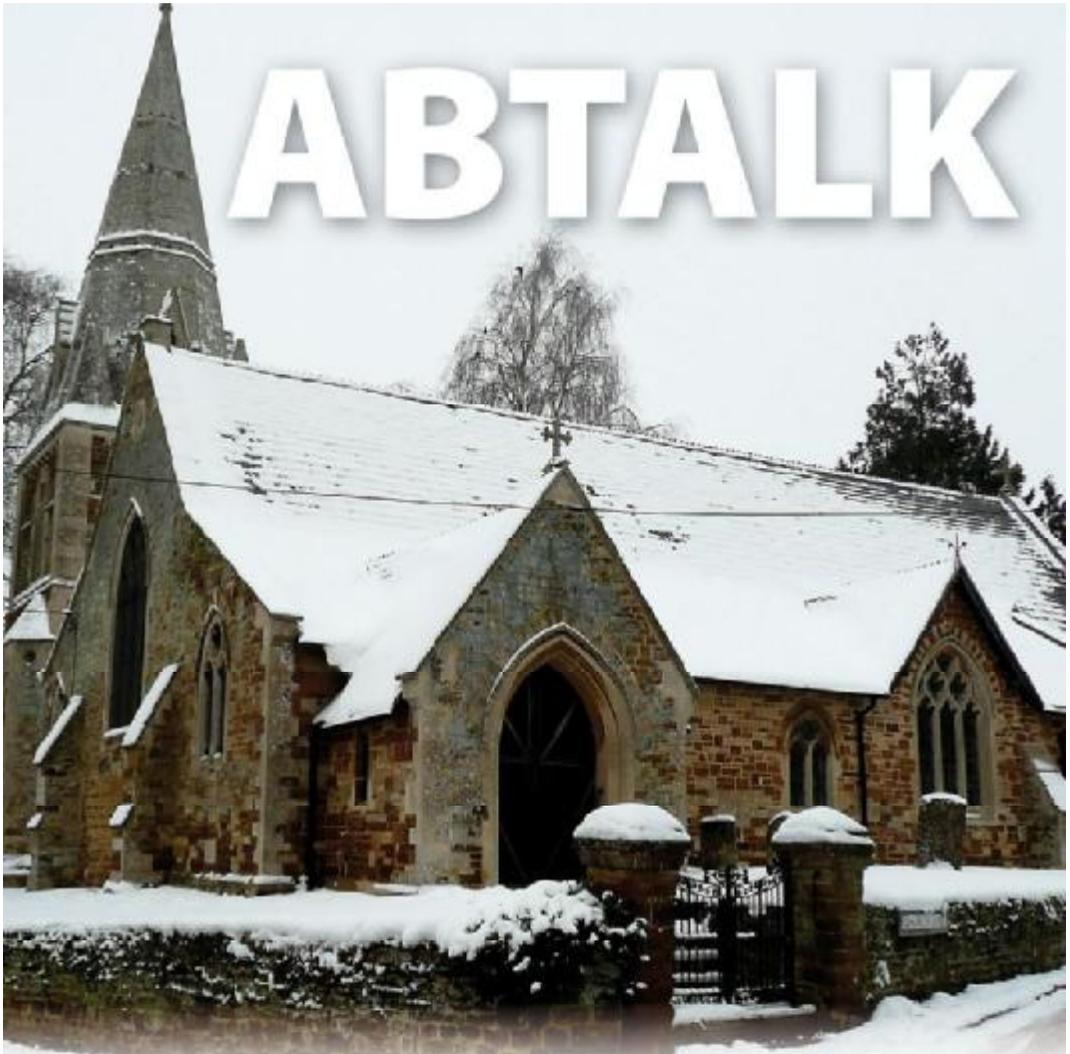


# ABTALK



*News from Abthorpe*

*February 2013*

## **PARISH COUNCIL REPORT**

The vacancy on the Parish Council has now been filled by the co-option of Merrilyn Berry so we are up to our full strength of seven members again.

At the last meeting we were shown several examples of speed warning devices and given estimates of the cost. These signs either display the actual

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speed of a vehicle or are triggered to display a warning when the limit is exceeded. A fixed sign is expensive, partly because power has to be connected to it, but a demountable, rechargeable sign which could be placed at each end of the village and pointed in either direction is within our means. We will be considering this further at our next meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> March.

The Council was very concerned over the flooding as you enter the village from Towcester. The blocked culvert under the road was reported several times but each time no problem was found. We were just about to write a stropmy letter when along came a competent crew who looked at it properly and had the problem sorted in an hour. More money must have been spent on futile investigation than on actually sorting out the blockage.

We were also concerned about the lack of progress in building the Affordable Homes in Brackley Lane. It seems that NCC Highways held up the development for several months but that problem has now been solved and work is progressing when the weather allows.

The precept has been set for the coming year at the same level as last year. This means a slight loss is estimated but we have a good reserve built up.

