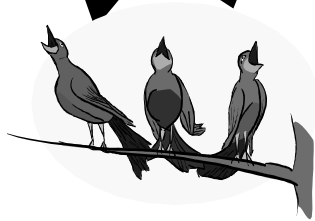


BIRDSONG

April and May
2012



BIRDINGBURY
NEWS
No 49



The River Leam in spate, sometime in the 1940s

See page 11 for news of our water supply.

The old willow on the right survives but this version of the fishermen's bridge was swept away in 1977.

This picture is one of many now stored in the village archive.

See page 10 for Birdingbury History Open Day on 5th May.

Parish Council Report

There have been two meetings since my last report. In February, Councillor Terry Healey joined the Council, and at the same meeting the new Clerk, Joanna Bloomfield took up post. We welcome both of them. There has been a focus on two major issues: replacement of the destroyed bus shelter and exploring the best use of the Rugby Borough Council (RBC) grant we were awarded in 2008 to address road safety issues in the village.

An open meeting for villagers on Saturday 10th March gave people an opportunity to vote for the best design for the Jubilee mugs the PC will be presenting to every child in the village, and also to give their views on how to replace the bus shelter. Separate reports on both these issues are included in this issue of *Birdsong*.

Negotiations with the County Council Highways officers on road safety issues have resulted in a plan to submit two major developments for spending the RBC grant, and these were agreed by the PC at their March meeting: £2,000 for speed warning signs on each of the roads coming into the village, and £12,000 for a path up to the church. These proposals are being submitted to RBC (as amendments to our original bid) and it is our hope that, once agreed, the work will commence in April/May.

The state of the 'jitty' between Main Street and Back Lane has also been discussed as a priority. This is a maintenance issue which the PC will continue to press the County Council to address. The PC will also consider, at its next meeting, whether it can afford to ask for the verge in Leamington Hastings Road to be kerbed, following approaches from residents about its poor state. It is hoped that these various projects will improve road safety for both pedestrians and car users.

The council is updating the Parish Community Emergency Plan, but before we can complete it with the names of villagers responsible for various aspects of the plan, we were advised we should register with Data Protection – which we have now done. If you have any queries about the implications of this, please contact our Clerk, Joanna Bloomfield (parishclerk@birdingbury.org) who is our Data Controller. Individuals being named will be contacted before the Plan is put on to the village website.

Given the worrying numbers of local burglaries recently, the local PCSO Helena Steadman, working in collaboration with our Neighbourhood Co-ordinator Jackie Morton, is suggesting we support the erection of signage warning doorstep sellers that the village is a 'no-go' area. If you have any views on this, please contact any of the councillors or the Clerk. Before we commit the Parish Council to expenditure on this, we would like to hear what you think.

Diana Turner, Chair

A reminder that the **Annual Village Meeting** will be held at:
8.00pm on **Tuesday 24th April** in the Birbury.

Do put this date in your diary, as it will be an opportunity to have your say on village issues, including the development of the bus shelter and its environs.

BIRDSONGBIRDSONGBIRDSONGBIRDSONG

Birdingbury Jubilee Mugs

At a meeting in the Birbury on 10th March votes were cast for the design to go on the Birdingbury Jubilee Mugs. There was a great selection of designs, the conclusive winner being Ceara Hayden. Congratulations Ceara, and commiserations but many thanks for entering to all the others - particularly the very talented entries from our younger members of the community.

A note has been circulated inviting orders for the mugs to be placed by Monday 28th March. If you have children 18 years old or under as at 31st August 2012 then they will be presented with a mug, courtesy of the Parish Council, but it would be useful if you could confirm how many eligible children there are in your household please. I am sure there will be additional orders placed for mugs as souvenirs, which are likely to cost around £4.50.



If you have mislaid the order slip then please just let me know your name, address, how many eligible children there are in your household, and the additional number of mugs you would like to order, by email to chris@elliam.org, telephone 633493, or a note to Brook Farm House, Back Lane.

Chris Morton

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Birdingbury Website

If you haven't yet done so, please visit the village website. Here you will find all sorts of information about the village, a monthly calendar and village diary, events and clubs, Parish Council information and minutes, news items and notices, links to other websites, and even copies of *Birdsong*!

www.birdingbury.org

Editor's Appeal Very many thanks to the readers who generously responded to our appeal in the February edition (they have been thanked individually). £180 was donated - sufficient for at least three issues of *Birdsong*. *Ed.*

The Bus Shelter

At the meeting on 10th March in the Birbury, about 20 villagers considered ideas for a new bus shelter. The general consensus was that we should try to create a new structure that was a 'modernised version of the old one' and would sit comfortably in its surroundings.

