



News from Abthorpe

September 2007

VILLAGE FUN DAY

The Fun Day organised by the Abthorpe Village Fund Group on 8 September was a great success, even though the weather didn't match up to last year. Much of the credit must surely go to the many volunteers who sweated at the BBQ, made cakes and salads, put up the bunting and marquees, man-handled the chairs and tables, and helped in numerous, often unseen, ways.

250 tickets were sold, many on the day. But the foresight of over-ordering on the meat and judicious serving of the salads meant everyone had a good plate.

The dog show was organized by Helena Pope this year and judged by Angela Darling who picked Robbie & Jane's dog Jack as the dog she would most like to take home. The cake, book and toy stalls added to the attractions alongside the coconut shy and other games. The various races for tots through to adults gave rise to much hilarity, especially the 'two in a sack' adult race.

As the afternoon wore on and got increasingly cloudy and chilly a lot of folks made their way into the church for

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a hot cup of tea and a piece of cake provided free by the church. And whilst there, quite a number climbed the clock tower to get a close up view of the workings of the clock in its graffiti-covered chamber and the bell above.

Compering the day, Carl Brennan kept everyone informed of the events in his inimitable way.

The fun day raises funds for Christmas activities for the young and old and other events in the village, and initial estimations of the surplus for this year are £880 after all expenses, which included a donation of £100 to the church for its continued support of the social events organized by the Fund. So, a great team effort by more than 47 volunteers. Thanks to all.





Many thanks to John Riches for these photographs.



WHIST – AND NOW CRIB

A group of villagers get together to play a few light-hearted hands of whist once a month at The New Inn, courtesy of Jane and Robbie who kindly provide tea to go with the home made cake supplied by ladies of the village. It has been running for a few months now, and a suggestion has been made to strike out to additional games.

So from Saturday 13 October a table playing cribbage will be added alongside the usual whist. Instruction has been promised for those who would like to learn or brush up some long-rusty skills. If anyone would like to come and join in, you would be most welcome: 2.00 - 4.00pm. Just turn up, or phone Francesca on 858056 if you'd like to know more first.

CHURCH CLOCK

You may have noticed that the church clock has been more erratic than usual just lately. It has a tendency to go fast or slow over a period of weeks, for no reason that can be fathomed – not temperature nor humidity – and this is corrected usually by very slightly lengthening or shortening the pendulum. But as it was made in 1871 it probably has a right to be a little temperamental.

It is set to strike during the day but be silent at night. However, it started striking during the night but

not during the day, and investigation showed there was a problem with the time clock that electronically controls the striking. Having discovered that problem the offending mechanism was removed which is why the clock is now striking all 24 hours. A new one is on order and hopefully it won't be too long before the familiar striking pattern is restored.

NEW POLICE FRONT OFFICE OPENING TIMES

Changes in public opening times of police stations in Northamptonshire came into effect on 1 August when documents can be dropped off, found property handed in, etc.

Towcester is now open 1.00 – 6.00pm, Monday to Friday.

At other times there is still the telephone: 08453 700700, or email via www.northants.police.uk; crime stoppers is on 0800 555111.

And of course there are regular updates on the Abthorpe website. Go to www.abthorpe.net and select the News page for a summary or click on the link to Neighbourhood Watch for more detail. Liz Capurro is our local coordinator on 850535 if you have anything to report.

RED KITES IN ABTHORPE

Many of you will be familiar with the red kites flying over the Chilterns near Princes Risborough on the M40,

where they were reintroduced between 1989 and 1994. So successful have they been that they have now extended their range as far as Abthorpe – seen recently by John Riches flying over Bucknell Woods. Has anyone else seen any unusual fur or feather in our area?



CHURCH TOTE

The Church Tote now has 98 members, with total winnings since it began in May 2003 of just over £14,000, with a similar amount being raised to preserve the fabric of the church.

The June winner was Andrew Dancer who won £252.50. In July Mr and Mrs Lacey were successful and Steve Neasham scooped the August draw, each winning £245. And breaking news of the September winner: Philip Berry has won £247.50

If you would like to be included in the opportunity to win a nice little bonus each month, at odds infinitely better than the Lottery, you can purchase numbers from Richard Tomalin on 858316.