## **ORANGE MAKES VILLAGERS SEE RED**

Customers of Orange and T-Mobile, now associated companies, either lost their service or had it greatly reduced just after Christmas. The disruption, particularly to the many local business users, was considerable. The response to complaints was: "Due to work being completed on the whole network across the UK some masts are being removed. The mast nearest Abthorpe has permanently been removed and will not be switched back on or replaced." Although the mast had not been taken down, it had been switched off.

The deluge of complaints, which also included local MP Andrea Leadsom contacting Mr Olaf Swantee the Chief Executive of Orange UK and Sue Smith the Chief Executive of South Northamptonshire Council, has had the desired effect and on 18<sup>th</sup> January the signal was back to full strength.

Orange and T-Mobile have hopefully learned their lesson that treating customers in such a cavalier fashion does them no favours.

However, it is worthy of note in passing that when the proposal to erect the mast was first mooted it met with considerable opposition! Which just goes to show that you can't please all the people all the time.

## WORK THIS ONE OUT

During work in Main Street connected with the new development to be known as Snelson's Orchard, the following road closure signs appeared at the top of Main Street and the entrance to School Lane. The developers could have offered a prize to the person who identified which route should be taken to get into the heart of the village.



## QUITE A COLLECTION

Thoughts of the Jubilee celebrations last year are rather in the past, although the present weather bears some resemblance to that time. Following the distribution of commemorative mugs on the Green, the subject of jubilee mugs came to the fore, and especially the extensive collection gathered over the years by Betty and Len Bodily and their families.

Their twelve examples span 75 years and three reigns. Alongside those produced by the village for the millennium, the Queen's golden (2002) and diamond (2012) jubilees, there are remembrances of the wedding of Prince Charles and Lady Diana (1981). Looking further back, two were produced for Queen Elizabeth II's coronation in 1953, and two for that of her father, King George VI in May 1937.

The final mug is of particular interest. Mr Bodily's brother was driving lorries back in 1936 and found himself in Stoke on Trent where a new mug had just gone on display.

In preparation for the coronation of Edward VIII



who had recently ascended the throne, commemoration mugs had been produced. Little did Mr Bodily realise how rare this mug would become because of course King Edward abdicated in December 1936 before the coronation took place. How fortunate that he had the interest to buy one for his brother - or had he been given a hint of the impending abdication?



## NEW INN NEWS

Christmas was a good time at the pub, with the restaurant doing well. And in addition to all the parties going on, Hugh McIntyre had the idea of cooking Christmas dinner in the pub for a few friends. The idea grew. So in the true spirit of the

season, with Rob's permission and contribution of 6 bottles of Prosecco, Hugh provided a traditional meal for 25 people who, like him, were not joining their families on Christmas Day. He was, however, spared the washing up as everyone helped to clear up the kitchen and dining room.

So now thoughts are turning to celebrations coming up in the near future, but first we have to note that there are no horses at the New Inn. All their meat - lamb, beef, pork - is bred within a 5-mile radius of the pub and is fully traceable.

Bookings are now being taken for Mothering Sunday on 10<sup>th</sup> March. This was a particularly busy time last year, so it's worth thinking now about whether to enjoy the special menu that will be put on that day.

On Easter Sunday the menu will include lamb from the farm of

landlord Rob Smith, just across in Slapton. And the restaurant will be open on Monday from 12.00 - 4.00, with the pub open all day. There are plans afoot for an Easter Egg hunt as well.

St George's Day (23<sup>rd</sup> April) falls on a Tuesday this year and will be celebrated in the pub. The theme will be carried through the restaurant where Steve and Sian have planned a 3-course set menu for £18.95. However, an added bonus for the village is that they will generously donate £4 per person to the village fund-raising efforts.

The popular steak nights continue on a Wednesday evening, when steak and a sweet are offered at £10.

While on the subject of the restaurant, Steve and Sian are very accommodating with any dietary requirements that a diner has. Just let them know in advance on 857306. Likewise, any of the dishes on the menu can be served as children's portions, or items mixed and matched.

The Christmas quiz on 16<sup>th</sup> December attracted a full house of 10 teams and a great festive atmosphere. No Eye Deer sent their winnings of a magnificent £137 to Vision Café in

Towcester. On 27<sup>th</sup> January the financial reward for the chosen charity was not so large, but the enjoyment was high. The ABBA team, with a different one of the group's songs as a team name each month, offered the £87 raised to Homestart. On 24<sup>th</sup> February the West Enders prevailed, sending £117 to Macmillan Nurses. The next quiz breaks the pattern of the last Sunday of the month as this falls at Easter and therefore will be on 24<sup>th</sup> March starting at 7.30.