It should be about the same size in order to make use of the existing concrete slab, which seems to be in good order, and should incorporate notice boards for village and church. Most people thought there should be glass in the ends so one could see buses approaching and that the finial from the roof of the old shelter should be reused.

A small group - David Harrison, Terry Healey, Gaynor Munro, Jackie Westcott and Chris Barney - will try to get the necessary details and prices so that a proposal can be presented to the Village Meeting in April. Possible sources of funding are being investigated.

Any further ideas are welcome – please contact one of the group.

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Progressive Supper

If any confirmation were needed that we live in a really friendly village, we had that in spades, literally, on that Saturday night. Thirty couples arrived in the Club, braving the winter conditions for what turned out to be another successful Progressive Supper. It was great to see two new couples (Rosy & Mike and Mel & Ian) as well as lots of old friends and neighbours.

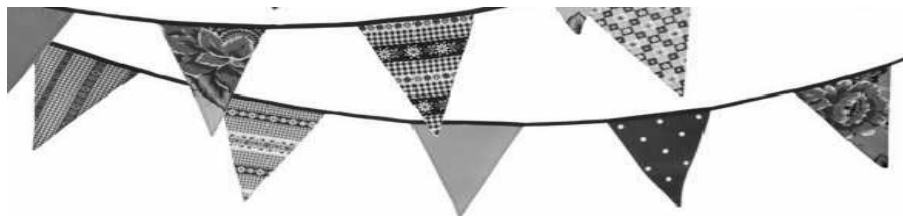
The raffle (thanks Jo and Karen) raised £151 and the donations another £575 so in total the event raised £726, which we are splitting equally between the church and Ward 11 at Birmingham's Royal Orthopaedic Hospital.

Aside from one or two slip ups (apologies to Chris & Dawn and Craig & Julie), we are absolutely sure people had a superb evening and the snow made everything very pretty as well as a little unpredictable!

Thanks go to Val for opening the club up early and making sure the tea and coffee were ready when we returned. Thanks also to those people who generously donated raffle prizes.

Here's to 2013!

Simon and Jackie



The Queen's Diamond Jubilee Celebrations

2nd – 5th June 2012

To mark 60 years of The Queen's reign a group of villagers has come up with a variety of activities to make this a truly memorable event.

Saturday 2nd June

2pm - 4pm The Birbury

“ALL OUR YESTERDAYS” - This will be an afternoon of tea and nostalgia. Please bring along any photos and memorabilia of past celebrations and events - a lovely opportunity to share those special memories.

“ALL OUR TOMORROWS” - For children the opportunity to take part in creating a lasting art piece containing their ideas and thoughts for the future, which we hope will be displayed in the village for years to come.

Sunday 3rd June

3pm - St Leonard's Church

JUBILEE CREAM TEAS AND SONGS OF PRAISE

Cream teas will be served from 3pm when you will be invited to choose hymns for the service starting at 4pm.

Monday 4th June

11am - 4pm Recreation Field

FUN OLYMPICS

A fun filled event for all the family Dress in your team colour - red, white or blue, depending on where you live - and cheer on your team for the medals.

From 12 noon a simple lunch for all will be served in the Birbury.

4pm - Unveiling & Dedication of the Royal Diamond Jubilee Oak Tree.

7pm -10pm PICNIC IN THE MEADOW

Bring along your picnic and candelabra to The Old Rectory Meadow.

Tuesday 5th June

3pm - VILLAGE STREET PARTY

Bring along a plate to share. Drinks, ice creams and Jubilee cake will be provided.

Wear your team colours! Presentation of Jubilee mugs and Olympic certificates .

The next planning meeting will be in the Birbury on Wednesday 23rd May at 7.45pm.

ALL WELCOME.

Being good neighbours.....

Our article in the last edition of Birdsong resulted in some positive responses to our ideas. A number of villagers offered to provide help in different ways. This is very good news and means that our plans to create a 'good neighbour' scheme for Birdingbury, to support the many neighbourly acts that already take place, really will come to fruition. The next stage is for us to put those ideas outlined into a format that will make the scheme a reality but also simple to use and operate. We will be doing this over the next month or so and hopefully we will be introducing details very soon.

