

ABTALK

A photograph of two white sheep standing in a blue metal pen. The sheep are looking towards the camera. The pen is made of vertical and horizontal blue bars. The ground is dark soil with some green grass. The background shows more of the pen and some green grass.

PARISH COUNCIL

Keith Fenwick, Chairman

There are two meetings to report. In January we set the precept for the coming year at £4,000, an increase of £250. This follows a substantial increase last year. As much of our expenditure, such as street lighting and audit fees are outside our control we have little room to economise. We did however decide that the refund of TADD (Towcester Area Door to Door) subscriptions would in future be limited to those currently registered with TADD. When bus tokens were issued we provided a subsidy to bus users. When the free bus pass was introduced we allocated a similar sum to paying for TADD subscriptions, but our auditors have quite rightly pointed out that this is an open-ended commitment. By restricting the payment to current members we will cap our expenditure and, in time, it will reduce.

The Parish Council is a member of Northamptonshire County Association of Local Councils. Last year their subscription increased substantially to equal about 8% of our budget so we have been considering whether

to retain our membership. We do get some useful advice but do not feel we get our money's worth. On the other hand, rules and regulations keep changing making it difficult to keep up to date. We will continue our membership for the coming year but review it again next January.

On 7th March most of the matters discussed were routine. There have been no further developments relating to Mini Farm; the recent planning application to extend the site was rejected but an appeal is still possible.

The Council has now obtained a Defibrillator for the village, paid for largely through a grant from the County Council. This machine can be used to restart the heart if someone suffers heart failure. Similar machines have been installed in many public places. Operation is relatively simple. If it has to be used contact is first made with the ambulance service who will guide the user through the necessary steps. The Defibrillator is housed in a relatively large box and we hope to be able to install it in the telephone

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kiosk on the village green. We want as many people in the village as possible to be familiar with it.

The purchase price includes a training session which will take place on Tuesday 3rd May in the Old School starting at 7pm. Please make a note of the date and come along if you can.

HANDLEY PARK SOLAR FARM

Back in May 2014 the Parish Council discussed a planning application to South Northamptonshire Council for a proposed solar park at Handley Park Farm objecting on the grounds that the proposed access at Foscoate was dangerous.

After a lengthy planning process permission was finally given for the construction of the solar park to go ahead with the proviso that access to the site should only be through the farm entrance at Handley Bends, about half a mile from McDonalds.

Haymaker Energy, part of the Pegasus Group of companies, emphasises that planning consent is for 26 years. After that period of time has elapsed the land will be returned to full agricultural use.

NEWS FROM THE CHURCH

*Barbara Malcomson
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Christmas seems a long time ago but it was lovely to see so many people in church at the Christmas concert, the Carol Service and Christmas Eucharist. The space created by removing the pews from the north side of the church worked really well when we served mulled wine and mince pies after the carol service.

Forthcoming services:

10th April	11am	Holy Eucharist Service
17th April	9.15am	Holy Eucharist Service
8th May	11am	Holy Eucharist Service
15th May	9.15am	Holy Eucharist Service;
26th June	10am	Patronal Eucharist Service (birth of John the Baptist) which will be a benefice service

The annual church meeting this year will be held on Tuesday 19th April, 7pm in the Old School. Everyone is welcome. Come and find out what has been happening at St John the Baptist Church over the past year.

Leah Abbott was the lucky winner of the tote in November (£205) whilst in December Chris Scrivener won £205. The January winner was Steve Neasham who won £200 and Mike Matthews scooped £202.50 in February. It was Rona Cambray's turn in March to win £205.50. Congratulations to them all. Thank you to everyone who takes part in the tote and if you do not, but would like to join, please contact me.

Following our temporary removal of the pews in November, we have now met with our architect to discuss our options for this space as we want it to be in use as much as possible. Ideally, we are thinking along the lines of using it for refreshments with a servery and also a much needed toilet. Our next plan is to visit other churches in the county that have had similar work done.

On some Sunday afternoons over the summer we are holding some 'Tea and Piece' events (a cup of tea/coffee and a piece of cake). We hope it will give people the opportunity to come and have a look at the new space, visit the church if you have not been in it already, have a chat with other villagers, enjoy homemade cakes and raise a little money at the same time. The first one will be held on Sunday 15th May from 3 to 5pm.