Each week customers are invited to play the Bonus Ball game. For a stake of £1 they select one of 49 squares. Then each Saturday evening the number of the bonus ball in the National Lottery becomes the winning numbered square. Recently Lynne Kilner (below with



Rob) who works behind the bar chose to allocate her square to the Old School committee fundraising, with the consequence that her winning number raised another £49 for the refurbishment fund. In fact the game has become so popular that a Wednesday version has been started.

### **LOOK AFTER YOUR HEART**

As part of a national campaign to promote the free NHS health check, people from 40 to 74 are invited to Towcester Town Hall between 10.00am and 3.00pm on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> February to either have a check there and then, or find out more about the promotion.

The check assesses the risk of heart disease, diabetes, stroke and kidney disease. Everyone is at risk of these conditions but the good news is that they can often be prevented by simple lifestyle changes.

Dr Stephen Rogers, Consultant in Public Health, said, "Many people between the ages of 40 and 74 don't go and have their health checked because they feel physically normal and healthy, but what they don't know is that some conditions might not present with symptoms for many years. Having a health check will help you to be better prepared for a healthier future."

### **OLD SCHOOL UPDATE**

As everyone will be aware, the Old School is undergoing the latest of its many updates during its 370 year history. Fundraising to achieve this has been going on very successfully over the last year or two and the total now stands at over £11,500.

This has enabled work to start on the kitchen, plans for which were on display at the recent AGM. It is scheduled to last for about 6 weeks from 11<sup>th</sup> February, but the cold weather has already meant that floor screed is taking some time to dry so it may be a few days longer. With such an old building it's impossible to know what will be discovered once current installations are removed. However, happily the worst fears over the damp on the front wall of the kitchen were not realised.

The plans for the toilet refurbishment and installation of disabled facilities have been revised which could mean that the cost should be less than originally thought. Planning and listed building permissions are currently in train.

To celebrate the completion of the new kitchen there will be an event in April. And the fundraising continues, with a plant sale on 19<sup>th</sup> May. Don't forget to pot up any split plants or spares from the greenhouse seed trays.

Now that the Abthorpe Nursery School has closed the Old School is available for hire at any time. There is an upholstery class taking place on Mondays and the committee is keen to attract other users. So if you know of anyone looking for somewhere to hold an activity, or you would like to see a particular activity take place in the village, then please get in touch with Jan Miles, the Secretary, on 857427.

### **THE MARMITE TEST**

Wind turbines are a bit like Marmite; people either dislike them intensely or think they're beautiful. Now that an application has been made to South Northamptonshire Council for a single large wind turbine to be built within sight of Abthorpe no doubt villagers will make up their minds whether to support or oppose the planning application. The plans are to erect one Enercom E53 turbine that measures 60 metres to the hub and 86 metres to the blade tip. The proposed site is at Poplars Farm in Wappenham parish not far from the top of the steep hill on the road that leads from Wappenham to Syresham.

A very detailed landscape and visual report submitted with the application states that from the core of our village there would be no views of the proposed development.

Homes on Wappenham Road and Brackley Lane may be able to see the turbine. It has been estimated that turbine noise should be below the daytime and night time noise criteria.

So whether you believe that the proposed turbine would be a useless, ugly, unmerited blot on our beautiful landscape or an interesting addition to the view, please make your views known to the case officer Claire Whitehead at SNC on 322132 or go to [snc.planning-register.co.uk/plandisp.aspx?recno=68383](http://snc.planning-register.co.uk/plandisp.aspx?recno=68383).

### **ABTHORPE BOOK CLUB**

The group is settling into a comfortable pattern of informal monthly meetings to chew over the latest chosen book. Previous Booker prize winners or nominations have been the focus recently, with *A Sense of an Ending* by Julian Barnes, and the tome of *Wolf Hall* by Hilary Mantel over the two months around Christmas. Then as an antidote to that, the most recent book is *Skios* by David Frayn, a much lighter and shorter choice from the Guardian books of the year.

For March, one of this year's Booker nominations has been selected: *The Lighthouse* by Alison Moore. Anyone would be more than welcome to join the discussion on 18<sup>th</sup> March. Just contact Alison

Symmers on [symmers@abthorpe.net](mailto:symmers@abthorpe.net) for details

### **THIRD YEAR ON SAFARI**

Following the success of the previous two Safari Suppers a third excursion is planned for 11<sup>th</sup> May.

For those unfamiliar with the concept, it involves providing one course for 6 guests and yourselves. After each course, everyone moves to a different house with a new set of dining companions. So over three courses you meet quite a variety of people (not that we're insinuating anything about the people of Abthorpe!) and if previous experience is anything to go by have some fun and good conversation along the way. Everyone starts together at one venue for a reception drink then gathers again at the end of the evening at one house for coffee. Although planning a course needs some thought as you only have a limited time to finish it off before serving, there is plenty of experience and help at hand to guide you through. It is definitely not a competition to show off your gourmet cooking.

This is a social not a fund-raising evening and is priced as such at £18 per person which covers all your food and wine. Everyone hosting a course is given an allowance for that course, deducted from the price of the ticket.

