



Country Park to pay its own way

Faced with unprecedented financial challenges, Northamptonshire County Council is looking to make its country parks self-financing, so that it can divert budget to other statutory obligations. The Council has decided to take an “invest to save” approach to this and is to invest in a package of improvements across all five of its country parks, including Brixworth. The aim being to provide excellent parks that are have something to offer for a wide range of people so that they can cover their running costs from the money they raise from car parking, sale of goods and other activities.

At Brixworth Country Park, a new toddler’s play area will be built next to the café during the first quarter of 2011. This will replace the nature hut and provide parents with an attractive and stimulating alternative safe play area for younger children. Meanwhile, the main play area will benefit from an exciting new piece of play equipment and outdoor fitness equipment will enhance the very popular ‘fitness trail’. The groundwork for all these improvements is already being put in place, and - weather permitting - all the new equipment and play area should be installed before Easter.

The Mackintosh Centre will stop offering residential accommodation and instead provide meeting and activity rooms for schools and groups. There are three rooms in total - two carpeted rooms mainly suitable for meetings, and a third room that can also be used for activities. These rooms vary in size; the largest could seat up to 50 people. To hire them, contact the Country Park warden on 883920.

In addition to this, a new fully accessible “Changing Place” toilet room will open the park up to visitors with profound disabilities by providing an adult-sized height adjustable changing bench, a hoist, and a toilet with space either side for a carer. The main public toilets will also be improved as part of the works.

During the year, the Country Park will put on a food craft fair in June. In July, it will see the launch of the Merry Tom Folk Festival - a new folk festival organised by many of the people who were previously involved with the very successful but now defunct Spratton Folk Festival. The Folk Festival will take place on 8 & 9 July - see also story on page 3 for more details.

Under new management

Hello and welcome to the first issue of the “new” Brixworth Bulletin. The team – some old hands, some new – has worked incredibly hard behind the scenes to find all the news and views from Brixworth and beyond. We trust you’re over the slight shock of the new colour scheme and masthead. Inside, we hope you’ll still find plenty of the familiar and well-loved Bulletin.

That doesn’t mean we’re not open to change. As you might expect, we brought plenty of ideas – but mainly we’re looking to you, the readers, to tell us what, if anything, you’d like to change.

We would be thrilled if you could put fingers to keyboard, or pen to paper if you prefer, and give us a little bit of feedback. What do you like about the Bulletin, what don’t you like? Are there any sections you couldn’t do without? Any regular features you don’t ever read? Maybe you don’t read the Bulletin because it never contains anything that interests you. In which case, tell us what would interest you, and we’ll see if we can make it happen.

You can email us at info@brixworthbulletin.com or write to Brixworth Bulletin; 13 Station Road; Brixworth NN6 9BP.

Alternatively, you can contact the various team members directly:

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Incidentally, the deadline for the next issue, both for advertising and editorial, is 25 April. Looking forward to hearing from you,

Claudia Flavell-White

Brixworth's Quality Parish Council

Brixworth Parish Council has won the Quality Parish Council Award. The Award confirms that the Council has all the mechanisms in place to deliver efficient services to local residents. This allows accredited councils to speak with greater authority to principal councils when asking to take on delegated functions which can be better carried out locally.

The quality council scheme is run by Northamptonshire County Association of Local Councils (NCALC), which represents more than 85% of the 208 parish and town councils in Northamptonshire, from the smallest with a few hundred electors, to the largest with several thousand.

The scheme is designed to provide a benchmark of minimum standards for parish and town councils and enable them to better represent the communities they serve. The scheme also aims to enhance relationships between local councils, principal authorities and community and voluntary sector organisations. A number of criteria have to be met in order to receive this accreditation:

Electoral mandate

Councils are required to show that at least two thirds of councillors were elected. 'Elected' can mean either at a contested or uncontested election. However, they must have stood.

Council meetings

Councils are required to publish draft minutes of meetings within two months of it taking place and make them available for inspection by any elector in the parish.

Communications and community engagement

Councils need a website which provides a list of council members and officers, details of how they can be contacted and which provides access to the annual report. Councils also have to have an

email address publicly available. They can either produce their own newsletter or contribute to a community newsletter.

For a second, discretionary communications and engagement category, councils have to formulate a community engagement strategy. They also have to provide a regular weblog on their website about council activity or encourage the community to talk to them through an online forum or through surveys on the website.

Code of Conduct

Councils must have formally adopted Section 12 (2) of the Code of Conduct which concerns the prejudicial interests of councillors and public participation.

Promoting local democracy and citizenship

Councils need to demonstrate that they work proactively to support local democracy and citizenship.

Terms and conditions

Councils with a paid clerk are required to show that they have adopted (as a minimum) the NALC/SLCC terms and conditions agreement and

provide evidence in the form of a statement that they have issued all paid members of staff with a contract of employment.

Training

Councils have to provide a training 'statement of intent' which shows that the council has identified key areas of training need for both staff and members.

The Brixworth Parish Council is to be congratulated on becoming a quality assured organisation and its Chairman Ian Barrett, who has 'steered the ship' very ably over the past few years, deserves some praise. However like most accreditation schemes the trick is to maintain and even improve on this performance.



Cllr Bament (right) and Cllr Lacey (centre) received the Quality Parish Council award from NCALC President Paul Blantern at the NCALC AGM at Towcester Town Hall

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The Birth of the Merry Tom Folk Festival

This summer will see the birth of a new folk festival right on Brixworth's doorstep. The Merry Tom Folk Festival, which is due to take place for the very first time on 8 and 9 July in Brixworth Country Park, will feature a full lineup of 12 nationally and locally recognised bands.