We had little feedback from people about whether they would feel able to ask for help but we are going to assume that, perhaps with some encouragement, that will happen. Continue to speak to us if you have ideas we can share.

***Mel Palmer Karen Armbrister Jan Seenan Diana Turner
Jenny Hawes Dick Withington***

BIRDSONGBIRDSONGBIRDSONGBIRDSONG

Broadband News

Many people have been asking the Liaison Committee when they are going to get the fast broadband from BT. Openreach has given out the information below – a little reluctantly at first because obviously things can happen to slow progress and there was absolutely no need for them to provide this information and thereby a stick with which to beat them! So, on the understanding that these are PROVISIONAL dates, in the interest of giving a guideline on progress, they can tell you the following:

“The first cabinet in Oxford Road, Marton has gone live and it should now be possible to place orders for premises in the Princethorpe area.

Openreach hope that a further three cabinets, which serve Eathorpe, Birdingbury and Bourton, will go live during April and May.

The remaining three cabinets at Weston-under-Wetherly, Hunningham Hill and Leamington Hastings, which require network rearrangement, are likely to go live in June.”

In addition, once the full subscription information is available it will be circulated so that we can take advantage of the new high speed connectivity.

Chris Morton

Still not enough rain

As every gardener will know the ground is exceptionally dry. For the last sixteen months rainfall has been way below average and Draycote Water is nearly half empty. Severn Trent have stopped drawing from there and at present our drinking water has to come from Meriden. To help restore levels and avoid restrictions in the summer they have spent half a million pounds on a temporary scheme to pump water from the river Leam in Willes Meadow, Leamington back into Draycote. To do this they are using an existing nine mile pipe, which normally takes water to Leamington, and sending it back 'uphill' to Draycote. There, a new pipe has been installed for the last 800 metres. Visitors to Draycote will see this great blue plastic snake running along the bottom of the dam at the Draycote village end before rising up and discharging into the reservoir. Pumping will only be allowed when river levels at Leamington are high enough but at full capacity this system would deliver 12.5 million litres a day. This may sound a lot but if they had to fill the whole reservoir in this way it would take more than four years. Thankfully, there are other methods to maintain the supply to Draycote.



We still need the rain, though perhaps not too much at a time. Our cover picture shows floods in Birdingbury sometime in the 1940s - and many living in the village will remember Easter 1998.

Chris Barney

BIRDSONGBIRDSONGBIRDSONGBIRDSONG

Bourton Village Hall

Live & Local has been awarded LEADER funding to support a pilot rural cinema project to enable rural communities to programme films in their local halls. Bourton Village Hall has been privileged to be invited to be part of this pilot scheme and so on Wednesday 2nd May we will be showing the film 'Hugo' - an Oscar nominated Scorsese film for all the family – not as yet on general sale on DVD. Tickets for this performance are FREE. All we ask for is your patience (should there be any technical hitches) and some feedback regarding the scheme. Doors will open at 7 for a 7.30 screening and seats will be on a first come first served basis (we hope to seat about 90 people).

Is someone or something affecting you or your community?

**Come and meet your local officer
at the Mobile Police Station.**

We will be in front of the Birbury at 10.00am on
Friday 11th May and Friday 22nd June

Feel free to pop in for a friendly chat with a member of the team.

There has been another theft of **number plates** from a vehicle parked along the Fosse in Stretton-on-Dunsmore. It is the fourth incident of this nature locally.

In each case, the vehicles targeted had "stick on" number plates which can be easily removed by offenders. Anti-theft screws can reduce the risk of theft of number plates. An anti theft number plate kit can be purchased from the internet for £5.99 or from any mainstream hardware store.

If you have any information about recent incidents of theft of number plates please contact the Neighbourhood Policing team on 01788 853851.

BIRDSONGBIRDSONGBIRDSONGBIRDSONG

Free Guided Farm Walk

Toft Farm

Kites Hardwick, Rugby, Warwickshire, CV23 8AD

With kind permission of Mr & Mrs Russell

Saturday 14th April 2012 at 2pm

As part of the Friendly Farmer Project to help establish relationships between farmers and their local communities, we would like to invite you to a guided farm walk. The walk will cover various aspects of the farm which may include:

***Background to the Farm
Farm diversification
Wildlife***

***Conservation
Environmental stewardship
Farmland Habitats***

After the walk there will be light refreshments free of charge.
Please ensure you wear suitable clothing and footwear as the tour will involve walking through fields and on uneven surfaces.

