

Thurlaston Chronicle



June 2014

36th Anniversary

Contacts

Parish Council Thurlaston

Chair
Vice chair
Councillors

Clerk

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Helen Creery
Darren Guy
Mary Cook
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Howard Roberts

Warwickshire County Council

Howard Roberts

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Jeremy Wright MP

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Introduction

Last year's issue marked 35 years of the Thurlaston Chronicle. In order that the tradition continues the Editorial team has welcomed 3 volunteers this year, Gill Dakin, Sue Winton and Alison Charles-Edwards.

We hope you enjoy reading the reports of the various 'legal' groups and the social groups. We continue with stories from our younger residents, some observations of the wild life in the area, a remarkable story of courage and romance from the Second World War and news of a medieval find in the village that has been presented to the Thurlaston Archives for posterity.

We are thinking already about future issues so if you have any comments or ideas please let us know.

We are thankful to Lottie Brown for using her photographic talent on the front cover of the Chronicle with "Oakfield Barn".

Happy reading

Brian Coleman

Council /Trustee/Community Reports

THURLASTON PARISH COUNCIL Annual Village Meeting 2014

2013 was a busy and challenging year for the Parish Council. At the start of the year Bryan Spann finally hung up his parish clerk pen and handed the Parish Council reins to Mo Steer. Helen Creery passed on the Chair role to Andrew Henning with me as Vice Chair. In July Andrew and Barrie resigned leaving me in the Chair. We had two uncontested volunteers for the vacant Councillor roles and in November Darren Guy and Mary Cook were co-opted onto the Parish Council.

I would like to take this opportunity to once again thank Bryan, Barrie and Andrew for their hard work and dedication to Thurlaston Parish Council during their time as Clerk, Councillors and Chair. I would also like to thank Helen for her constant support, Mo for guiding us through the avalanche of new legislation, governance and local government policy and Mike, Darren and Mary for volunteering for the councillor roles which has meant we can maintain our independence as a Parish.

2015 is when all the councillor roles are up for re-election it would be great if we had more residents who were prepared to stand for election – just something to think about over the next 12 months. You may not be aware but Thurlaston Parish Council is an employer, the Parish Clerk is a salaried role, we therefore need to comply with all the relevant employment law policies and procedures. The Freedom of information act, data protection, financial regulations, financial and regulatory audits, Health and Safety and planning are examples of areas where the Parish Council needs to have written policies and procedures.

Below are current Parish Council projects, any help and support welcome:

20 mph speed limit: The regulatory process is now complete with no objections from any stakeholders. The speed limit will be introduced in June / July 2014. The 20mph speed limit essentially means all roads in Thurlaston will be a shared space where vehicles, pedestrians, horses, etc. have an equal right to use Thurlaston roads. We are currently in consultation with Warwickshire County Council to agree signage plans available to view at the meeting and the next Parish Council meeting. All comments and recommendations appreciated.

Parish Plan: Updating the Village Design Statement and Conservation Report followed by the publication of a Parish Plan. The VDS and conservation Report available to view at the meeting and the next Parish Council meeting. We would like to thank previous Parish Council members and residents who developed the aforementioned reports and would welcome anyone who would like to get involved in developing the Parish Plan.

WCC Minerals Core Strategy: As part of their core strategy WCC are conducting surveys and ground investigations across the county for their geology and mineral records. They have issued notice that they will conduct ground investigation works on Barnwell's Barn Farm (land that borders the footpath between Stocks Lane and Biggin Hall lane and runs up to the Golf course). We are in discussion with WCC

Parking, Conservation and Heritage: Parking and specifically inconsiderate parking has been a long-term issue in the village. There have been several suggestions forwarded to the Council and we will investigate all options legally available to discourage inappropriate parking. We are also in discussion with the WCC Traffic and Road Safety Team and their Design architects for advice on road and village design. Enhancing our heritage and conservation are key aspects of our discussion with the team. Severn Trent Water has suggested they could lock the entrance gate with residents having the pass code. They are awaiting our response from this meeting. (Post meeting note, this was all agreed)

Gary Hartfield

Village Hall Committee Report – March 2014

The aim of the Village Hall Committee is to manage the village hall for use by the village, and we were delighted that in the last year the hall has been used on approximately 100 occasions. Sometimes there can be a clash of dates so please book early and do try to be understanding. Irene Spann, our booking clerk Tel: 522882, continues to take your requests for the hall and equipment hire.

The ever-popular **Pub Nights** are run by Irene and held in the village hall on the first Friday of alternative months, when you will as always get a cheerful and very warm welcome.

Look for the Bear Tree sign on the left as you enter the village, it is there in the 5 days leading up to the event.

We had one **Progressive Supper** last year held in May and run by Helen Creery assisted by Sue Winton. Although the numbers were low everyone attending had a most enjoyable evening. The next supper is due to be held in October and if you would like to help with the organisation please contact Helen, Tel. 522646. This event has been running in the village for many years and it would be a shame to lose it due to lack of support. It actually requires at least six tables each with eight participants for the smooth running of the event. On the other hand the **Pudding Night**, a brainchild of Irene, was held in April and was extremely popular, packing out the hall. Perhaps the format of the two events could be somehow combined.

Sylvia Jacques, Gill Dakin and Maggie Guy organised the wonderful and highly successful **Village Fete** in July, and they very kindly donated half the profits from the afternoon to the village hall funds.

The **Christmas Lights Party** combined with the December Pub Night again proved very popular.

The Village Hall Accounts for 2013 are displayed on the notice board. Our main income has come from hall and equipment hire charges (£654.00), the Village Fete (£1330.30), the Pub Nights (£313.60), the Progressive Supper (£221.50) and the Pudding Night (£205.00).

Apart from the routine running costs and maintenance of the hall our main expenditure was the much needed rebuilding of the retaining garden wall in front of the hall (£1000.00).

John Hyde joined the committee this year and the role of treasurer has been transferred to his expert hands. I would like to thank all the members of our committee for all the contributions they have made throughout the year, and I am pleased to report that everyone is willing to stand for another year subject to agreement at the Parish Annual Meeting.

