

# Thurlaston Chronicle



Thurlaston, Warwickshire

**June 2015**

**37<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

## **Contacts**

Thurlaston Parish Council

Chair

Councillors

Gary Hartfield

Helen Creery

Mary Cook

Norman Lines

Steve Murphy

Janet Wykes

Parish Clerk

Local Borough Council

Dunsmore Ward

Deepah Roberts

Howard Roberts

Carolyn Watson-Merret

Warwickshire County Council

Howard Roberts

Member of Parliament

Kenilworth and Southam

(includes Thurlaston)

Jeremy Wright MP

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## **Introduction**

Welcome to this the latest version of the Thurlaston Chronicle. As always the Chronicle is issued mainly to provide an annual record of life in our village of Thurlaston, but also to create interest for all ages, and at the same time inspire the readers to be involved in village life.

How encouraging it was for the editorial team to see that in the recent village survey that the Chronicle was recognised as the 3rd most popular village 'activity' out of 50? It is also exciting that the village is launching a group to highlight the many (and more to come) community activities. Community spirit is a rare asset these days and should be cherished.

Usual format includes the reports from the various 'business' functions and also the 'leisure' groups, in addition there is a bit of aerial history, and something really down to earth from Cyril Holcroft. It is good to hear from our latest Parish Clerk, Janet Wykes, and also to read the reflections of our latest centenarian (the amazing) George Shaw. The village has a great heart for supporting charities and I have included an update for you on one particular local charity, and just so we don't forget the past, an article about the Thurlaston Archives.

Many thanks again to Gill Dakin and Sue Winton for their valuable help in getting the content together.

Happy reading

Brian Coleman

## **Council /Trustee/Community Reports**

### **Thurlaston Parish Council Report - Annual Village Meeting 2015**

In September Mo Steer passed on the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer role to Janet Wykes (Clerk and RFO for Church Lawford). I would like to thank Mo for all her hard work and dedication and helping the Parish Council to be aligned with all the latest legislation which has to be complied with by Parish Councils. This was a lengthy process and Mo worked many hours more than her contract hours for which we are all immensely grateful. Janet has several years' experience with Church Lawford and will help to guide us through the legislative processes and to be more efficient with the use of technology. Thank you to Darren Guy for his work in the recruitment process.

In November Mike Hutton resigned due to ill health, we would like to take this opportunity to thank him for his contribution to the Parish Council and his support to Mo during the external auditing process.

**20 mph:** As you are all aware the 20mph speed limit was introduced in February. This was introduced for the safety of all residents especially for our children and elderly who we want to be able to play and walk in the village safely. Please try and observe with the limit and ask any friends, family and workers to do the same. Other Parishes have been very successful in managing speeding by the use of community speed watches please let me know if you would be interested in supporting this in the future.

**Parish Plan:** This is a priority for 2015 anyone interested in helping to update our current Village plan and Design statements please contact any of the councillors.

**WCC Minerals Core Strategy:** all the surveys have been conducted and we are on their list of consulters’.

**Parking:** As agreed at the last village meeting the gate to Draycote water was locked at the bottom of the sheep hill. This was vandalised twice and has been left open since. No further complaints of parking.

**Conservation and Heritage:** As part of the process to enhance our environment we have discussed the introduction of a Wildflower meadow, at the entrance to the village, and grass verges to replace tarmac along Main Street. David Cooper kindly sketched Main Street with grass verges from Stocks lane to Church Street which were submitted to WCC highways. There were no objections to this in principle we just need the approval and desire from residents and then need to find the funding. All feedback greatly appreciated.

**Lengthsman:** His team started work in the village in the first week of January. They have a 4-week work rota with set tasks for each of those 4 weeks. Some of their tasks are: verge cutting, footpath, hedge and fence management, cleaning and repairing non electrical signs, clearing leaves or debris and localised drain and flood prevention work where possible. There is possibly a little time for extra one off tasks. If you are aware of anything in addition please contact Helen Creery. Many thanks to Helen for organising this; Thurlaston is one of only five villages chosen for the trial lengthsman scheme.

