

News from Abthorpe

September 2015

10TH ANNIVERSARY OF *ABTALK*

It's difficult to believe that *Abtalk* is 10 years old this year. Supported by the Parish Council, which pays for its very low printing costs, it started with a modest four pages aimed at sharing information of which the Parish Council was aware. In the intervening years it has grown like Topsy, and this 47th edition still appears in the same format, with the same editors (time for a change!?) and with the continuing aspiration to share information and publish articles which everyone enjoys reading, at least in part.

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We try to cover all the events and keep you abreast of changes in the village. We also include something of Abthorpe history which is rich and varied. Of course, material for publication is always welcome – we aim to publish four issues per year in roughly February, May, September and December but the precise timing depends on other commitments. If you wish to contribute, please do get in touch.

PARISH COUNCIL

The conservation area in Abthorpe was set up over 20 years ago and consisted mainly of those properties around the village green, in Main Street and on the north side of Wappenham Road between Main Street and School Lane. Now South Northants Council is proposing to include Silver Street and School Lane. This inevitably includes a few modern houses. The aim of the conservation area is to ensure that the distinctive character of the area is maintained or enhanced by:

- encouraging the maintenance and repair of all buildings
- ensuring that any development or alterations are of a similar scale to adjacent buildings and that design and materials are sympathetic to the character of the surroundings
- ensuring that trees and woodland are protected

All the residents affected were informed by letter and a presentation was made to the Parish Council at its meeting on 10th August where some additional information was gleaned. For instance, within the Conservation area planning permission is needed for a satellite dish which is visible from the street. Overhead power lines are discouraged, although that does not seem to have any influence over Western Power. The period of consultation has now ended so we await the final decision, although it seems very likely that the change will go ahead.

The Parish Council is in the process of acquiring a defibrillator to treat heart attack victims before professional help arrives. Once it has been installed we will let you all know where it is and advise how to use it; we are told this is not difficult and that anyone can use it.

We have also been examining ways of cleaning the War Memorial. The stone tablet set in the wall below the memorial in particular is showing signs of wear with some names becoming illegible. The best advice we have had is to do very little: just use a soft brush and warm soapy water to clean it. Some years ago the bronze plaque was added to record the names of the fallen which are in raised lettering on the memorial itself. It may be necessary to install a similar plaque to record the other names.

THE OLD SCHOOL

With the recent completion of the latest stage of the renovation of the Old School, it is hoped that a campaign started by the National Village Halls forum to urge the government to refund VAT on improvement work to charity-run community facilities is successful. They say volunteers should not have to fundraise to pay VAT bills on improving these buildings. A grant aid scheme towards the 20% tax levied on building work would enhance the ability of the voluntary the Old School Committee to implement continued improvement.

Thoughts are turning to Phase 4 of the renovation project, which is the hall itself. Hopefully the VAT question will be resolved to the Committee's advantage by then.

After the respite of the summer, a new tranche of events is in the planning stage. The return of the ever-popular Truckers' Breakfast will be on Saturday 21st November, followed by a Christmas coffee morning at the home of Janet Dancer, 35 Wappenham Road, on Thursday 3rd December. A chilli night or similar will brighten the dark days of January on the 30th.

More coffee mornings will return in January. And it's never too early to start preparing contributions for the plant sale, next year on 25th May, followed by the fish and chip supper

on the Green on 25th June.

With recent fundraising successes (£1,001 from the plant sale and £735 from the fish and chip supper) the total raised since September 2011 is £20,170. This has financed the renovation of the kitchen and meeting room, and contributed towards the toilet block project, as well as the running costs of the Old School.

The committee is always delighted to hear any ideas for events or offers of help. Just get in touch with Jan Miles, the secretary: jan.miles@abthorpe.net; 857427. For instance, a mums and tots group would be a great addition to the village if two or three people would like to start one.

COUNTY CONNECT SERVICES

If you book your village bus journey online there is a new portal, Open DRT, which replaces the existing online service and is linked to the booking and scheduling system. To continue to book journeys online you will need to re-register quoting your existing membership number: www.county-connect.co.uk/bookonline/register.phtml. You will then receive new login information.

Among other things the new system will provide pick up and drop off time estimates; you can view, cancel and manage all of your journeys online including those made

by phone, and cancel a journey using their mobile website.

Help and guidance: www.county-connect.co.uk/information; 0345 456 4474 - select option 3.

VOLUNTEER ON HORSEBACK

If you see a policewoman on horseback in the village it will undoubtedly be Cassie Cross from Astwell Mill, who has recently become a Volunteer on Horseback for Northamptonshire Police. She regularly rides around the local villages, including Abthorpe, keeping an eye out for signs of suspicious concerns to report back to her sergeant.



