



ABT

News from Abthorpe

December 2013

PARISH COUNCIL

The main news from the Parish Council is that the speed sign has been installed. It is only useable at the Towcester end of the village at present as the post at the Wappenham end has been erected in the wrong place. The PC is still trying to get it moved. Initial reaction is that the sign has had some effect in slowing down traffic entering the village. It will be rotated 180 degrees to warn traffic coming down the hill when we fit an additional bracket.

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The Millennium sign on the green is showing its age so there are plans to renovate it next year. Thanks go to the volunteers who have offered to do this work.

For over a year the Parish Council has been trying to get the finger post at the crossroads just before the village replaced after it was stolen. NCC promised that they would do it during this financial year, but although that started in April there is still no action.

There has also been great difficulty in persuading NCC to replace the grit bin at the same spot. This is a County Council responsibility and they have refused to do so because the road from Towcester to Abthorpe is gritted, despite the fact that the grit is needed to stop people coming from Silverstone sliding into the junction. We are now taking this up with our County Councillor in the hope that he can get someone to see sense. Otherwise we will have to pay £290 to buy one.

And on a happy final note, the Parish Council has agreed to donate £1,000 towards the refurbishment of the Old School as this is an essential facility for the village.

RECENT BURGLARIES

There have been several house break-ins in Abthorpe in the last

few weeks which is a very unusual occurrence, so much so that we can tend to get a bit complacent about security. You may therefore want to review your own security. All occurred when owners were away.

ROAD CLOSURE

You should have received a letter from Northamptonshire Highways advising of the road closure for carriageway patching which will take place from 6th January. If you were puzzled by the letter, this is the explanation: The work will take place on Wappenham Road between the cross-roads on the Towcester side of the village and the turning to Slapton half way to Wappenham, i.e. on both roads into the village. The work team will move along this section of road repairing as they go. Where they are working the road will be closed. So sometimes we may have to go via Slapton if coming from Towcester and other times we may have to go via Slapton if coming from Wappenham. Road closure notices will be posted at each end, but there will be someone there to advise which way to go. Remember the work takes place between 9.15 and 3.30 each day. What happens if we are 6 inches deep in snow remains to be seen!

TOWCESTER FOOD BANK

At this time of year the foodbank is more important than ever. Although we live in a relatively affluent area there are people who find themselves in unexpected difficulties. People in crisis are issued with foodbank vouchers by frontline care professionals such as doctors, health visitors, social workers, CAB or police. Clients bring their voucher to a centre where it can be redeemed for three days' emergency food. Volunteers meet clients over a cup of tea or free hot meal and are able to direct people to agencies able to solve the longer-term problems. The Towcester foodbank also runs a rural delivery service which takes emergency foodboxes to clients living in outlying areas.

The Abthorpe collection box is at the back of the church and any contributions would be very welcome. It is too late for special Christmas 'treats', but please consider popping an extra item of non-perishable food for the foodbank into your basket when you go shopping

The total donated from the village so far is a very generous 110.4kg of goods. The project is being coordinated at the Riverside Centre and is supported by the Trussell Trust and Churches Together in Towcester: towcester.foodbank.org.uk.

TOVE VALLEY BROADBAND

The growth of the system has continued. According to the latest figures on www.tovevalley.com 237 people have signed up to the service with 220 installations completed. Bradden and parts of Helmdon are now being served in addition to the original villages. The service has been particularly popular in Bradden.

Come along to the AGM on Tuesday 28th January in the Old School at 7.30pm to hear all the latest news.

On the day that MP's questioned the bosses of the energy companies about their pricing policies, Tove Valley chairman Eric Malcomson and his wife Barbara were also at the Houses of Parliament to receive £5,000 for winning the regional TalkTalk Digital Hero Award, as noted in our last issue. An additional excitement, as reported here by Eric, was that "we were automatically entered into a national competition with the other 11 heroes to win a further £5,000. This prize was to be announced during the presentations. On the 29th October, Barbara and I set off. We had a little wander around Trafalgar Square with the rest of the half-term visitors and then on down to the Houses of Parliament. We met the other regional winners

on College Green - the one you see all the TV presentations from - and had our pictures taken. Then it was off through the security gates and in to the Palace of Westminster.

