

# ABTALK

A photograph of a village street. On the left is a two-story stone building with a grey roof and several chimneys. On the right is a smaller stone building with a gabled roof and a small tower. The street is paved and there are trees and a utility pole in the background.

*News from Abthorpe*

*April 2011*

## **PARISH COUNCIL**

The four-yearly elections to the Parish Council have just taken place. With only four valid nominations and a fifth one that was rejected on technical grounds, we are at least two members short of full strength. Despite advance notice that the elections were coming, nobody came forward to express interest in joining. Now you may feel that the Parish Council does very little, but what it does do is, I believe, of benefit to everyone. With an even more active Council, still more could be done.

To start with the Council owns the village green. It also provides street lighting and funds this magazine, *Abtalk*. The Parish Council also acts as a local voice in the increasingly complicated world of local government. It gives us some say in how the village develops. If the Council faded away due to lack of support, its powers would be taken on by the District Council, who would not maintain the village green in the way we do now and would likely just turn off the lights.

The Annual Parish Meeting is on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> May in the Old School, starting at 7.45pm, so if you care about your village come along and find out

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what has been happening. If you are interested in getting involved, please speak up. The meeting will also hear reports from various organisations in the village, including the Old School, Church, Village Fund, together with the local schools and our County and District Councillors.

Many will remember the plans for Affordable Housing which were exhibited last year. That site is no longer available, but a proposal has now been put forward to build nine homes on the adjacent site nearer to Wappenham Road. The plans were presented to the Parish Council at its last meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> April. While the layout of the homes and their appearance seems reasonable, only 14 car parking spaces are provided, against 20 for 10 homes in the previous proposal. The Parish Council feels very strongly that each home must have at least two spaces and will be pressing this case. The village is already awash with cars. For a village such as ours, with no public transport, to apply national guidelines of 1.5 spaces per house is not tenable. It is hoped that the new plans will on display on 23<sup>rd</sup> May, before the Parish Meeting, so please come along and give your views. If you share our concerns about inadequate car parking, please make that known.

The Parish Council will report on its work during the last year. Much

of it has been routine. We have continued to press for improvements to the signposting at the crossroads on the Towcester side of the village in view of the fatal accident there in November 2009; at least the white lines have been repainted. Some of the overhead electricity wires are being put underground and we have had to install two new street lights as a result. We are still waiting for this work to be completed. The village green has been kept cut and tidy by the band of volunteers. The notice board and telephone kiosk have been refurbished. All fairly mundane, but they do contribute to maintaining a pleasant environment.

The Meeting should be attended by our County Councillor, Ben Smith. Although our limited bus service is only used by a few people in the village, for them it is their only way of getting about independently. The County Council's plans as a result of budget cuts to withdraw all rural bus subsidies will cause hardship. An alternative has been promised, but so far nothing concrete has been proposed. Nor does there seem to be any consultation on the subject. The Parish Meeting will be an opportunity to quiz Ben Smith on this subject.

### **SPEEDWATCH**

Speeding through the village has been of concern for many years so we have actively participated

in Speedwatch, the scheme where volunteers operate a police speed gun and record the speeds of passing traffic. It is remarkable what the sight of anyone standing in a high-visibility jacket does - you can see the dust rising from quickly applied brakes. Unfortunately Speedwatch has fallen victim to County Council spending cuts so will not operate this year, but we will continue to press for periodic checks by the police.

### **OLD SCHOOL FUNDRAISING - OFF TO A GOOD START**

In the last issue Julie Dyckhoff, Chair of the Old School Committee, explained the need to raise funds for the refurbishment of the kitchen and toilets. The sell-out quiz on 2<sup>nd</sup> April proved an excellent start, making

£1,083.04 to get the ball rolling. But more importantly it was an enjoyable evening, at least if gauged by the noise levels and banter. 5+2 won the first prize, but it seemed that even the losing team were equally pleased with their decorated wooden spoons.

Filling the piggy bank continued with a coffee morning and bring and buy on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> April at the home of Janet Dancer in Wappenham Road. It's anticipated that this will be followed by others as they are a nice opportunity for a chat over tea and homemade cake.