Headlining are the well-known and loved celtic folk-rock specialists MadDog McRea, veterans of the Spratton Folk festival and many others. In their own words, MadDog McRea play "jiggery folkery hokery pokery" and blend a unique mixture of folk rock, pop, gypsy jazz, bluegrass and 'shake you're a**' music into their bubbling musical cauldron. Also on the menu at the Festival are local heroes such as Little Johnny England and The Angels' Share. Visitors can expect a broad spread of music from Gaelic rock and Irish jigs to traditional English music.

The event is planned as a family-oriented, easily accessible summer festival which, in addition to the music, will feature children's entertainment, workshops, food and craft stalls. Festival-goers will be able to camp at the site.



The festival is organised and managed by key personnel from the hugely successful Spratton Folk Festival (pictured above). "Merry Tom Folk Festival will draw on our experiences of managing Spratton," said organiser Mark Fletcher. "Our intention is to make this festival fully sustainable and self-financing from the outset." Everyone involved with the organisation is working for free to make this festival happen for Brixworth.

If you're curious but not sure if the music is for you – or if you simply can't wait – then head to The George in Brixworth on 5 March where one of the featured bands will be playing, for free.

Tickets are available at www.wegotickets.com, at the festival website www.merrytom.co.uk, from the shop at the Country Park, by emailing sales@merrytom.co.uk, and at The George pub in Brixworth on 5 March. Prices start at a concessionary rate of only £5 for the Friday and go up to £80 for a full weekend family ticket. The first 350 people to book tickets will be able to take advantage of an early-bird discount, reducing the price to £50 for a family weekend ticket, adult weekend £15, and concessions on the Friday at only £3.



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Police Quarterly Report

by Sgt Mike Grady

Community panel meeting

The most recent community panel meeting covering Brixworth took place on 27 January at the Community Centre. Chaired by David Hymas there was a report on the previous quarter priority of litter (see below). The next quarter priority is burglary and in particular metal thefts (see report below). The next Community Panel Meeting will be on 28th April 2011 at the Community Centre, Spratton Rd at 8pm. Everyone is welcome, so come along and get involved in setting your local priorities or just observe.

Waste management day

As litter was the quarterly priority flagged up at the village Community Panel, Special Officer Jo Hillery ran a waste management day at Brixworth Primary School on 18th January together with Daventry District Council. This involved a litter pick in the village and education about litter, recycling and caring for the environment. In addition a poster competition was held with children from the primary school invited to submit entries.

Internet safety

On 14th March the primary school will host an internet safety evening for pupils and

parents. It promises to be an eye-opening session which highlights the dangers and pitfalls of Facebook and similar social networking sites. Any parent or guardian with a child at the school would benefit from attending.

Thefts from the Co-Op

Theft continues to be the number one crime in Brixworth with most offences being committed at the Co-Op. Offenders have been caught on 20th and 25th October and 1st November; all have received an £80 fine. An adult offender has been charged with theft from the Co-Op and appeared before Northampton Magistrates court on 10th January 2011.

We have also had reports of young children helping themselves to sweets in the Co-Op – if anyone sees this occurring please alert the management or call us on 03000 111222 to report the incident.

Underage drinking

Another issue that appears to be growing is adults buying alcohol for underage youths. This mainly occurs at the Co-Op in Brixworth when a number of youths gather outside and ask shoppers to buy alcohol for them. Over the last period, two youngsters have been

caught doing this. It is an offence for anyone under 18 to purchase alcohol, it is an offence for a shop to sell it to them and it is also an offence for anyone to supply alcohol to under 18s. The Co-Op runs an under-25 scheme whereby anyone apparently under the age of 25 will be asked for ID; please understand the reasons for this and be patient when you or others are asked for ID. If anyone is caught buying alcohol for youths they will be fined.

Cannabis

Cannabis use seems to be on the increase across the county, particularly amongst younger people who seem to view its use as acceptable. On 25th November a youth was issued a final warning for possession of cannabis in Brixworth and any further offence will result in a court appearance. A young man was recently imprisoned for continual possession offences. This is a reminder that cannabis is a Class B controlled drug and possession in any form is an offence.

If you have any information on those using or supplying any illegal drug please get in touch. If you want to remain anonymous call crime stoppers on 0800 555111.

Break in at the Cricket Club

Between the 16th and 19th December 2010 the Cricket Club on Northampton Road was broken into and sweets and crisps stolen. The stolen items indicate it may have been youngsters. So if anyone you know suddenly had an abundance of king size Snickers or Mars Duo bars, please do give us a call as we would like to speak to them. The number is 03000 111222, or drop us an email to SCTDaventryRuralNorth@northants.police.uk

Scrap metal thefts

Another crime that is on the increase is theft of metal. The price of some metal is rocketing again and we have had several opportunistic thefts of copper cylinders, cabling, old radiators and even a garden roller and drain covers. If you see anyone acting suspiciously or helping themselves to scrap metal please call us immediately.

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Country Eye by Brian Webster

Fisherfolk of the Brampton Nene

'Little grey men' are hard at work along the valley of the Brampton Nene, trying to earn a living as highly skilled hunters. Stealth is their method of approach, whilst their weapon of choice is a six-inch long, sharply pointed dagger. They have probably been there as long as we humans have, maybe longer, a testament to their staying power as hunters. A quiet walk along the Brampton Valley Way, especially during early morning or evening, will reveal them wherever the winding stream approaches the walkway. Standing at water's edge as silent sentinels, or feeling threatened, lifting aloft on broad finger-edged wings to fly with measured, powerful wing beats to a place of safety.