"We walked down Westminster Hall, across the Central Lobby and down the Thames side of the House of Lords to the Churchill room, possibly named because there are several pictures painted by Sir Winston hanging on the walls.

"There was a lovely reception and we met several MPs including Andrea Leadsom who came to support us. The MPs were rushing back and forth because there were 'divisions' going on. There were TV screens all over the place showing what bill, amendment and so forth was being voted on and the MPs had

eight minutes to get from wherever they were to the division lobbies to vote.

"Sad to say we did not get the national award but earlier, while our regional awards were being presented by Dido Harding and Martha Lane Fox, I did comment that Scott Freeman who set up CyberSmile, a charity with resources to combat cyber-bullying, would be the deserved winner. My prediction was right.

"After the awards, we were taken on a little tour to some unusual places in the Palace of Westminster. I'll be locked up in the tower if I tell you everywhere we went, but I must say the broom cupboard in the Chapel of St Mary Undercroft was interesting.

This is where Emily Wilding Davison, a suffragette campaigning for votes for women at a time when Parliament denied them that right, hid in the broom



Eric and Barbara Malcomson at the Houses of Parliament with the Regional Talk-Talk award.

cupboard on the night of the 1911 census so that she was able to record her address as the House of Commons. She died in June 1913 from injuries she received when she threw herself under the King's horse at that year's Derby."

FLY THE FLAG FOR NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

We had to check that it was not 1st April already before alerting you to this gem. A competition has been launched on the County Council's website to find a flag for Northamptonshire.

The contest is open to schools, community groups or individuals to design a flag which they believe best represents the county. All entries will be assessed by a panel of judges, including a representative from The Flag Institute in London and a Professor in cultural studies, and the final five designs will be put to a public vote.

The Parliamentary Flags and Heraldry Committee is encouraging communities across the country to get involved and register their own flags, and NCC thinks this is a golden opportunity for Northamptonshire to find a flag to be proud of. So all you budding flag designers, visit www.northamptonshire.gov.uk for the details. You have until 17th January to enter your submission.

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST CHURCH

Following the devastation wreaked in the Philippines, collections have been arranged in church towards the appeal. Apart from a basket at the back of the church during December services, it will also be put out for 15 minutes before and after if you would like to give but not take part in the service. Money can also be put in the offertory box at the back of the church, all of which will be sent to the appeal.

Thank you to everyone who supported Operation Christmas Child either by filling a box, donating items towards a box or giving money towards items or the postage. Thirty three boxes were sent off this year which is an amazing result from a small village.

Harvest celebrations spanned the weekend of 5th/6th October, starting with the supper on Saturday evening in the Old School. The 'ladies who cook' did everyone proud with a choice of beef casserole, cottage pie or chicken hotpot followed by apple crumble. The newly installed modern kitchen made things much easier. Proceeds from the supper were £388.28.

On Sunday there was a good congregation for a service led by Alison Robbins and her daughter Katie Deal with the theme of bread.

Katie Deal at the Harvest service

Two videos illustrated the parable of the sower who broadcast his seed on a variety of soils and the story of Jesus feeding the 5,000.

Katie and Alison passed around samples of ten different types of bread, including pumpernickel, naan, bagels and rye, and

asked the congregation to name them and state from which country they originated. The service concluded with coffee, biscuits and chat. The harvest gifts went to the Hope Centre in Northampton.

The Watling Singers returned on Saturday 14th December to give a Christmas Concert in church, which was a good opportunity for a relaxing evening before the frenetic run up to Christmas

You have probably noticed men hanging by ropes from the church spire recently. This is the last bit of work to be done from the quinquennial (5 yearly) inspection.

There were originally four decorative finials at the corners of the church tower but two had long since fallen down and no-one seems to know where they went. So having received some donations two new ones were made to complete the symmetry of the spire. Having been on show in church for a while, they have now been hoisted into place and set by the steeplejacks who have been repointing the stonework while suspended from rope rigs. Although to the casual observer the work appears to be highly dangerous, the craftsmen employed by Alpha Maintenance Services of Daventry, specialists in this type of work, have an excellent safety record. In addition to working on churches the company specialises in carrying out repairs to high chimney



stacks and cooling towers in many parts of the world.