Hopefully a good many of you are already potting up the spare plants you've split while tidying up the garden during the recent



*Glena Holton, Monica Plant and Sheila Andrews enjoy a joke at the coffee morning on April 26th.*

lovely weather. On Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> May give the garden centres a miss and buy some plants for your garden at the Plant Sale - on the Green or Old School depending on the weather - from 11.00 to 1.00: a good opportunity to add different plants to your stock inexpensively, and enjoy a convivial cup of tea and slice of cake.

There are tentative plans to join with the church and resurrect the village fete. If this comes to fruition it will be on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> June. No doubt more information will circulate nearer the time.

### **POPPY APPEAL**

Although it seems a long time ago, the results of the Poppy Appeal in November came too late for the last issue. Janet Dancer regularly collects in Abthorpe and this year the generous donations totalled £358.70.

### **CHURCH NEWS**

The Rev'd Paul McLeod presided recently at the annual two meetings for parishioners: the first to elect churchwardens for the coming year, the two vacancies for which were filled by David Hughes and Richard Tomalin, and the Annual Parochial Church Meeting.

The church wardens and the various officers of the church reported how they had fulfilled their

duties throughout the year. In his report the Rev'd Paul who has only been with us since November 2010 reminded everyone that the church is not his church - but our church. He posed the question: how was the church going to encourage more people to join? How can we engage with children and young people from our community and how can we ensure that there is an ongoing ministry of care for all?

As Treasurer Alison Robbins summarised her financial report by paying tribute to the generosity and support of the village which has enabled the church building to be kept in a very good state of repair so that it can provide a fitting setting for services of all kinds.

Barbara Malcomson reporting on the work of the Parochial Church Council outlined the efforts that had been made during the interregnum before the Rev'd Paul joined us. She emphasised the work done by Richard Tomalin, the sole church warden during that time, and offered thanks on behalf of everyone.

Members of the PCC for the following year were elected: Angela Darling, Barbara Malcomson, Alison Robbins and Francesca Wright.

In July Graham Buckle will be joining the Benefice as a Self Supporting Assistant Curate. He will be Ordained Deacon in Peterborough Cathedral on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> July after

which he will begin his curacy in the Whittlewood Benefice. Graham is in full time employment and so will have limited time to give in active ministry in the Benefice, not unlike many who are in full time employment. As Curate, Graham will be turning his theoretical training into actual active ministry under the guidance of the Rector and, hopefully, with the help and challenge from the parishes in the Benefice. Graham is supported by his wife, Davina, and their family.

The tote winner for February was Val Goodyear who won £217.50. Fortune seems to be smiling on her as she also won the squares game during the Old School quiz. In March Angela Darling won £217.50.

### **GENEALOGICAL SEARCH**

Rob Butler, a retired Royal Australian Navy dentist from Shoreham in the Australian state of Victoria, visited Abthorpe back in July 2007 with his wife Wendy to carry out research into his family's history - particularly of Welshman the Rev'd Pryce Jones who served as parish priest here for 38 years between 1793 and 1831. However, there was a twist to the story when an extract from *The London Gazette* of 21<sup>st</sup> December 1816 was produced which showed that by order of the court for the relief of insolvent debtors the petition of the Rev'd Pryce Jones late

of Abthorpe but now a prisoner of debt confined to His Majesty's goal in Northampton would be heard by justices of the peace on 16<sup>th</sup> January 1817. That was not quite what Rob was expecting although he saw the funny side of it and remarked that Pryce must have got out of the 'slammer' as he died in harness here in Abthorpe.