TOVE VALLEY BROADBAND (AKA ABBA)

Northamptonshire County Council has recognised the extraordinary effort put in by the directors and volunteers of TVB by nominating the company for the Next Generation Digital Challenge 2015. ABbA is one of only five shortlisted finalists in the Rural Network Category. It is the only nomination operated entirely by unpaid volunteers. In a statement, Eric Malcomson the company's chairman, said that to be nominated is national recognition of the achievements of our community in bringing superfast broadband to the businesses and homes of the Upper Tove Valley.

The awards ceremony will be held on 5th November at the House of Lords in the Palace of Westminster and will celebrate great exemplars of digital endeavour. Whatever the outcome however, their inspiration to not only start a satellite link to a Belgian internet provider in 2003 but continue their enthusiasm to provide fibre optic links in 2015 is locally much appreciated by all those who benefit.

Summer this year has been a bit quieter than last year when everyone was in the throes of installing fibre cabling between the villages. There have been a number of new installations to deal with as well as extending the service to some

of the outlying areas. Farmers in particular face problems: they are expected to make returns online but often suffer from really poor speed when using BT lines.

The number of members continues to grow as does the traffic on the system. When the first superfast connection was made in May 2013 all the traffic was handled on a 100Mbit/s link to the outside world. Within a year that was near capacity so it was a great relief when the switch was made to a 1,000Mbit/s link last December. Already that is nearly 30% full at peak periods, serving 420 members.

TADD NEEDS DRIVERS

Towcester Area Door to Door is a volunteer service which ensures those without transport in south Northamptonshire can get to medical appointments. It is one of the few charities supported by the Parish Council and has more than 800 members (600 of whom are over 75) who currently receive and very much appreciate the help. Volunteer drivers undertake more than 13,000 journeys per year, an average of 60 a day.

More volunteers are required. Drivers with some flexible free time would be welcomed to help residents in the local community. Car insurance companies permit driving for TADD without a premium

increase and HMRC allows a tax-free mileage allowance to be paid to voluntary drivers.

For more information email: tadd@connect.com with your details and a Trustee will contact you; 01327 810300 between 9am and 1pm.

COUNCIL TAX COLLECTION

A little heartening news for all us honest tax payers! South Northamptonshire is at the top of the tables following the publication of the Council Tax rates for authorities across the country.

In the latest figures from the Department for Communities and Local Government SNC is shown to have collected 99.13 per cent of its Council Tax demand. Just six other councils out of 326 do better.

FINANCIAL BOOST FOR COMMUNITY PROJECTS

One of the benefits of the building boom in Towcester is the New Homes Bonus, a grant paid to local authorities by central government for every new home built in their area.

The SNC grants panel has approved 24 applications for a share of this money among which the Towcestrians Sports Club, used by a number of people in the village, has been granted £20,000 for improvements to their site.

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

There have been a few alerts which have been circulated over the summer. Please do consider joining this email group as the timely two-way communication of anything untoward you see, and alerts sent out, can only make Abthorpe, already a very safe place to live, even safer. Unfortunately there were break-ins at cottages in Foscode but the information came through too late to be of use to circulate.

To join go to the Abthorpe village website: www.abthorpe.net, and sign up via the Abthorpe Alert link on the left.

WALKING ONE MILE

SNC and Macmillan Cancer Support are joining together to help more people affected by cancer become and stay active. Walking for Health is a national programme which is run by Macmillan and the Ramblers and delivered locally by SNC. The walks are open not only to people affected by cancer and other health conditions, but also those simply wanting to improve their health.

The local South Northants Health Walks scheme offers 20 weekly walks, at three different levels. These short group walks are free to join and led by friendly, knowledgeable people specially trained for the job. There is no need to book, just turn up on the day. Full details: www.southnorthants.gov.uk/1638.htm;

colin.hull@southnorthants.gov.uk; 322337;

BOOK GROUPS IN THE VILLAGE

There are two book groups in the village: Page Turners and Abthorpe Book Club, each meeting approximately monthly.

Page Turners now has a new contact: Merrilyn Berry, merrilyn.berry@abthorpe.net; 857531.

Anyone who would like to give either a try would be very welcome. The ABC contact is Alison Symmers: asymmers@gmail.com; 857416.

LIBRARY SERVICES

As well as the Mobile Library visiting the Green on the second Saturday of each month from 2.50 to 3.10, there are now new online services for members to access e-books, e-audio books, e-magazines and music downloads for free. Information from www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/libraryonline.

Twocester library offers free Wi-Fi, as well as running free sessions for children such as Rhymetime, Play & Learn (for under 1s and under 5s), Bookstart Bear Club and Storystomp, ideal for making new friends and developing a child's speech, language and communication skills, helping them to be ready for school: www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/libraryservice.