The 'little grey men' are herons, so-christened by Northamptonshire's great naturalist-author-artist Denys Watkins-Pitchford, who wrote under the pen-name 'BB', and who lived at Lamport (see also p. 9). With inordinately long legs, and gangling form, they seem to me vaguely reptilian. Yet with plumage of soft shades of grey, black, and white, the head topped with a graceful crest of slender black feathers, they are also beautiful.

As fishers they are unrivalled amongst birds. With infinite patience they wait upon their fishy prey, the neck curved, only darting the long neck forward at the last split-second to seize it with the opened scissor bill. Or they stalk it, wading slowly through the water until within striking distance. If they have caught a large fish they will bring it ashore to pick the flesh from the bones. As well as fish they are also partial to frogs, and when times are hard they will eat freshwater mussels, crayfish, and large insects. Even small birds and mammals have been recorded among their prey.



Hérons mostly nest in colonies in high trees. They build huge structures in February or March, of sticks lined with smaller twigs and grass, which is collected by the male, while the female builds and stands guard over the nest. From three to five eggs are laid, pale blue in colour at first, although they soon become stained with the comings and goings of the adult birds. Both birds take turns to sit on them until they hatch after about 25 days, and the young are ready to fly after seven or eight weeks.

Heron mortality is high during periods of severe cold in winter. Hard-frozen lakes and rivers effectively lock their prey away from them. So I am wondering what effects the cold December just past will have had upon them. The ferocious winter of 1963 saw their numbers crash by two-thirds. Another crucial stage in their lives is during the late

summer and autumn. This is when the young birds of the year are learning their trade; sad to say many of them never make it. One thing they need to discover has to do with the so-called angle of refraction, the apparent bending of the light as it passes from air into water. So they need to aim lower than their prey appears in order to hit it.

When the new A45 was being built along the River Nene valley from Northampton the new carriageway was lined with young herons waiting for the road kill caused by speeding traffic. Sometimes a pathetic bundle of grey, black and white showed that the herons themselves regularly became casualties. All the more for the funereal crows and rooks to Hoover up!

Being a highly visible species that largely nests in discrete colonies, we have a pretty good idea of the ups and downs that take place in the heron's population. Since 1928 the nests have been counted annually and a new assessment is due to be published in the next couple of years. I would guess that not more than 30000 birds exist nationally in a good season, with maybe a hundred pairs in Northamptonshire. This makes them quite a rare species when compared, for example, with the blackbird or the chaffinch, with national populations of around 8-10 millions of each. The nearest nesting colony that I know of to Brixworth is at the Earls Barton gravel pits, where they nest in tall trees fringing the river, and at a lower level on islets in the worked-out pits.



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Fruit & Veg and not much sleep

Stephen Troop tells Jennifer Fitzgerald about running Brixworth's greengrocer's

K. F. Troop & Son needs no introduction. Anyone in Brixworth will know the family-run greengrocer, which supplies the village not just with fresh fruit and veg but also with fish, herbs and spices, flowers and – at the right time of year – even with Christmas trees.

What were the origins of the business?

Dad (Ken Troop) started the business after the war, selling fish and fruit and veg around the local villages out of a Bedford van. Initially, he worked for Tom Harris who was a well-known Saints player. Unfortunately, Tom died suddenly in 1960 so Dad took the business over. I was thinking of joining the police but helped Dad out as a lad when he wasn't well once, and I have continued ever since!

When the health shop on Spratton Road came up for sale we bought it. We continued selling from both the shop and the vans until about seven years ago when we based our business entirely out of the shop.

What is your relationship with Brixworth?

I grew up in Spratton. Dad's folk were originally from Cottesbrooke. Like a lot of the younger generation then I moved to



Brixworth in 1986 because housing was more affordable here. That's what gave me the idea for a shop here. Dad already knew a lot of people in the village through his cricket connections.

What changes have you seen over the years?

The biggest change was the building of the community centre with a library and coffee shop, which meant that Brixworth got a lot busier.

When we sold from the vans, most village houses had large gardens so people didn't buy much. And previous generations were prepared to cook all sorts of fish. Now people don't have the time and don't know the different varieties - but they're becoming educated through the TV chefs. It means I have to keep up with the TV programmes because there's always a run on the ingredients mentioned the next day!

Because of the current economic climate, I've noticed customers are buying more seasonally and are making more soups.

What type of customers do you have?

Our business is now split 50-50 between the shop and catering to businesses – pubs,

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Who is currently involved in the business?

Dad is still involved full-time. There's also Alan Gowen, who used to have his own fruit shop and has a keen eye for how displays should look. We also have Liz and Bob Wags. Helen works in the shop and is supported by Thomas, Nicholas and a bunch of young people who take over from her later in the afternoon.

Describe your typical day

I get up at three am and go to the shop to take the orders which have been left on the answering machine. By ten to four I'm back home to change and then I set out for Leicester at quarter past. In Leicester, there's a big wholesale market and produce also arrives there from Birmingham airport, from Spain and France. Other Leicester suppliers give us prepared vegetables and cheese, which we sell to restaurants.

I'm back in Brixworth by about half past six. Dad will have been at the shop from five o'clock, putting together the orders. Deliveries of bagged lettuce and herbs arrive from Worcester around six o'clock. Four of us continue working on the orders until ten o'clock and then we organise the delivery using our two vans. Deliveries continue until about one o'clock. In the afternoon we tidy up, bag the salads, sort and unload, and check the shop is filled. We may spend some time netting and bagging at Dad's warehouse in Spratton – we bag a lot of local produce ourselves.