And all hosts are alerted to any food allergies to be catered for. The event is limited to 64 people, so there are 8 hosts for each of the three courses, plus one hosting the pre-dinner drinks and another the coffee. If you would like to attend please email [safari@abthorpe.net](mailto:safari@abthorpe.net) immediately, giving your name and telephone number and indicating which course you would like to host; or you can call Andrea Lambert on 850536. If the event is over-subscribed by March 27<sup>th</sup> lots will be drawn.

As this is the only notification which will come round - no leafleting of the village is planned - do get in touch now if you would like to take part.

### **CHURCH NEWS**

*Barbara Malcomson*

We had a lovely pancake tea on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> February. It was a successful afternoon with lovely cakes, a quiz on all things Shrove Tuesday, treasure hunt, raffle and of course the pancakes themselves. We raised just over £220 too. Thank you to everyone who helped in any way and those who supported us.

Some of you may have noticed that a chunk of the churchyard wall has fallen down. The Archdeacon gave her permission for the repair, which has now been completed.

The annual Parochial Church Meeting will be held in church on

Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> April at 7.30pm. It is an opportunity to hear what has been going on in the church and what will be happening. If you would like to be able to vote at this meeting, you need to be a member of the Electoral Roll. A new roll is being prepared at the moment and anyone who was on the previous roll will also need to fill in a form. Steve Andrews, the electoral roll officer on 857654 has the appropriate forms.

The church spring clean will take place on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> March from 10am to noon. All hands welcome: a chance for some exercise, chat and refreshments.

Recent tote winners have been Tina and Darren Emerton who won £227.50. In January Rob and Barbara Smith were the winners of £230 and most recently Sylvi and Dave Coleman scooped the February prize of £227.50.

Services for March and April:

Mothering Sunday, 10<sup>th</sup> March: Holy Eucharist Service at 11am

Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> March: Holy Eucharist Service at 9.15am

Maundy Thursday, 28<sup>th</sup> March: The Last Supper and Watch from 7.30pm to 10pm

Easter Sunday, 31<sup>st</sup> March: Holy Eucharist Service at 9.15am

Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> April: Holy Eucharist Service at 11am

Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> April: Holy Eucharist Service at 9.15am

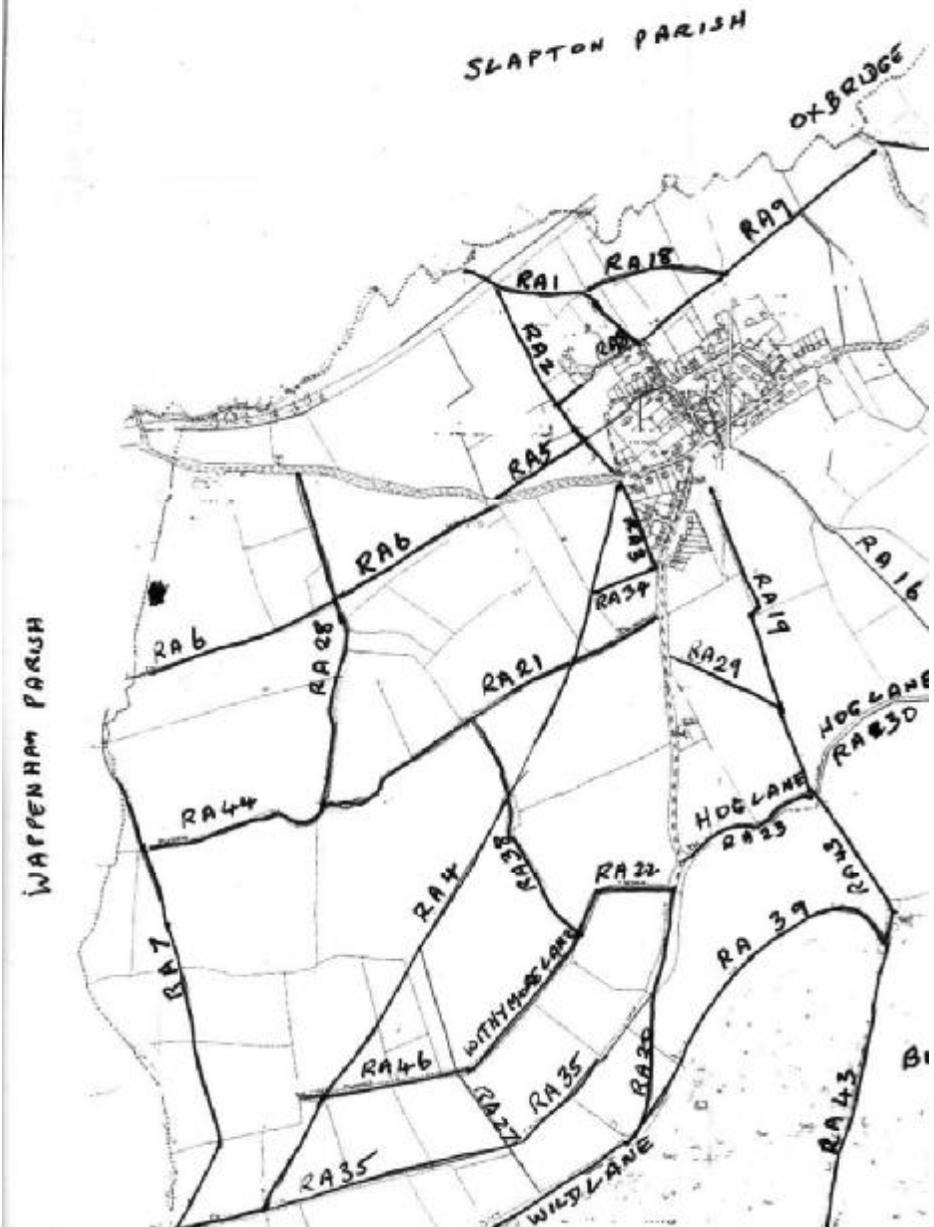
Everyone is welcome to any of the services.