Numbers are restricted, therefore pre booking is essential.

Please contact Jenny Gunnell on 02476 858244 or jennyg@rase.org.uk

The Recreation Field Committee

Invites you to join a

Working Party

on

Sunday 29th April 2012

Please meet at the Field at 10am

**We would be grateful if you could bring some gardening
and staining equipment, containers, brushes, spades, brooms etc**

**LEAMINGTON HASTINGS INFANT SCHOOL
COMMUNITY EVENING**

Wednesday 25th April, 7.30pm

Please join us to view the exhibition of school memorabilia from our 50th Anniversary last November, which will be on show during our Community Evening.

Representatives of the school and other community groups will also be on hand to share information and answer questions. This is a great opportunity to see the school and find out a little bit about what is happening in and around your community!

If you know of a group which might like to join us for the evening, please contact the school on 01926 632359.

Alex Rigler

BIRDSONGBIRDSONGBIRDSONGBIRDSONG

Birdingbury Annual Egg Roll

Saturday 7th April 10.30am

Rain or shine it will be held at the Recreation Field

The Birdingbury will be open for refreshments afterwards and prizes awarded for the best decorated eggs for those under 5, 10 and 14.

Please come and support this annual event. All welcome.

Jo Cutts

BIRDSONGBIRDSONGBIRDSONGBIRDSONG

On Wednesday 2nd May

Birdingbury Wheelers will take to the road for the 2012 season.

Meet outside the Club at 7pm. All (cyclists) welcome.

Birdingbury Village History Open Day



Birdingbury Village History Group will be holding an Open Day on Saturday 5th May, from 10.30am onwards in the Birbury and the Club.

We have collected a lot of interesting information about the village:

- the growth of housing and the families who lived in them
- constructed a timeline of local, national and international events
- created a digital photographic record of Birdingbury and its residents
- produced a database of all Memorial Inscriptions in St Leonard's
- recorded and transcribed interviews with people who have lived here most of their lives

We hope you will drop in and look at the displays of what we have been working on. There will be tea and coffee available!

If you have any objects or old photographs (especially aerial photographs) that you think would be of interest, and that you would let us borrow for the day, please contact us.

Lastly, if you would like to join us on the day but need help getting there, please contact:

Liz Davies on 01926 632091,
or email birdingburyhistory@hotmail.co.uk

BIRDSONGBIRDSONGBIRDSONGBIRDSONG

Bourton & District Garden Club Thursday 26th April 2012.

Village Hall, Bourton on Dunsmore 7 for 7.30pm Visitors welcome

Pruning trees & shrubs. Speaker Mr Ian Gourlay
Barbara Penny - 632957 Ann Morton - 632862 Carol Cooper - 632033

FUN AND GAMES IN THE BIRBURY

In the early afternoon of Saturday 18th February it looked like the weather was going to be the winner in the annual Pancake Race. Hordes of eager youngsters crowded into the Birbury - to get out of the rain - and some of the optimistic audience were re-assuring them, 'It'll clear up soon!' Meanwhile others were muttering about health and safety and broken bones.

However, the optimists won, the sun shone and the race was on!

A variety of frying pans were held tightly in eager hands and they all contained a pancake of sorts - these gradually reduced in size as they were tossed enthusiastically, before, during and after the races. Gaynor organised the milling competitors and started them off on the official route from the phone box to the club. There were so many enthusiastic youngsters that two races were organised; Rees Moore was the first winner and the second was a dead heat between Crawford Timms and Josh Thomas. These two obviously inspired their families because Maxine Timms won the Mum's race and Nick Thomas the Dad's. The last event was an additional race for the Birbury Committee who were responsible for organising the event; this was won comfortably by a sprightly Dick Withington.

Missing from the audience this year was Derek Moore who, sadly, died recently. Derek served as a member of the Birbury committee for many years, several of them as Treasurer. We decided to link in with the British Heart Foundation Fund raising day and raise money for it in memory of Derek by selling cakes and refreshments after the races. This was the reason that the committee were wearing eye-catching red t-shirts. Volunteers had made cakes ranging from fresh cream scones to fruit cakes and the money from the sale of these was added to some Jackie had made from selling cakes elsewhere, the sale of the t-shirts and donations. Altogether a fantastic £210 was made for the British Heart Foundation in memory of Derek.