MARIE CURIE COFFEE DAY

The Marie Curie Coffee Day gets us in the mood to start thinking about Christmas. This year it is to be held on Thursday 29th October, 10am to 3pm and 4pm to 8pm at the home of Liz and Barry Haycock. They live at Highfield Farm, just outside Abthorpe on the Wappenham Road. This year Liz and Barry hope to reach the significant milestone of £100,000 raised since they started the coffee days.

CHARITY CRAFTS

SNVB identified a need for a Charity Craft Circle following several enquiries from potential volunteers and local community groups. The project aims to provide opportunities for people who are interested in handicrafts to use their skills to help local charities. The volunteers produce handicrafts which are passed on to local groups to sell, or which will assist them in their services. Current ideas include blankets for dogs waiting to be re-homed by a local animal charity, children's skirts/waistcoats/bonnets for a local canal museum and greeting cards to be sold at craft fairs.

Sessions are held on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of every month between 2.00 and 3.30 at the Volunteer Centre in Whittons Lane, Towcester. New members are very

welcome. Or you can make items at home if you prefer.

Fish and Chip Babies

The Charity Crafts group is currently knitting for fish and chip babies in Africa. These are really poor babies, many of whom are born with Aids and that is about all these little souls come into this world with. They are so poor that they are sent home wrapped in newspaper which is why they are called fish and chip babies. The jumpers themselves are very easy to knit and they are worked in one complete piece. For most knitters they take an afternoon or an evening to complete. They are important because in Africa, the nights are cold and these babies have no clothes.

If you would like to have a go the patterns are at snvb.org.uk/Documents/Fish_and_Chip_Baby_pattern.pdf. Also, any gifts of wool would be most appreciated. Because the clothes are knitted in bright-coloured stripes, small amounts of wool can be used.

Knee Blankets for Cynthia Spencer

The crafts group has recently embarked on a new project to knit/crochet blankets for Cynthia Spencer Hospice in Northampton. These blankets are a bit bigger than conventional knee blankets and help both patients and visitors to

stay cosy. You can make the blankets in any colour wool, using whatever pattern you like.

For information on any of the above contact Lorraine at the Volunteer Centre, 358264.

Additionally, Lorraine would be pleased to hear from anyone who has craft materials to donate e.g. knitting wool or card would be useful. Knitted items and wool donations can be dropped in at the Towcester Volunteer Centre (Monday to Thursday mornings).

NEWS FROM THE NEW INN

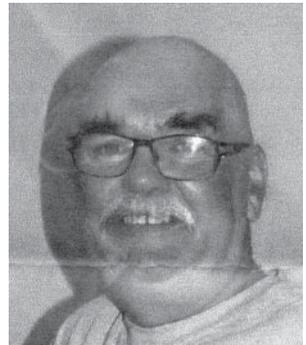
Well of course the main news currently is that all the games from the Rugby World Cup will be shown in the pub. Judging by the packed bar for the opening game, quite a number of people prefer to watch it in company with others – with beer on tap. And more local sporting news is that the darts team has had a magnificent run of five winning matches.

Chef Steve is bringing back the specials board by popular demand, and the fresh fish that Rob collects from Billingsgate each week is proving a great hit, both in the restaurant or as a takeaway which Steve will do any night the kitchen is open.

With his happy band of helpers Steve is gearing up for Christmas and will be introducing his Christmas menu from mid-October. He is planning a similar offering to last year: 6 courses which will be priced at around £26.

The music afternoons and quiz evenings on the last Sunday of the month continue with Craig providing the music on 27th September and the quiz starting at 7.30. Recent quiz nights have raised £185 for the local air ambulance and £85 for Macmillan.

One of the quizmasters, Clive Wright, bravely presented his head to be shaved in aid of Macmillan's Brave the Shave. After four pints and a good deal of laughter, the beard came off as well, pushing the total raised to over £400.



WAPPENHAM WIND TURBINE

After being successful in the initial High Court Appeal on the 9th March, the action group has now been informed that the solicitors acting on behalf of Mr Jones, the land owner seeking to install the turbine, have been successful in securing an Appeal hearing against the judgement made by John Howell QC. This is scheduled for 27th or 28th October.

THE FUTURE OF TOWCESTER

There is still time to comment on the draft planning brief which identifies opportunity sites that could support the growth of the town centre. Consultation is open until 9th October. Surprisingly it is quite an interesting document.

Building on the Towcester Masterplan, South Northamptonshire Council has prepared *The Land West of Watling Street Towcester Planning Brief*, which offers suggestions on the potential uses of sites, if they were to become available for development in the future.

These sites include the land formerly occupied by Towcester Library, Magistrates Court, the Co-operative in the Sponne Centre, as well as sites currently in use including the Towcester Fire Station, Paynes Nursery additional land, Towcester Coachworks, Sponne School and community facilities on Islington Road. The draft planning brief also suggests traffic management ideas for Market Square and the Queens Road/Promfret Road areas.