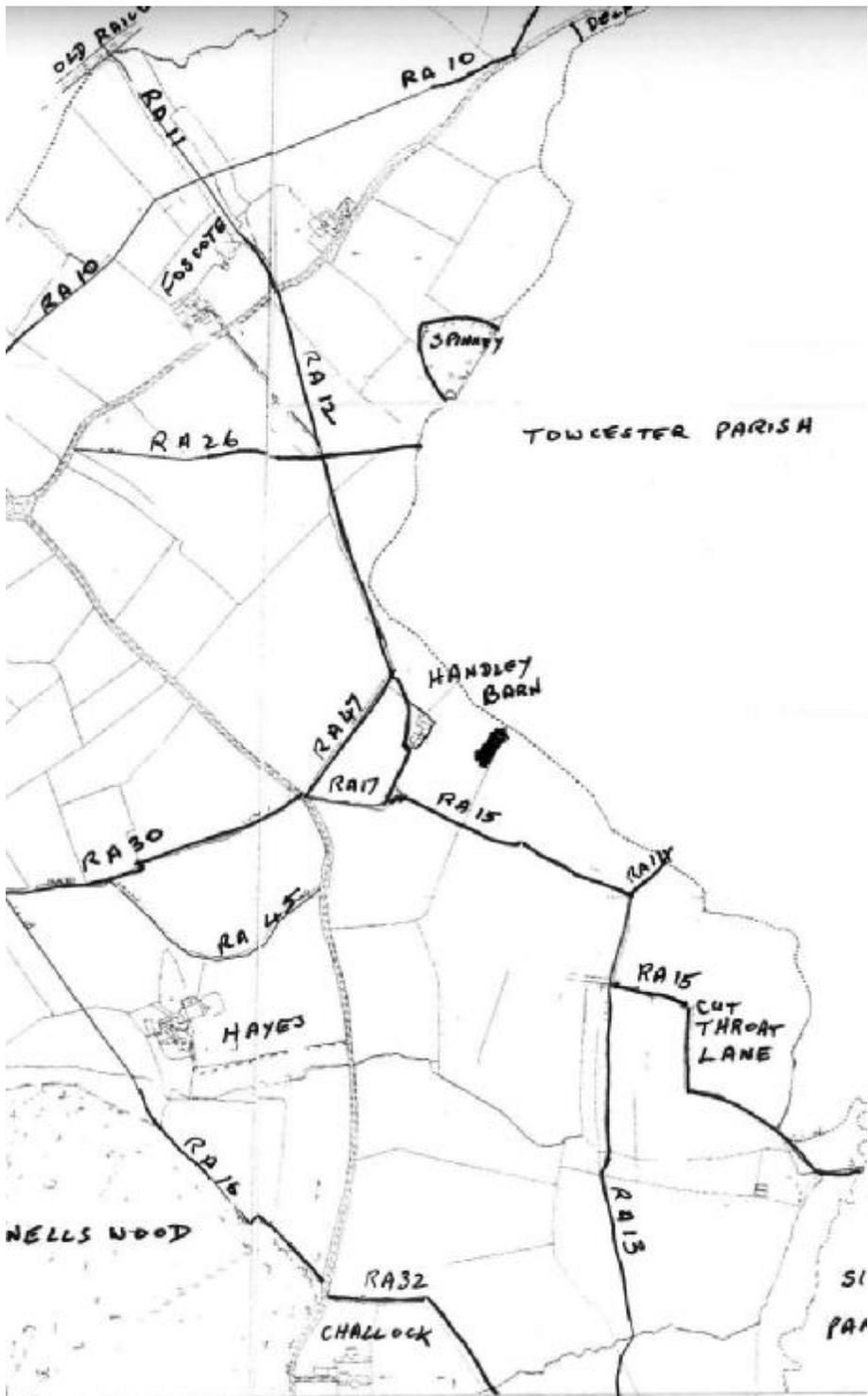
### **ABTHORPE FOOTPATHS**

Though there are many paths and ridings through Bucknell Wood only a few are official footpaths or bridleways. The meeting of the paths are marked by yew trees, called variously five points, six points or eight points. These can be used as identifying points if one gets lost, eight points being the centre of the wood where a byway crosses a bridleway along with six other tracks meeting there. Beyond Bucknell Wood is an area called The Potash, near Wappenham Lodge Farm, where a woodsman burnt wood, the ashes of which made a good fertiliser. Footpaths to Abthorpe, Slapton, Syresham and Wappenham all radiate from the Potash because villagers went there to collect the ashes.

When the fields were smaller it was easy to follow a footpath via stiles but even with larger fields the majority of those radiating from the village can be retraced by lining up with the church spire. They were originally for work rather than leisure purposes so usually follow the shortest route. They were used by people working in the fields or

# ABTHORPE FOOTPATHS





walking between Abthorpe and other villages. Now the paths are all numbered and have a schedule which describes the route of each one.

Some lane names date back a long time. Hog Lane, east of Brackley Lane, led to the open field Green Hedge next to the Silverstone road. From the track towards Handley Barn another leads off to Cut Throat Lane which served early enclosure small fields. It was so called because it is the shape of an open cut throat razor. Beside it was an osier bed which was rented in 1798 to Cockerill, a Towcester basket maker.

The name of Withymore Lane derived from the large boggy area to the west of Bucknell Wood called Widymore. Withies were willow stems which could be used in thatching.

Potland Lane was thought in recent times to be so called because of household rubbish which was deposited by some villagers beside the lane before rubbish collections began in the 1930s. However in 1826, long before houses were built in Brackley Lane or the west end of Wappenham Road, the lane ran through a large field called Great Potlands Close. This lane was the most direct route to Wappenham. A small piece of a large bowl made from original Potterspury ware has been discovered off Potland Lane. The production of Potterspury ware ceased in the early 1700s.

A few ways have picturesque names with no known origin such as Hog Lane and Wild Lane. Two designated six foot wide paths, one from the Stocking Frame to Bucknell Wood and the other from the end of Main Street to Oxbridge, were original village tracks before a road was built early in the 1800s to connect the cross roads with Silverstone. From Oxbridge the path was the quickest way to Foscoate and from the Stocking Frame the road went through the wood to the main riding then joined a track to West End, Silverstone.