**Neighbourhood Watch:** Bryan Spann has taken over as Neighbourhood Watch Co-Coordinator from Tony Mennell, thanks Tony for all your work and effort with NHW. (See Bryan’s Report below)

**Website:** We will have a Thurlaston Parish Council website soon; all information relating to the Parish Council will be available to view on the website. We will let you know the website address when available. Your feedback will be appreciated.

Parish Council    Chair: Gary Hartfield

## Thurlaston Village Hall Report

The function of our Committee is to manage the Village Hall, in order to provide a pleasant centre for village events and also for villagers' private meetings, parties etc. We are very fortunate to have this facility on our doorstep, so please use it and encourage others to do so. Irene Spann our booking clerk (Tel: 522882) will be only too pleased to arrange for the use of the hall, or for borrowing hall equipment.

The ever-popular Pub Nights continue to be run expertly every other month by Irene. (Look out for the Beer Tree sign in Main Street during the week leading up to the Pub Night on the Friday evening.) We had one Progressive Supper in October organised by Helen Creery, Sue Winton and Peter Steer that was very much enjoyed by all who attended. Sylvia Jacques and Darren Guy ran an extremely successful Village Fete in July, and they very generously donated half the profit from the afternoon's events to the Village Hall funds. The Christmas Lights Party was held December 12<sup>th</sup> and again proved very popular.

The Village Hall Accounts for 2014 are displayed on the notice board. They show that our income has come mainly from hall hire charges (£630.36), the Progressive Supper (£221.50), The Village Fete (£900.00), and the Pub Nights (£332.74). This covered our expenditure which was mainly maintenance as no major projects were undertaken in 2014. The Fete Committee has control of a Reserves Account of £1028.40.

I would like to thank all of our committee members for their help throughout the year. Sue Winton and Lee Wise, both members for several years, have decided to leave the committee this year. Sue joined the committee when a member of the Fete committee, which she actually headed in 2011 and 2012. She has been an endless source of ideas and enthusiasm, and indeed both will be hard to replace. I have also decided to stand down after a very enjoyable 8 years as Village Hall chairman.

### **2014/2015 Committee Members**

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

### **2015/2016 Committee Members**

Claire Jinks	Chair
Dawn Whitmee	Secretary
Irene Spann	Booking Clerk
John Hyde	Treasurer
Mary Cook	+ two vacancies

## **Thurlaston Poor's Plot Charity, Trustees Report**

Thurlaston Poor's Plot Charity has been operating for well over 100 years. It was set up to help the poor and needy of the village. The Charity has land along the Coventry Road; this land is worked by 2 farmers and some villagers who have allotments. Rent is collected which is the source of our funds.

In recent times we have helped children going into further education with a grant. The charity is run by a scheme issued by the Charity Commission if anyone would like to see a copy of this scheme please contact the clerk. At present all allotments are being worked but if you would like to put your name down on a waiting list please contact the clerk.

The Trustees of the Charity are: -

- Mr. Roland Robinson (chairman)
- Mrs. Claire Salmons
- Mr. Darren Guy
- Dr. Sheena Ashford
- Mrs. Paula Irish (proposed)
- Mrs. Kathleen Owens (clerk)

## **Newcombe and Spier Almshouse Charity, Trustees Report 2015.**

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, 2014, was another busy year with regard to maintenance, repairs and improvements.

In early February 2014, Mrs Moore gave up the tenancy of number 3, as she was unable to cope on her own. The trustees took advantage of this vacancy to renovate this almshouse with rewiring, a new bathroom, a new and improved kitchen plus new carpets and full internal redecoration. The total cost was £8600. A new resident moved in at the middle of July 2014.

In September 2013 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 but that the condition of the boundary wall at the rear of the property was a major cause of concern. There were several areas of defective brickwork and some bulges and leans. Localised rebuilding, brick replacement and re-pointing were carried out in April 2014 at a cost of £5,200.



The routine maintenance necessary with buildings of this age continued throughout the year. This included dealing with condensation in the bathroom at number 1 and improvements to the bathroom at number four which were completed in the early part of this year.