About twice a week I travel to growers in Spalding. We source directly from half a dozen farmers we have been working with for ten years. We also collect produce from a lot of local suppliers, including potatoes from Market Harborough and pears from near Stamford.

I'm home by three thirty pm to go through the paperwork, while Dad works on the invoices. I'll then catch an hour's sleep or in the summer I maybe go for a bike ride.

I'm a keen cyclist and take part in a lot of sponsored events. I'll then go back to the shop and check up on stock for the next day.

In the evening I'll return to the shop again to take messages, especially for milk orders. On average we sell 2500 pints (about 1000 litres) of milk a week, and 300 litres of cream.

It's a long day, but we're used to it and used to surviving on little sleep.

It was hard this Christmas because of the snow. We cut all the Christmas trees we sell ourselves in Yorkshire and this was difficult because of the amount of snow there. But overall we definitely benefited from the big freeze because people were venturing out less to the supermarkets.

What is the funniest thing that has happened to you?

It's hard to pick a single event. People say the funniest things sometimes, not realising that the things in the shop actually grow on trees! Thomas ribbed me when I didn't recognise Paul Daniels when he walked in last year in a black brimmed hat. We also had William Hague walk in once, and Neil Kinnock, when he opened the library.

What is the strangest thing that has happened to you?

It didn't happen to me but Dad – he was unwinding the window blind one morning at about five o'clock when a man came in and

pointed a gun at him, demanding money. Dad made as if to knock the gun out of his hands with the winder and the guy ran off.

What are your main challenges at the moment?

Making sure we continue to have good supplies at reasonable prices. A lot of suppliers are saying they're not going to bother now because they lost a lot of crops like cauliflower last year because of the bad weather. So there's less stuff going into the ground. I think over the next twenty years we are going to see food costs spiralling and people in the UK don't like to spend a lot of money on food. The price of onions rose last year from £150 per ton to £300-400 per ton. We're going to see more imports which will mean higher prices because of transport costs and higher fuel prices.

Apart from that, it's about keeping everyone happy. A lot of greengrocers have gone bankrupt. It's hard work, and if you're in the game, you have to play to win. But we enjoy it.

What message do you have for your customers?

A big thank you for your support!

Apart from that, I'd like people to understand that buying locally isn't always dearer than buying at the supermarket – check our prices for milk!

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Planning update

REFERENCE NO. & DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION	PC RECOMMENDATIONS & DDC DECISION
DA/2010/0666; 8 High Street, Renewal of planning application For detached chalet dwelling with single garage	23.8.10 PC No objection 24.9.10 DDC Approved
DA/2010/0676; Merry Tom Farm, Church Brampton Single storey extension with link to existing barn, conversion of existing barn into habitable room with changing facilities	23.8.10 PC No objection 30.9.10 DDC Approved
DA/2010/0779; Old Hare & Hounds, 7 Church Street, Removal of and work to trees in a Conservation Area	4.10.10 PC No objection 19.10.10 DDC Approved
DA/2010/0782; Paddock Cottage, Brixworth Hall Park, Work to trees subject of a tree preservation order	4.10.10 PC No objection 22.10.10 DDC Approved
DA/2010/0741; 18 Tantree Way, First Floor extension over existing garage	12.9.10 No objection 26.10.10 DDC Approved
DA/2010/0745; 4 The Croft Single storey extensions	12.9.10 No objection 27.10.10 DDC Approved
DA/2010/0714; 2 The Slip Fence and two storey side extension	12.9.10 PC objects 3.11.10 DDC Approved
Kelmarsh Wind Farm	DDC Refused
Mabbutts woodyard	DDC Refused

Wind farm and woodyard plans refused

DDC has refused planning permission both to Kelmarsh windfarm and the redevelopment of Mabbutts's woodyard into an industrial park.

Wind farm protesters had turn up en masse at the Council. The planning committee refused permission, noting the visual impact the wind turbines would have on nearby historic Kelmarsh Hall.

Plans to redevelop the derelict woodyard on Station Road in Brixworth were also unanimously rejected, despite having been recommended for approval by the planning officer. Residents had raised concerns about the impact of traffic to the conservation part of Brixworth, and questioned the need for more industrial space in the area.

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Brixworth First Responders: making every second count

Every second counts when someone has a serious illness. Community First Responders can perform simple interventions to save lives or prevent disability.

First responders help the ambulance service to ensure that patients get the help they need as soon as possible.

When an emergency 999 call comes in from Brixworth, an ambulance is immediately allocated. At the same time, the ambulance service may contact the on-call first responder and ask them to attend. As the responders are based locally they can reach the patient usually within the first five minutes and provide essential treatment prior to the arrival of the ambulance.

Brixworth First Responders can attend to patients who are suffering a cardiac arrest, heart attack, chest pains, patients who are unconscious or who have severe breathing difficulties. We arrive on scene with a kit bag which contains an automated external defibrillator (a machine that delivers an electric shock to the heart), oxygen and basic first aid equipment.

Thanks to the help of Brixworth Parish Council, who kindly donated the necessary equipment to get the group started, Brixworth First Responders have been available to respond to your emergency calls since 23 October 2010. Within their first week they had attended four patients.

Whilst we have a group of dedicated members we are always looking for more people to join the group and be able to help

someone when they need it most. No previous experience is required as full training will be provided by East Midlands Ambulance Service. Group Coordinator Phil Elvidge said: "People interested in joining our scheme need to be over 18, physically fit, have a full driving licence and access to a car and be a good communicator."