Wild Lane goes past the wood towards Syresham. It is about the same width as a driftway, ie sixty feet, used by cattle drovers. Locally the nearest drovers' road was the Welsh Lane from Wales to London. Some distance after leaving Southam it passes Helmdon, crossing the modern A43 near Syresham, onto Biddlesden then Buckingham. Another drove road, Banbury Lane, is part of the route from Wales to Northampton, locally passing by Pattishall where there is a known driftway. Sometimes the animal trade was outwards from the county with cattle from South Northants being driven to sell at fairs in Oxfordshire and Wiltshire when lesser well-documented drove roads may have been used.

From 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026 any historic right of way which has not been legally registered will be extinguished (Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000) even though it might have been in use for centuries. Some parishes have only a few paths registered on the county council definitive map but Abthorpe has 43 registered. Some of these were probably not in use before 1949 but there was a period then when anyone could register paths and some people did so without eliciting any challenge from the land owners. After 1975 the county council notified the parish council that they wanted to downgrade some rights of way. Nothing happened until 1982 when the government announced that there would be no more changes except for those already in the pipeline. NCC then applied to downgrade various vehicle rights of way and bridleways. Abthorpe representatives went to the public rights of way enquiry in Brackley to put forward arguments against downgrading, whilst Mr Dennis Nightingale on behalf of NCC opposed that view. Before her final decision Mrs Harris, the Inspector from the Department of Environment, walked all of Abthorpe's disputed paths with some villagers and Mr Nightingale.

The main reason that NCC did not want to keep the vehicle rights of way, then called CRFs (cart roads used mainly as foot paths) was that the county council was legally obliged to maintain them as they were the old village roads. Most were established at the time of old inclosures sometime in the early 1600s to allow villagers vehicular right of passage to their fields adjacent to the lanes. The result of the enquiry was the downgrading of all Abthorpe CRFs except two: Wild Lane and one in the wood. All CRFs were later reclassified as BOATS, byways open to all traffic. At the time of the enquiry Mrs Harris was assured by Mr Nightingale that all the CRFs which might be downgraded by the county council would still retain vehicular access for landholders to get to their fields.