As well as the Messy Church which is held in Whittlebury Reading Room at 10am on the third Saturday of the month, there is also one held at Paulerspury School on the third Tuesday of the month at 3.15pm. Messy Church is aimed at families.

For further information on anything please contact me.

SAFARI SUPPER

Missing from the social calendar last year, the Safari Supper is making a very welcome return on Saturday 3rd September. The Abthorpe version involves a host couple providing one course for 6 guests and themselves. After each course everyone moves to a different house with a new set of dining companions, which means that over three courses you meet quite a few fellow villagers, with fun and good conversation along the way.

Everyone gathers at one venue at the start of the evening for pre-dinner drinks before being directed to their starter course house. At the end of the evening all come together again for coffee (and to finish off the opened bottles of wine which have been collected along the way!).

As there will be a maximum of 64 people (32 couples), most participants will be hosts of a course. Although this can take some thought as

there is limited time to finish it off before serving, there is plenty of experience and help on hand, and most importantly, it is definitely not a competition to show off your gourmet cooking.

This is purely a social occasion, not fund-raising, and as such is priced at £20 per person which includes all food and wine. Each host is given an allowance for the course they are providing, deducted from the price of their ticket. All hosts are alerted to any food allergies to be catered for.

If you would like to be part of the safari adventure email safari@abthorpe.net. There won't be flyers for this event, so do get in touch if you'd like to take part or know more.

TOWCESTER FOOD FESTIVAL

Towcester Food Festival is looking for Festivalmakers to support the festival and act as the public face of the event. Volunteers need only give a few hours around the weekend of the event on 11th and 12th June. They will be responsible for stewarding, greeting and assisting visitors. Festivalmakers will receive two free tickets to the event, a food, tea & coffee voucher and a branded Festivalmaker T-shirt.

The recruitment evening is being held at the Volunteer Centre, Whittons

Lane, Towcester on Wednesday 20th April from 7 to 8pm. For more information call Lorraine on 358264 or email lorraine@snavb.org.uk

OLD SCHOOL NEWS

27th January proved not to be the most clement weather for encouraging people to come to the AGM, but it could also be that everyone is very satisfied with the way the Management Committee is running the Old School. The committee members remain unchanged: Richard Gladdle (chairman), Jan Miles (secretary), Lynn Neasham (treasurer), Sarah Lawson, Janet Dancer, Fi Noble and Tim Pope.

The accounts presented look healthy with the year end at September 2015 showing a balance of £10,573 after all the work on the toilet rebuild had been taken into account. Fundraising for the year (to September 2015) totalled £3,260, made up as follows:

Coffee morning	£424
Plant sale	£1,006
Fish and chip supper	£1,203
Women in Farming	£55
Truckers' breakfast	£341
Donations	£230

Thoughts are now turning to Phase 4 of the refurbishment plan, this time the main hall. With the kitchen, meeting room and toilets now looking spruce, a revitalised

central area will complete the internal upgrading of the Old School. The scoping work has started; more details to follow. Fundraising will be concentrated this year on providing a contribution towards that budget, which hopefully will once again be helped with grants. Your past support for all the events is much appreciated, and is equally important now as the committee continues to improve this beautiful old building.

Yoga classes have started each Friday morning from 9.30 to 11.00 and are proving popular. If you would like to join in just turn up with your mat or contact Flore Stretch: 07939 050846, florestretch@outlook.com, www.florestretch.co.uk. The first lesson is free and £7 subsequently.

And more exercise should shortly be available when the hall is set up for badminton. Flyers will be on their way in due course.

People up and down the country are celebrating the Queen's 90th birthday this year. While the actual date is 21st April, the celebrations will be close to her official birthday, over the weekend of 11th and 12th June. Abthorpe cannot be left out, so the Old School committee is organising an event on the village green on Sunday 12th June. This will start around mid-day and include a bar, games for the younger ones

(in body and in mind) and of course food. Full details will be circulated to everyone shortly but make a note of the date in your diary now. This will replace the fish and chip supper on the Green this year.

Other events on the calendar are a return of the ever-popular Truckers' Breakfast on 9th April. Service will start at 8.00am for the early risers, continuing until 11.00. Apart from a really good breakfast, you can have a convivial chat with neighbours, or just read the papers. It's a great start to the weekend.