David Cooper 6th March 2014

2013/2014 Committee Members

David Cooper	Chairman	810443
Dawn Whitmee	Secretary	
John Hyde	Hon.Treasurer	
Irene Spann	Booking Clerk	522882
Sue Winton		
Lee Wise		

The Thurlaston Poor's Plot Charity Report 2014

The Poor's Plot Charity is functioning much as usual. We have given grants of £250.00 to 5 students in the village this year for help with books etc.

This grant is once only per person. Other help is available, on request i.e. help with heating cost and lifelines. Please contact a Trustee or the Clerk.

The charity is looking for new Trustees and perhaps a new clerk if anyone is interested.

Allotments are in good order and farmers have paid their rents. There are no allotments available at this time but if you wish to be put on a waiting list please contact the clerk

Kathy Owens

The Trustees of the Newcombe and Spier Almshouse Charity 2014

For those who are not aware, the local almshouses are a terrace of six small houses in Dunchurch between the Dun Cow and the Church, opposite the Scott statue and Mops. The charity was founded in 1690 and has run continuously since then. It is for the benefit of Dunchurch and Thurlaston residents and Thurlaston Parish Council appoints one trustee.

Last year, 2013, was another busy year with regard to maintenance, repairs and improvements.

The window frames and doors at the rear of the almshouses were repainted and a new rear gate was fitted giving access to the passageway, all of the cost of £2475. Early in the year, the downpipe from the roof guttering at the front of number 4 became blocked and allowed the water to run down the front wall. The blockage was eventually traced to the underground drains below the front gardens of the almshouses. By the time this was cleared, damp had penetrated the front wall of number 4, and it was necessary to have professional damp proofing and re-plastering at a cost of £1111.

At the end of last year the bathroom of No. 4 was renovated with the bath replaced by a shower and this will cost approximately £3000 to be paid in the current year.

In September last year the five-year (Quinquennial) inspection of the almshouse overall condition was carried out by Rodney Melville and Partners, Chartered Architects from Leamington Spa. This established that the building was generally in good condition with only one or two minor problems but that the condition of the boundary wall at the rear of the property is a major cause of concern. There are several areas of defective brickwork and some bulges and leans. Localised rebuilding, brick replacement and re-pointing are necessary. We have had a quote of £5,200 for this work.

The total expenditure for the year ending 31/12/2013 was £11,314.30, leaving a surplus of £5072.89 that will cover the £3000 due for the bathroom.

In early February this year, Mrs Moore gave up the tenancy of number 3, as she was unable to cope on her own. The trustees will take advantage of this vacancy to renovate this almshouse with rewiring, a new bathroom, an improved kitchen plus full internal redecoration.

So, we have a vacancy for a new tenant. A prospective tenant should be a widow or widower, who has lived in Dunchurch or Thurlaston for at least two years, is

above retirement age and is of limited means. We currently have two people waiting for a possible vacancy in the almshouses and the trustees would consider new eligible applications made whilst renovations take place.

The Charity funds remain in good order and enable the trustees to maintain comfortable albeit limited accommodation for the residents.

Walter Harvey

6 March 2014

Dunchurch Boughton Endowed Trust. Trustee Governor Report.

The Trustee Governors are responsible for administering the Trust fund left to the school by a local benefactor Frances Boughton, after whom the school was named.

The last meeting was held on 3rd October 2013.

The trust had increased its value by approximately 8% over the last 12 months and maintained its level of income generation.

Following discussions the following areas have been approved for funding by the trust and funded in 2012 /2013:

Contribution towards running Rock Solid Club	£3,000.00
10% Contribution towards window replacement	£3,871.00
Restoration clean carpets	£1,476.00
10% Contribution to asbestos removal	£247.00
IT equipment including – 50 x iPad's plus charger	£13,737.00

Additional items under consideration

The budget for the coming year has been provisionally agreed at £21,000 subject to income received. The trust is looking to contribute to the following items in the next year:

Tire Park	£8,000.00
Garage	£5,000.00
Lap Tap Replacement	£15,000.00
Rock Solid Contribution	£3,000.00

Greg Irish 1st March 2014



St Peter's, Dunchurch



St Edmund's, Thurlaston

St Edmund's Report to the Village Annual Meeting 2014

In the context of the wider Church of England, it's easy to be despondent and concerned that there's a lack of relevance and a lack of involvement that might spell terminal decline. Interestingly, the Church of England is alive to this and has just received a report "Signs of Growth" which reports on 18 months' research looking at the statistics and their meaning, rather than the anecdotal evidence often mentioned in the press. One good thing we can notice about Dunchurch and Thurlaston Parish is that it's not the product of an amalgamation, and it doesn't have 6, 8, 10 or 12 churches. Both amalgamations and multi-parish benefices are recognised as a bad idea, productive of decline, not growth.

Cathedrals are seen to be doing well at attracting newcomers, but we can do nothing about that. What is working and relevant to us, though, is what are known as "Fresh Expressions of Church" in other words, church and church-like activities which aim to meet the needs of people in radical ways or radical places, like Café Church in Costa or Messy Church in a local school. In our parish, we've begun a discussion about church provision, which aims to go beyond the traditional and hopes to embrace the relevant. We would be very interested to hear from anyone who would like to give us their views on how the present church community could help produce church they might be able to identify with.

The biggest challenge St Edmund's face at present is the usual one of finance. Our most recent 5-yearly inspection of the building gave rise to a recommendation from the Architect that we spend about £15000 on essential repairs to preserve our Listed Building for the future. We are trying to do this with help from grant-making trusts, but recognising that it's 10 years' worth of contributions from the village fete. Much as we might like, we can't walk away from the building, because it's in our community and it's listed. It's like the challenge of maintaining the Village Hall, but with the additional cost of repairing to original condition, rather than modern convenience, I suspect we're only going to be able to sustain this into the future with a radical approach, and I'd be interested in a conversation with the village leadership to explore what might be possible there.

Whether I'm talking about St Edmund's, or St Peter's, or the Parish, I'm still talking about us trying to do church which is relevant to our communities and to those of some faith or none, whilst recognising that that might be a sea change rather than just a long march for some of us. I think perhaps most importantly, I want to make the point that church is about people and God, not buildings, and our imaginative, out-of-the-box thinking has got to embrace God and People or we might as well go home (and not be complacent about that being an eternal home!).

