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News from Abthorpe

September 2008

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

At this year's Parish Meeting held on 19 May some interesting reports were heard from County Councillor Ben Smith and PC Horner:

Ben Smith outlined plans for enhancing waste disposal. To increase the percentage recycled, it is hoped to introduce weekly collections of kitchen waste next year. This will be stored in special containers which will be supplied and which can be kept in your kitchen. Some reservation was expressed at the meeting about how this storage will work in practice, so we wait with interest to see how the scheme is implemented.

PC Horner reported that crime has halved in Abthorpe over the previous year, down to four (a real hotspot). All were thefts. The police had to come to the village on one occasion when cold callers were suspected of causing a nuisance to older residents, plus one visit to operate a speed camera. In response to a question about village signs stating that cold callers were not allowed, PC Horner said that erecting these signs involved some paperwork. He also doubted if they had any legal validity, but would find out more information.

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Ben Smith gave an outline of the Towcester Vale Development proposals. Most interest was shown in the proposed road access, new bypass and congestion on the existing road. It appears that, contrary to statements made at a public meeting in Towcester earlier this year, 'hamburger' junctions are still being considered (see separate item on the latest information on this junction). Further examination of the various papers supporting the planning application show that the Highways Agency is not happy with the proposals. Their consultants have stated that the hamburger junctions will not have sufficient space for stacking turning vehicles. However, the Highways Agency appears to want any improvements to the A43 to be paid for by the Towcester Vale development, ignoring the fact that at present there is serious congestion at the A5/A43 roundabout as well as delay at the Abthorpe roundabout. The only thing that appears to be clear is that there is no clear plan for Towcester Vale and a lot of discussion yet to take place.

ABTHORPE MILLENNIUM CELEBRATION CD

Many of you will remember the fascinating CD cataloguing the history of Abthorpe in pictures, sound and documents which was put together by a group who spent many hours sifting through information

donated by villagers. One was given to every household in the village but some spare copies remained and were recently offered free to those interested. However, they were snapped up so quickly that additional copies are being produced. So if you are new to the village and would like this historical treasure trove to browse at home please contact John Riches: john.riches@abthorpe.net.

THE NEW INN IS OPEN AGAIN

Following Jane and Robbie Costall's departure on 10 July the pub underwent complete redecoration and refurbishment before being re-opened by the new tenants, Barbara and Rob Smith on 7 August. It was meant to be a quiet dry-run for the busy days to come. However, word travels swiftly in this village and the pub was soon packed. And so it has continued. The attraction of an invitation to a complimentary BBQ on the Saturday saw about 300 people head in that direction - far more than the adult population of the village.

Barabara and Rob are well known Slapton farmers who also have a thriving bed and breakfast business alongside their pedigree Texel sheep and Friesian cattle. They are operating the pub as a joint venture with their daughter Sam who is becoming a familiar face behind the bar. The plan is to provide a restaurant for their guests who can wander (or wade) across the fields

and be transported back to their accommodation. Chef Jason Gannon is sourcing as many local ingredients as possible including beef, pork and lamb from their own farm. Jason has impressive credentials as a chef, having come second representing Ireland in an international competition. Already the success of this venture is evident and the restaurant can be recommended.

And the free wireless broadband connection is again up and running.

TOWCESTER BYPASS

It's back to hamburgers! The statement in the last issue that there would be no improvements to the existing roundabouts on the A43 was based on information given at a public meeting in Towcester, when it was stated that hamburger roundabouts

do not work. Whatever the truth in the latter, the current plans for the A5 Towcester bypass and the A43 improvements do include hamburger junctions at both the Abthorpe and Tove (A5) roundabouts. Just as a reminder, hamburger junctions are arranged so that the main traffic, in this case on the A43, goes straight through what is otherwise an roundabout, with traffic lights to control both the main and the subsidiary flows.

TELEPHONE KIOSK

The removal of the kiosk is being handled as a planning application through the District Council. The Parish Council has no objection to the removal of the telephone service but prefers the box to be retained. The District Council has agreed and have refused permission so ways of taking over the box, without telephone service, are now being explored. We may be left to paint and maintain it.