And to complete the spire's makeover, the weather vane cockerel has been refurbished and regilded.

The next project, when funds permit, will be to redo the path on the north side which is just about down to mud and in summer full of weeds. This will make getting into church much nicer for everyone including brides in their long dresses.

But on a more sober note, there are indications that someone has tried to jemmy the church door, presumably at night. So could everyone, particularly those who live near the church, be vigilant and let

Barbara Malcomson (857066; malcomson@abthorpe.net) or Richard Tomalin (858316; richard.tomalin@abthorpe.net) know if you see any suspicious activity.

Winners of the September tote were Philip and Merrilyn Berry who won £220, and in October it was the turn of Mrs A Hitchings (£222.50). In November Ann Cunningham had a win of £220.

December and January Services

Tuesday 24th December	4pm	Christmas Eve Carol Service (Mulled wine and mince pies to follow the service)
Wednesday 25th December	9.15am	Christmas Day Eucharist Service
Sunday 12th January	11am	Holy Eucharist Service
Sunday 19th January	9.15am	Holy Eucharist Service

The Churchwardens and PCC wish you all a very Happy Christmas and New Year. Thank you to everyone who has supported St John the Baptist church in whatever way in 2013.



POPPIES AND THE ACT OF REMEMBRANCE

This year the Wappenham and District branch of the Royal British Legion came to Abthorpe to commemorate Remembrance Sunday. As the winter sun cast long shadows over the village green, veterans from past military conflicts gathered at the war memorial to remember local people who had perished in the service of their country during two World Wars. The Rev'd Paul McLeod read their names. With their standard held aloft the veterans led the way back into church for a moving service of remembrance. The collection of £237.88 went to the British Legion.

For two weeks leading up to 11th November Janet Dancer took on the role she has fulfilled for some years of selling us our poppies. Her achievements each year were matched again this year, with a magnificent total of £402.52 collected in the village to go towards the district total of £3,083.15.

The local branch came close to shutting down last year before a drive to generate new membership and refresh the committee bore fruit. There is no requirement to have served in the armed or supporting services to be a member of the Royal British Legion, so if you would like to find out more email colin.atkins@btinternet.com or contact Janet on 857650.



LIFE LONG FRIENDS

Out comes the Christmas card list again, checking through to cross out those no longer on it for various reasons but there are some who come top of the list however many years they have featured - friends made in childhood and early years.

Abthorpe was a very self contained place before the advent of the railway in the 1870s. Friends met face to face with no need to send cards, but with the advent of the Dr Barnado's children and evacuees in WW2 the children's circle enlarged and due to often sad circumstances very strong friendships were made. To live at home with parents yet go to school with others parted from their family drew a strong sense of compassion. There might have not been much money to spend on toys at Christmas but children from the village felt safe and happy surrounded by aunts, uncles and cousins. The Dr Barnado's children had no such safety net but most of the foster mothers who took them in tried to make up for the loss of their family.

Dr Barnado established a boys' home in 1870 in Stepney and another for girls in 1873. His scheme for fostering out was being tried experimentally and in 1888 an inspector for the home, Dr Jane Walker MD, wrote in her report, "It is the most economical way of disposing of the children. Each child costs 5 or 6 shillings per week... it would cost considerably more than that for them to be maintained in an Institution... It is a help to the villages, enabling agricultural labourers to live more comfortably, making a nice addition to their weekly earnings, also bringing more money into the hands of the shopkeepers and making it easier for owners of cottages to get their rents... I hope the Boarding Out System will develop.." The foster parents abided by a strict contract and care was taken to make sure that not too many children were placed in one village so that they all blended in. (See [http:// infed.org/mobi/thomas-john-barnardo-the-doctor/](http://infed.org/mobi/thomas-john-barnardo-the-doctor/) for more on Dr Barnado and his work.)

The school log book, which started in 1905, first mentioned Dr Barnado's children were attending Abthorpe School in 1912. The children had to return to the Barnado's homes at the age of twelve to learn a trade but the authorities could be kind and when one young boy left Mrs Matthews, the blacksmith's wife, he was so upset that he was allowed to return to Abthorpe to live with her permanently. It was heart-breaking when he was killed in his early 20s in a motorcycle accident whilst going to Towcester to

shop for his foster family, at Green Lane crossroads (the turning to Greens Norton before the garage, which then continued to the right linking through to the A43).