At the time some of the bridleways were downgraded to footpaths. The right of way over a track classified as a bridleway is on foot and on horseback, possibly with the right to drive animals. However, it cannot be used by wheeled vehicles (including, bizarrely, pushchairs – probably because the modern off-road type weren't even thought of in 1968) except bicycles which are allowed by section 30 of the Countryside Act 1968. Cyclists, along with horses led or ridden, would be committing trespass against the landholders if they used a footpath without permission.

Abthorpe Parish Council waymarked all the parish footpaths in the 1980s. NCC has a duty to keep a definitive map record of all rights of way in the

county. However, this is only a record of the existence of those rights, and parishes need to register all their rights of way with the county council. Some in other villages walk their paths once a year but it would be a long job to cover all forty three in Abthorpe parish. But as they are all paths open to the public they can be walked at any time so long as walkers keep to the Country Code: please close gates and keep dogs under close control. The Protection of Livestock Act 1953 states that it is an offence to allow a dog to be at large in a field where there are sheep, at large being defined as not on a lead or otherwise under close control. Also the Animals Act 1971 states that it is an offence to allow a dog to chase or attack livestock. A farmer may shoot a dog which is chasing or attacking livestock without being liable to compensate the dog's owner. Further information can be obtained from the Ramblers' publication - *Rights of Way, a guide to law and practice* by Riddall and Trevelyan: [www.ramblers.co.uk/rightsofwaybook/](http://www.ramblers.co.uk/rightsofwaybook/)

M E H

### DIRTY DOGGEREL

At dawn and dusk I walk my hound  
 Brackley Lane, with few cars, is my favourite round.  
 Houses so neat, front lawns so trim  
 Ugh! There's more dog dirt again! (but I know it's not him).  
 When Fido does his necessary "do", I scoop it all up in a bag or two.  
 Why aren't other canine owners similarly aware, when their dog does  
 its poo  
 Do they really not care?  
 Since Christmas the mess has become visibly worse  
 For residents of the Lane it must be a curse.  
 If you find it sick-making to pick-up after your dog  
 Imagine what it's like for a non-owner to clear up your dog's "log".  
 So come on, you "dog-lovers" when you go off on your "walkies!"  
 Don't turn a blind eye - scoop up your dog's "naughties".  
 And, this motto applies to all doggies, large and small  
 It's simply not fair to our residents, not fair, not fair at all!  
 Woof! **Woof!**

A Dog Owner

### **'WRAPPED UP IN NORTHAMPTONSHIRE' CAMPAIGN**

The recent cold snap has come as a timely reminder of Northamptonshire County Council and NHS Northamptonshire's campaign to help protect vulnerable people during the cold winter months.

Winter packs containing thermometers, carbon monoxide detectors, service providers' information and a practical checklist to ensure you or someone you care about is warm this winter are available on the designated helpline number 0845 677 2220, or [www.wrappedup.org.uk](http://www.wrappedup.org.uk)

The campaign encourages residents to check on and ensure that vulnerable neighbours, friends and relatives in high risk groups are looked out for this winter. In Northamptonshire around 13 per cent of households are elderly people living on their own, with 11.5 per cent of households living in fuel poverty.

### **FILM ABTHORPE**

The film evenings offer a bright spot during the winter months with the shared experience of watching an eclectic variety of films informally at the Old School. *Mrs Henderson Presents* was the offering on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> February, a very entertaining Judi Dench film, with an accompanying

short looking back nostalgically at days gone by. The next date has been set of 21<sup>st</sup> March when the main film will be *Mystic River*, produced by Clint Eastwood and for which Sean Penn won Best Actor and Tim Robbins Best Supporting Actor. An uplifting spring choice for April 25<sup>th</sup> is *A Star is Born* if you would like to make a diary note.

Everyone is very welcome to come along for 7.30 with whatever liquid refreshment to make your evening enjoyable. Crisps and the like are already provided. Apart from a social evening, seeing a film on the big screen has its advantages.

### **MINIBUS HIRE**

A quick reminder that South Northants Volunteer Bureau has a new 16-seater minibus and trained driver available for hire by community and not-for-profit groups, charities and schools, with generous special offers and discounts available. Contact Nick on 358264, [nick@snyvb.org.uk](mailto:nick@snyvb.org.uk).

### **ABTHORPE BROADBAND ASSOCIATION**

The ABbA AGM was held on 22<sup>nd</sup> January. The well-attended meeting heard that the bid to seek government funding to bring superfast broadband into the village was taking so long and involved more conditions than

anticipated that the first phase of the project will now proceed without external funding.

This involves obtaining a fibre connection to the valley and connecting it via wireless to the villages involved - Abthorpe, Slapton, Wappenham, Lois Weedon and Weston. Since the meeting detailed discussions have taken place with potential service providers and one of them has been selected to install the connection. It is still too soon to give a firm date when it can be brought into service, but it is hoped to do so during March or April. Meanwhile, detailed planning for the wireless network has proceeded, equipment is being purchased and technical teams in each of the villages organised. Progress will gather pace as the weather improves. Everyone who has registered on [www.tovevalley.net](http://www.tovevalley.net) will receive notification as soon as a connection can be offered. There is still time to register if you have not already done so.