The winners were rewarded with chocolate eggs or fruit - funny how most chose chocolate. A welcome chance to sit down and recover from all the excitement was available in the Birbury. The races were discussed, pancakes compared - or what was left of them - and promises made of faster times next year. A friendly and relaxing event and a lovely way to spend a sunny Saturday afternoon. A fitting tribute to a friend and former colleague. Many thanks to all who were involved, competitors, cooks, organisers and the encouraging audience - including Derek's family.

Jennie Hawes

STOP PRESS:

We held a Bring and Buy on Saturday 17th March and raised £120 to help us run the Birbury; thanks once again to all who took part.

Kasisi Orphanage and Mercy Ministries, Lusaka



We were overwhelmed with all the donations made from our Birdingbury friends for us to take to Zambia – and would like to say a really big THANK YOU to our wonderful community for responding to our appeal in the last edition of Birdsong. We set off with six suitcases, one for our clothes, another with ‘shopping’ for Caroline and Angus (all those things that we can get Am-

azon to deliver safely to our doors but are unlikely to arrive intact in Zambia), and FOUR suitcases filled with things for Kasisi and Mercy Ministries.

We visited both organisations with Caroline. They are incredibly different in terms of their structure, the people they help and their resources, but their dedication to helping orphaned or at risk children remains consistent and totally admirable.

Caroline sorted through the gifts with enormous excitement. Amazing glue (we managed to get a 2 litre bottle as well as lots of prit-sticks there), pens, pencils, craft materials – all to be shared between her two classes; the baby clothes and toys destined for Kasisi where they have so many orphaned babies (their latest addition was just a week old – his mother had died in childbirth and he had no family to raise him); then the clothes split between both organisations for distribution as they thought fit.



The Kasisi Orphanage is a very well organised place, run by a group of totally committed Polish Nuns led by Sister Mariola. They have about 250 children who live there, many of whom are HIV positive and together with other illnesses require medical care which the charity provides. The orphanage has very clean and regimentally laid out dormitories where large groups of children share rooms. Within the secured area there are classrooms for the various age groups for their lessons. Caroline has been working with the staff and teaching them how to deliver the pre-school learning. She obviously is very well respected and loved by the nuns and staff as well as the children.

Mercy Ministries is a great contrast. This school provides for children who have been identified as being at great risk in the community. Whilst the children still return to their homes at the end of the school day, they are receiving a good education through structured lessons, and life skills which they would be unlikely to get in their homes.



The classrooms are pretty basic thatched rooms set around a clay courtyard. The toothbrushes, toothpaste and soaps went there – not to be taken home



where they might not get used by the children, but kept in school where they can be taught each day how to look after their personal hygiene. Here we saw the work that Caroline had done with setting up a classroom for children of all ages with special needs. The children were learning how to count, and were doing basic puzzles. Many of the clothes we took out went to Mercy Ministries who will give them to the children as they see

fit. The charity were also really grateful for the money we gave to them which will be used for continuing to build their toilet block, or for the much needed transport vehicle that they require. The message I think we took away from our visit to Mercy Ministries is how lucky we are to live in our clean well equipped homes in our caring community with the NHS and schooling on hand and in our well structured lives. I think some of our children could do with a visit to see how lucky they are!

For those of you who know the Mackie family, we can report that they have built themselves a wonderful home with most mod-cons – even if power cuts are a regular feature – and that Caroline, Angus, James and Emma seem to be very well settled and happy. They send their very best wishes and thanks to everyone in Birdingbury.

Jackie and Chris



Looking Back . . .

What was going on in our village this springtime 10 years (20 years, 30 years ...) ago? Here's a random dip into parish council and village meeting archives which may be of interest.

Spring 2002: the PC (Chairman Chris Barney) noted that the demolition of Three Elms, Back Lane, was complete and work would soon start on four new houses [later Yew, Ash, Elm, Oak]. It adopted a proposal to develop a Parish Plan [it came to nothing at that time but was later taken up again and the Plan was published in 2009]. The corner of Stockton and Leamington Hastings Roads was selected as the site for an oak tree to celebrate the Queen's Golden Jubilee. The Annual Village Meeting in April reported that a log swing, tower unit and 'Burmah Bridge' had been added to the Recreation Field play equipment. Severn Trent said that the long-term sewage smell had been solved. Mrs. Knowles had been appointed Head of Leamington Hastings School. The church now had a water supply.