Mrs Tom Barford at Foscoote Hill was a local supervisor for Barnardo's. She visited the houses where children had been placed to make sure they were happy and well cared for. Foster mothers could also talk over any problems with her. She was a London girl who moved to Foscoote in 1898 and did not take kindly to being uprooted from London to the depths of the country. The connection with the children was therefore welcomed by her.

A fondly remembered Barnardo's boy was Derrick Poole who lived with Connie Billingham and her parents in the village. Derrick won a scholarship to Towcester Grammar school. He was very musical, playing the organ in church and once playing for the guests of Sitwells at Weston. Sadly he was killed in WW2:

Albert Derrick Poole. Sergeant 1580928, 40 Squadron, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. Died 12th May 1944. Age 21.

Adopted son of Mrs. S. A. Billingham of Abthorpe. Buried in Coriano Ridge War Cemetery, Italy. Collective grave III, F, 9.

(from roll-of-honour.com)

Another boy fostered by the Billinghams was R Wootton who went on to qualify as a doctor, later working as a medical officer of health in a large London borough. Kate and Fred Snelson and their daughter Louie fostered Dr Barnardo's children until the late 1940s, some of whom have kept in touch with friends they made in the village. Girls were fostered too: Mary Scot has remained friends with Rene Balderson ever since.

When it came to WW2 evacuees the village headmistress, Hilma Abberley, did not call them that until 1943; previously she had listed them in the school log book as immigrants. There were ten in 1941, that number soon dropping to four. Mostly they were children who had come to stop with relatives. Whilst their father was in the navy Frank and Jimmy Mann along with their mother stayed on the Green with the same Mrs Barford who had overseen the Barnardo's fostering and who had since moved into the centre of the village from Foscoote.

Many other friendships were forged during the war with the Italian and German prisoners of war based at Greens Norton. Following the Italian surrender in 1943, the Italians volunteered to work as 'co-operators' and

were moved out, almost certainly to the camp at Byfield. They were given considerable freedom and mixed with local people. German prisoners of war were then placed in the camp at Greens Norton. All the prisoners worked on the local farms. The young men missed their families so much and some made toys for the local children. A very memorable Christmas was when a few went to Mile Oak Farm on Christmas evening to sing carols around the piano, *Silent Night* being sung in both English and German. Among them were Hermann and Alfred who corresponded at subsequent Christmases with the farmer's wife until she died in 1975. She sent food parcels and they sent news of what life was like for them in Germany after the war.

The camp became a YHA hostel, which was closed in 1976, but had originally been build for the Land Army. Part of the area was later bought to build the community centre. There is an interesting article at silverstonevillage.org/greensnortonvillage.org.uk/index.php?isit=7? on the camp.

The Italians went home after the war but were able to return to work in England if they could prove a job waited for them. Local farmers were pleased to have them back. For example, the Cugini brothers, both prisoners in different parts of the country who were moved to the same camp at Farthinghoe when the authorities found they were brothers, came back to England after the war. Vincent was a skilled cabinet maker who worked for Woottons the builders of Sulgrave. Tony later brought his wife Loreta to Cemetery House (now Rozel), so that their daughter Anna could go to Abthorpe school while he worked at Handley. His widow,



Christening of baby Anna with, from the left, Tony, Loreta and Vincent.

Anna, aged about 7, with her little sister Gina, at her first communion.

Loreta, still keeps in touch with her Abthorpe friends. Alberto Giuliani was another who returned for farm work but later married and worked at Plessey, living in Abthorpe for the remainder of his life.

Because of shared memories through difficult times all those Christmas cards take on a special significance, especially for those little girls who have stayed friends ever since their school days here over seventy years ago.

M.E.H and R.B.



LEESON TRUST

The annual meeting of the Trustees was held recently. As in recent years, the budget for grants for the forthcoming year was £1,200. This is divided equally between Education and Relief in Need. This year the Education grants were split between the three schools which serve the village: Sponne School receives £300 for books, Silverstone Infant School £150 for books and Silverstone Junior School £150 for art materials. There are no longer any mobility scooters to support but a suitable use for that money has been found.