The coffee mornings started again on 11th February with a pleasing number of people keen to come out for a chat, and on the way raised £247. It is hoped the next one will be in April, followed by early July; the dates are still to be confirmed. But already fixed is a summer gathering on 2nd August at 12 Wappenham Road.

One of the highlights for gardeners is the plant sale, this year on Sunday 22nd May from 2.00pm. Now is the time to start thinking about adding a few extra seeds to your spring planting and potting up cuttings or split plants.

It is worth keeping an eye on the new noticeboard which has been kindly donated by Nick Green. It serves as a useful reminder of all the

events planned and has been fixed to the courtyard door leading into the Old School.



NEWS FROM THE NEW INN

The pub continues to flourish with live music on the second and last Sunday afternoons of the month. On the evening of the last Sunday the quiz continues to raise generous sums for the winning team's chosen charity. At Christmas the Hope Centre in Northampton, which focuses its work on homelessness, received £185 which with £46.25 gift aid totalled £231.25 courtesy

of the Fireside Nookies. In January the Alzheimer's Society benefited by £101, and in February the Calverters selected the Air Ambulance to receive the £150 raised. The March quiz was somewhat depleted in numbers, possibly because the date had been moved to the third Sunday because of Easter, but still £112 was given to the local branch of Riding for the Disabled chosen by No Eye Deer. RDA was delighted to be able to purchase looped reins as an aid for disabled riders. The next dates are 24th April and 29th May, the bank holiday.

A new menu for spring is now on show. And don't forget to book for those special days: St George's day on Saturday 23rd April which will feature traditional English fare, and Father's Day on Sunday 19th June.

RED CROSS

The Red Cross is looking for people to spare some time collecting during Red Cross week, 8th-14th May, either by taking a Red Cross collection tin from house to house or helping with a street collection on 14th May.

If you can help, Susan Heath-Fowler would like to hear from you: susanheathfowler@redcross.org.uk; 07977567570.

Interestingly, the local area played its part in WWI by providing auxiliary Red Cross hospitals at Blakesley Hall

(which was demolished in the 1950s), Towcester, Duncote Hall and one for officers only at Lois Weedon

VSCC NEW YEAR GATHERING

Once again the Vintage Sports Car Club held a New Year gathering in Abthorpe. The club, founded in 1934, provides an opportunity for people to enjoy pre-World War II cars competitively and socially. Considering that the weather had been so wet, an impressive line-up of historic cars graced the parking area of the New Inn. Whilst their owners enjoyed hospitality and conviviality inside, many people gazed with admiration at such wonderful and historic workmanship.

There were Bentleys and Lagondas, a Lea Francis plus an MG and others. The only foreign marque was provided by the favourite transport of Inspector Maigret on television, a Citroën Traction Avant model.



(Above) Lea Francis (partly hidden), Bentley and Lagonda.

(Left) Another Bentley, Lagonda and the Citroën

PEOPLE

Newly arrived villager Rio James White was born on 19th January weighing-in at 7lbs 4ozs. His mother Naomi and father Stuart who live in School Lane are absolutely delighted, whilst grandparents Beverley and Michael are celebrating the arrival of their first grandchild.



And another first grandchild is being celebrated by Alison and David Robbins who announced the safe arrival by fixing four pink balloons to a bush in their front garden. Their daughter Katie gave birth to a healthy 8lb

PEOPLE CONTINUED

1oz daughter on 12th March. Katie, who until her marriage had spent all her life in Abthorpe, and her husband Chris Deal are absolutely delighted and intend to have their daughter christened in Abthorpe Church at a date yet to be decided. They have named her Elizabeth but she will be known as Lily. Dr Katie works as an archaeologist for the British Museum and Dr Chris is employed by Network Rail.

More arrivals are Lisa, Carl and son Ashley Mephram who have moved to 39 Wappenham Road. Lisa works in child care while Carl is a gardener. Ashley, who is 10 is a keen ice hockey player.

Rachel and Alun have set up their new home at 28 Wappenham Road, moving from St Albans and Barford in Warwickshire respectively. They plan to marry in Abthorpe village church in November, but between preparations they are enjoying the countryside and exploring the local cycling and walking routes. Rachel is a nurse lecturer at the Royal Veterinary College while Alun is a project manager with National Grid.