Sadly, since his visit, Rob's wife Wendy has died but as he was determined to continue genealogical research into his family he revisited Abthorpe last year to report on the most recent results of his research. Readers may not be aware, said Rob, that two successive Vicars of Abthorpe some 200 or more years ago, were brothers. The Rev'd John Jones was parish priest here from 1778 to the time of his early death in 1793 at the age of 41. He was succeeded by his younger brother Pryce. Rob questioned why Pryce Jones was incarcerated in Northampton Goal for a short period at the end of 1816 as a result of being unable to satisfy his creditors. Perhaps, Rob said, there is a strong indication in the wording of an archive related to the history of our village's Leeson Charity:

*"The Rev Price (sic) Jones, who was vicar and master of the school from 1793 was for many years before his death ..... utterly incapable of teaching, having*

*fallen into habits of intemperance and became involved in pecuniary difficulties, which obliged him to absent himself for a time from his living. During this time an old man was employed by the parish to teach a few children in the school house, for which he was paid out of the poor's rates, and in 1819 the trustees, on consideration of these circumstances, resolved to withhold from the vicar his salary of £38 a year as schoolmaster....."*

Rob, who insists he is a direct and temperate descendant, realises that Pryce was not without blemish. He wonders whether the number of memorials to him in the church reflected the love of his family, or were they a testimonial from the then proprietor of The New Inn?

## **CENSUS 2011**

Thinking of genealogists, census records are an important source of information to those searching out their family histories. The Census Act was passed in 1800 in response to concerns that the increasing population would outstrip the food supply. The first census day was on 10<sup>th</sup> March 1801 and revealed a population at that time of 8.87 million, which, added to by seaman, convicts and military personnel excluded from the main census, brought the total to 9.4 million.

But the first effort to collect

national information was when William the Conqueror commissioned The Domesday Book in December 1085 to assess the extent of the land and resources being owned in England at the time and define what taxes he could raise against these to fund his vast army. The book gets its name from the scale of the information it collected. People compared it to the Last Judgement (Doomsday) described in the Bible.

The 2011 Census taken on 27<sup>th</sup> March will only prove useful to those following us in 2111 as the full details are not released for 100 years. Initially the names and addresses are stripped off and only the raw data is turned into statistics of interest to the many organisations from special interest groups to emergency services, businesses, local authorities and central government who use it for planning, resource allocation, targeting investment and research. An accurate census therefore benefits everyone in one way or another.

And a fact to be proud of is that South Northamptonshire had the highest rate of initial returns in the country at 86%, before the census collectors started their follow up work to remind those who had forgotten, or persuade those who were a little reluctant. After another two weeks the return percentage had gone up to 93% with a final outcome expected of 97%.

### **VILLAGE FUND GROUP**

The committee has agreed to concentrate their efforts on supporting the fundraising activities of the Old School Committee for the time being, although they hope to arrange something for the older residents at Christmas.

### **SAFARI SUPPER**

The adventure into the unknown takes place on 4<sup>th</sup> June, and is now full and over-subscribed. The organisers limited the initial outing to 48 places, and are very grateful to all the willing people (as yet unnamed to preserve the mystery of the evening) who have offered to host a course.

A further report on what was discovered on the safari will appear in the next issue.

### **VILLAGE GREEN MOWING**

There have been a number of new people taking up residence in Abthorpe recently who may be unaware that the village takes responsibility for cutting the village green and surrounding grass areas. Following a fundraising period a few years ago a ride-on mower was purchased and volunteers trained, who now cut the grass weekly in the season.

If anyone – new or long established – would like to be included in the rota (your turn comes round about three

times a year) Keith Fenwick would be only too happy to train you up. Give him a call on 857083.

### **NEWS FROM THE NEW INN**

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The good news from the pub is that the restaurant has re-opened. Chef Ben Davies had a successful start when he launched a new menu on Good Friday. Ben comes from Pattishall and has previously been head chef at the Broomhill Hotel at Spratton. The restaurant is open Wednesday to Saturday, 12.00 - 2.30 and 6.00 - 9.30, and for Sunday lunch from 12.00 to 5.30. No food is served on Monday or Tuesday. See [www.newinnatabthorpe.co.uk](http://www.newinnatabthorpe.co.uk) for the menus. We wish Ben well in his enterprise.

The open mic nights continue every other Tuesday. You can find all the details on their own website at [www.newinnabthorpe.co.uk](http://www.newinnabthorpe.co.uk), including forthcoming bands.

