were just there, on the floor. Why hasn't someone had them. Anyway with pockets full, the saddle bags full of pears and blackberries, we set off back to the site.

We had the best of the day, it drizzled for most of the afternoon, Doe and I played Rummikup. The forecast for tonight is horrendous for severe thunder and rain.. Where shall we be, snuggled up in our lovely dry and snug bed, probably listening to natures orchestra dropping rain on our roof.

## Tuesday 6th September

Wow, I really hope that the rain we have had here is also happening at home. More heavy rain and thunder from around nine for a few hours. This morning starts cloudy with a bit of rain every now and then. We're in bed reading till nine forty five. Our neighbours in the auto sleeper Broadway are on a slight slope and they are leaving this morning so I don't want to go anywhere yet because I want to see if they can move off the slope. Will he spin, will he not spin? He got clean away, no spin. so now we can go and investigate a bit of a lake in another field. with very big Koi carp.

Well, that's a surprise, it's quite a nice sized lake with very big Koi carp. As usual these types of fish are very friendly and will take food from one's hand, or suck it from one's hand anyway. And they did. We made the decision to come back later with some bread—it's all we have to tempt them .. The day has turned out to be quite nice and very warm when the sun comes out to join us. Across the road there is an old orchard which has Damson trees in plenty. Actually there are damson trees all around here. Must remember this site every September. We've had damsons, pears, nuts and lots of juicy blackberries. I'm sure with a bit more enquiring we could have plums as well. In the orchard there are also about thirty pally sheep that have a liking for damsons too. They just followed us around from tree to tree. They even tried to get into my carrier bag! I have never seen sheep so partial to the fruit.

After lunch we're on the bikes down to the church and millennium green to pick up any nuts that have been blown down last night. We just picked them off the floor, loads of them. We cycled back a different route via Hollins lane, just about one and a half miles and we were home. Still a lovely warm afternoon, a cuppa and we get the crust off the loaf and amble down to the lake through another field full of sheep, a bit dodgy trying to miss the poo!! The fish were like frothing, twisting eels as they bullied each other to get at a morsel of bread. Really nice to see. As I leaned over to feed them my glasses rolled out of my top pocket. Oops!!!, They were a really old pair anyway. Too deep for a rescue attempt. Could be a lesson here.

Back to the van, sat out and read for a while. The wind got up and chilled us a bit so inside we went. Played Rummikub for an hour or so. My, how the time flies. Doe, the chef gets our dinner, a curry plus. Very nice too, now all is done, it's nineteen fifteen. There is no rain forecast, the sun has almost gone behind the trees. Tonight will be the usual, a little reading, a little crib, maybe more Rummikub or even some Scrabble. Then bed by ten, as usual.

## Wednesday 7th September

Last night we played scrabble and read for a while. After a quiet night it's time to set off for home, the usual stuff to put away. On the road by 10.30. I have decided to go via Clifton, because I want to go over the river Teme just to see how much water is in there, because when we were at Lentwardine a few weeks ago the river was dry there. Quite a bit of water today, but we have had a lot of rain. Home via a visit to Fran at Leominster, dropped off some fruit that we had acquired. Home around one, parked the van and emptied her, took the bikes of fand stored them. This afternoon made some tomato chutney and damson jam. Neil arrived to visit Craig and will stay the night.

**Eric Joseph**

### Ginger Biscuits

#### Ingredients

4oz/125g flour

1/2 teaspoon baking powder

1/2 teaspoon ground ginger

3oz/100g golden syrup

1.5oz/50g butter

Mix flour, ginger and baking sugar together.

Melt the butter and golden syrup in a saucepan.

Pour into the flour, mix and knead well.

Roll the paste out 1/4"/5mm thick.

Use a cutter to cut out the biscuits.

Put on a greased baking sheet.

Bake in a moderate oven 170c/mark 3 for about 20 minutes.

### New Year's Quiz answers

1. Tonga

2. Gregorian



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## Diary Dates January

**Coffee & Books Meeting** Thurs 5th 10-12 LBVH p1

**LBPC Meeting** Wed 4th January 7pm LBVH

**MBPC Meeting** Thurs 5th 7.30 MBCH

**Community Café** Saturday 14th 10-12.30 MBCH

**Wassail** Sat 14th 7pm prompt starts from LBVH p2

**Sleeping Beauty Panto** Fri 20 & Sat 21 7.30pm LBVH p1

**Art & Craft Space** Thursday 26th 2pm p4

**Flicks in the Sticks** Thurs 26th MBCH 7pm p3

**Church services** P2

### REGULAR EVENTS

**Tiddlers and Toddlers** Fridays 9.30-11.30 MBCH

**Table Tennis** 1st Tuesday 7-9pm LBVH

**Venues MBCH** Much Birch Community Hall

**LBVH** Little Birch Village Hall

## Footpath Officers

If you have any queries about footpaths, contact

**Little Birch: new officer to be appointed**

**Aconbury:** Mike Leigh 01981 540698

**MuchBirch** including **Kingsthorpe:**

David Irwin 07766 135068

david.irwin13@btinternet.com

## Little Birch Parish Facebook Group



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Find the latest news, events

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## 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