Welcome also to Hannah Seckington and Callum Jones who have made 32 Wappenham Road their home. Hannah has moved from Weston where her family has farmed for many years. It is not surprising therefore that horse riding has been a favourite pastime. She is working at Savills in Banbury having transferred from London to give herself an easier commute. Callum works in construction recruitment in Milton Keynes, and has a keen interest in rugby, playing for the Towcestrians first team. He has just moved from Silverthorpe on the Silverstone road, a home which his parents, Nigel and Fleur Jones, bought a couple of years ago (and whose move to Abthorpe parish from Silverstone the editors managed to miss - with apologies!). Nigel spends quite a bit of his spare time riding his bicycle, while Fleur's forte is baking special cakes. Hopefully we can sample some at a future village event.

WAPPENHAM WIND TURBINE

For those of you following the many twists and turns of the planning application by Aidan Jones of Poplars Farm, Wappenham, to site a wind turbine on his land which will be visible from some homes in Abthorpe, on 3rd December Mr Jones's appeal against the application was successful and the planning permission reinstated.

The statement from the Action Group, which has been fighting long and hard against the proposal, simply said: "The petition against the proposed wind turbine development, taken prior to the Inspector's initial decision, was signed by over 72% of all households in Wappenham Village. It was with that mandate that WWTAG fought this decision and took up the cause when South Northants District Council failed to actively represent their constituents' views.

"It is with regret we inform you that following the latest appeal from the applicant, the original inspector's decision to allow the unwanted development to go ahead has been re-instated".

ABTHORPE IN THE WAR: THE UNSEEN SIDE

When people talk about life in the Second World War it is usually about what it was like on the front or for the worried relatives at home, but it lasted over five years and as many people were in reserved occupations life had to go on as near normally as possible.

This is reflected in the village news in the local paper, the *Northampton Mercury*, where the mundane far outweighed the serious war items. People listened to the war news on the wireless so perhaps the paper's editors thought that the weekly paper would sell well as neighbours, parents and children could all read about each other or see their own names in print.

There was very little local crime so P C Suter, the local policeman who lived in Silverstone but covered both villages, justified his existence by pouncing on road users for very minor misdemeanours. He must have spent a lot of time lurking in the dark to feed the local magistrates' court with so much work. For riding a bicycle with no lights Edmund Kendall, Kath Holton and several others were fined 5/- (25p) each. No matter that the batteries might have run down since they left work, P C Suter would be waiting to catch them. Fines became higher: in 1944 Ron Rush and Barbara were each fined 10/- (50p) for no rear light, with a summons against the latter for having no white surfaces on the rear mudguard being dismissed

on payment of costs.

Tommy Warren was keeping the New Inn in the 1940s when he was fined for not immobilising a motor, considered important in case an enemy parachuted in and stole the vehicle. Despite the fact that fuel was only available for business purposes all signposts had been removed so that any thief would very soon either get lost or run out of fuel.

A favourite trick of the police was to wait for a farmer to drive his tractor across a road to his fields on the other side then pounce, as most tractors were not normally used anywhere but in the fields. So it was in 1946 Owen Tew was fined for no registration number displayed, no insurance, no road fund licence and driving a tractor without tyres on the road: the lot.

Policemen loomed large in a farmer's life, calling any time to make sure he only kept two dogs without the obligatory dog licence. When Jack Barford had a third young dog his wife ran and hid with it inside a very smelly, dirty hen house until the policeman had left

When Lyn Davis had his sheep dipped adjacent to the school all the children watched as the policeman viewed every sheep and the dogs being pushed under the dip. This was needed to keep sheep ticks and

scab at bay and also kept ticks off the dogs, but who knows what it may have done to the dogs in the long run as sheep dips were fairly potent. During the war DDT was used for everything: in the dip, pump sprayed around the cowshed and the farmer's kitchen to kill all the flies. Powder DDT was shaken over the cattle and again the dogs, as well as being used in the hen coops to kill red mites. The yellow spray used on crops just after the war caused a farm dog to go blind within two weeks but it was another year before the operators were required to wear masks. Later it was withdrawn from use completely.