On Friday 29<sup>th</sup> April from 2.00pm Bunny will be spit roasting one of Rob's own lambs to celebrate the Royal Wedding, accompanied by music from Lee and Friends.

The darts team is excelling, and are well up in the league. Skittles starts again in May. Players who would like to join either team are most welcome; just talk to Rob.

The monthly charitable quiz on 15<sup>th</sup> February was won by Old Money

who donated the prize fund of £50 to the Starlight Children's Charity, which aims to brighten the lives of seriously and terminally ill children by granting them once-in-a-lifetime wishes and providing entertainment for children in hospitals and hospices throughout the United Kingdom. Following on from that on 29<sup>th</sup> March, 5+1 fought a hard battle against The Unintelligibles pipping them at the post in the last round. The £81 raised went to Mind.

The quizzes continue throughout the summer so come along and join a team for these friendly evenings which have the added benefit of raising money for good causes chosen by the winning team.

### **NEW SURE START CHILDREN'S CENTRE OPENING IN TOWCESTER**

Towcester Sure Start Children's Centre is part of the South Northants Rural Cluster managed by Action for Children. It will be based at Towcester Youth and Community Centre and will be open by the end of April 2011.

The Children's Centre team is now offering a number of outreach activities in and around the Towcester area for families with children under five. Once open, the centre will also run a programme of activities and services within the new centre. More information: [www.southnorthantschildrenscentres.org.uk](http://www.southnorthantschildrenscentres.org.uk).

### **ABTHORPE HERITAGE PROJECT UPDATE**

The final presentation was given on 2<sup>nd</sup> March in Syresham, well attended from all the villages that had taken part.

It was an interesting overview of the information gathered on the historic landscape in our area, with census information showing the changes in rural occupations between 1851 and 1881. Among the little snippets of interest around Abthorpe one showed the coping stones on the wall outside Yew Tree Cottage to have been 'recycled' from the church when it was rebuilt.

The full report will take some time to compile but will eventually be publicly available through the Heritage Resource Centre at The Rockingham Trust.

So enthusiastic was the group of volunteers looking at the ancient hedgerows around Abthorpe that they nobly agreed to continue their work to cover the whole area rather than the selected parts they had originally been asked to do. So you may yet come across people with clipboards peering into hedge bottoms to see if there is evidence of previous layering, continued husbandry or where a boundary has been erased to assist modern farming.

## WAPPENHAM SHOP

Following the closure of the shop last November, there is a move afoot in Wappenham to explore the level of interest in starting a Community Shop. To that end Rupert Fordham organised a village meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> February, attended by Andrea Leadsom, MP for South Northants, Paul Featherstone, chair of the parish council and Robin Prior from Sulgrave's community shop management committee, and over 70 people from Wappenham and surrounding villages including Abthorpe.

Rupert explained that the purpose of the gathering was to talk about the principles of the project rather than the detail and to gauge the appetite of the village for such a venture. There are 251 community shops in the country with 20 more opening each year. The most popular model is community ownership as an Industrial Provident benefit society.

Andrea Leadsom lent her full and active support to the proposal, on a personal level (the old shop was the first place her children were allowed to cycle on their own, and her son has already offered to volunteer), and on a political level as an example of the government's objective of removing barriers to the community helping themselves.

Paul Featherstone's presentation was based on the information offered

to such ventures by the expertise of the Plunkett Foundation. He gave typical facts on starting a community shop: from capital required to length of time to start up. 90% of community shops use regular volunteers, dipping into the array of knowledge and expertise within the community. Average turnover is £133,000 with a net profit of £4,000. 97% of start ups are successful; there have been only 8 closures. Typical goods on offer range from everyday essentials, local produce, post office services to a café.

Robin Prior offered the Sulgrave experience as a case study. Their demographics are similar to Wappenham with a population of 400, 60 children under 14, in 130 houses. The initial feasibility study was discouraging, so was ignored! Premises were found in the shape of an historic building which needed rescuing (many grants available) giving 300 sq ft of selling space. They went with an ambitious plan to open 40 hours over 7 days a week with a paid manager who is also the postmaster. They are now open 57 hours over 7 days, staffed by a manager and 50 volunteers and offer a full range of products. Their most profitable lines are fruit, vegetables and the deli, although the home baked bread does well. Their regret is not having sufficient space for a café area. See [www.sulgrave.org/](http://www.sulgrave.org/)

Shop01.html for more details.