Rev'd Malcolm Garrett

Neighbourhood Watch 2014

It is with regret that we have to inform you all that Tony Mennell has tendered his resignation as our co-ordinator after 5+ years. Sincere thanks to Tony for his guidance and help as our Thurlaston NW co-ordinator

The parish council asked Bryan Spann [who happened to be a member of the public at their March meeting] if he was interested in taking over from Tony from the beginning of April. He agreed, and will now be the village point of contact.

Another year has passed without major incident with the Thurlaston website being invaluable to alert the village regarding the presence of door-to-door salesmen and the like in the area. Can we ask you to maintain this circulation of information especially though the winter months.

Again however can we give a word of warning on the use of the Thurlaston website, good as it may be to warn us of unknown strangers in the village please do not exchange details of your holiday dates, days out, and other movements to all.

Any comments, issues relating to Neighbourhood Watch please contact our new co-ordinator, details below.

Neighbourhood Watch Contact.

Bryan Spann

01788 522882

079 9986 1055

Bryan-Irene.Spann@Tesco.net

Community Leisure Groups

Thurlaston Ramblers

April 2013 to February 2014



Another energetic year for the Thurlaston Ramblers

Walks included: -

Braunston – March -A cold day with little or no sun and a penetrating easterly wind. Eight brave villagers set off from the Boat Inn. A circular walk along the grand Union canal though Wolfhampcote round past the Admiral Nelson. Another four villagers joined us for lunch. The world was put to right over a couple of drinks and nice meal. Approx. 3 miles

Thanks go to Helen and Des Creery

Long Itchington- April -A fine bright morning when we set off from the bus shelter at 10 am parked up near to the Buck & Bell Inn. The walk took us west out of the village, across the River Itchen into the lovely Warwickshire countryside. Everyone came prepared for a cold day, but the weather had other ideas. The temperature rose to over 20⁰ C and we shed the topcoats. Ten walkers plus two more for lunch. About 4.0 miles. Many thanks to David Cooper

Blue Bell Walk - Wappenbury Woods - May –Fifteen set off from the Malt Shovel in Bubbenhall across A445 and up the hill, skirting Ryton Pools into the woods and wonderful display of blue bells. Although it was very breezy and mainly overcast, it remained dry. Approx. 4. miles,
Two more joined us for lunch making a total of seventeen.
Many thanks to David Cooper.

Country Walk - Grandborough - June A fine bright morning when we set off from the bus shelter at 10 am. Down the concrete path round lake and up the Toft like seven mountain goats. The pace was good and the going was firm and dry. A most enjoyable walk through the countryside. Approx. 4 miles. Lunch at the Shoulder of Mutton was 'two for £10'

Napton on the Hill – Walk - July - Eight made an early start to The Kings Head at Napton. The first part of the walk was not for the weak of heart as we climbed a steep path to the 13th century church of St Lawrence. Onwards and upwards to the summit. The Napton windmill dominates the skyline; it is believed that this mill dates back to the 16th century. We stopped at the memorial garden to the Royal Observer Corp who manned this position during WW2. Down through a field of very frisky bullocks to the Kings Head. An excellent meal for £6. Total distance 4 miles.

Many thanks to Penny Holcroft

Stockton - The Blue Lias – August. Nine villagers set off, the first part of the walk was out and along the Grand Union Canal. At bridge 20 we came out onto the road round by the farm shop and along a wooded area fenced off from a large disused quarry. Through Stockton into woodland towards the Inn. We came out at the fishing pools but at over three and a half miles in very warm weather no one wanted to go the extra half a mile round the pools, they needed a drink! A most enjoyable meal, and coffee taken outside by the canal side.

Country Walk to Frankton - October 2013 - A fine bright morning eleven of us we set off at a good pace. Down the concrete path round lake and up to the South West corner, down the grass footpath to Draycote village. Up cardiac hill to Boughton, following the footpath through the old part of the village. Lunch was 'Two for £10'. 3 miles

Historic Walk – Braunston- November - Mo & Peter Steer organised this very interesting walk along the Grand Union onto the Oxford Canal. At the junction Peter

explained the construction of the cast iron bridge. A little further along we stopped and he showed us the aqueduct that takes the Oxford Canal over the river Leam. At the medieval village of Wolfhampcote we visited the 13th Century Church of St Peter's; a real time capsule. Ten sat down to lunch at the Boat. Approx 3 miles

Ryton Pools - The Malt Shovel - January 2014. It had rained for days but it seemed warm approx.. 5⁰ C ? We parked up at the pub and set off in damp air. The paths are hard standing, with the exception of a few large puddles we had a brisk walk enjoyed by one and all. Back to the inn for our pre-ordered meal of roast pork, for £4.50. Approx. 3 miles

Draycote Water - February 2014. It had rained for weeks, the wettest winter on record. The only mud free walk was round the lake. Seven of us set off on a bright sunny morning at 11 o'clock. All went well until we were in sight of the visitors centre. The wind got up and the rain came down. Draycote Water looked like the North Sea on a bad day. An enjoyable lunch in the restaurant overlooking the lake. The sun came out and the walk back was very pleasant. Many thanks to all the people who came on the walks and to those who organised them.

We have a few interesting walks planned for the rest of 2014
Everyone is welcome. If you don't want to walk then join us for lunch.
We look forward to seeing you all

Mel Harley

Thurlaston Ladies Club 2013 -2014

Once again the ladies club have had an interesting year of speakers, outings and social events. On the way, we have welcomed new members which is very encouraging.

Our speaker in April was Dixie Atkins who gave us a light-hearted look at Shakespeare which was much enjoyed. In May, Kay, very amusingly, described her efforts, both hard and enjoyable, in becoming a Blue Badge Guide. We were all very impressed and filled with admiration as we learnt all that was involved. We benefit so much from Kay's knowledge as she organises wonderful days out for us in June. Our numbers for this event are swelling every year. This year we went to Stamford where Kay gave us a guided tour of the town and then we split up to find somewhere to eat. Then off we went to Burley House,. It is known as England's greatest Elizabethan House. Lovely gardens and very modern audiovisual systems. A really lovely day out.