June in Abthorpe



September in Abthorpe

NEWS FROM ST JOHN'S CHURCH

Anna Lawson and Julia Ford-Cordes from Abthorpe were confirmed, along with 15 other candidates on 22 June. A packed congregation participated in the service led by the Rt Revd Frank White, Bishop of Brixworth, accompanied by the joint choirs of Silverstone and Whittlebury churches in a beautifully decorated church. After the service the traditional refreshments of tea and home made cakes were served in the Old School.

On 3 August the old English festival of Lammastide was revived by Canon Bridget Smith. It commemorates the first fruits of the grain harvest in the form of an offering of newly baked bread, sampled by the congregation at the end of the service. During the service Barry Haycock carried a sheaf of his newly gathered wheat to the communion table. The Venerable Christine Allsopp, Archdeacon of Northampton, was the guest preacher.

The winner of the May tote was Mrs Webster from Slapton Lodge who won £257.50. Jan Miles scooped the jackpot in June and David Darling in July. In August Bernie Herriot won £252.50.

DO YOU ENJOY FOOTBALL?

Northampton Town Football Club is offering ticket vouchers to new residents as a way of developing links with the local community. Contact Samantha Malin on 01604 683760 or email samantha.malin@ntfc.tv.

NEW BUS SERVICES

Earlier this year proposals for a regular bus service from Towcester to Abthorpe and surrounding villages were circulated for comment. It appears that these will not be implemented. The County Council has said that arrangements for bus stops, to the required standard, for new services starting in September are in hand. As nothing has appeared in our village it is assumed that there will be no new bus service. However, maybe this is no bad thing.....

..... PLANNING YOUR JOURNEY

Keith Fenwick

Now that I have my nice new bus pass, valid for local buses throughout the England, I wanted to see what I could do with it. The first opportunity was getting me to and from central London, where I was going to spend three nights at a conference. Following the details which came with the bus pass got me to the government's travel planner at <http://directgov.transportdirect.info/Web2>. Now this can only be set to public transport or car; it cannot be set to give journeys which are only valid by local bus services. However, I persevered.

PEOPLE

FRED BALDERSON : 1921 – 2008

An appreciation by Keith Fenwick

Fred Balderson had lived in the village for so many years that he was considered a local. Born in Fosters Booth in 1921, he married a local girl, Rene, in 1944. After army service he came to live in the village and worked at Groom & Tattershall's in Towcester for 47 years until his retirement, in the meantime bringing up two sons, Robert and Paul. He took an active part in village life and was a member of the parish council for many years, serving as chairman.



Fred retired in 1982 but continued to be active. He enjoyed nothing better than wandering the fields in search of rabbits in the days when owning a shotgun was much easier. My father must have said the right thing as one night when he was staying here there was a knock on the door; there was Fred holding a freshly shot hare. Fortunately my father knew how to skin and prepare it for cooking – it was very tasty.

Fred continued to enjoy his gardening in later years and had a wide circle of friends. This was reflected by the full church for his funeral service. Our sympathies go to Rene, Robert, Paul and their families.

A warm welcome to Jusna Noor-Begum who has moved into 2 School Lane. Jusna is a barrister by profession. And also to Mary Final and her family at 2 Stanhill Row.

Many of you will remember David Pont who has received public acknowledgement of his acting skills since the family moved to Canada. In June David took part in *The True Adventures of Robin Hood*, described as a 'surreal farce', and the following extract from the press review has made his parents, Simon and Laura, justifiably proud of David, who is taking up a place at York University, Toronto, to study drama:

"However, the actor who truly floored me was David Pont as Sizeable Johanna. Not only has he the mark of a true actor with his courage to take a drag act in a young production, but he manages to come off as convincingly feminine under the act's circumstances. Pont is the first among equals in this promising company to be able to perform with that kind of skill."

Getting to London was simple, as I could get a bus from Towcester to Milton Keynes and the train from there. But I wanted to come back on Sunday and gave the starting time as noon from London Euston. The result dumbfounded me. From Euston the route involved bus to Baker Street, walk to Lisson Grove for a bus to Luton Airport, then another bus to Milton Keynes. It was now 3.05pm. My next bus left at 11.40pm and took me to Coventry, followed after a one hour wait for a bus to East Midlands Airport, then a bus to Loughborough arrive 3.14am, a walk to the coach stop, then a bus to Northampton, arriving at 5.05am, in plenty of time for the 5.55am bus to Towcester which was reached at 6.25am.