Potential uses of these various sites could include the provision of commercial offices, leisure and cultural facilities, car parking, new bus facilities, or housing accommodation that meets the needs of the growing district.

If the planning brief is adopted, it is intended to assist the Council in determining planning applications that secure high-quality development in Towcester town centre. However, adoption of the planning brief may affect those who own property, live and work within the town, along with those who visit it. Details of the full planning brief can be viewed at www.southnorthants.gov.uk/6706.htm. Comments and views should be submitted to the planning policy team in writing to planning.policy@southnorthants.gov.uk or by post to Alan Munn, Planning and Conservation Officer, South Northamptonshire Council, The Forum, Moat Lane, Towcester, NN12 6AD before 5pm on 9 October.

WAPPENHAM SHORT MAT BOWLS CLUB

The Short Mat Bowls Club in Wappenham meets every Thursday afternoon from 2.00 to 4.00 in the village hall. They are trying to recruit new members from outside Wappenham to ensure there are sufficient people to play each week. Transport can be arranged if necessary.

It's not the same as green bowls or bowls you might have seen on TV, and apparently is very easy to pick up. Each session costs £2 per member, which includes tea and biscuits. Just bring some indoor shoes; bowls are provided. It's suitable for all ages. You can just turn up and watch before you try, or have a chat with Eliza Bond on 860240.

MEMORIES OF WAPPENHAM BETWEEN THE WARS

A recent issue of *British Railways Journal* contains an article about Wappenham station written by Bill Kendall. It is quite short but describes the traffic the station dealt with and mentions many of the people who used the station as passengers or to send and receive goods. There is a good photograph of the station and a map. The magazine costs £10.95. If anyone is interested in obtaining a copy get in touch with Keith Fenwick (details on the front) and he will

place a bulk order, hopefully getting a reduction in the price.

LUNCH CLUB VOLUNTEERS URGENTLY NEEDED

South Northants Homes has 12 sheltered schemes in the area and the residents enjoy a regular cooked meal. Most residents are elderly and some have dementia. Help is urgently needed at Meadow Court in Towcester where SNH is looking for friendly volunteers to assist their staff. You would be helping to prepare meals, dish up and serve a lunch to residents and enjoy a chat.

Information: Lorraine at the Volunteer Centre, 358264.

PARKING IN TOWCESTER

Having bemoaned the lack of parking in Towcester now that the Forum has brought more cars to the town centre, news has come through that planning permission has been granted for a new public car park off Northampton Road.

There had been objections originally as it is in a known flood risk area. However, apparently the Environment Agency is now satisfied having been provided with additional information which included a revised flood risk assessment, a flood action plan, and other measures to mitigate the effects of any flooding.

The final decision notice has now been issued and work could

start soon with pre-construction archaeological work.

And just released is a survey in which the public is asked to give their views on the longer term parking needs of the town. This is part two of the study referred to in the June edition of *Abtalk*. The survey will be open until Sunday 25th October at www.southnorthants.gov.uk, or for a paper copy: 322368; david.allen@southnorthants.gov.uk.



Local sign seen recently

PLUM PUDDING ARISES

Plum Pudding is the unusual but much loved name of a fresh water spring here in Abthorpe. Motorists driving into the village from Towcester may have noticed that just before they arrive at the village sign the road surface is constantly wet. The spring once surfaced close to the road and was channelled into a culvert which fed into the Meadwell Brook; this passes under the road close to the first houses and then flowed down into the nearby River Tove.

Then about 35 years ago as part of a road improvement scheme an underground culvert was provided for Plum Pudding. Around Christmas 2006 heavy vehicles damaged the culvert and the spring's water flooded the road. Eventually after a search for a burst water main it was recognised that Plum Pudding was indeed the culprit and the following summer the culvert was again repaired. In July 2013 Plum Pudding broke free from her shackles and flooded the road yet again. Now less than two years since the last repairs the road is constantly covered by a thin film of water. Plum Pudding seems to be the culprit.

HAPPY SCHOOL DAYS!

From the 1700s farmers and vicars could afford to send their boys to school but few others went unless there were free charity schools in the villages. Girls were often better educated because, through the generations, more mothers learned to write and read and passed on the knowledge to their daughters at home whilst boys were working on the land or were sent away to be apprenticed. London was only three days walk away and many boys

were apprenticed there in quite ordinary trades. Shopkeepers in Towcester often mentioned in their wills their brothers working in London as shoemakers or shopkeepers.

Three Barford boys from Foscoate, John, Val and Thomas, whose father died in 1685 when they were still young, were left £25 each, a tidy sum of money which was enough to pay for apprenticeships. John stayed at home to work on the farm and Val trained to be a clerk with a Mr Andrews JP at Bascote, Warwicks. After Andrews died Val had been sufficiently educated to return to Foscoate and help with the legal side of the creation of Abthorpe as a separate parish from Towcester in 1737. In 1694 Thomas went to London as an apprentice in the Turners' Company, but within the year he had died; he probably had no resistance against all the London germs. Incidentally, the Turners' Company was given a Royal Charter so that only they could make the wooden measures for wine and ale. It was medieval turners who established the English pint as an official measure.