July and the fete was our next event, once more producing tea and home made

cakes in the village hall. We made £370 a little less than the previous year but there was more food for sale on other stalls.

In September, our old friend Gillian Andrews, accompanied by her husband who provides snippets of music, spoke of her life behind and in front of the cameras. She is always great company and has many funny tales to tell. Acting seemed a little less glamorous by the end of her talk.

In October we had a talk on the charity "Send A Cow To Kenya". Susan Burdett came with some lovely slides and described how the charity helps small villages to become self-sufficient. Also what ever is given to individuals, an animal or seeds etc, is then passed on by them to another village, once they can afford to do so. Members gave generously to this very worthwhile charity.

The evening talk in November was given by a father and son who came with a full genuine set of armour, which took some time to put on. They came in the guise of Sir Thomas Tresham and his squire and there was plenty of light-hearted banter, which we all enjoyed.

Christmas lunch at the Kings Head in Napton was very well attended and voted our best venue for that event. Our social In January which was a baked potato lunch with many fillings was also very well attended and helped to get 2014 off to a good start.

Our evening talks twice a year which were intended to include all the village have received very poor turn outs. We already have a booking for next November but that will be our last. Richard Cook, who is speaking has been on Country File and will demonstrate and talk on rural crafts, chair seating and Christmas decorations from woodland objects. He can be found on the Internet and we are hoping that the village will support us on this evening, even if it is raining!

Every one has had a programme of our events for the current year and we always welcome one off attenders as well as our regular members

J.Douglas

Thurlaston Art and Craft Show 2013

The second Art and Craft Show was held in the Village Hall on the weekend of 28th and 29th September 2013. Although several of the exhibitors from our 2011 show were unable to attend this time several new Thurlaston residents came forward and in the end we had 17 contributing. The displays included Upholstery and Soft Furnishings (Jackie Harvey), Textile Art (Gill Dakin), Lace making and Cross Stitch (Sara Welch and Helen Creery), Woodwork (Graham Stokes), Millinery (Eleanor Flower), Vintage Dressmaking (Julie Smith), Engineering Skills (Thomas Gall).

There were a number of paintings on display in various media from artists Vivien Sharp, Sue Winton, Elton Lovell, Malcolm Garrett, Mary Harwood, Blanaid Mary Cook, Brian Coleman, Millie Irish and David Cooper.

We were backed up by an excellent team in the kitchen who provided tea and cake for everyone, and the large marquee was erected behind the hall to give us more room. The weather was fine on both days, which encouraged a large number of visitors to attend, and was warm enough for some of those to have tea sitting in the garden. Although I might be biased I thought that the work on display was even better this time and the new contributors were fantastic. In several cases it was the first time they had displayed their work and I think that all the exhibitors enjoyed the experience and the feedback they received from the visitors.

We did not charge for admission, but the donations towards tea and cake together with a small contribution from exhibitors for any work sold enabled us to cover our costs, give a small donation to the Village Hall and also give £245.00 to St Edmunds Church Restoration Fund.

It is really remarkable what artist skills we have in Thurlaston. If we have another show we have been offered St Edmunds to help us accommodate the displays and could have even more exhibitors, hopefully also including younger members of our community. Maybe we could incorporate the numerous musical talents that we have in the village and make the event a real Thurlaston Arts Festival.

David Cooper

The Fete 2013

Saturday July 6th 2013 was a beautiful midsummer day. The theme for the fete was "Ye Olde English Midsummer", there were scarecrows such as the green man, flower pot man, a couple enjoying the weather in the church yard etc and a very clever one juggling balls. The fete was opened by Adrian Turner followed by many of the village children shouting "oyez! oyez!" and with the ringing of a bell. David Cooper then performed his last role as Squire, and handed the Chain of Office on to Barrie Bemand.

There were new stalls – win a coconut, jam jar game, adult and children's welley wanging in the children area which was run by Jean Russell from the Nursing home. Another popular new stall was Hot dogs served by Fergus, Peter and Steve. New stalls also included a stand from Draycote water and Shetland ponies promoting their work with disabled children. We also had classic vehicles on show, thanks to Andrew and Unni and John and Vicky.

Compare for the day was Steve Murphy, and Mo Steer when Steve was dancing, also assisted by George Eden. Did someone say that Steve was dancing? That will be the Morris Men then.

The Morris men were Steve, Bryan Spann, Gary Hartfield, John Hyde, Martin Dakin, Darren Guy, Roger Bull and Simon Knowles with Andrew Henning as the Morris fool. Their practice nights had been filled with laughter, but a few of them looked rather daunted and nervous on the day. They need not have worried their two dances; the stick dance followed by the handkerchief dance went down a storm. We almost had to hire a press release officer, to cope with all the photography shots and interview requests. Well-done lads. The villagers did request a rerun, as many people working on stalls or at venues unfortunately missed seeing them. They were secretly coach by Sylvia's friend Ro Silvester, who was presented with Bouquet and a card by Mo Steer.

It was a lovely sunny day the ice cream stall manned by Mary and Colin Cook was incredibly busy, as was the Pimms stall ran by Sally and Ev. Ev also did a great job as Treasurer. Other ladies multi tasking were the ladies in the hall selling homemade cakes and teas.

The Visitors all seemed to enjoy the fete very much commenting on the friendliness of everyone, the old fashioned theme and the safe and happy children's area. It goes without saying, that the fete had many, many helpers which are too many to list, thanks to everyone involved. The fete raised £2606 which was split equally between the Church and the Village hall.

This year's fete Committee is again headed by Sylvia Jacques who has been joined this time by Darren Guy.

In view of current events happening during this year, (Anniversary of WW1, Football World Cup and for the golfers, the Ryder Cup), the Fete committee have decided the theme for this year will be **The Great British Union Jack**. So please dig out all things red, white and blue ready to decorate our village for our great Fete day!