The project is now live – the waiting is almost over.

### **NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH OFFER**

The local Neighbourhood Watch association is offering a range of personal and property alarms for sale at 'especially keen prices' which they have negotiated with suppliers.

There are personal safety alarms

at £6.50 and £2.50 each, and a multi-function alarm which is commonly fitted to a shed or garage, but also has personal alarm and doorbell functions at £10.50.

More information: [www.snast.co.uk](http://www.snast.co.uk) or to order contact Tina Adey at [tadey51@btinternet.com](mailto:tadey51@btinternet.com). Postage and packing are charged at cost or you can collect from Tina in Yardley Gobion.

### **NAB BUS IN TOWCESTER**

The local branch of the National Association for the Blind has a distinctive specially adapted vehicle which for the last 14 years has been used as a mobile information and resource unit. The bus will be visiting Waitrose car park between 1.30 and 3.30 on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> April where a trained information officer can give advice, support and information to visually impaired people and their carers.

You can also see aids to help with reading and writing, cooking, telling the time, large print items and much more.

### **OLDER RESIDENTS' CHRISTMAS LUNCH**

With outside temperatures well below freezing, the warm comfort of the New Inn was a welcome venue for the annual Christmas lunch for the older people of the



*From the left, Glenda Holton, Bob Salmons, Bet Rush and Melanina Giuliani being served by Sian, Jan and Pam.*

village organised by the Village Fund Group. Seventeen sat down to a very appetising turkey lunch, complemented by a selection of wines and followed by the traditional Christmas pudding.

This lunch has now become one of Abthorpe's Christmas events and the senior citizens present thanked the Fund's organisers Jan Miles and Pam Watkins, plus Steve and Sian from the catering team. Long may this tradition continue.

### **THE RIVER TOVE IN FLOOD**

The recent heavy rains have shown the wisdom of the unknown people who first selected the site for our village close to the clean freshwater Meadwell Spring but well above the River Tove that regularly spills out onto its flood plain.

Over the centuries the meanders that occurred naturally on the Tove's flood plain have been eradicated as the river has been channelled into a straightened bed. But even today

it's possible to pick out where the river once ran by the slight undulations on the surface of the water meadows.

Just before Christmas the Tove, or Sowe as it is still known by some people higher up the valley, was in full flood. At Oxbridge where the Abthorpe to Blakesley road crosses over the river the normally peaceful little brook was flexing its muscles. The Environment Agency's Tove monitoring station at Greens Norton showed that on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> December at 09:45 the river level was 1.86 metres, well above the typical range at that location of between 0.32 and 0.84 metres.

**CHRISTMAS FOUNTAIN**

And not only was the Tove experiencing flood conditions. With a backdrop of seasonal lights, the Christmas fountain laid on in the middle of Main Street by contractors repairing the mains water supply was much appreciated.



**PEOPLE**

A warm welcome to Leanne and Jan Powell who have moved into 30 Wappenham Road from Lincolnshire. We hope they will enjoy living in the village.

Sian Richardson and Stephen Casemore who run the restaurant at the New Inn as business partners are now planning another partnership. They announced their engagement on return from a holiday in Thailand before Christmas. Our congratulations to them both.

**DIARY***Thursday 28 February*

Free NHS health check, Towcester Town Hall, 10.00 to 3.00

*Sunday 10 March*

Mothering Sunday Holy Eucharist, 11.00

Special menu at the New Inn, 12.00 to 4.00

*Monday 11 March*

Parish Council meeting, 7.45, Old School

*Monday 18 March*

Abthorpe Book Club, 8.00

**DIARY (CONTD)**

*Thursday 21 March*

Film Abthorpe, the Old School, 7.30

*Saturday 23 March*

Church spring clean, 10.00 to noon

*Sunday 24 March*

Charity quiz, the New Inn, 7.30, £3 including supper

*Maundy Thursday, 28 March*

The Last Supper and Watch, 7.30pm to 10.00

*Sunday 31 March*

Easter Sunday Holy Eucharist, 9.15

Special menu at the New Inn, 12.00 - 4.00

*Monday 1 April*

Easter Monday Easter egg hunt and special menu, the New Inn

*Wednesday 3 April*

NAB information bus, Waitrose car park, 1.30 - 3.30

*Tuesday 9 April*

Annual Parochial church meeting, St John the Baptist, 7.30

*Monday 22 April*

Parish Council meeting, 7.45, Old School

*Tuesday 23 April*

St George's Day celebration at the New Inn, special charity menu

*Thursday 25 April*

Film Abthorpe, the Old School, 7.30

*Saturday 11 May*

Safari Supper, 6.30

*Monday 13 May*

Annual Parish Meeting, 7.45, Old School

*Sunday 19 May*

Plant Sale, Old School