Spring 1992: Chris Barney (he was Chair then, too) announced that the First Homes on Leamington Hastings Road were finished and the first owners had moved in. Canon Idwal Jones would preside at an official Opening Ceremony on 9th May. A gas supply was being brought to the village. The PC had approved the borough council's proposed 'village envelope', defining the area within which certain development *could* be allowed, although the PC said that they didn't want all of the few building plots within that envelope to be built upon.

Spring 1982: (the PC met in the Club at this time. Mr. S. Hackley was the Chairman). The Recreation Field slide-mound was ready for grassing [the first phase of the R. Field had been opened in March 1978]. There was consternation in the village at a National Coal Board proposal to open a new pit within or near to the parish. The PC and Club were urged to discuss ways in which a community room could be built [no progress was made at that time but three years later a joint Club/village effort resulted in work starting on what was to become The Birbury. It opened 2nd May 1987].

Spring 1972: (PC and AGM met in the Club; spring saw the Chairmanship pass from Mr. Harry Truslove to Mr. T. Horn). A path was being built along the south side of Marton Road from The Malt Barn to what is now Merryfields. Rugby Rural District Council had agreed to provide three garages for the Council Houses in Back Lane. The village had won third prize in the

1971 Best Kept Village Competition. Demand for a village recreation field was growing and the PC was in discussion with church authorities about the possibility of using part of Glebe Field. Efforts continued to bring in a 30mph speed limit. The PC was unhappy at the proposal to make the parish part of the new 'Rugby District Council' when it replaced the Rugby Rural District Council in 1974 – they preferred to be part of a Southam District Council.

Spring 1962: [the PC did not exist at this time – it first met on 2nd August 1967. Before then there were Annual – and sometimes other – 'Parish Meetings' or 'Assemblies' For some time these meetings had been held in members' homes – the result of issues between them and the Club about access to a room there. [H. Truslove was the Chair.] A major debate resulted in the rejection of a proposal to bring street lighting to Birdingbury. The 'Village Bread Charity' - soon to be wound up but still active then – was reported to have a balance of £1.3s.3d.

Spring 1952: (the Parish Meeting was held in the 'Old Schoolroom' – now the Club; the Chair was H. Truslove). A proposal to re-site the War Memorial in the church-yard was discussed and the meeting was told that the District Council had approved the building of some Council Houses in Back Lane [eventually completed in 1956].

Spring 1942: (meeting in the school. Chair H. Truslove.) A piped water supply had just been laid on for the village.

[There is no record of any meeting held in 1932]

Spring 1922: (meeting in the school. Chair Rev. E.B. Conder). The meeting noted that the War Memorial was now 'open.'

Spring 1912: (Chair Rev. F.W. Barrows). The only recorded business of this Parish Meeting was a strong expression of opposition to the Report of the Sewerage Committee of Rugby District Council and its proposals for the village. A resolution 'proposed by Sir T.G. Biddulph, Bart. [Birdingbury Hall owner] and seconded by Mr. Charles Cockerill' was to be sent to the RRDC together with the critical advice of a London civil engineer hired by the parish.

Spring 1902: (held in the 'National School Room'. Chair Rev. F.W. Barrows). The main business was arrangements for observing the Coronation Day of King Edward VII [9th August 1902]. The meeting decided to "write to Sir T. G. Biddulph, Bart. [of Birdingbury Hall] to ascertain his views."

Archivesworm

Letters

Dear Friends in Birdingbury,

Many thanks for all your very generous donations. We unpacked them with much excitement.

Most of the baby clothes were given to Kasisi Orphanage who were extremely grateful. The toys were divided between the two charities and the soaps/toothpaste etc. were given to Mercy Ministries. The toothbrushes and toothpaste were wonderful to receive as we have been teaching the children about personal hygiene, and wanted to teach them how to brush their teeth. This is now possible.

As we arrived at Mercy Ministries the younger children in the Special Needs Class were learning their numbers, so the magnetic clock and the number foot mat were put into action straight away.