Progressive Supper

A fine May evening saw 48 participants gathering in the Village Hall for a glass of sparkling wine before dispersing for a convivial evening of good food in various homes around the village. Many meetings in passing happened in Main Street between courses as we progressed between hosts. The evening rounded up with coffee and mints in the Village Hall. It was a very pleasant sociable evening organised by Helen Creery and Sue Winton which raised £221.50 for the Village Hall funds.

The next Progressive Supper will be in October 2014 - why not join in for an evening of good food in good and varied company? There can be no more relaxed and sociable way of meeting up with new acquaintances or old.

Thurlaston Golf Day

Congratulations to Mary Cook for winning the first Thurlaston Masters Golf Challenge!

We had a wonderful day way back in August, with unbelievably hot weather as we took on the delights of Whitefield's Golf Course. Although the numbers were not so great for our first attempt at getting something off the ground we are hopeful that we can organise another in 2014.

Mary saw off the challenge from Bob Hobday, Ron Douglas, Colin Cook and Unni and Andrew with an excellent performance.

Look out for further dates for a rematch.

Andrew Henning

Christmas Tree light 'switch-on'.

David Cooper organised our traditional event December Friday 13th to switch on the tree lights with carols under the tree led by Gill Wood on the clarinet and then followed by carols in the village hall. Opened by music on the keyboard from Roger Robinson's daughter Millie, the evening saw the return of the band now called 'Take it Easy'. This year the band was made up by – vocals from Andrew Henning, Guitars Peter Wilson and Martin Dakin, Drums Morris Rodham and Saxophone by Owen Summerfield (a colleague of Martins). A shared buffet was followed by an enjoyable pub night, where mulled wine and other drinks were served in style by Irene and Dawn.

Carol service at St Edmunds

This lovely service December 22nd 2013, involved many people and included pieces from two younger members of Thurlaston. Millie Guy played her first ever performance on the clarinet most confidently and a beautifully sung solo from Daniel Torrance was much appreciated. Angela Youngman's choir and Gill Wood's wind band, both made up of village members and musical friends provided the music for the service which was lead by Malcolm Garratt, assisted by fellow villager Morris Rodham.

This is always a popular village event and this year was no exception, with readers, musicians and singers all prepared to make a special effort for the carol service - the church was bursting at the seams.

Charity Concert in St Edmunds Church.

Saturday, March 1st saw a wonderful afternoon in the village church, with music from the Fresh Air Wind ensemble. Organised by Gill Wood and compared by fellow villager Paul Jacques, they played a wide variety of music from classical to folk, jazz and ragtime with a couple of fun items for the children. The group was joined by a guest viola player, Katrin Gilbert, who played two memorable solos. Despite many villagers being away, the church was packed with a very enthusiastic audience and tasty homemade cakes, provided by the musicians and family friends

were enjoyed by all. Jenny, Marilyn, Judy B and Kay did a magnificent job serving and washing up for so many people.

Over £380 was raised for the UNICEF Syrian Children's Appeal and a grateful letter of response was subsequently received

Friday Morning Coffee

The successful coffee mornings held in the village hall each month, are a nice way to catch up with friends and neighbours.

Lovely coffee and biscuits are served by the very hardworking Jenny Cooper and her team. April's team was Jenny, Sara Welch, and David Rees, others often found helping are Marilyn Watts, Angela Stewart, Eileen Inns and David Cooper.

However the Easter Coffee morning was different as it was attended by the Mayor of Rugby, Councillor Tony Gillias and the Mayoress, Ms Janette Owen.



At the start of his year of office the Mayor aimed to visit every parish in the borough and we were delighted to see him in Thurlaston. He managed to speak to everyone in the room and before he left he gave a short speech. He had only 6 weeks left in office, of what had been a very busy and rewarding year.

The mayor commissioned a large collage, which will eventually hang in the Town Hall; it will be made up of pictures representing each parish.

The chosen Thurlaston entry was created by David Cooper (it now hangs in the village hall) and will be one of the pictures that will feature in the collage.

Why not come along to the coffee mornings held in the Village hall 10.00 am – 12.00 on the Third Friday of every month – everyone is welcome.

Thurlaston Village Quiz Night

Saturday January 25th 2014 saw the welcomed return of the annual village quiz. Many thanks to Steve Murphy and his team (Sally Wise, Greg Winton, Dan Whitmee and John Hyde) for organising such a fun evening.

Steve compared the evening with his usual charm and charisma and (just about!!) managed to keep the ever increasingly rowdy room, under control. Sally was

responsible for keeping 'the scores on the doors'. A new system of organised marking kept the quiz moving along and ensured no foul play. The multiple copies of question sheets was a helpful touch and was well received.

A delicious fish and chip supper from The Wave fish and chip shop in Cawston was organised thanks to Bob and Marilyn Hobday and Bryan and Irene Spann. We were also able to celebrate Lynne Bemand's 'special' Birthday with a slice of cake.

The winning team with an impressive score was 'The Pudding Baggers' - Andrew and Unni Henning, Colin and Mary Cook and Des and Helen Creery. Well done!! You are officially the village 'cleaver clogs'!

The evening was a really good laugh and much enjoyed by all who came along. Don't forget the next quiz is scheduled for Jan 2015 and will be organised by 'The Pudding Baggers'.

After making a donation to the village hall, the profit from the evening of £225 was donated to The Bradby Club for Young People.

Art Awards

Two villagers had work accepted this year for display in the 2013 Rugby Open Art Exhibition, held at Rugby Art Gallery. There were 278 entries with only 86 pieces being accepted for display. David Cooper's entry was an acrylic painting of a gull and Elton Lovell had an oil painting of his daughter Priya. Elton went on to receive an award for his brilliant picture from The Decorative and Fine Art Society. Both of these pictures had been on display at the Thurlaston Art and Craft Show in September.

David Cooper has also been winning awards again, this time for his pastel picture 'Communicating' in the Rugby and District Art Society show in December that was also at the Rugby Art Gallery.

Myton Hospice Coffee Morning

The annual Coffee morning held in the church in December raised £386 for Myton Hospice. Many thanks to all those who supported it. Rev'd Malcolm Garratt

Pub Nights

The ever-popular **Pub Nights** are run by Irene and held in the village hall on the first Friday of alternative months, when you will as always get a cheerful and very warm welcome.