A good management association is crucial and the shop needs to attract people from surrounding communities and overcome the increasing competition from home deliveries. Their current financial state shows cumulative losses since opening of £4,000 offset by donations of £12,000. Their breakeven turnover is £130,000 a year, with the best annual profit being £2,000, the worst a loss of £2,000. There are tax and other reliefs as well as numerous sources of charitable funding to be had.

Their experiment has been a success, not least in the sense of community that it has brought to the village. Housebound residents have only to phone their orders which are delivered, and local people have found a new purpose in life by working in what has become the hub of the community - and a great news exchange. More villagers have got to know each other and the local economy is supported. And it's a saving to residents to buy perishable goods as and when they need them rather than wasting the remnants of the weekly supermarket shop.

Although a success, Robin Prior emphasised the amount of hard work it took initially and continues to require. Running such a business is not an easy option, but it is extremely rewarding for the community.

Following some explanatory questions, those attending the meeting agreed overwhelmingly to go ahead and form a steering committee to explore the feasibility of the community shop. An exciting project: let's hope it gets off the ground.

*A letter from the Rists to their customers, many of whom were from Abthorpe.*

We just wanted to say a very big thank you to all our customers and friends who supported us right up to the end of our trading, and a particular thank you to all of those who were able to attend the presentation on the last day and give us such a wonderful send-off. The generosity of the gift, from those of you who participated in the collection, overwhelmed us. It really was a magnificent gesture and one we shall never forget! We were also very pleased to receive so many, and we must say, unexpected gifts from so many customers. We are still adjusting to our newfound freedom and later start to our day, but we do very much miss the daily contact with you all.

Once again, a very big thank-you for your generosity and very kind thoughts and good wishes.

*Evelyn and Tony Rist*

## CHRISTIAN AID 'SOUPER SOUP' LUNCH

Thank you to everyone who supported our soup lunch. We were able to send a cheque for £200 to Christian Aid. Who would have thought that we would be enjoying our soup sitting in the garden in late March!

*Eric and Barbara Malcomson, Richard and Carolynn Tomalin*

## FILM ABTHORPE

Film Abthorpe returned to the oldies on 31<sup>st</sup> March with a showing of *Our Man in Havana*, a classic Alec Guinness film. However, the previous offering of *Midnight Cowboy* was hardly modern. Many people had not seen it since their youth, so memories were stirred. The next screening will be on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> June, with a programme yet to be decided.

## THE LONG SUMMER DAYS OF CHILDHOOD REMEMBERED

School summer holidays seemed so long and only the fine weather was remembered. Each generation had their own secret places and once they had been packed off with jam sandwich picnics the adults had no idea what they did, often not being told about it until years later. Hunting for crayfish under Oxbridge was a regular pastime, more successful than fishing under Tinker's Bridge though a clever adult could soon tickle a fish to take home.

The favourite place was the Lasher by Slapton Mill (the weir which diverted water round the mill). This was used for generations for paddling and swimming with no adults around. One day in the 1940s everyone watched a girl drowning but did not realise anything was wrong until two boys dived in and pulled her out just in time. In winter the field by the Lasher used to flood so everyone could paddle safely.

In the 1970s Jenny and three friends, paddling in the Lasher on their own, pulled a trophy out of the mud to use as a doll's bed not realising that it was a small skull. Her parents took it to the police station where a policeman decided it was probably from a civil war casualty and needed no further investigation. Jenny was often led into mischief by her friends, once being persuaded to hang off the footbridge next to Slapton Mill. But her small friend could not pull her back so had to run into Slapton to get help leaving Jenny dangling over the stream.