Anyone interested in becoming a volunteer First Responder should contact Phil Elvidge, Brixworth First Responder Coordinator, on 07964 162918 or email CFR.brixworth@hotmail.co.uk



A few of Brixworth's First Responders. Front row left to right: Julie, Alex and James; back row left to right David, Sue and Brixworth group coordinator Phil

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On the trail of BB and The Little Grey Men

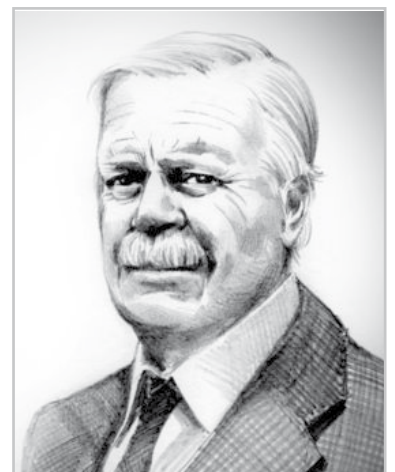
Denys Watkins-Pitchford (known as BB) author of 'The Little Grey Men' was born in 1905 at Lamporn where his father was the Rector. The young Denys spent his days exploring the local countryside, marvelling at nature in all its forms, and developing a deep love of the natural world. He went on to be a successful author penning over 60 books and as a talented artist also illustrating them.

The BB Society, formed in 2000, celebrates and builds upon his achievements, particularly in the world of conservation. In 2007, with a lottery grant, we designed a trail based on 'The Little Grey Men', the story of the last gnomes in Britain, with which BB won the 1942 Carnegie Medal for Children's Literature. The trail is enormously popular and has proved a great asset to the park.

We also have an annual Creative Arts Competition for primary schools at Brixworth and surrounding villages.

Our latest venture will be a book fair at Brixworth Village Hall on Sunday 15 May 2011 between 10am and 4pm. All the usual book fair interests will be represented including the countryside and in particular plenty of BB books will be available.

If you have any snippets of information about BB we would be interested to hear from you. For further information about The BB Society, creative arts competition, trail or book fair please contact Susan Edwards on 01604 842010



Hanging Houghton and Lamport News

There were two attempted break-ins in Hanging Houghton recently. Both of these occurred in neighbouring properties in Manor Road, so be on your guard!

On a related subject, I felt it was appropriate to remind local residents that our village Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator is Stuart Archer who lives at the end of the Croft, and all such incidents should be reported to Stuart.

I was very pleased to see that Daventry District Council (DDC) has rejected the recent application for planning permission for the wind farm at Kelmars. Yet another attempt to spoil the beautiful countryside of rural Northamptonshire bites the dust.

DDC is also currently pursuing a solution to the parking problems for the residents of Manor Walk. The Council has arranged a meeting with Lamport Estates to ascertain if there is any room for movement.

On a sadder note, I am sure that many of you will remember David Bayes who moved from Hanging Houghton to live in France a couple of years ago. Dave has recently been admitted to hospital in France and is awaiting a lung transplant. He has been on oxygen for a year and has lost a lot of weight. I am sure that we all wish him well for the future.

Mike Philpott

In memory of Practice Nurse Cathy Utley

It is with sadness that the Bulletin has to report the sudden and unexpected death of Cathy Utley on 15th December 2010. Cathy was practice nurse at Saxon Spires Surgery and had been with the village surgery for 22 years. Cathy's funeral took place on 14th January 2011.

Dr Michael Southcott, who has himself served Brixworth and surrounding areas for over two decades, had formed a close working relationship with Cathy, whom he describes as the 'mainstay' of nursing cover at the practice.

Cathy had enthusiastically embraced her role with dedication and professionalism beyond her duty. She extended her practice nurse role and held diabetic, asthma and kidney disease clinics. She was well known and popular among patients, particularly those with long term chronic conditions. One patient commented that they had 'enjoyed' being ill to see Cathy.

Dr Southcott describes Cathy as bubbly, enthusiastic and vivacious and says her central creed was her duty to her patients. She supported colleagues, was last to leave at night, worked weekends and covered for sickness absence.

Over the years she has raised thousands of pounds to purchase equipment for the surgery such as blood pressure monitors,

24 hour ECG machines and defibrillators by holding car boot sales.

In conjunction with Cathy's family Dr Southcott is setting up and administering 'The Cathy Utley Memorial Fund'. This will be used to carry on Cathy's good work, enhancing the service provided from the practice. Anyone wishing to make a donation should write a cheque out to 'The Cathy Utley Memorial Fund' and either send it to the practice or hand it in person at reception.

Cathy will be missed by colleagues and patients alike, 'She has left a gap we can't fill.' commented Dr Southcott.



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Volunteers make a difference to the blind

The Northamptonshire Association for the Blind is looking for volunteers who can spare a couple of hours once a fortnight to become a help to blind and poorly-sighted people in their area with small tasks or simple human contact.

“This small time commitment will make a huge difference to a visually impaired person’s life,” says volunteer coordinator Rachel Cave. “People with a sight impairment often become isolated and lose confidence. A volunteer role within our visiting service will help them regain and retain their independence and well-being.”

Volunteers can help with simple everyday tasks such as reading mail, newspapers and correspondence, accompany visually impaired people on short walks, visits to the doctor or hospital; occasionally help them go shopping, or assist with labelling food and household items to improve their safety.