Look for the Bear Tree sign on the left as you enter the village, it is there in the 5 days leading up to the event.

Community Events

It is very clear from the previous reports that Thurlaston is a lively village with varied pursuits and interests going on.

If your event has not been mentioned this time and you would like it mentioned in future why not contact one of the new team of editors (see **Introduction**). Articles via e-mail preferred but not essential.

Family notices could also be reintroduced – so if you want to record / mark a special birthday or anniversary date let us know.

Special Interest Section

John Davis World War II Memories

John was born in Coventry in 1920 and has lived in Thurlaston for over 50 years. Last year, in 2013, he was awarded The Arctic Medal.

In 1939, at the outbreak of war, he volunteered to join the Royal Navy, but first took a holiday in Weymouth with his childhood sweetheart, Joyce. At the insistence of her father, they were accompanied by his parents but managed to get time alone to do their courting on a seat beside The Nothe, a Napoleonic fort after which his house in Pudding Bag Lane is named. This is where he scattered Joyce's ashes seventy years later.

He was sent to HMS Royal Arthur, based in the first Butlin's holiday camp in Skegness, for six months training with the Wireless Branch and was then posted to HMS Marguerite, docked in Aberdeen, in November 1940. Walking along the road on the day he arrived, he saw a newspaper billboard announcing that Coventry had been flattened by bombing. With all lines of communication destroyed, John had no way of knowing whether Joyce and their two families had survived. It was four or five days before his father managed to cycle to Bedworth and phone the Admiralty to leave a message for him, saying that they were all alive and unharmed.

North Atlantic Convoys

HMS Marguerite was a Flower-class corvette, or in John's words, a glorified trawler, carrying about 80 men. Their job was to accompany and protect the large merchant ships carrying armaments, ammunition, fuel and food etc from the American base in Newfoundland back to Britain. The convoys would consist of 45-55 merchant

ships with an escort of 20-30 naval vessels. It took two weeks to cross the Atlantic, the pace of the slowest steamers.

John's role was to decipher the Morse code messages arriving from the Admiralty (via Rugby wireless station) which he could read at 20 words per minute. Few messages were sent from the ships in order to conceal their location.

Despite their best efforts on the hygiene front, due to a shortage of fresh water, the harbour workers would often reel in disgust at the stench as the boats were docking.

Unlike many young men in the army, John was able to get home to Coventry when on shore leave, although many of those precious nights were spent in his parent's Anderson shelter.

South Atlantic and Indian Ocean Convoys

After 12 months on the NA convoys, John and his crew received an issue of tropical uniforms and instructions to sail to Freetown, Sierra Leone. Their base here was a converted liner and they rarely went ashore as heat, mosquitoes and sewage running in the streets made Freetown a health hazard. Some of the south Atlantic convoys sailed to The Caribbean and The Falklands before returning to Britain, while others went south to Cape Town. Fewer ships were sunk on these trips as less German U-boats were deployed in the south Atlantic than the north. A real highlight for John was Christmas, 1942, when HMS Marguerite had to go into dry dock for repairs in Cape Town. All members of his crew were given hospitality by local families and John stayed with a Boer family on their vineyard. He described five days of gracious living amidst the hardships of war. They were treated with great kindness, ate candle lit suppers in a stately dining room with a minstrel's gallery and swam in the sea each day. He recalled a bell being rung during the morning to summon the workers in for coffee and prayers. They went up Table Mountain but were unable to see anything as the 'tablecloth' of cloud came down.

On a convoy to Bombay, via Durban, Mombasa, The Seychelles, The Maldives and Ceylon, they experienced their only bombing by the Japanese, in Colombo harbour. HMS Marguerite escaped unscathed but John was admitted to hospital in Bombay with a suspected gastric ulcer and sent home to Chatham. They docked at Cape Town on their return journey where he went ashore and bought a diamond engagement ring from *De Beers*. He never rejoined the Marguerite and his fellow sailors and was not allowed to know their location or how they fared until the war was over. Whilst at Chatham, convalescing, he and Joyce were engaged.

Russian Convoys

It was now 1943 and to John's delight he received what he took to be a land posting with The Admiralty Wireless Station Whitehall. However, a few days later he discovered that the posting was not at the London centre for wireless control as he had thought, but aboard HMS Whitehall, a World War I destroyer on the

Russian Convoys. These involved sailing north around Norway and on to Russia via the Kola inlet to Murmansk or Arkhangelsk. This part of the ocean was the most densely populated by U-boats, with German planes flying overhead to inform the U-boats of the convoy's location. Whilst HMS Whitehall remained safe, they saw many of the merchant ships they were protecting blown up. As much of their cargo was ammunition and fuel, even if men survived the blast and were rescued from the sea before hypothermia set in, they rarely survived as they had invariably swallowed water containing fuel.

The breaking of the Enigma code at Bletchley Park had an immediate, positive affect on the Russian convoys. Now they could work out the location of the U-boats and have a far greater chance of avoiding them.

Between his first and second Russian convoy, John went home to Coventry on leave. The first Joyce knew of his visit was a phone call from Rugby station one Thursday, half an hour before he arrived. That Saturday they were married and off on honeymoon to Blackpool. By Tuesday John was on his way back to his ship.

Bevin Boys

Once victory was declared in Europe in May 1945, there was not a lot for John and his comrades to do, but there was great fear of being sent to fight the Japanese in the Far East and no-one knew how long that might last. John had been away from his new bride for too long and she was expecting their first child. He saw a notice asking for men willing to return home to work in the coalmines, where there was a great shortage of workers and he decided to volunteer. After a brief period of training he was sent to work in the mine at Keresley, Coventry, meaning that he could live at home. Despite his 'soft hands' in the early weeks, he soon adapted and because the coal seam was 13-15 feet (unlike the 2 foot anthracite seams in South Wales) found the work perfectly acceptable. The irony was that Victory over Japan occurred only three months later and his fellow sailors were demobilised right away. John, meanwhile, had to complete his year as a miner before receiving his demob papers.