PIG ROAST

Although it seems a long while ago now, the pig roast held in the Old School on 15 July raised over £465 for church funds. Having the event at lunchtime seemed to meet with approval as over 100 people enjoyed Colin King's fresh spit roasted pork with the excellent selection of accompanying salads that we've all come to appreciate.

HARVEST CELEBRATIONS

Saturday 22 September saw 45 people sitting down to cottage or fish pie followed by fruit crumble and custard, coffee and mints, for the annual Harvest Supper. Although this is not a fundraising event a small profit was made. The Harvest Thanksgiving Service on Sunday evening received gifts of produce and tinned food which are donated to the Hope Centre in Northampton (previously known as the Soup Kitchen). They provide meals for the homeless in Northampton all year round based almost entirely on gifts from churches and schools at harvest time.

PEOPLE

Many congratulations to Anthony Jackson who has overcome difficult health problems to win a place at the University of Glamorgan to study law. We wish him every success. Who will deliver the papers now?

Annabel and Ed Speir now have a delightful daughter, Poppy Alexandra, born on 14 August and weighing in at a healthy 7½ lbs. And, bless her, she waited until the major building work on their home, Yew Tree Cottage, was finished.



Miss Anne Lewis has decided to leave her home of 37 years and move to Towcester for the time being. Hopefully she will come back to join in village events from time to time.

Ian Kingston and Karen Bowman have moved in to 22, Wappenham Road (the new house half way up the hill), along with Jake who is 7 and Felicity who is 4. They have not come far, from Pattishall. Ian works in Northampton and has lived most of his life in the area, having played rugby for Towcestrians.

DISABILITY LIVING AND ATTENDANCE ALLOWANCES

The Disability sub-group of South Northamptonshire Council is keen to improve the level of benefit take up across the district for those who are entitled. An outline of the criteria for each follows; please do enquire if you think your circumstances may entitle you to either of these tax-free benefits.

Disability Living Allowance is for children and adults who need help with personal care or have walking difficulties because they are physically or mentally disabled.

You may be entitled to Disability Living Allowance if you have a physical or mental disability, or both; your disability is severe enough for you to need help caring for yourself, or you have walking difficulties, or both; you

are under 65 when you claim, whether or not you work - it is unaffected by income or savings.

Attendance Allowance is for people aged 65 or over who need help with personal care because they are physically or mentally disabled. It is not usually affected by any savings or income you may have and how much you get depends on how much your disability affects you. There are two rates of Attendance Allowance:

* *Higher rate* = £64.50 per week (if you need help or supervision throughout the day and during the night.)

* *Lower rate* = £43.15 per week (if you need help or supervision frequently throughout the day only, or during the night only.)

Some examples of needs are help with washing, getting in or out of the bath or shower, dressing, eating, getting to and using the toilet, communicating your needs, or needing someone to keep an eye on your medical condition or diet. You can get Attendance Allowance even if you live alone. You will not usually need a medical examination when you claim for Attendance Allowance.

But with both allowances it's best to check out the details, either by ordering a claim pack from the Benefits Enquiry Line on 0800 88 22 00; or probably more user-friendly is to contact the Welfare Rights Service on 01604 636112 for further details, or to make an appointment at Towcester Volunteer Centre on 01327 358264.

NEWS FROM THE NEW INN

As usual at this time of year, Jane and Robbie have organised a variety of events to brighten up the longer winter evenings. On Saturday 13 October make up a team of four and enter the free general knowledge quiz. Then on Saturday 27th there's a trip to Stratford races: limited places at £30 per person which includes return coach, entry to the races and a drink on your return to the pub. The coach leaves at about 10.30am.

Friday 2 November sees the return of The Montanas, a band playing a variety of styles, and called back by popular demand (so they must be good!). Bonfire night is being celebrated on Saturday 3 November with a fireworks party but minus the bonfire; 7.30 onwards. Craig will provide the music and Jane will warm you up with soup and crusty bread when you retreat inside.

After the Saturday afternoon whist on 10 November, 3 - 4 hours of murder mystery evening is being put on following the great success of the previous

one. This one is 'The Brie, The Bullet and the Black Cat' – very mysterious. Again there are limited places at £15 per person to include a 3-course meal.