The next option was an easier journey, leaving London the following morning at 6.20am and reaching Towcester at 8.20am.

I remember hearing about this journey planner when it was first introduced, at a not inconsiderable expense to the taxpayer. It seems that it can still come up with some far-fetched journeys.

Now the challenge is to find the most ridiculous journey using this site – no prizes but good entertainment for us all.

DOG CONTROL ORDERS

South Northants Council is conducting consultation until Tuesday 30 September 2008 on proposed new

laws affecting dog owners. These include cleaning up when a dog has fouled, keeping dogs on a lead in some areas, including footpaths, verges and footways, keeping dogs out of some areas and putting a dog on a lead when directed to do so by an official. It is recognised that dogs need free exercise, but it is not clear whether 'footpaths' refer to those over fields or just the ones at the roadside. Anyone can comment on these proposals before the deadline. Further details can be found on www.southnorthants.gov.uk or you can obtain a copy by calling 01327 322 322.

BUCKNELL'S WOOD

The Forestry Commission has not listened to complaints over the closure of the car park from either Abthorpe or Silverstone parish councils and has simply refused to reconsider its decision. It is devoting its resources to Hazelborough Woods, where there is a waymarked trail. There are outline plans for "further recreation infrastructure investment" in that woodland. The Forestry Commission also claims that the existing car park at Bucknell's Wood requires "regular and costly maintenance for what in all honesty is not a huge amount of use when compared to other sites". One wonders if any Forestry Commission manager has visited the place. It is particularly noticeable this year that

many of the pathways in Bucknalls are becoming overgrown due to lack of maintenance and in not many years will be impassable.

ROBERT SNELSON'S FAMILY

You may remember that in December's issue last year we mentioned the visit of Robert Snelson to his family's roots here in the village. That piece was picked up by Yvonne Shuttleworth who has been trying to find information about the Snelson family, of which she is part. We were therefore able to put her in touch with Rob Snelson who now lives in St Neots. Yvonne wrote:

"I live in Padbury, Buckinghamshire, but I am originally from South Africa. My 80 year old mum who lives in Johannesburg has often spoken warmly and fondly of her 'Uncle Tom Snelson', because he taught her the most beautiful Irish and English folk songs when she was a child. She remembers every song to this day, and has always wondered where in Britain he came from. He was married to Annie Catherina Collen, her mother's sister. This is definitely the Thomas Snelson you refer to because I remember visiting Violet, his daughter in the seventies and I

know her siblings were Ivy, Harold and Arthur. We have lost contact with all the family but I shall be sending this information to my mother who will be equally delighted to learn about Tom's life story."

It's fascinating how the Internet has made so much information available, and that our small newsletter has a life beyond Athorpe.

VILLAGE FUND NEWS

An outing and lunch organised by the Village Fund Group in June was a huge success. A convoy of cars chose a country route to the National Herb Centre in Warwickshire, not far from Banbury. After looking around the wonderful herb display, the senior citizens of the village enjoyed lunch in the centre's restaurant. Everyone agreed that it was an excellent day



Audrey Dancer, Francesca Wright and Barbara Rush at the Herb Centre

out and hoped that the organisers, Jan Miles and June Willsher, would arrange another trip in the not too distant future.

The fun day planned for 6 September became another of many casualties of our 'summer'. However, the Fund committee hopes to hold another event in the Old School before Christmas.

The Fund's AGM will be held on 12 November in the Old School and everyone is invited to participate. The Chair and Secretary will be standing down after four years so now is the time to think about whether you would be prepared to stand so that social events can continue to thrive in the village.

TOWCESTER YOUTH COFFEE SHOP

Again back in June, Rona and Dave Cambray hosted their 5th annual Twilight Party for around 120 family, friends and neighbours in the lovely garden of their home to raise money principally for the Towcester Youth Coffee Shop. Dave has been involved with the project, a drop-in-centre for Towcester 10 – 18 year olds, since its inception 19 years ago. Spit roasted pork and lamb, and entertainment from Irish folk singer Brendan, completed a lovely day

which raised around £1,000.