“It’s important to point out, this is not a domestic or personal care role,” Cave says.

All volunteers will be offered ongoing support and specialist training will be provided as needed. Volunteers should be



caring and supportive, willing to understand visual impairment, and able to commit a certain amount of time on a regular basis. They may also have to undergo a CRB check.

Mileage and telephone calls will be reimbursed at the current rate.

If you’re interested, please contact Rachel Cave on 01604 719193 or 07889 411274.

Former boutique re-opens as pet shop

A new shop opened on 29th January at 130 Northampton Road. Formerly home to ‘La Boutique’ and before that ‘Simply Different’, the premises now house Miller’s Pets, the passion and brainchild of animal crazy Audrey Miller.

Audrey has three children and two step children and has lived in the village with her husband Roger, who runs Roger Miller Maintenance and whose family have long associations with Brixworth and Spratton, for six years.

The Miller household boasts sixty pets, including a snake, bearded dragon, rabbits, guinea pigs, mice, rats, chickens, and parrots. Audrey completed her City and Guilds qualification in animal welfare at Moulton College last year in preparation for this new venture. She holds a passion for animals and gets upset at how some pet shops look after the animals. She is dedicated to the welfare of animals and pets and hopes to promote this by example and by offering advice to customers.

As well as selling small animals the shop will stock a range of feeds for dogs, cats, fish, pond life, pet birds and wild birds.

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Draughton News

Draughton hosted a stunning Christmas Fayre last year. Cakes and Christmas puddings were mixed, cooked, marzipaned, and decorated by a dedicated team. Preserves, wreaths, Christmas stockings and sacks, bird feeders and hyacinths were beautifully set out. Those who gave generously of their time and skills were rewarded with empty tables.

Fund raising for the church will continue apace as we have no heating – and a jolly Carol Service with the lovely new crib was enhanced more than might be usual by the thawing properties of mulled wine.

The club room has become an even more important part of village life since refurbishment. The garden club continues with its huge variety of meetings and the monthly coffee mornings on the first Saturday of each month are proving very popular, with a chance to buy books, gossip and enjoy Sheena's brownies! All are welcome. Yoga takes place every Monday from 7pm.

Ron and Anne Block – who have been at the heart of the village, the clubroom and the church, are to move away to Cambridgeshire to be nearer their family. The village will miss them and owes them huge thanks for all the work they have done over many years. It was Anne who provided so many previous village reports to the Brixworth Bulletin. We wish them happiness in their new home.

Kate Calnan

Do you have a Lion's Heart?

Do you want to have fun while helping good causes, meet new people, learn new skills and make a difference? If so, the Brixworth Lions may be for you.

Brixworth Lions are part of Lions Clubs International, a non-sectarian and non-political organisation with 45,000 clubs and 1.35 million members worldwide.

Brixworth and District Lions covers the area north of Northampton from Walgrave, Scaldwell and Holcot to Spratton and Creaton. Meetings are held monthly at the George in Brixworth.

While best known in the area for the annual Santa's sleigh, The Lions have also undertaken litter picks, bulb planting and other local service activities. Social activities such as walks, bowling, skittles and theatre visits make this a friendly club for all.

We raise funds for local, national and international charitable activities such as buying equipment for the local scouts or providing relief to earthquake victims.

If you're interested in joining, just come and meet us. Call Andrew on 0845 833 5857 or email: Brixworth.Lions@Yahoo.com

Our website is: www.e-clubhouse.org/sites/BrixworthBranch

Local man goes fishing for poetry



Brixworth amateur writer John McFadyen has published five volumes of poetry. Each volume has a 'fishing' title but there is not a perch, hake or salmon in sight - instead the theme is internet dating and relationships. Waterstones in Northampton will be stocking the books, which were launched on 8 December 2010.

'My mother wrote fantastic poetry but when she died in 2003 all her works apart from two were lost. I decided to make sure that didn't happen to my poems. It is so hard to find a publisher without an agent and an agent without having been published so I thought I would do it myself,' explains John.

John also organises the the East Midlands Creative Writing Group or Penpals which meets in Brixworth and can be found at www.meetup.com/penpals/.

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Brixworth and District U3A

The organisation has continued to attract new members over the last few months and membership is now approaching one hundred and fifty. The monthly meetings, which are held at Brixworth Village Hall on the first Wednesday of the month at 1.30 for 2 pm are attracting in excess of seventy members. They have enjoyed a varied programme of events, including speakers on the history of *The Chronicle and Echo*, and the Country Parks Association. At the March meeting we plan to hear about the amusing side of *Upstairs, Downstairs*. 'Life with My Father' will be the title in April, and the May meeting will be about a visit to 'Down Under'.

All the interest groups continue to attract a lot of attention and there are now sixteen groups, the latest additions being Bridge (mainly for beginners), and crafts. The Christmas lunch at The George at Great Oxendon was well supported with about fifty members present, and the January and February lunches at The White Horse in Old and The Red Lion in Thornby attracted over twenty members. We have arranged an evening out in March at Highgate House and if this proves successful further evening events will follow. Rambling is still a popular activity and whilst there wasn't a walk in December, the group has completed a couple of rambles at



Crick and Cosgrove this year, as you can see in the photo above.

The new Music Appreciation Group is off to a great start and in April they are going to the Birmingham Symphony Hall to hear Stravinsky's Rite of Spring. Marian and Mike Fitchett hosted a musical evening in December with a Christmas theme and they are hosting a further event on 11 March, which will revolve around Spring. Table tennis and the tea dances are also attracting a good following and there are about a dozen members learning to play Bridge; at the moment they are meeting every week in order to try and hone their skills.