Sometimes it was damage to animals which alerted possible danger to humans. The whitening treatment used in bread for wartime consumption was known by vets to cause dogs that were fed on it extensively to have fits. One Abthorpe man was very relieved when his collie bitch recovered from frequent fits after being fed dog biscuits rather than the staple white bread that his family used, but no-one suggested they should cut down on their own family consumption.

Grafton View was previously known as Higgs Cottage, but for many more years before that it was called Letts Cottage where a

spiritualist, James Booth Letts, and his sister Jane from Hollowell had lived for 25 years. After Jane died he became a virtual recluse though he caught the bus into Northampton on a Saturday to collect rents of houses he owned there. His appearance gave the impression of poverty and in 1940 his death was announced with a certain insensitivity on the part of the newspaper. It said that 80-year old carpenter Mr Letts was always seen walking about the district wearing his sister's old cape, a sackcloth apron, trousers tied up with string: a pathetic character. The report stated that no one knew he invested his money in stocks and shares, but he left a fortune (for the 1940s) to charity, starting with £1,000 to his sister's charity for poor widows in Hollowell, £3,000 to be invested to endow three hospital beds in Grafton Ward for the kindness he

received whilst in hospital. Grafton was the men's surgical ward at Northampton General in the old part of the hospital. Finally over £13,000 was divided between Guys Hospital and the Salvation Army, with his tools and books being given to children at Dr Barnados.

The *Northampton Mercury* ran a club for children, Merry Comrades Circle, which benefited both the children who were members and charity. The children had their names and ages printed in the paper on their birthdays, encouraging them to buy a copy. They sent in silver paper to raise money for children's hospital wards and also sent money. Those who collected £1 worth of ship halfpennies became captains for a year and were able to go on a bus trip to the pantomime. During the war the money went into a prisoners of war fund.

Extracts of their letters were published. In the column for November 1944 it said, "Little Margaret Rush, Abthorpe, came to the





Halfpenny minted between 1937 and 1957 featuring the Golden Hind.

office with 10/- saved in halfpennies and three penny pieces. She brought the address of a prisoner of war and was so pleased to take a pullover and some gloves from the Merry Comrades to send to him." A victory fund to raise money for hospital radios led to community fundraising but still in the name of the Comrades. Apart from children sending their toys and books, money was raised through recycled Christmas cards, and also putting on whist drives; in 1947 Angela and June Lawrence raised £15 in this way. All the children mentioned lived in Abthorpe.

Edmund and Elsie Kelcher collected silver paper and wrote regularly about what they were doing. The

last Abthorpe event was organised by Glenda Holton and Janet Dancer in the 1970s. The charity carried on until 1988 and at its peak had 10,000 members. In total it raised over £130,000, mostly through children's efforts. It provided radios for all the county hospitals, parcels and presents for soldiers through the Red Cross and bought a gift for every returning soldier after the war. Clearly those in hospital and fighting in the war had the children's sympathy.

One regular item in the paper was photos and details of wounded soldiers. Harry Hinton was wounded, aged 20, whilst serving in North Africa. Three months later in March 1943 his mother, then living in School Lane, had notified the paper that he had been wounded again, still in North Africa. Harry survived the war to live in Silverstone and raise his family.

Copies of the *Northampton Mercury* from 1766 to 1950 can be seen at www.findmypast.co.uk/



TOWCESTER FOOD BANK

Towcester Food Bank's volunteers have thanked the kind and generous people who donated a huge amount of groceries so that their clients, local people in need, did not go hungry over the Christmas period. During December, even though the food bank was closed over the public holidays, 419 local people received supplies of groceries. This figure included 197 children.

Asked why there had been such a large increase in demand there were apparently no clear answers. But as some of the Towcester charities provided leaflets about the food bank's activities with their Christmas gifts to local people this may have raised awareness of the service. A volunteer revealed that the vast majority of the food bank's clients are people on low incomes who are finding life at present a bit

of a struggle.

Details of the types of items which are needed can be found on www.towcester.foodbank.org.uk.