You may also have noticed that the Coffee Shop is one of the three charities being supported by



Rona and Dave Cambray

Waitrose with their token scheme. Make lots of visits to Waitrose and drop yours in the appropriate slot to support the splendid work that Dave and his colleagues do for this project.

A MUCH-LOVED RECIPE

Many of you will have enjoyed the rice salad that Richard Tomalin regularly produces for village events. To make up for missing it at this year's fun day, he has agreed to share with us his own variation of a commercial recipe to add to our culinary repertoires.

Curried Rice Salad (serves 4)

250 g/9oz long grain rice
2 tbsp oil

1 onion, chopped
 2 peppers, chopped
 2 tbsp mild curry powder
 375 ml/13 fl oz water
 Salt
 350 g/12 oz can sweetcorn,
 drained
 100 g/4 oz raisins
 75-100 g/ 3-4 oz salted peanuts
 (cashews or almonds)
 Black pepper

Heat the oil in a medium-sized, heavy-based saucepan. Fry the onion and pepper over a medium heat for 3 minutes until soft. Add the curry powder and cook for 1 minute, stirring constantly. Add the rice and cook for 1 minute, again stirring. Add water and $\frac{3}{4}$ tspn salt, bring to the boil and stir once. Cover the pan, lower the heat and simmer gently (check after 15 – 20 minutes). Turn off heat and leave to stand, covered, for 5 minutes. Turn rice into a serving dish, leave to cool to room temperature, then fold in corn, raisins, peanuts and black pepper (peanuts will add sufficient salt).

You can turn it into a main supper by adding cooked chicken, pork, ham or prawns.

DIAL-A-WHEELCHAIR

Wheelchairs and other equipment are available from the British Red Cross on short-term loan (up to 8 weeks) subject to availability. For further details contact Dial-a-

Wheelchair in Northampton on 016094 678 500 between 10am and 4pm, Monday to Friday.

DISABILITY INFORMATION

An official from the Department for Work and Pensions and a representative from Ability Northants will be available at Towcester Library on 7th October to give advice to anyone with a disability or carer related problems, including benefits.

CRIME PREVENTION PRODUCTS

Although Abthorpe is a very safe area in which to live (see our 50% reduction in the crime rate above!), crime prevention is always worth considering. Northamptonshire's Crime Prevention Officer Kate Wright has selected a number of products designed to prevent crimes such as distraction burglaries and to improve handbag security, personal safety and vehicle security. Below is a sample selection; please contact Kate on 08453 700700 ext. 8585 for more information.

- ◆ Mini handbag alarm which clips onto and is activated if your purse is snatched - £2
- ◆ Personal safety alarms which can be attached to a handbag as a charm (£2.50) or worn on the wrist (£4.00) - £5
- ◆ Disklok steering wheel lock: apparently this is one of the best steering locks on the market at a

special low price from £35

- ◆ Door viewer intercom: a spy hole with an intercom attached - £10
- ◆ Store small items in an authentic-looking can or book - £3 to £4
- ◆ A PIR (movement sensor) shed alarm also for garages, outbuildings and caravans with remote key fob

Apparently number plate theft is also prevalent with 253 offences recorded in the year to June 2008. You may want therefore to consider investing in a theft resistant number plate (more details www.secureplate.com) or replace existing screws in your number plates with non-return screws to prevent its removal.

SPEEDWATCH

The Parish Council has managed to secure the cameras of the Speedwatch project back in the village. For obvious reasons no more will be said for now, but more on how it went will be included next time.

LET'S GO DOWN TO THE WOODS

Do you fancy a night camping in a wood? Despite their neglect of Bucknell Woods, come good news from the Forestry Commission, who has constructed, with voluntary help, three shelters in Fineshade Wood, north of Corby, and three in Fermyn Wood, near Brigstock. It is expected that they will be mainly of interest to youth groups, but any other organisation can make use of them. Only outline information has been provided so far, but for more information contact the Commission on 01780 444920.