Brixworth is a member of the Northamptonshire Network of U3As through which a link is being set up with Northampton University. It is hoped that this link will benefit both parties as the U3A will have access to some of the university's facilities and in return will assist students in some of their projects. This tie-up is in its early stages and more details will be available in due course. We are more than happy to accept new members and contact can be made with the membership secretary Peter Davies on 880401. Alternatively, further information and contact details can be found on our new website www.u3asites.org.uk/brixworth.




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Bands, Gigs and Plays

by Peter Harmer

As this is my first article with the Brixworth Bulletin, I would like to share with you what I hope to bring to the quarterly newsletter. Firstly, the Bulletin, in my personal opinion, has always been aimed at the parents, or the older generation of the village. But hopefully with an influx of new, younger writers, it will become more popular among the youth of Brixworth. So, every quarter I will be keeping you up to date with all the local gigs and events going on around Brixworth and Northampton along with small reviews and what to expect of the acts involved.

Kadence head to Maida Vale

So to kick off this year's first 'youth friendly' bulletin, I'd like to tell you about a couple of upcoming Northampton Bands causing a buzz around town. Firstly, Overstone-based band Kadence who you may have seen recently at either 'The Good Ship' or 'The Romany Public House', are soon to be recording some material at none other than the BBC Maida Vale studios in London. Kadence are a four piece who started out as a brother/sister acoustic duo; however they have gone on to recruit a drummer and Brixworth's very own Joseph Foley as their bassist. The sound these four talented musicians produce has a somewhat late 90's indie feel to it, and with a mixture of male and female vocals carrying the band, they surely have a bright future on the local scene and hopefully around the country in the coming year.

Elastic Band snaps back

Another band trying to make it onto the Northampton music scene is the aptly named 'Elastic Band'. This band began life as an acoustic three piece of Moulton Secondary School students back

in the summer of 2010 with two guitarists and vocalist, however, after a rocky start the band decided to go their separate ways until, in November of the same year, they snapped back, recruiting the talents of pianist Tom Forgione and vocalists Annie Stone and Paris Copp. Their first gig after reforming took place on the 18th of December as they opened for another local band 'Re-Ignite' in Moulton Secondary's annual 'Battle of the Bands'. They are currently stronger than ever with a new contemporary sound and looking for gigs throughout the county, so will definitely be one to watch for 2011.

@ Royal & Derngate

Now, as we enter spring still trying to recover from the Christmas festivities, there are several big events on at Northampton's major venues now that the pantomime season is over. The 12th of April brings Ireland's notoriously quick-witted Ed Byrne to the Royal and Derngate theatre for a stand up show and for our more serious readers out there, make sure not to miss Hugh Osborne's 'Diary of a Nobody', an adaptation of George and Weedon Grossmith's original novel, coming to the Royal on the 4th of March and running for just over a month.

Finally, as a writer for the youth I'd like to urge those of you throughout the village to help come up with ideas and create a decent outlet for the children and young adults of Brixworth who have received a somewhat bad press over the last 6 months. If anyone has any ideas they wish to be put forward, feel free to contact me at peter.harmer@live.co.uk.

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What's on?

5 March	Merry Tom Folk Festival Preview	The George, Brixworth
9 March	Stephen Amos	Royal & Derngate
11 March	Russell Kane	Royal & Derngate
12 March	B. Centre pre-school Bake Sale (9am - 1pm)	Community Centre Foyer
16 March	Steeleye Span	Royal & Derngate
19-20 Mar	Peppa Pig's Party	Royal & Derngate
21 March	Kate Nash	The Roadmender
22 March	Greg Davies	Royal & Derngate
23 March	Circus of Horrors	Royal & Derngate
24 March	National Science Museum Live	Royal & Derngate
26 March	Pink Floyd Experience	Royal & Derngate
27 March	A Night at the Opera	Royal & Derngate
29.3-2.4	Annie	Royal & Derngate
3 April	Mother's Day - Free Travel	Northampton & Lamport Railway
4-5 April	Antiques and Collectors Fair	Lampport Hall
7 April	10cc	Royal & Derngate
12 April	Easter Activity Day (2-4pm)	Brixw. Centre Pre-School
12 April	Ed Byrne	Royal & Derngate
14 April	Russell Watson - Live	Royal & Derngate
16-17 April	Country Fair	Kelmarsh Hall

17 April	Charlie Chaplin - The Mutuals	Royal & Derngate
23-25 April	Easter Egg Special Train Service	Northampton & Lamport Railway
24 April	Easter Egg Hunt (and trail in school hols)	Brixworth Country Park
25 April	Easter Egg Hunt	Brixworth Church Yard
29.4 - 1.5.	The Gruffalo's Child	Royal & Derngate
30 April - 2 May	Teddy Bears' Holiday - Special Service	Northampton & Lamport Railway
1-2 May	Hardy Plant Fair	Kelmarsh Hall
6-21 May	Hamlet! The Musical	Royal & Derngate
2 May	Marie Curie Daffodil Run	Kelmarsh Hall
7 May	Lenny Henry	Royal & Derngate
7 May	Painting the Spring Landscape	Lampport Hall
8 May	Tchaikovsky Gala	Royal & Derngate
11 May	Macmillan Walk	Althorp House
13 May	The Beat	The Roadmender
14 May	Glenn Hughes	The Roadmender
15 May	Animals in Pastel	Lampport Hall
21-22 May	Country Fair	Althorp House
22-24 May	Derren Brown	Royal & Derngate
24-28 May	Love Love Love	Royal & Derngate
26-28 May	Thriller Live	Royal & Derngate
28-30 May	Ivor the Engine Special Event	Northampton & Lamport Railway
29-31.5.	Festival of Country Life	Lampport Hall