In 1737 the Leeson Trust was changed so that vicars could live in Jane's house if they also taught at the school, but there seemed to be no one to oversee how well they taught, although the Charities Commission produced regular reports on how charity money was spent:

For inquiring concerning charities, County of Northampton 1838

"Abthorpe: school wholly inefficient, but new vicar lately presented intends to supervise the school and supply a person to act for him in teaching."

Things were no better at Wappenham. A well-known vicar's family, the Scotts, had thirteen children but father Thomas died quite young in 1835. One of his older sons, Tom, who was already teaching informally, was appointed vicar in his place whilst some of the children were still young. Fourth child, George Gilbert Scott, became the well known architect, later succeeded by his son also called George Gilbert Scott. Gilbert Scott senior's reputation overshadowed the rest of the brothers' achievements and even that of his own grandfather Thomas, who had been one of the founders of the Church Missionary Society.

There is an interesting free book online <https://archive.org/details/theforceoflove00scotuoft?>: *The Force of Love - a memoir of the Ven. Melville Horne Scott by his son Melville Scott.*

As father Thomas died very soon after moving to the new rectory, which his architect son had designed, relations from the extended family raised enough money for the children's later education. Melville, the youngest child who was born in 1827, was sent to Christ's Hospital School, a Bluecoats

school, when he was nine. He stuck it for a year but was so ill-treated and became ill that his mother took him home. Afterwards he rode on a donkey from Wappenham to Abthorpe to receive his schooling from the Abthorpe curate John Price. He then went to Stockingford, Nuneaton, when Price had a further curacy there, spending two years with him but said he learned very little and was in contact with so much evil that he returned home in 1841 to join pupils being taught by his brother Tom, who was both vicar and teacher.

Most of his village friends had very different schooling. Education had to be paid for. Some villages had benefactors who left money in their wills for a few poor children. Jane Leeson had Abthorpe School built and provided money for a teacher but stated the education was only free to poor children. In 1723 Thomas Knight of Slapton left a bequest for three poor children to be taught to read English and learn the catechism by heart as well to buy them books. There was a 'non classical school' (assumed to be an informal school not linked to the church) in Slapton for a while in the 1700s.

Melville described the very miserable schooling of Wappenham children:

"I can hardly describe the small amount and the poor quality of the day school education of those days. What I could not tell you of the cripple school master Mr Garratt and the hump backed school master Job Jones. (These schoolmasters were probably paid by the village overseers from the tax paid by landowners, a law started during the reign of Elizabeth I when each parish was made responsible for its poor.) The children were either not taught at all, or by such men as these, or taught in the village Dame school; thus you can understand what rude material the Sunday School teacher had to deal do with. (Sunday Schools taught more than just religion and were sometimes the only education available to poor children in a village.) And as the material was rough, so also were the methods rough and rude which were brought to bear on them. How well I recollect the fierce looks of old John Middleton, the old Scots Grey (cavalry regiment) who sat in the midst of the boys in the chancel (indicating teaching took place in the church rather than a school) with such a long stick, the thud of which upon the boys heads I still seem to hear even now, and in school it was the same, thrashing was incessant. I began to teach when about thirteen, but even then I sat in my class armed with a cane which I made use of proudly. The whole work was indeed very experimental, and the Church authorities for most part knew less about the matter than the lowlier clergy.

Sunday schools were indeed in many places considered a doubtful innovation. There was little in the condition of the Church in these days to attract or influence children. It is wonderful to think into what uncomeliness of condition and unchurchliness of tone the Church of those days had sunk. I myself have seen an excellent Christian lady sitting at the north end of the Holy Table with her tin candlestick upon it and her large class of elder girls all sitting around within the rails, all this without the least atom of irreverence of spirit and without the slightest idea that such methods were unbecoming."

The music for Wappenham church was provided by two flutes, clarinet and bass viol, the musicians sitting in the gallery which had an inscription 'for the use of the singers only.' Abthorpe used similar instruments, the organ being installed in the church much later. String repairs were noted in a church accounts book.

Despite his poor educational beginnings Melville Horne Scott went on to Cambridge University, later becoming Archdeacon of Stafford and a Canon of Lichfield Cathedral. One of his brothers, William Langston Scott, who was educated at home by his father and then his elder brother, was at Cambridge at the same time. He was vicar of Abthorpe from 1854 until 1863; he was also a botanical collector and plants he collected are in Manchester museum.