John was happy to share these memories but was adamant that the article should in no way glorify war. His anguish regarding the plight of the merchant sailors dying from ingestion of fuel was clearly no different to his feeling for the thousands of young Germans who ended their days at the bottom of the ocean in their metal coffins.

I felt privileged to hear this account from John, being all too aware how few veterans are still with us; I doubt there are many whose thoughts and memories are as sharp as his.

Alison Charles-Edwards

Young Thurlaston stars

Lottie Brown

Hello my name is Lottie, I live down Biggin Hall Lane and I am a keen photographer. I am currently studying a BA in Photography at Coventry University and also have an internship at Aston Martin in Gaydon as a photographer.

I began to be interested in photography when I received a camera for my 12th birthday, since then I have studied the subject throughout my education. Whilst attending sixth form at Princethorpe College I studied A-level photography and went on to complete an Art foundation at the brand new Warwickshire College in Rugby. This is where I found a real passion for where I would love to go with my photographic career.

Whilst in education I have gathered a portfolio of work experience in the photography world. I experienced journalism photography whilst volunteering at the Rugby Advertiser, this gave me a great insight to what working life would be like at a newspaper or magazine and I'm delighted to have had two of my pictures published in Warwickshire Life.

I also accompanied a professional photographer on a few weddings in Warwickshire, this too was great experience and further helped to guide me in the direction I would like to go with my career. I have also photographed for album covers, events and newborns, this I particularly enjoy.

Having these experiences has made me consider what genre of the profession I would like to go in to in the future and has also given me a taste for the different types of photography there are.

What I love about photography is the creativity; I enjoy planning all the different things for the shoot such as location, themes and style. I love seeing the outcome after a shoot and playing around with the edits, as this is what improves the images and makes them unique. I can also learn from my mistakes when seeing the outcome and I learn what I could do next time to make the photograph better.

I also enjoy using film cameras, I use these cameras for university projects and collect them too. I like learning about the history of photography and using film cameras helps me to have a good understanding of this.

In the future I hope to travel far and wide with my photography, as travel inspires me the most. I would love to work as a journalism photographer but I am happy with wherever my career takes me.

Millie Irish

Millie lives in Thurlaston, is aged nine and sails at Draycote Water Sailing Club. She writes: 'Sailing is a sport for any age group. It is the best thing that ever happened to me. You don't have to have a boat because you can borrow them

from the club, but I have my own boat. It is an Optimist dinghy – called an Oppie for short – and I have named her ‘Lady Peneloppie’ after the Thunderbirds character, and Daddy is known as Parker!

‘Over winter I have been going to different sailing clubs in the Midlands for Optimist training days with my friend Katy. It has been very windy and we have done some swimming as well as sailing after lots of capsizing! Now Katy and I are enjoying racing at Draycote Water and junior club, which are both run by volunteers at the club.

‘This summer we hope to get better at racing and see more kids enjoying sailing at the club. Anyone can give sailing a go – it’s great fun, and you don’t have to live by the sea!’

Editors note. Over the past few years we have featured Emily March, Alex Winton, Daniel Torrance; Harri, Freddie and Tommy Ogilvie; James and Priya Lovell and now Lottie and Millie. If you or yours would like to be featured contact us soon to be on the list for 2015.

Nature in Thurlaston

We grew up in very different surroundings, one in a rural part of Kent, the nearest neighbours being a mile away and who now lives in the more rural part of our village in Biggin Hall Lane (BHL). The other spent teenage years living in Trafalgar Square and is now in Pudding Bag Lane (PBL) surrounded by houses as well as gardens and a stones throw from Draycote Water. We both love the countryside and count ourselves lucky to have such an abundance of nature, both fauna and flora, on our doorsteps. Knowing that these thoughts are shared by many of you, we thought it timely to write a bit about birds as a start in the hope that it will be added to in future editions.

Birds in and around Thurlaston

The regular garden visitors in PBL include long tailed tits, great and blue tits, chaffinch, goldfinch, wren, blackbird, robin, wren, dunnock, magpie, greater spotted woodpeckers and jays. Then occasional, seasonal or less common visitors include chiffchaff, blackcap, coal tit, redpoll, siskin, brambling, greenfinch, bullfinch, song and mistle thrush, fieldfare, redwing, pied wagtail, nuthatch, green woodpecker and even reed bunting.

However, down in the wilds of BHL both tawny and little owls are heard at night, and barn owls have been seen in the lane. By using a nyjer seed feeder with its six perches, goldfinches are attracted in profusion. When full, the others sit in the hedge waiting their turn. Nature shows a different side when a sparrow hawk, who regularly does a flyby of the feeder, manages to take a bird but they all need to eat! Siskins and linnets visit the feeder over the winter months. Ravens, buzzards,

green as well as great spotted woodpeckers are heard and seen regularly. It is fascinating to watch the green woodpeckers feeding on the lawn, especially two years ago when they brought their young down to feed.

A sign of spring is seeing mallard turning up in less expected places, such as a pair on the Mill Drive or in the front garden! Also good to see coot nesting again and moorhens scuttling about beside the pond off Biggin Hall Lane and taking advantage of the food dropped from feeders in gardens in the lane.

There is a healthy population of jackdaws, starlings and house sparrows, especially around the church. The latter two species are on the BTO red list because their UK breeding records have reduced by over 60% in the past 25 years. House sparrows have been noted visiting BHL suggesting that they are extending their territory. Wood pigeons are everywhere and collared doves are plentiful too. Their story is remarkable. Under their own steam they moved at great speed from India and first colonised the UK in 1955. Sensibly, they do not migrate annually, unlike the turtle dove, whose population has crashed by 80% since 1995 due to changes in farming practice in both the UK and Africa, where they spend the winter, and being shot relentlessly on their journeys across the Mediterranean.

Buzzards are observed circling above us regularly riding the thermals during the warmer weather. Cormorants are seen flying to and from Draycote at times, with heron also spotted in the area, probably going to the heronry near Hill Farm at the top of Draycote hill. A red kite has also been seen recently. The most surprising record was reported by Mo: "In the very early days of our move to Thurlaston, a marsh harrier flew into a large glass door of Paul Jacques' bungalow (when Les and Betty Wise lived there) and left a clear imprint besides giving Betty a serious fright." Marsh harriers are not normally seen in villages and there have only been 8 records over Draycote Water since 1976.