VILLAGE NETWORKS BUS ON TOUR

The bus will be visiting Towcester on two days in each of the first three months of 2014. It's a handy way to get information and confidential advice on all sorts of things, such as how to find the best deal on electricity supplies (bring a copy of your supplier statement); welfare benefits and debt; free lessons on using computers, emailing, on-line shopping, etc; ideas on how to reduce water consumption; local Job Clubs and advice on job searching; volunteering opportunities.

See www.snvb.org.uk/VillageNetworks.html for locations and times to drop in and have a chat, or call Nick King on 358264, nick@snvb.org.uk.

PEOPLE

Martha-Rose Gray who is 10 and lives in the village finished a 40 length sponsored swim at Towcester Swimming Pool wearing a multi-patterned onesie! It took her about 45 minutes. What a great achievement especially as she raised over £200 in sponsorship for Children-in-Need. She was even mentioned on Blue Peter and literally put Northamptonshire on the map.



New villagers continue to arrive, and we would like to welcome Emily and Steve Marshall to no.1 Snelson's Orchard. They have moved from Evenley with 1-year old Buddy. Steve works in Banbury as a delivery driver, while Emily travels to Mercedes Benz in Brackley where she's part of their financial team. She is also an Avon representative, useful to know if you are partial to their products.

Simon and Laura Boardman were married earlier this year and have chosen 32 Wappenham Road as their first home together. Laura grew up in Syresham so is familiar with the area, although they were most recently living in Kings Sutton. Laura has just

PEOPLE CONTINUED

joined Simon in the joinery business in Evenley of which he is a director, although for Simon practical work was off the cards for a few frustrating weeks as he recovered from a shoulder injury sustained while playing hockey for Banbury. Hopefully Laura will remain injury-free in her sport of horse riding.

Also in Snelsons Orchard, at No.2, are Sam and Marc with their children Millie, 4, and Callum, 1. They have moved from Brixworth and look forward to life in the country.

Melissa and Peter Randall have arrived at 31 Wappenham Road from Kettering. Peter works for Salcey timber at Silverstone, while Melissa has the full time job of looking after their two children, Holly, almost 4, and William who is 16 months. Melissa is keen to get together with other parents by starting an informal Parents and Tots group in the village. There are certainly quite a number of pre-school children here now. If anyone is interested in exploring this idea, please email melissarandall79@gmail.com.

And another baby in the village is 6-week old Nell, a very bonny 7lbs 10oz born to Gemma Briggs and Carl McKellar. No doubt her brother, Sonny, is getting used to the idea of having a sister around.

Charlotte Saunders has moved to 1 Stanhill Row from Greens Norton, and already experienced the joys of a Sunday quiz at the New Inn along with her partner, whose birthday was celebrated during the evening. Charlotte is a physiotherapist based at the Ramsay Centre at the Horton Hospital in Banbury, but also works at other centres. In her leisure time she enjoys singing, although rehearsing for shows is probably far from relaxing.

PEOPLE CONTINUED

One of our newer arrivals is Jo Burt who has moved to 34 Wappenham Road from Blakesley. Jo has two children, Jacob 11 and Finley who is 9, and a 9-month old black lab called Murfy. Murfy has already met other canine friends while out walking. Jo is a hairdresser, basing her business at home.

We hope all the latest additions to our community will enjoy their time in Abthorpe.

THE OLD SCHOOL

The Old School has received the donation of a flip chart with paper which can be used in the building, particularly for the refurbished meeting room which now has free wifi installed. The flip chart is also available for external hire at a nominal rate.

The AGM will be held on Wednesday 22rd January at 8pm in the Old School. Come along to hear how the refurbishment programme is progressing and let the Committee have your suggestions and feedback on events and plans.

Recent events have contributed to the fundraising total, but more importantly have been fun and interesting evenings for those taking part. The race night made £811.37

and £350 was donated by the Women's Food and Farming Union who hold regular meetings at the Old School and hosted BBC Radio Northampton's Green Welly Show in October.