Melville saw first hand how children were treated when he was a curate at Ockbrook, Derbyshire. He said that the day school and Sunday schools thrived but working class children did not attend. *'A Mrs Wood kept an infant school in a barn. She tied the children together with a clothes line, keeping a second to castigate them. One pupil said the only thing he learnt was to keep quiet.'* (Again, Mrs Wood was probably paid by the parish.)

Reports by the Commissioners on charities and education for the poor in 1839 painted a poor picture of village schools across the country but once the 1870 Education Act was brought in it meant that all children between five and 13 were entitled to attend school, though that did not become compulsory until the 1876 Factory Act which was designed to stop child labour. By 1871 Abthorpe's small school building had more than doubled in size. The original school room was used for infants and all the rest were taught in the larger room. At last there was education for all children - over two hundred years after Jane Leeson had had Abthorpe school built.

MEH and RB



Renee Balderson's mother, Louie Matthews, standing next to the schoolmaster in 1899 when she was about 9. There were then about 100 children on the roll.

RURAL CINEMA

Now that Film Abthorpe has come to an end, those who enjoy watching a film in company with others may enjoy the offerings of the local Rural Cinema showings. Those left for this season in the near locality are at Blakesley Village Hall, Blakesley, 7th October at 8.00pm and Whittlebury Reading Room, Whittlebury, 13th October at 7.30pm, both showing *The Theory of Everything* (2014) about the relationship between Stephen Hawking and his wife.

LEARN ABOUT MEDIEVAL GARDENS

Nicola Lowe, MA, will be giving a talk on medieval gardens at the Old School on 3rd October at 6pm, by arrangement with St. Botolph's Church, Slapton. Nicola is a published art historian and has a lifetime's enthusiasm for the medieval parish churches of England.

Refreshments and canapés will be served. Suggested ticket donation is £10 or £8 for students and children. No need to book in advance.

PEOPLE

In our last issue we featured the long life of Ruth Charles as she celebrated her 100th birthday. Sadly we now have to report her death in Sheffield. The village sends condolences to her daughters Rachel and Judith, sons in law Mike and Paul, her grandchildren and their extended family. Ruth was a remarkable lady!

Her funeral took place at St Giles Church, Codicote in Hertfordshire on 7th September and she was buried alongside her beloved Edward in Codicote churchyard

For anyone interested Rachel's nephew, Peter, has digitised the 100th birthday posters which can be found at <http://www.shatteredvisage.com/grannyruth/>. They are a fascinating snapshot of a long and interesting life.

Sadly we have to say goodbye to another of our older residents. Bob Salmons has died at the age of 88. Bob was a Blakesley man who started work at the age of 14 at Blakesley Hall (now demolished) where one of his jobs was to push wagons of coal up from the station on the miniature railway which connected the two. Later he became a signalman on the proper railway at Blakesely. He came to Abthorpe in 1953 when he married Cath, initially living at Cath's mother's house at the bottom of Main Street, a house which was later left empty



PEOPLE - CONTINUED

and fell down. Bob moved to the road construction industry, being involved in among other things the building of the M1. Bob was a keen sportsman, playing football for the village team and cricket for Helmdon. Gardening had always been another passion; his garden was always immaculate and produced great crops of vegetables.

Bob's funeral is in St John the Baptist Church on Friday 25th September at noon.

On Saturday 8th August a JCB pulled up outside the church, the chosen means of transport to bring Max Kellner to his wedding. Accompanying Max on the ribbon bedecked digger as his best man was his brother Harry.

When the bride Sadie Cameron arrived wearing an ivory dress with a long train she joined Max at the chancel step for the traditional Church of England ceremony. She had four adult bridesmaids, Theresa and Sophie her sisters plus friends Amanda and Emma. Theo Cameron-Phillips, Sadie's seven year old son gave her away. Isobel Cameron-Phillips (9) and Paige Kellner the eight year old daughter of Max were flower girls. The



PEOPLE - CONTINUED

bride's nephews Owen and Ethan acted as page boys.

After the ceremony the celebrations continued at Slapton Manor Farm where the barn and marquee provided a wonderful venue in warm summer weather to enjoy some excellent refreshments to complete a memorable day.

A warm welcome is extended to several new residents:

Sue and Graham Burgess have moved to Rozel on Main Street from near Hanslope so are already familiar with the area. Abthorpe is proving convenient for Sue's work at Silverstone Visitor Centre and Graham can continue his business from home providing specialist equipment for the food industry. Graham's interest in old cars will strike a chord with several people in the village, as will Sue's love of gardening and cooking.

Emily and Tim Humphrey have moved in to 26 Wappenham Road, although that will not be Emily's surname until 26th September when they are married. Both come from farming backgrounds in Kettering and Helmdon respectively and both now work in Banbury. Emily is in marketing and Tim is a quantity surveyor. They are looking forward to getting involved in village life although they have already got caught up in it as they were moving furniture in on the day of the garage sale and had to ensure that nobody thought they were selling things.