These are just a few examples of how your donations were received. However they were all received gratefully and will all be put to good use.

Many, many thanks.

Caroline

BIRDSONGBIRDSONGBIRDSONGBIRDSONG

Thanks

To all our friends in Birdingbury, Barbara, Jeremy and Jonathan wish to say thank you for all your cards, messages and lovely comments about Derek himself, and also for your generosity and kindness in so many ways. It has been quite overwhelming and comforting. Thank you all so much.

Barbara Moore

BIRDSONGBIRDSONGBIRDSONGBIRDSONG

Cynthia, Jayne, Steven and Roy Rogers would like to express their grateful thanks to neighbours, friends and villagers for cards, messages and kind offers of help and support during Roy's stay in hospital. It's really wonderful to belong to such a caring community. Thankfully, Roy is now making a good recovery.

Many thanks

Cynthia

Dilys Williams

Dilys Williams, who lived in Birdingbury until May 2009, died in Rugby on 13th February. She was about 63.

In 2009 Dilys and her brother David Williams were evicted from their council houses in Birdingbury by Rugby Borough Council, and in a Dickensian scene Dilys' furniture, clothes, personal papers and other belongings were piled on the edge of the road by council workmen. Fortunately the weather was dry, and Dilys and David were able to find temporary storage for most of their things, though Dilys always maintained that many of her personal belongings and papers had been destroyed during the eviction.

While trying to find somewhere permanent the Williams and their two cats started living in their old car, parked in a lay-by alongside the canal. Their living conditions were cramped and very poor, and became steadily worse, though they looked after themselves and the cats as well as they could. They remained positive and good-humoured, and tried hard to deal with their situation, but the last winters were the worst in recent memory, especially for people living in cars, and their lives became very difficult. Dilys became weak and ill during the coldest weeks of 2011, and as she suffered from a leg ulcer she found it difficult to walk, though with the better weather she slowly recovered.

Both Dilys and David dreaded yet another winter living in the car and as all their efforts to get a private tenancy had failed, they finally had to ask Rugby Borough Council to treat them as homeless. After considerable delay the Council eventually gave David the short-term tenancy of a flat in Rugby, just before the worst of the winter. That was where Dilys died. She was buried in Kidwelly, Carmarthenshire, where her family came from, though David plans to hold a memorial service in Rugby shortly.

Dilys was a strong-minded and sometimes difficult woman who'd known great unhappiness, with the death in a cycling accident of her only son at the age of 14 some years ago. In the last three years she showed considerable fortitude and dignity in appalling circumstances. It is a remarkable and disreputable paradox of Britain in the 21st century that people can still be obliged to spend their last three years of life in an old car simply because they can find nowhere better. May she rest in peace.

John Bradshaw

(John befriended the Williams when they were homeless. *Ed.*)

Birdingbury Village Club

Open Mic Night

A reminder to all those aspiring entertainers that the 'Open Mic Night ' is being held at Birdingbury Club from 8pm on Saturday 26th May. So, whether you are a musician, singer, comedian, magician or juggler you will have an opportunity to entertain us. There will be prizes for the most entertaining acts so don't be shy - come and show off your talents! Karaoke will also be available; please leave a note with Val or let Ian Tipton know the songs you want to sing so we can have them ready.

Ian Tipton.

BIRDSONGBIRDSONGBIRDSONGBIRDSONG

Notices

Found on 14th March in Main Street, Birdingbury – **green IPod** belonging to Molly. If this belongs to you or you know who the owner is please contact Paula Taylor on 01926 633746.

HOLIDAY FLAT IN YORKSHIRE

Quiet, comfortable ground-floor flat in David Hockney country near Bridlington. Sleeps three: one double, one single. Ample parking. Sorry, no pets, no smokers. £210 per week except July and August £260. Short breaks possible. Phone Janet Kent on 01926 632662

Just So Cafe at Bridge Nurseries Napton: is reopening on 6th April for the Easter weekend with face painting, bouncy castle and some delicious local ice cream and of course cake for you all to try - yummy!

Billy & Erin Flint will be undertaking a 5 mile sponsored walk on 22nd April to raise funds for a new indoor sports facility at Kilsby Lane, Rugby, which will house Rugby Gymnastics Club and Rugby Town Football Club as well as a new Squash Club.