We also know that spring is here when we see swallows, house martins and swifts returning: swallows amaze us by flying into the log shed to nest at such speed you wonder how they can stop. House martins, 'this guest of summer' as Shakespeare put it, nest on several houses in PBL and elsewhere. Fortunately it is illegal to disturb or knock down their nests: a terrible way to treat these amazing birds after their perilous journey from sub-Saharan Africa to be with us. Couldn't we leave the cleaning up till they finally leave in early October?

Another way to enhance the chances of our embattled and decreasing bird population is to be aware of their common nest sites, especially hedges. We do nature a big favour by tolerating and enjoying some natural untidiness by delaying hedge cutting as nesting can last from March until the end of July.

Draycote Water: A Magnet for passing birds

If you are interested in the natural world, as well as an excellent 5-mile walk or cycle ride, it is hard to ignore the reservoir, plus "country park" on the edge of

Thurlaston. When it was created in the 1960s and opened in January 1969, it covered more than 600 acres (240 hectares) of good quality farmland which meant attitudes to it were very mixed.

Our only real complaint about Severn Trent, from a nature point of view, was their destruction of a ramshackle shed which housed a superb and thriving house martin colony. However, the many bird feeders, the variety of trees and habitats, the creation of the scrape and the bird hide are all excellent.

It is the largest expanse of water in Warwickshire, holding up to 5 billion gallons of water, which means that any bird flying over may drop by. The wintering duck, grebes or occasional divers do just that, especially outside the fishing season. The website **Draycote Birding** www.draycotebirding.co.uk/ records the latest sightings, an annotated checklist, map, and photos. All sorts have been seen there: yellow hammers, tree sparrows, osprey, spoonbill, little egrets, water rail, green-winged teal, great northern diver and recently, a long-tailed duck, and drake smew.

Looking up to the sky over Thurlaston in the early morning and again at dusk, you will see wave after wave of gulls, sometimes with the odd cormorant and a few Canada Geese, flying to and from the safety of their roost on Draycote water. Numbers peak at 50,000+ birds in the winter (yes, people do count them). Both the sight and sound of the gulls have a strangely evocative quality.

Sue Winton and David Charles-Edwards. (With thanks also to Mary Cook and Mo Steer)

Mammals in and around Thurlaston

Sitting in the garden at dusk in the summer watching the bats is a favourite activity although we are not knowledgeable enough to be able to identify them: to see them is enough!

Foxes are frequently seen and heard around the village, in sheds, on lawns and in fields. At least one frequents the garden of the Nursing Home and is heard from Main Street barking and screaming in the small hours..

A couple of years ago the vixen and her cubs would come out to play in the field adjacent to the woods. Badgers are also seen from BHL. Muntjac Deer and the numerous rabbits have rather a negative press when they dine out in gardens and “make the dogs go ballistic when they are on the drive at night”. Rabbits also visit many gardens.

Most people are ambivalent, often for good reasons, about some aspects of nature. Grey squirrels, beautiful and remarkable acrobats that they are, have rather taken over in the past 100 years since being introduced from North America, whether by stripping the walnuts from our trees, eating the food we put out for the birds or damaging our feeders. Brown rats along with various mice, shrews and voles are also about if more discreet most of the time. The population of hedgehogs is sadly reduced by a third in the 21st century. Intensive agriculture, with

the loss of hedgerows and permanent grassland, the use of pesticides and smaller and tidier gardens sometimes with fencing that prevents them moving between gardens, as well of course as their slaughter on the roads, have all played their part. It would be great to have some sightings reported again in our village.

Reptiles in and around Thurlaston

When Sue moved here 7 years ago, "I was showing a friend round the garden and saw what I thought was a rubber snake caught in a piece of old rabbit hutch wire (if you had seen the rubbish left in the garden it would have come as no surprise).

Then I realised that it was a female grass snake, I asked my son to get the secateurs and holding the snake I cut her free, she didn't move and I thought maybe it was too late to save her but we left her alone for a while and when we went back she had gone. I like to think that it is her that comes back each year to lay her eggs as a way of saying thank you."

Grass snakes breed in the compost heap, lovely to watch them basking on top in the sunshine and the pond is a haven for wildlife with an amazing variety of dragonflies including one called a Broad Bodied Chaser." So its grass snakes and slow worms that top the list. But we will leave them, butterflies, plants and trees for another day.

Sue Winton and David Charles-Edwards.

A Medieval Find in Thurlaston

In 1991 when we were starting to convert our barn in Biggin Hall Lane we had a tremendous amount of clearing and sorting rubble, cleaning and saving bricks which took several weeks if not months. Lynne found a piece of metal that was obviously old, either in the barn or in the yard. We thought it looked like an iron axe head and put it to one side.

Twenty two years later Lynne rediscovered it behind our greenhouse. We still thought that it was an axe head. We thought it was made of iron being so heavy but how old was it? So we decided to take it to Rugby Museum to ask their opinion.

They kept it for about 6 months and when they contacted us we were told that the Archaeology Department at Leicester University had examined it.

Their conclusion was that firstly it was made of a copper alloy, secondly that it was not an axe head but a leather scraping or cleaning tool and finally that it was late Medieval. It is approximately 16cm in length and the blade is 8cm wide, and weighs approximately 600g. There is a notch where a handle was attached with cord of some sort.

In our barn when we were digging out the floor made up of three to four courses of concrete, blue brick and cobble sets we discovered what we thought might be a sheep dip. Ian Gall did say that he wondered if it was a pit to soak animal hides when preserving and making leather goods.

So we in addition to references to Thurlaston in the Domesday Book we have an artefact that shows evidence of leather working at Grange farm in the Medieval period.

We have presented it to the village to be kept with the Archives.

A copy of the Rugby Museum report and two photographs are available to view in the Thurlaston Archives. **Lynne & Barrie Bemand**



Lynne with the medieval cleaning tool.