Emily is part of the Hayward family and her great great grandfather farmed in Abthorpe; he was also the village butcher. Haywards also kept the pub and post office in Abthorpe. It is purely coincidental that she has moved into the village where her ancestors must have been a prominent family. She is looking forward to learning more about the Haywards of Abthorpe, so if anyone has any reminiscences of the family she would be glad to hear them.

Claire and Chris Zachar are happy to have finally moved to Wheelwrights in Silver Street with Benjamin 8 and Thomas 6 after a rather protracted experience of our somewhat tortuous conveyancing

PEOPLE - CONTINUED

system. They previously lived in Brackley. Chris's work at Silverstone Circuit is a short drive up the road, whereas Claire has a little further to go to her job as an event manager near Banbury. They both enjoy running, and Chris is also a cub leader. The boys are settling in well and the family looks forward to getting involved in village life.

And Forge Cottage on the Green has new residents. Anne Ashton and Jeremy Crawford-Horn have moved from Wales with their cat Bella, nearer to Anne's family in Milton Keynes. Jeremy is working for Starbucks, busy setting up a new outlet north of Northampton to open shortly before Christmas.

CHURCH NEWS

New plans for the church

Richard Tomalin

The PCC has been investigating how we could make our church building more attractive for non-service events and to encourage more people to stay for refreshment after a service. In common with most churches ours is filled with Victorian pews. It is pretty much impossible to create an informal environment for more social activities such as coffee mornings, afternoon teas and refreshments after services. This leads to the building having the feel of only a place for formal worship. We do, of course, provide simple refreshments after services, but people tend to get in each other's way. We have held the occasional afternoon tea event very successfully, but we have always been left with the feeling that it could have been so much better with a bit more space.

So what can be done? The church is small and our options are restricted. We also have in mind that our funds are insufficient for anything other than a quite modest plan. The obvious direction to consider is to remove some pews which would give additional space.

The main entrance to the church is at the back of the north aisle. We feel that opening out this area would have the greatest effect for people entering the church. For this reason, after considering various other options, we have decided that this area is the one we would like to consider changing.

During discussions with the diocesan authorities we learned that it would be possible for us to request permission for a "Temporary Minor Re-ordering". This means that we have to detail what we would like to do as a trial and ask for permission to make any changes as long as they are reversible. We have now received permission along these lines to remove all but the back and front pews in the north aisle. The pews will have to be removed carefully and stored safely so that they could be replaced if necessary. The photographs show a very rough impression of what we would like to accomplish.



The permission will last for 15 months. In that time we will have to make firm plans for what the final project would be, involve our architect, apply for some funding to help us along and finally apply for a faculty (the church's version of planning permission). These plans will involve what covering to have on the floor (carpet, wood etc) and how the area is to be furnished, together with a myriad of other details that have to be considered when making changes to a listed church building

We are planning to get the pews removed before Christmas so that we can see how the new space works after the carol service when we expect our largest congregation of the year to stay behind and enjoy mulled wine and mince pies.

Ours is a small congregation, but the church building belongs to the whole village. We are hoping for support and suggestions from a wide circle in the village and beyond and welcome any feedback. If you have any comments

or questions, please contact one of the PCC:

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Alison Robbins	857795, robbins@abthorpe.net
Jill Greenhalgh	858102, jill.greenhalgh@abthorpe.net

Other News

The new venture of the Garage Sale around the village held on 6th September was a huge success, due to lovely weather, good advertising and great organisation from Jill Greenhalgh. Both the 16 sellers and the organisers had a good day and have learned a lot; undoubtedly it will be repeated in years to come. The range of goods on sale varied from ancient wind-up gramophones to this year's plum crop, modern push chairs and discarded souvenirs, plus lots of bric-a-brac that was no longer needed. Visitors seemed satisfied with the bargains they had purchased. The proceeds for the church were £700, no doubt made up of a substantial contribution from the sale of tea and cake which kept those serving rushed off their feet for long periods.

This followed the Photographic Exhibition held jointly with Tove Valley Broadband back in June. Although not attracting as many people as had been hoped some of the old photos stirred up lots of memories and chat from people attending and there was a lovely atmosphere during the weekend. There were also some stunning pictures taken on people's holidays as well as photos of some of the abundant wildlife we see around our village. £149 was raised for the church. Thank you to everyone who supported both these events.

One delightful outcome of the photographic display was that Lorna Hooper and Melanina Giuliani were able to meet up again over a cup of tea. In the last edition of *Abtalk*, the article on shoemakers in Abthorpe referred to the terrace of houses opposite the Green. Two of these houses had a special resonance for both ladies. During the Second World War Lorna, together with the rest of her family, lived in nearby Slapton and she attended Abthorpe school. Her father was a meteorologist based at Silverstone's RAF bomber airfield. En-route by ship for a new posting in Gibraltar he lost his life when the troopship was torpedoed. The family had to find a new home.