The Old Ship was such a good place to play for several generations. These old fish ponds were in the (now arable) field on the left going out of the village towards Towcester before the crossroads. They once belonged to

*The Old Ship*

Leeson House and were surrounded by drooping and split willow trees which could be climbed by even the youngest children - giving the appearance of an old ship. Sadly after the land changed hands in the 1970s, the new owner had the area filled in and all the trees cut down.



The Green has been the centre for sport: cricket, football and tennis on the road. It was the focus for Abthorpe Feast weekend in July; there was the excitement of the fair which was set up on the Green for several days with swing boats, roundabouts and stalls. On Feast Sunday evening after church Towcester silver band played there.

In the cold winters of the 1970s the snow drifts on Brackley Lane below Lousy Bush field [Grafton View] were as high as the hedges and strong enough to walk along. In the 1940s if it was icy the road past the Green was made into a very long slide: not much traffic then except

Mr Davies's cattle being driven into his yard from his fields (now Yew Tree Farm).

School time was often as much fun as holidays. In the 1940s when it was hot the teacher, Mrs Smith, would take the infants onto the Green for lessons as the playground was too small and stony, although they had to avoid the dirt from the geese kept at Leeson House and Yew Tree House and let out to graze on the grass. The girls played two ball and skipping with a double rope. Miss Abberley and Mrs Smith taught the children to Maypole dance. The pole was set up on the Green, and the May Queen and attendants paraded around the village. On one occasion they walked to Slapton with Mrs Smith to sing May songs to bedridden Mr Underwood, a local farmer.

*A wedding party in 1926 showing how the yew trees at Yew Tree House looked at that time.*



Mrs Smith was sadly missed when she left in 1948 as she was such a good teacher. Her replacement, daringly referred to by the children as "Mabel", which they thought to be her name, taught the remaining 18 children aged between 5 and 11 all in one room. She wore knee length knickers which had a pocket for her handkerchief which she often retrieved whilst teaching. A small Slapton boy caused much amusement when he ran round and round the desks to escape being smacked with a ruler with all the children shouting. She once stopped boys and girls playing cowboys and Indians on the Green, so after that breaktime every child in the school kept banging their desk lids until she gave in. More sniggering was caused whenever she shouted at the children and her top false teeth

fell down.

The school was for Slapton and Bradden children as well, some of whom were left unsupervised at lunchtime whilst the others went home to lunch. A favourite game was to pour the school milk on the tortoise stove and watch it bubble and burn. Pupils had ink made from powder but the teacher had proper ink kept in a large stone jar. This was purloined to pour into a few desk inkwells but was often spilt. No comment was ever made by her although she must have been aware of what had been going on. In the end another head teacher was appointed but there were so few children that the school was closed about 1960. The parents only agreed to this after the LEA promised permanent provision of a free bus to the schools at Silverstone.

In the early 1900s children experienced only a brief childhood as the school leaving age was 12 and the boys were expected to work alongside their fathers in the fields. Even at school the boys were taught gardening in the Reading Room garden by the school master in the 1920s, which stood them in good stead when they had gardens and the allotments at the crossroads to tend.

Sometimes fun ended in disappointment. Bill hand-pumped the church organ for Mrs White during services but one Sunday he ran home rather than stay behind to pump for longer so that she could practice. But when he went at Easter to get his annual payment of two and sixpence Vicar White refused to pay, so a whole year of organ pumping counted for nothing.

*M E H*

### **NEW TRUSTEES SOUGHT**

Northamptonshire Rape & Incest Crisis Centre is looking for women willing to play a key role as trustees in this important charity which has undergone rapid development since the appointment of a new manager in 2009.

If you are interested in finding out more, please contact Janette Lord, Centre Manager, The Lighthouse Centre (NRICC); tel: 01604 250721.



### **TELEPHONE KIOSK**

John Underwood has just put the finishing touches to the restoration of the red telephone box on the Green. He has replaced the top glass panels with four originals he tracked down on e-bay, still with the word 'TELEPHONE' etched on the surface. Can you think of any uses for the box? If so, let the Parish Council know.

### **WAPPENHAM NEWS**

The annual plant sale will be on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> May, 9.00 - 12.30, at Clarissa House, High St, Wappenham. And a barn dance is being organised for the evening of 25<sup>th</sup> June.