WFFU also organised a Caribbean Christmas cookery demonstration attended by some non-members from the village who also got an opportunity to sample the dinner afterwards. They certainly seem to arrange interesting meetings. If you would like to find out more about the organisation, which focuses on the quality of our food as well as our countryside (you don't have to be in farming), see www.wfu.org.uk or contact Jane Treharene at gordontreherne@hotmail.com

The Old School Committee is

imaginative in the range of events they put on and the Truckers' Breakfast on Saturday 30th November was a great innovation. Along with the bacon, eggs, black pudding and mugs of tea, diners could peruse a selection of the best daily papers (although sadly one editor failed to find a copy of *The Sun*). Over 60 breakfasts were served and the universal acclaim for the morning surely means it will be repeated. The added bonus was an addition of £300 to the refurbishment fund.

The coffee mornings will start again after Christmas although the dates are still to be decided. If anyone would like to host one please contact Janet Dancer on 857650. These are a great help towards the fundraising programme.

The third phase of the refurbishment plan, upgrading the toilet area and providing disabled facilities, is progressing well. All the relevant consents for the plans have been obtained: listed building (the Old School is Grade II), building control, and fire officer. Attention is now turning to raising the necessary funds. The Committee is most grateful to the Constance Travis Trust which has made a grant of £2,000 and the Parish Council who have contributed £1,000. And at their December grants committee

meeting, South Northants Council has agreed a contribution of 31% towards the total budget or a maximum of £8,500. The final application to complete the budget requirement is being made to the Big Lottery.

MARIE CURIE CANCER CARE

A certificate proudly hanging in the kitchen of Elizabeth and Barry Haycock's farmhouse records that over many years they and their friends have raised the magnificent total of £84,237 for the charity Marie Curie Cancer Care. Their recent coffee event added another £5,200 to this total. What a wonderful achievement!

NEWS FROM THE NEW INN

The pub will be open from 12.00 to 2.00 on Christmas Day, and the (rather good - taste tested by the editors) Christmas 6-course set menu will be available until the 22nd.

On New Year's Eve the Wednesday steak menu will be served, giving way to a lamb roast and New Inn knees-up for all the locals through to the early hours. The pub will also be open on New Year's Day.

In the restaurant the new year will see a new menu. Also watch out for various food and drink promotions.

The restaurant has had a change of décor, and it will be the turn of the bar area to be freshened up next.

Looking further ahead, there will be a music evening on Sunday 20th April (Easter Sunday), followed by an Easter Monday celebration.

The quiz evenings are becoming ever more popular and it was almost a full house in October when No Eye Deer passed the winning sum of £140 to Macmillan Nurses. The next quiz was on 24th November, and this time It's A Good Question decided that the magnificent total from the evening of £150 should go to Cynthia House Hospice. The Christmas quiz was on Sunday 15th December when Kisses on Fire won. The pub was PACKED and it was the largest amount raised since the quizzes began. £210 went to Crisis at Christmas. These are friendly, enjoyable evenings and well worth coming out for. Watch for signs around the village for the next dates.

POPLARS FARM WIND TURBINE

Aidan Jones of Poplars Farm in Wappenham submitted an application some months ago to South Northamptonshire Council for permission to erect a single free standing wind turbine on his land. If permission is granted the turbine would be visible from homes in

Brackley Lane. As the District Council failed to make a decision within the period of time allowed an appeal has been submitted to the Secretary of State. The appeal will be determined on the basis of previously submitted written presentations only.

FILM ABTHORPE

The film evenings are taking a break for Christmas. They will resume in the new year, scheduled for the last Thursday in January, February and March.

LOCAL EXPORTS

John Riches had an interesting encounter while up by Wild Wood Farm recently, as he recalls here: "The farm is about half way along the lane that links Wappenham with Syresham and parked outside was a large lorry towing an equally large trailer. The lorry was piled high with bales of hay and the trailer was about half full. On the front of the lorry was a company name with an address in the Ceiriog Valley. The driver, standing patiently alongside explained that his valley lies just to the south of Llangollen in mid Wales.

In my innocence I asked why he was bringing hay all the way from Wales to rural Northamptonshire. He soon put me right. He was taking the

hay to Wales where he assured me there was an awful lot of stock, both sheep and cattle, but not much flat land on which to grow winter fodder. The business of taking hay to Wales kept him busy full time. As we spoke a farm vehicle rumbled from inside a nearby barn loaded up with yet more hay bales for the trailer and I went on my way feeling pleased that our local farmers are in the business of exporting hay to Wales."