In her memoirs Lorna describes how "we found a cottage in Abthorpe at seven shillings and sixpence a week from Mr Reg Chapman. It was on the

village green, number 2 which was a 'two-up and two-down' house. The main downstairs room had a huge greasy stain on one wall and a hook where over the years a slaughtered pig had hung to feed a family over the winter months! Later on Melanina, who was married to one of the Italian POWs based at the Lasher, was



bought over to England by her husband who like many decided to stay on the farms after the war finished. Melanina didn't speak a word of English but my mother and her husband helped her. They lived next door to us at number 1 for many happy years."

Melanina, who still lives in the same cottage all these years later, and Lorna had plenty to talk about as they watched sequences of photographs from the old days projected onto a wall of the hall. The two ladies are shown in the photograph above.

Living in Abthorpe you cannot miss the signs of harvest around us: the harvesting equipment on the roads, some of it really huge nowadays, the fields changing, and the hedgerows full of berries.

Harvest celebrations took place on 19th and 20th September. It was a glorious weekend with beautiful weather. There was a lovely atmosphere in the Old School at the Harvest Supper on the Saturday. Good food, lots of laughter and a bit of competition with Bob Carter's Quiz.

The Harvest Thanksgiving service had everyone singing the well-loved harvest hymns. The donations of produce are sent to the Hope Centre in Northampton. During the service the Rev'd Graham Buckle dedicated the new notice board in the porch in memory of David Hughes, a churchwarden for many years who died last year. It will keep the notices much tidier and save a few fingernails trying to get the drawing pins in.

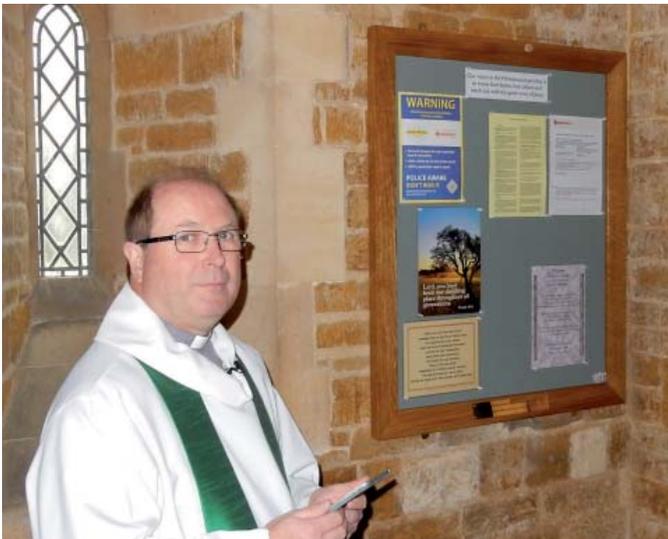
For other services in 2015 please see the Diary on page 24.

Greens Norton Community Choir will be coming to give a concert in church on Friday 4th December. This will be a lovely (and fun!) start to the Christmas season. There is no charge for the concert and no tickets. Put the date in your diary and more information will be circulated nearer the time



The Food Bank continues to be well supported and John and Joyce Riches have taken 15kg to the Towcester Food Bank in July and 20kg in August. The running total is now 531kg. Thank you to everyone who supports it.

David Tomalin won the tote in June and in July it was Rob and Barbara Smith's turn. The winning prize was £212.50 in both cases. Mark Wardley was better off by £207.50 in August. Congratulations and thanks to all.



Rev'd Graham Buckle in front of the new noticeboard which he dedicated on 20th September. The inscription reads "This noticeboard was erected in 2015 in memory of David Hughes. A good friend and servant of this church."

And lastly just to say thank you to everyone who got in touch about starting a badminton group. Summer has slipped away and I have yet to follow up what arrangements we could make. I will!

Jill Tolson

DIARY

Friday 25 September

Coffee morning, 10.00, Stable Cottage, The Green in aid of Macmillan

Sunday 11 October

Holy Eucharist Service, 11.00

Sunday 18 October

Holy Eucharist Service, 9.15

Thursday 29 October

Marie Curie Coffee Day, 10.00 to 3.00 and 4.00 to 8.00, Highfield Farm

Sunday 8 November

Remembrance Service, 10.50

Sunday 15 November

Holy Eucharist Service, 9.15

Saturday 21 November

Truckers' breakfast, the Old School, from 10.00

Thursday 3 December

Christmas coffee morning, 35 Wappenham Rd, 10.00

Friday 4 December

Greens Norton Community Choir concert, St John the Baptist

Sunday 13 December

Holy Eucharist Service, 11.00

Sunday 20 December

Holy Eucharist Service, 9.15

Christmas Eve

Carol Service, 4.00

Christmas Day

Holy Eucharist Service, 9.15