Any thespians amongst you may like to consider joining the drama group which performs pantomime and other presentations throughout the year. For instance, they are currently planning a Murder Mystery dining evening (going 'on tour' this spring) and a play in the summer. Jonathan Carpenter is the contact if you would like to be involved or receive details of future performances: [jonathan.carpenter@berrybros.com](mailto:jonathan.carpenter@berrybros.com); 01295 768120

## PEOPLE

Tina Jones who lived in the village since the 1950s died recently at the age of 77. Her husband Bob with many members of the family, plus friends and former work colleagues, gathered at the Roman Catholic church in Towcester for a funeral mass led by the parish priest the Rev'd Dr Brendan Killeen. At the conclusion of the mass most of the congregation travelled to our parish church here in Abthorpe where many villagers had assembled to pay their last respects to Tina.



Father Brendan conducted another memorable service before Tina was carried through the village, where she had spent most of her life, to be laid to rest in our church yard extension.

Later Bob Jones described some of the high points in her life. She was born in the village of Cerreto Sannita in the province of Benevento some 60km north-east of Naples. Although she was baptised as Assunta her family soon referred to her constantly as Tina and that's the name we all knew her by. Her father was killed in the Second World War whilst serving with the Italian army. She attended a convent school not far from her home. Bob explained that when a Swedish film star called Marta Tolon came to Cerreto Sannita to make a film, Tina acted as her

**PEOPLE** CONTINUED

understudy for some distance shots. When the film was completed Tina was invited to Rome to review the finished product. That was when her wanderlust began.

In the 1950s Tina visited an agency in Italy to apply for a permit to travel to England to work. Her application was successful and she worked as a nursemaid in Berwick-upon-Tweed. But she was unhappy there and returned to Italy. A few months later the wanderlust reasserted itself and she returned to England to work for a Mr Neale in nearby Adstone as a housekeeper. About 1958 she left there and came to lodge in Abthorpe with Mrs Tipple, an Italian lady. Mrs Tipple moved away and Bob bought her house. Tina stayed, married Bob in 1962 and lived in the village for 53 years until her untimely death.

Tina worked for a number of local companies including Plessey in Towcester where she helped to manufacture valve holders for wireless sets. When computers came on the scene she moved to Brackmills in Northampton where she was engaged in the manufacture of components such as keyboards.

Tina loved gardening and most of us will have admired her wall displays while driving along School Lane, celebrated as one of the village's open gardens last summer.

Although Tina lived in Abthorpe for over 50 years she retained her Italian looks, sense of style and a lovely accent reminiscent of her homeland. Throughout her married life Tina regularly returned to Italy to visit relatives but she considered Abthorpe her home. We will miss her.

Welcome to Marna Perrigo who has moved to 31 Wappenham Road. Marna has lived in the area for many years, as has her family. She has now started her own business specialising in hand-made soft furnishings. She is finding Abthorpe a very friendly village.

The promised new arrival to Lucy and Paul Grimes reported in November 2010 made a swift appearance on 15<sup>th</sup> February. So eager was Idena Maeve to come into the world that Lucy says she was "almost born on

**PEOPLE** CONTINUED

the drive". However, they just made it to Banbury where she was born at 1.04am. Lucy and Paul would like to thank everyone in village for there kindness and cards they have received. Congratulations to them both and Hettie, Idena's big sister.



Another happy event was the wedding in St John the Baptist of Marco Bacic and Laura Middleton on a beautiful, warm Saturday in March. They moved to Yew Tree Cottage during the winter already full of their plans to marry in Abthorpe. We wish them a long and happy marriage.



The restoration of Yew Tree House has been completed sufficiently for Alex and Katie Hammon to move in with 2¼-year old Scarlett (the quarter is very important at this age!) just before the birth of their second child. They have

settled in Abthorpe from London, via a two-year sojourn in Weedon. Alex grew up in Tiffield so has returned to his roots, and is near his

**PEOPLE** CONTINUED

work as an insurance broker in Northampton. We hope they will all be very happy living in the village.