STOWE HOUSE

Although we do not promote advertising in the strictest sense, if pieces of local interest come our way we are happy to pass these on. One such is this brief history of Stowe House which may not be familiar to all villagers. Stowe is a local landmark which, like our church, we would like to see preserved.

Known in its heyday as Stowe Palace, the house was designed as the principal temple in the renowned landscape gardens, echoing the Greek and Roman styles during the 18th century. Vanburgh, Kent, Adam, Gibbs, Valdre and Soane have all made their mark at Stowe, creating 'the largest, most



completely realised, private neo-classical building in the world.'

Stowe Palace was almost continuously rebuilt and refurbished by the Temple-Grenville family in an attempt to match their ever-growing political ambitions. From the glory days of their connections with the Pitts to the visit of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert in 1845, the expensive tastes of the 2nd Duke of Buckingham and Chandos led to near bankruptcy from which the family never really recovered.

Rescued from certain destruction by the creation of Stowe School in 1923, the House has been a centre of learning for over 80 years, inspiring many pupils with a love of art and architecture. In 1997 Stowe House Preservation Trust was created to raise funds for, and to manage, a six-phase restoration plan. The first two phases were completed by 2005 and the fundraising continues. The aim is to restore the 18th century masterpiece for which it was once famed.

The House is open to the public mainly in the school holidays plus during term time for 2pm tours. For details of opening and admission prices please check the website www.shpt.org or phone the 24-hour information line on 01280 818166.

VILLAGERS AT WORK -

AN OCCASIONAL LOOK AT WHAT OUR NEIGHBOURS DO FOR A LIVING

Nick Wright joined World Vision, an international Christian charity based in Milton Keynes, when he moved to Brackley Lane with Francesca and their two daughters. Nick gives this account of his working life over the last three years.

"Working for an international charity can be a stimulating and challenging experience. I had already worked for 20 years or so in similar organisations but this was a step change in my career and my first experience of working in a truly global organisation – a very steep learning curve. Our work as an organisation focuses on advocacy, development and relief. My job as an organisation development specialist is to help leaders, staff and teams work together in an insightful, skilful and well-coordinated way so that, together, we achieve the best possible results for those living in poverty and injustice.

"Some weeks ago I was involved in running an international learning event for World Vision staff from over 50 countries around the world. It was humbling to hear so many first-hand accounts of war, poverty and insecurity from participants and the amazing courage and commitment of those who work in live and work in such conditions. I spent time with an older man from Ethiopia who only owns two shirts and would give one away if he found

someone who needed it; a young woman from Bosnia whose father was murdered and whose best friend was shot dead in front of her by a sniper at the age of 14; a woman from South Africa who felt afraid to return to her room in the dark because she was so used to living under threat of violence. I left the event feeling moved and inspired by the example of those I encountered and their stories of perseverance and transformation in the midst of such incredibly difficult circumstances.

"I feel privileged to be part of an

organisation that's seeking to bring about real and positive change alongside others in the world. Our own small efforts combined really can add up to something worthwhile in people's lives and that's what gives me encouragement and hope. Visit www.worldvision.org.uk to see more of the work of this and similar agencies such as Tearfund, Christian Aid, Oxfam, Action Aid or Save the Children. They can provide interesting information and analysis on important global issues as well as creative opportunities to get involved."

EVENTS

Sunday 28 September

Harvest Worship, 11.00am, followed by Harvest lunch in the Old School

Sunday 5 October

Fiori Musicali Chamber Ensemble with James Bowman (countertenor), Jane Downer (oboe), at St Mary the Virgin, Fawsley, 7.00 - www.fiori-musicali.com

Sunday 26 October (2.00am)

Clocks go back

Wednesday 12 November

Village Fund Committee AGM, 7.30 in the Old School

Sunday 7 December

Cantatas by Candlelight - Fiori Musicali Chamber Orchestra with Grace Davidson (soprano), St Lawrence Church, Towcester, 7.30 - www.fiori-musicali.com

Saturday 13 December

Christingle Service - 5.00pm - jointly organised with the Village Fund

Sunday 21 December

Carol Service - 4.00pm

Christmas Day

Holy Communion - 9.00am