GIVE YOUR TIME THIS CHRISTMAS

Every year more and more people give up a few hours to help others during the season of goodwill. So why not make your time a Christmas gift this year by getting involved in volunteering? Remember, opportunities can take place throughout December leaving Christmas Day free if you prefer.

Contact the Volunteer Centre if you would like to find out more about volunteering at Christmas: 358264.

WIGGLE CIRCUIT BREAKER SPORTIVE

On the Sunday morning after the clocks went back an hour people could be forgiven for having a lie-in. When locals living in homes alongside Wappenham Road eventually pulled the curtains they were met with the

sight of a constant stream of cyclists - hundreds of them of all ages

The company UK Cycling Events in its determination for people to get out and ride had organised a non-competitive Wiggle Circuit Breaker Sportive that started at Silverstone circuit. Competitors had the option of two fully signposted routes: The Epic of 84 miles or a mere 52 miles for those who wished to take things easy. The ride, that was described on its web site as a "cracking end of season sportive," took in places as far away as Farnborough Park in Warwickshire and Boddington reservoir before finishing at Silverstone where competitors would receive a well-earned medal, refreshments and even, if required, a massage.

FOOD CADDY LINERS

For those of you who are using the food caddies to recycle food waste, South Northamptonshire Council has created a local network of shops which stock the liners for when your free roll runs out. Those nearest to us are: Croft Stores (Nisa) in Silverstone, PO and Stores in Greens Norton, Browns of Blakesley, and Paynes Nurseries and the Convenience Store, Brackley Road, both in Towcester.

ENGLISH IS TOUGH STUFF

A little poem to read aloud over Christmas. It was given to NATO personnel having difficulty getting to grips with English pronunciation, prompting one Frenchman to say he'd prefer six months hard labour to reading six lines aloud.

Dearest Creature in creation,
 Study English pronunciation.
 I will teach you in my verse
 Sounds like corpse, corps, horse, and worse.
 I will keep you, Suzy, busy,
 Make your head with heat grow dizzy
 Tear in eye, your dress will tear.
 So shall I! Oh hear my prayer.

Just compare heart, beard and heard,
 Dies and diet, lord and word,
 Sword and sward, retain and Britain.
 (Mind the latter, how it's written.)
 Now I surely will not plague you
 With such words as plaque and ague.
 But be careful how you speak:
 Say break and steak, but bleak and streak;
 Cloven, oven, how and low,
 Script, receipt, show, poem, and toe.

..... and so on for 9 verses to.....

Finally, which rhymes with enough -
 Though, through, plough, dough or cough?
 Hiccough has the sound of cup.
 My advice is to give it up!

Written by Dr Gerald Nolst Trenite (1870-1946), a Dutch observer of English

RECYCLING FESTIVE FOIL AND AEROSOLS

A few interesting facts for this time of year: as a nation we use over 16,000 tonnes of foil and 30,000 tonnes of aerosols annually. Over Christmas the amount of rubbish we produce rises by about 30%, an estimated 175 million mince pie cases alone.

In just a few weeks the recycled aerosols and food trays could be reprocessed and back on the shelf as a new product or packaging; they're endlessly recyclable. The process works by house collections being taken to a local depot for bulking into larger loads before being transported to a Materials Recovery Facility. Here, the materials are separated from each other using powerful magnets, lasers and hand picking. Any printed decoration is removed, and it is then baled ready for reprocessing. Steel cans and aerosols are made into anything from cutlery to a new car; glass is melted down and remade into glass packaging; paper and card is recycled into notebooks, toilet paper, magazines etc; foil and aluminium cans are turned into new cans; plastics are made into such things as bin liners, garden furniture and sewer pipes.

DIARY

Tuesday 24 December

Christmas Eve Carol Service, 4.00

Wednesday 25 December

Christmas Day Eucharist Service, 9.15

Sunday 12 January

Holy Eucharist Service, 11.00

Sunday 19 January

Holy Eucharist Service, 9.15

Monday 20 January

Parish Council, Old School, 7.45

Wednesday 22 January

The Old School AGM, 8.00

Tuesday 28 January

Tove Valley Broadband AGM, the Old School, 7.30