And it's not long before Christmas is upon us, with the special lunch and dinner menu starting from Tuesday 27 November: £14.99 for four courses. Meanwhile the Tuesday to Saturday 2-course meal for £6 is still on offer.

The Darts team has just come to the end of its season, and they did as well as last year – finishing a spirited bottom of the league. The Skittles team has just started its winter campaign and has from now until May to shine. Because there are more players than can be accommodated in the team, Jane is planning to arrange some friendly matches, so if anyone else fancies a game let her know.

For more information on any of the above call Jane or Robbie on 857306, or pop in to the pub.

TALES FROM THE PAST

Rob Butler and his wife Wendy recently visited Abthorpe during a trip from Australia to research his family history, particularly Welshman the Rev Pryce Jones who served as parish priest here for 38 years between 1793 and 1831. There are two relevant plaques in the church, one commemorating Pryce Jones's service to the parish – one of very few

Abthorpe priests so remembered, which may indicate he found a place in local hearts – the other in remembrance of his eldest daughter Sarah who died in 1839 at the age of 42 years. However, his ministry didn't go quite as smoothly as may have been expected: in 1816 he was in Northampton prison for debt. His petition to the court for the relief of insolvent debtors was heard in January 1817, and was probably successful as he returned to Abthorpe to continue his work for the church. Further research revealed in the genteel language of the history of the Mrs Jane Leeson Charity that the Rev Price Jones for many years before his death was utterly incapable of teaching (one of his duties) having fallen into habits of intemperance and became involved in pecuniary difficulties which obliged him to absent himself for a time from his living. An old man was employed by the parish to teach a few children in the school house and Price Jones's salary was withheld accordingly for upwards of ten years.

During the afternoons of whist we do a little reminiscing about the more recent past in the village. The winter of 1947 was unforgettable for its harshness, and memories of the postman walking out from Towcester to make his deliveries along the tops of the hedgerows because the snow was so deep show a devotion to duty

which it would be difficult to imagine today.

And a little tale of my own: during demolition work within part of our house the backs of two panels revealed they were put up by Bill Cleaver of Sulgrave in 1939. On one he had drawn a self-portrait with characteristics which projected his sense of humour across the years. Does anyone remember Bill?

Jill Tolson, 857320

So – HELP WANTED

Abthorpe has changed much over the last 50-odd years and it would be so good to capture some of the stories of how life used to be in our lovely village. The tales that come out from the older Abthorpians are a joy – and most of them would be publishable! Does anyone (or preferably several people) have the time and inclination to capture some of these memories so that we can share them with the newer residents who may be fascinated in how life used to be lived here? Please call Jill on 857320. Thanks.

CALLING ALL WIND MUSICIANS

The acronym NOW is already familiar as Northamptonshire on Wheels (providing transport for youngsters to work or training), but it also stands for Northamptonshire Orchestral Winds, a relatively new touring wind orchestra. There are three bands:

Beginner, Training and Main, and the starting point is a free workshop for complete beginners, those who have played for only a short time, and those who are rusty, so a good opportunity for anyone of any level who wants to play in a band. They seem to have some good connections as the main band will be playing at Carnegie Hall next March. See www.now4band.co.uk for full details.

RURAL REACH PROJECT

South Northants Volunteer Bureau has arranged a major free event at Towcester Racecourse on 17 October, 2.00 – 8.00pm, which brings together over 25 specialist agencies that offer support to voluntary groups. It will be of benefit to anyone in the voluntary and community sector, right down to the smallest village play group. This is a good opportunity to meet experts in the field and to attend the 'How to ...' workshops. For example there will be information on fundraising, finance, governance, ICT, volunteering, the launch of the Voluntary and Community Sector forum and the free professional support available through ProHelp. Representatives from NCC and SNC will explain the funding and support they can offer groups.

For further details including timetable www.snvb.org.uk or call SNVB on 01327 358264.

SUMMER PICNIC

During a lull in what seemed to be incessant rain during the earlier part of the summer, over 30 children and parents gathered on the village green for what has now become their annual picnic, followed by informal games.