TOVE VALLEY BROADBAND

The AGM was held on 27th January, attended by 30 members. Chairman Eric Malcomson reported on another successful year, with 465 homes now connected. The finances are in good shape. The loans which were given by members to fund the establishment of the system are being gradually repaid; all should be done by 2017. Membership is still increasing but only slowly, which is to be expected given the penetration already achieved. Some of the recent connections have been to more remote properties in the area.

ABbA is also now working on a pilot scheme to connect homes directly by fibre in place of wireless links. Fibre is more reliable but more importantly the capacity to meet any future data requirements. Once the pilot is complete and there is a better understanding of the technology and the cost involved, it will be offered more widely.



Volunteers working at the Food Bank

At present there are about 120 houses in our village of which 92 are connected. If you are want to be connected, register on www.tovevalley.com. Connection can usually be made within a few days. As a not-for-profit company, 'best ever deals' are not offered as inducement to join but once you have paid the initial charge, your bills will be much lower for a greatly improved service with no data limit.



Updating the broadband equipment on Spring Meadow Farm was quick and easy with this portable cherry picker which was hired for half a day. It was also used for work in Bradden and Woodend.

PAMELA ASHCROFT AND HER UNCLE ALBERT POOLE

Pamela Ashcroft (nee Poole) who lives near Kilkenny in the Irish Republic recently made contact. She has been researching her family tree for a number of years and while looking at the village website stumbled across the December 2013 edition of *Abtalk* in which her uncle Albert Derrick Poole was mentioned as having been placed in the care of Dr Barnardo's Homes and who was subsequently adopted by Mrs S A Billingham of Abthorpe.

Until she read that report Mrs Ashcroft didn't know that her uncle had been adopted. Mrs Rene Balderson who has lived in Abthorpe all her life was able to tell her about her uncle. She recollected that Derrick Poole was very talented and after attending the village school won a scholarship to Towcester Grammar School (now Sponne). Derrick was very musical and played the organ in the church. Rene recalled that she had played tennis with him, and that he had given a musical presentation to guests of the Sitwells at Weston. After grammar school he went on to study at Nottingham University, something that was very rare indeed for a village boy in those days.

During the Second World War Derrick served with the RAF Volunteer Reserve and rose to the rank of

Sergeant. Tragically, on 12th May 1944 at the age of 21 he was killed in action in Italy and is buried at the Coriano Ridge War Cemetery. His name is recorded on the village war memorial and he is remembered each year at the Remembrance Day Service.

Pamela Ashcroft explained that her father and his five siblings who included Derrick were separated when her grandmother died in 1928. Four of the family were taken in by family and friends. Two of the children, including Derrick, went into Dr Barnardos.

Pamela, in the photograph below, thanked the authors and the editors of *Abtalk* for running the article that has given her a little more information about her family's history. She had spoken at length to Rene Balderson and was overwhelmed by the stories that she told her. She hopes to visit Abthorpe in the near future.



TOWCESTER'S DEVELOPMENT

Work on the long awaited car park in the area of the Forum started in November. It was due to be open by February with 60 new spaces, but the scheme still seems to be in progress. A further 110 spaces are planned for phase two.

The next stage of the Moat Lane development and has been given the green light by South Northamptonshire Council's Development Control Committee. It is an amendment to the original planning application approved in July 2013 for the commercial phase of the Moat Lane regeneration. The plans comprise a convenience store, shops and cafes, as well as houses and flats across Whittons Lane and Bakers Lane. The developer is hoping to begin work before the end of 2016.

MINIBUS FOR HIRE

South Northants Volunteer Bureau has a new 16-seat minibus and trained drivers for hire to not-for-profit community groups, charities and schools. It sounds luxurious with air conditioning, low step access, seatbelts, armrests and reclining seats.

There is a first-trip discount on offer, so for more information contact Nick on 358264 or see click on the picture at www.snvb.org.uk

ROMANY DAYS

Mini Farm has been in the news of late. Pamela Handley, who lives there with her family has written an interesting piece about the culture in which she grew up. She works as compliance and training manager in the care industry.

In the time of our grandparents' and parents' childhoods the preferred mode of transport was horse power, usually pulling a bow topped wagon which was the family home. These gave way to the more modern caravans you will have seen in recent years.

During our childhood travelling around was more accepted; work was often seasonal as the women and children picked fruit, vegetables and hops for the farmers. The farmer would let the families stay in a field he owned which meant only a short walk to work. The men earned a living from scrap metal or sharpening (grinding) knives/shears/lawn mowers etc.