31.5- 4.6	Horrible Histories	Royal & Derngate
3-25 June	Eden End	Royal & Derngate
6-11 June	Yes Prime Minister	Royal & Derngate
9 June	Choosing Plants for the Garden	Lampport Hall
10-12 June	Literary Festival	Althorp House
12 June	Last Night of the Proms	Royal & Derngate
14 June	Tony Christie	Royal & Derngate
18 June	Northampton Symphony Orchestra	Royal & Derngate
19 June	Father's Day - Free Travel	Northampton & Lamport Railway
19 June	Food Fair	Country Park
20 June	Guided Garden Walks	Lampport Hall
22 June	Ladies Day	Lampport Hall
26 June	Theatre: The Tempest	Lampport Hall
27 June	Jazz on a Summer's Day	Lampport Hall
29 June	Simplifying Landscape in Watercolour	Lampport Hall
1-2 July	Art Exhibition Week	Lampport Hall
5-9 July	Avenue Q	Royal & Derngate
8 July	British Grand Prix	Silverstone
8-9 July	Merry Tom Folk Festival	Brixworth Country Park
15 July	Landrover Owner Show	Billing Aquadrome
16-17 July	Festival of History	Kelmarsh Hall
24 July	Althorp Revealed - Free Entry	Althorp House

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To reserve your free taster lessons please call Julie on 07834 351112 or e-mail: info@karatetots.co.uk

Sports Page

Cricket: Planning for the new season

With England's magnificent Ashes victory still fresh in the memory, our thoughts turn towards the new season.

We will again run three senior league teams on Saturdays, playing in the Northants Premier League, Division 4 and Division 14 respectively, as well as four junior teams at U17, U15, U13 and U11.

Senior indoor nets began at Moulton Sports Centre on Sunday 7th February. They take place every Sunday from 5.30- 6.30pm.

Players of all ages and ability are welcome as always, as are volunteers who would like to help out with any aspect of running the club. In particular we are seeking Tea 'Ladies' for 2011 to prepare cricket teas on Saturday afternoons, paid by the Club. If you would like to help, then do get in touch.

Brixworth Cricket Festival Weekend – 15 & 16 July 2011

Following last year's inaugural match, and a famous victory by the Brixworth Select XI, Lashings are seeking revenge!

Friday 15 July sees Brixworth CCVS Lashings World XI, in support of The Three Little Miracles Fund.

The Lashings very rarely lose and they have promised to bring an even stronger team this summer. Further details about hospitality packages and match timings etc will appear on the Club's website.

On Saturday 16 July, Brixworth Cricket Ball will offer another fantastic evening of

wonderful food, wine and live entertainment along with a superb selection of auction and raffle prizes.

For further information please contact head of the organising committee, Margaret Rattley, on 07970 974525.

Sponsorship

We are extremely fortunate to have a wonderful ground, superb facilities and a growing band of loyal followers, as well as some major events that draw large crowds.

If you can help in any way, whether via a perimeter advertising board, shirt sponsorship, support for the Lashings game etc. then please get in touch.

Chris Timm, club chairman (1604 882591; Christimm_24@hotmail.com; www.brixworthcc.co.uk)

Brixworth Amateur Golf Society

Under the Captaincy of Rob Bennett, 2010 proved to be another successful golfing year with high numbers playing at each venue. As a mark of his Captaincy, Rob presented each member with a BAGS pitch repairer. He also awarded the Captain's Shield to Ray Buckby.

The January venue for the George Clapton Memorial Trophy was won by Nigel Rylance.

The Tim Moulds Jug was won by Geoff Green and winners of the Cup, played for on each day out, included Nigel Rylance, John Wilson, Paul Adams and Steve Nixon. Golfer of the Year was Steve Nixon, with Bill Waller the runner-up.

The Golf Society's annual general meeting will be held on Thursday 30 March at 8pm at the Sportsfield Pavillion in Brixworth. Everyone is welcome, whether they're new or existing members or simply curious.

We've arranged venues for 2011 for 15 April at Abbey Hill, 10 June at Kibworth, 12 August at The Leicestershire and 7 October at Brampton Heath. Anybody interested in joining should ring John Wilson on 880490.



Badminton Club Open Night

Brixworth Badminton Club is currently looking for new members. We are holding an open night in Guilsborough on Wednesday 23 March from 7.30 – 9.30 pm. Come and play for free for the night, see the facilities and decide whether our friendly club is for you.

Brixworth Badminton Club plays on Wednesday and Friday nights from 7.30 to 9.30pm at modern facilities at Guilsborough School, on four courts.

Whilst the club should appeal to those social players wanting to improve, it also provides a challenge for those who aspire to play more competitively.

Interested? You can find more details on www.brixworthbadminton.co.uk; or contact club secretary Jonathan Tame on 01604 881179 or jonathantame@sky.com. Alternatively, just turn up after 7.30pm on Wednesday 23 March at the sports hall at Guilsborough School with suitable footwear.

Juniors Football

Brixworth Juniors Football Club are looking for a few more players who are currently in Year 2 at the school.

If anyone is keen on playing football and would be interested in joining Brixworth Juniors next season (2011/2012) then please contact Jim Nelson (Under 8s Pumas Manager) on 883702 or 07703 598119 for more information.