THE BIG DRAW

This is a national initiative to encourage people to draw. Various activities are planned throughout October, including one at Brackley Farmers' Market on Saturday 20th between 10.30am and 1.30pm. Open to people of all abilities, including those who cannot draw, this workshop will be lead by artist Sonia Hawes and costs £6. Book on 01327 322334. Visitors to Sulgrave Manor in September and October will be encouraged to draw themselves on a large apple shape to be displayed at the Manor's apple weekend on 13/14 October. Details on 01295 760205 or www.sulgravemanor.org.uk.

South Northants Council publishes a regular newsletter on arts in the area. Copies from Sue Carverhill on 01327 322334 or download from www.southnorthants.gov.uk.

HEALTH SERVICE COMPLAINTS

Do you feel that you have not had the service you expect from the NHS and want to complain? The Independent Complaints Advocacy Service (ICAS) is a statutory service which supports patients and carers who wish to pursue complaints. It is free, independent and confidential and will support you to find your way through the complexities of the system, even coming to meetings with you. If you feel you could benefit from their advice, call 0845 650 0088.

ROAD REPAIRS

Atkins, who carry out road repairs on behalf of the County Council, has been testing a new emergency repair method with the aim of achieving a permanent repair first time round. So far the trial has been successful, with the number

of follow-on complaints being reduced. So let's see how long the recent patching done in the village lasts.

SUPPORT AND FRIENDSHIP FOR FAMILIES

Volunteers with parenting experience are being called upon to help Home-Start Daventry & South Northants, which provides friendly assistance to families with children under the age of five who are finding life difficult.

This is a rural scheme covering villages to the south and west of the county as well as the towns of Daventry, Towcester and Brackley.

People can get involved in a variety of ways from supporting a family with a disabled child, talking to a mother with post natal depression or playing with the children. The charity is appealing for people of all ages and backgrounds who can spare two or three hours a week.

A course of preparation for new volunteers is due to start this autumn. For more details call Mary or Carol on 01327 703434.

FUTURE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

For those of you who are interested in such matters, a joint strategy (mmm, we all blanch at yet another 'strategy') is in its early days of planning between Daventry, Northampton and SN Councils. It will address development over the next

20 years. The first discussion paper has been published with responses due by 31 October. Details are on www.westnorthamptonshirejpu.org, including the itinerary for a travelling exhibition.

And on local council matters, Northamptonshire County Council has a new Chief Executive, Katherine Kerswell. To launch her tenure, Ms Kerswell has published the County Council's 'Report to the People' with a request for your views on what you like most and least about the county and what sort of place you would like to see it become. Email: consult@northamptonshire.gov.uk.

WAPPENHAM WEBSITE

We are rightly proud of our village website, but you may also be interested in browsing through Wappenham's site which has historical facts and other information about the village:

www.northantsvillages.org.uk/wappenham.

USEFUL LOCAL WEBSITE

www.aboutmyarea.co.uk/nn12 aims to display local news and lots of other information.

And just a reminder.... If you want to look back over previous items in Abtalk, the archive is on the website under the News section www.abthorpe.net/newsletters.htm.

EVENTS*Saturday 13 October*

Whist at the New Inn. 2pm, tea and home-made cake, 50p

Quiz at the New Inn. Free entry, teams of up to 4 people

Wednesday 17 October

Exhibitions, workshops, advice for voluntary and community groups,
Towcester Racecourse, 2.00 - 8.00

Saturday 27 October

Trip to Stratford Races. Coach leaves New Inn at 10.30am, £30

Friday 2 November

The Montanas. The New Inn

Saturday 3 November

Firework party for bonfire night. The New Inn

Monday 5 November

Parish Council meeting, 7.45pm at the Old School

Saturday 10 November

Whist at the New Inn. 2pm, tea and home-made cake, 50p

Murder Mystery evening at The New Inn. £15 including 3-course meal

Sunday 11 November

Area British Legion Remembrance service, Abthorpe War Memorial at
10.55am and after in church

Saturday 8 December

Whist at the New Inn. 2pm, tea and home-made cake, 50p

Thursday 13 December

Christmas lunch for the older residents, The New Inn

Saturday 15 December

Carols on the Green at 5.00pm

Sunday 23 December

Carol Service at St John the Baptist, 4.00pm

Christmas Day

Holy Communion at 9.00am