Congratulations to Tom Gladdle for running the London Marathon in 4hrs 28mins 16secs, quite an achievement while preparing for his finals in politics and East Asian studies at Leeds. Tom was running on behalf of Sophie's Campaign for the Children's Ward for Interesting Things To Do (SCCWID). Sophie was the sister of a school friend who sadly died at 14 from cancer. She set up the charity to improve the facilities in the children's ward at the John Radcliffe Hospital to make it a more cheerful and less traumatic environment. Since 2000 the charity has raised £4m and is supporting the new Children's Hospital in the grounds of the Radcliffe to provide extras for the teenage ward beyond the NHS contribution. Tom's aim is to raise £5,000. If you would like to help, go to [www.justgiving.com/thomas-gladdle](http://www.justgiving.com/thomas-gladdle) for more information.



The Rev'd Douglas Bond who served as Rector of Abthorpe in the 1980s has died at the age of 71 in a residential community of retired Anglican clergy at Lingfield in Surrey. He had circulated the story below to his friends, who felt it a fitting tribute to him:

Anyone who has ever dressed a child will love this one!

Did you hear about the teacher who was helping one of her primary students put on his boots? Even with her pulling, and him pushing, the little boots still didn't want to go on. Finally, when the second boot was on, she had worked up a sweat.

### PEOPLE CONTINUED

She almost cried when the little boy said, 'Teacher, they're on the wrong feet.' She looked, and sure enough, they were. It wasn't any easier pulling the boots off than it was putting them on.

She managed to keep her cool as together they worked to get the boots back on, this time on the right feet. He then announced 'These aren't my boots.' She bit her tongue rather than get right in his face and scream, 'Why didn't you say so?' like she wanted to.

Once again she struggled to help him pull the ill-fitting boots off his little feet. No sooner had they got the boots off when he said, 'They're my brother's boots. My Mum made me wear them.'

Now she didn't know if she should laugh or cry. She mustered up the grace and courage she had left, to wrestle the boots on his feet again. Helping him into his coat, she asked, 'Now, where are your mittens?'

He said, 'I stuffed them in the toes of my boots.'  
Her trial starts next month.

### BABYSITTING COURSE

The Youth and Community Development Service is running a 10-week babysitting course in Towcester Town Hall starting on 4<sup>th</sup> May, 4.30 - 6.30. It is delivered by the Red Cross for young people aged 14 plus. The course covers all the areas necessary to be a competent babysitter and culminates in relevant certificates and meets the Duke of Edinburgh's Award bronze skills section. For further information contact Karen on 07588 485244.

### SIX STAGES OF A PROJECT - RING ANY BELLS?

- 1 Enthusiasm
- 2 Realisation
- 3 Disillusion
- 4 Apportionment of blame
- 5 Search for the guilty
- 6 Rewards and promotion for the incompetent

**DIARY**

*Friday 29 April*

Lamb roast and music, the New Inn, from 2.00, food from 5.00

*Monday 9 May*

Parish Council meeting, Old School, 7.45

*Saturday 21 May*

Plant sale, Clarissa House, High St, Wappenham, 9.00 - 12.00

*Sunday 22 May*

Plant sale, Abthorpe Green, 11.00 - 1.00

*Monday 23 May*

Annual Parish Meeting, Old School, 7.45

*Tuesday 31 May*

Quiz at the New Inn, 7.45 for 8.00

*Monday 6 June*

Parish Council meeting, Old School, 7.45

*Thursday 9 June*

Film Night, Old School, 7.30

*Sunday 12 June*

Wappenham gardens open for the National Gardens Scheme

*Tuesday 21 June*

Quiz at the New Inn, 7.45 for 8.00

*Saturday 25 June*

Barn Dance, Wappenham Village Hall

*Monday 18 July*

Parish Council meeting, Old School, 7.45

*Tuesday 19 July*

Quiz at the New Inn, 7.45 for 8.00

*Saturday 6 August*

Blakesley Agricultural Show

*Saturday 3 September*

Wappenham village fete