Families often travelled together so there was cooking outside on fires and a real community feel. Often children did not attend school but learned from the extended family. While some families may have travelled far and wide, others stayed local to an area.

Weddings, christenings and funerals are usually large affairs with

family and acquaintances coming from far and wide to celebrate or pay respects. Girls are chaperoned during a courtship with curfews laid down. Boys/men were expected to ask the father's permission to court his daughter first, then when ready, return to seek permission to marry. Some families would share the burden and cost of these events. During hardship or illness families come together to take care of each other.

When the modern world we know today began to emerge, as much as people wanted to maintain and keep the traditions it began to prove harder and harder to do so. Families moved with the times, putting their children through education, finding a more established place to stay; many today have 'proper' jobs, some have settled into houses. There are more mixed marriages now, where two cultures have come together. In some of these marriages the non-traveller has adopted the traveller way of life and adapted well. In others the traveller side of the ancestry has been lost as they have conformed to the 'settled' way of life and brought their children up in this way. In either case no judgements are made, individual choice has been respected.

Travelling the roads is no longer

an option so houses, dedicated sites or buying their own land to live on are the only choices left. For some, owning their own land but living in a traditional home is how they feel they can maintain the culture and keep their growing families together as they used to be. The pride of standing on their own two feet and not relying on state handouts is important to many who have worked and saved hard for what they have achieved.

VOTER REGISTRATION

If you are not already included on the electoral register the deadline for adding your name is 18th April to enable you to vote in the Police and Crime Commissioner election on 5th May. You will then of course also be registered to vote in the European Referendum on 23rd June.

HYDRAULIC FRACTURING IN ABTHORPE

As some of you are aware a planning application has been submitted to Central Government by Folpar Oil for exploratory hydraulic fracturing in our community on land adjacent to Spring Meadow Farm. Under recent changes of law this bypasses all local planning regulations.

Folpar Oil is a company which claims to use advanced cutting edge green technology in the

most sustainable way possible. All electricity used on the drill pad will be sourced locally from solar farms, as will fracturing fluid.

To demonstrate their commitment to the environment Folpar Oil has been carrying out initial survey and preparation work on site and, to their knowledge, unnoticed.

However, some people will probably have huge concerns over the chemicals used in the fracturing fluid. While most of these chemicals are demonstrably harmless two of them could give cause for alarm. One is crystalline silicate which can cause severe visual impairment in humans with over stimulus of the lachrymal glands. The other, which is used in large quantities, is dihydrogen monoxide. This is not only corrosive, frequently fatal if inhaled and, subject to exposure in its solid state, can cause severe tissue damage and is probably responsible for more deaths annually than any other single chemical.

Folpar Oil intends to restrict the use of these chemicals to the area around the drill site, but to allay any concerns villagers may have about these or any other items a meeting has been called for Friday 1st April at 7.00pm in the New Inn, when Folpar Oil's PR director, Avril Fyshe, can explain Folpar Oil's intentions.

DIARY

Saturday 9 April

Truckers' Breakfast, the Old School, 8.00 - 11.00

Sunday 10 April

Holy Eucharist Service, St John the Baptist, 11.00

Sunday 17 April

Holy Eucharist Service, St John the Baptist, 9.15

Tuesday 19 April

Annual Church Meeting, the Old School, 7.00

Sunday 24 April

Live music, the New Inn, 2.00 onwards

Charity quiz, the New Inn, 7.30

Tuesday 3 May

Defibrillator training session, the Old School, 7.00

Sunday 8 May

Holy Eucharist Service, St John the Baptist, 11.00

Sunday 15 May

Holy Eucharist Service, St John the Baptist, 9.15

'Tea and Piece', 3.00 to 5.00

Sunday 22 May

Plant sale, the Old School, 2.00

Sunday 29 May

Charity quiz, the New Inn, 7.30

Sunday 12 June

Queen's birthday celebration, the Green

Sunday 26 June

Patronal Eucharist Service, St John the Baptist, 10.00

Tuesday 2 August

Coffee morning, 12 Wappenham Road, 10.00

Saturday 3 September

Safari Supper, Abthorpe-wide