Billy and Erin have been members of the Gym Club for some time and Billy, along with a number of his village friends regularly train with and play for the football team.

They would be grateful for any sponsorship you are able to give - if Billy's football team raises £250 the Coach has promised to dress up as Banana Man for the event, so Billy is particularly keen to raise as much as he can!

Alex Rigler Porthleven Marton Road

Ladies Circle

For our February meeting, Jackie Westcott entertained us by encouraging us to play a game of “Logo” - a change from our advertised event of ‘Film Night’. Logo as the name suggests involves advertisements and product packaging. Members enjoyed recalling the advertisements from yesteryear along with current ones, and some told stories of their memories which the advertisements provoked. Our thanks to Jackie who was also hostess for the evening.

In March we were in for another treat. This meeting was billed as ‘Josie Price’s Holidays’ and the uninitiated expected a slide show. However, no sign of a projector – just Josie dressed in a safari outfit, (accompanied by John), with a table covered with photographs and books. Josie then sat on the table and told us about ‘Africa – Our Passion’. Josie and John have been on safari holidays for the past five/six years – initially going on a basic holiday but then upgrading to the luxury ones - visiting Tanzania and Kenya.

Josie began by telling us the meaning of some of the words in Swahili – safari meaning journey, for example. She then went on to speak about the camp they stay in and the jeeps they travel in. Their room at camp was the same as a hotel bedroom apart from the canvas walls. To accompany her talk, Josie showed photographs she had taken herself. These had been developed to A4 size and were incredible – close up pictures of lions, elephants and many more.

Josie did lots of research before booking their holiday so that it coincided with the end of the rainy season when the water holes are full and there is a greater possibility of seeing the animals. On last year’s holiday they had seen the wildebeest as they attempted to cross a river. The wildebeest roam in a circuit through Tanzania and Kenya to eat the new grass. This necessitates the crossing of torrential rivers and Josie and John were fortunate to witness a crossing of one of them. The wildebeest mass on the bank before the crossing and there can be as many as five thousand.

Members were enthralled by Josie’s talk and as someone commented ‘you didn’t expect that, did you’! Our sincere thanks to Josie and John, and to Jennifer Johnstone and Roz Murray, our hostesses.

Next meeting 10th April is ‘Surprise’ - arranged by Annette, Geraldine and Julie.

9th May - ‘Being creative with craft’ – arranged by Diana who has asked that members (and visitors) bring items of embroidery, knitting or other crafts.

Our final meeting of the year on 12th June will be a visit to Feldon Farm at Frankton—arranged by Gaynor.

If you are intrigued by the titles of the forthcoming talks and events, please join us in The Birbury at 7.45pm on the dates shown (the second Tuesday of the month) – visitors £2.

Barbara Munro

Birdingbury Calendar

| April | | | | | see page |
|--------------|----|-----------------------|--------------------------|-------|----------|
| Saturday | 7 | Egg Roll | Recreation Field | 10.30 | 7 |
| Saturday | 14 | Toft Farm Guided Walk | | 2.00 | 6 |
| Tuesday | 10 | Ladies Circle | Birbury | 7.45 | 19 |
| Thursday | 12 | Library Van | Main Street | 2.35 | |
| Tuesday | 17 | Parish Council | Birbury | 8.00 | |
| Tuesday | 24 | Village Meeting | Birbury | 8.00 | 3 |
| Thursday | 26 | Fish and Chips | Club car park | | |
| Saturday | 29 | Working Party | Recreation Field | 10.00 | 7 |
| May | | | | | |
| Wednesday | 2 | Birdingbury Wheelers | Club | 7.00 | 7 |
| Thursday | 3 | Film - 'Hugo' | Bourton Village Hall | 7.00 | 7 |
| Saturday | 5 | Birbury and Club | Village History Open Day | 10.30 | 10 |
| Tuesday | 9 | Ladies Circle | Birbury | 7.45 | 19 |
| Friday | 11 | Mobile Police Station | Club car park | 10.00 | 6 |
| Tuesday | 16 | Parish Council | Birbury | 8.00 | |
| Wednesday | 23 | Jubilee planning | Birbury | 7.45 | 5 |
| Thursday | 24 | Library Van | Main Street | 2.35 | |
| Saturday | 26 | Open Mic Night | Club | 8.00 | 18 |
| Thursday | 31 | Fish and Chips | Club car park | | |



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