Our resident at number five, May Adams, who had moved to a nursing home in December 2014, passed away in January. Whilst this almshouse is vacant, the trustees will have it refurbished and redecorated. We already have a prospective new resident who can move in April.

The total expenditure for the year ending 31/12/2014 was £26,270, a deficit of £10,471, which was covered by the cash income surplus from previous years. The Charity's main investments, where all the income is reinvested, increased by £8,000 during 2014.

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

Walter Harvey

12 March 2015

## **St Edmunds Church Report**

There are now many more children living in the village, and just before Easter we were able to hold a very successful Easter Egg Hunt in St Edmund's with 19 children plus parents present. The children played outside on the church grass in the good weather, and then went inside to make baskets to carry the eggs. The church chairs were re-arranged to make a maze, which puzzled the youngest, and then they were read the Easter Story as reported by a donkey. Flat cardboard egg shapes with individual patterns, but cut in half, were distributed around the church, and the children rushed about collecting them and then pairing the patterns in order to claim their real chocolate eggs. Cake was eaten and drinks taken, and everyone enjoyed the occasion. Many thanks to all the helpers, and it is planned to hold further events to support parents and children.

In 2014 there were 49 services at St Edmund's, with an average attendance of 13, compared to 18 the previous year. This reduction is largely due to regular congregation members moving away or becoming ill. If the special services (Christmas, Easter etc.) are removed the figure is an average of 10, from a regular group of about 20 people who attend say once per month.

Services have alternated weekly between modern language Communion at 9.00am on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month and traditional language Evensong at 6.30pm on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday traditional language Communion is held at 9.00am, and an informal service is held at 6.30pm on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday. If there is a 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday, it is a modern Communion alternating between St Edmund's



and St Peter's. Traditional services remain the most popular, but it is felt that they are unlikely to attract new younger participants. With our Vicar Malcolm retiring at the end of July this year, we will be faced with an interregnum for perhaps one year before we know the future shape of our parish, and how we will be supported thereafter.

We need to recognize that those currently running St Edmund's are -shall we say - getting longer in the tooth, and it is becoming clear that younger blood is necessary to safeguard the future of the Church. At some future date it is possible that the Church and Village Hall functions could be merged into a joint Community Centre, if that is seen as desirable by the village. Should this be the case funding would most probably be available to extend and modernise the facilities of the church building, perhaps including the kitchen and bathroom in Church House. As long as the Church is in commission, the building remains the property of the Church of England, but there are many examples of shared use, and we all need to take a long-term view on this. If we do not use the church, we will lose it!

The coffee morning in the village hall every 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of the month, continues to be very successful, attracting a great many villagers (and an occasional dog) through the morning. The church, lead by David Charles-Edwards and Angela Stewart, has provided regular support to the Warwickshire Nursing Home, which is very much appreciated. Collections are made in the village for Christian Aid, the Poppy Appeal and Myton Hospice, and the Rugby Food Bank and YMCA are well supported. A Remembrance Service is held each year in front of the large wooden cross on the church, in thankfulness for those who gave their lives, and continue to give their lives, in support of our beliefs and way of life.

During the year, we have invested in a new water heating system for the church kitchen and toilet (£460.00), and have repaired the three nave windows and the vestry window (£1600+VAT each and £200+VAT respectively). Work has started on rebuilding the wall adjacent to the gate, re-pointing of the church house brickwork between the front windows, and some tiling repairs (£1633+VAT). The building and repair works were advised to be carried out by the church architect following the five yearly review. It is expected that we will be able to recover the VAT payments this year.

To cover the costs of the above, we received a grant from Allchurches Trust for £500 (already received), and £2000 from Warwickshire and Coventry Historic Churches Trust, which will be paid on completion of the work. We have also started a repair fund which was launched in the church at an evening last Autumn entitled "Thurlaston Memories", when videos of village celebrations of the Queen's Diamond, Golden and Silver Jubilees were shown, together with some interesting fete barn dancing videos! Some 50 to 60 people attended and clearly enjoyed themselves. The fund currently stands at about £900, and last summer's fete provided a further £900, which is very much appreciated. In general terms we

broke even in 2014 with a small surplus of £350, and with running expenses of £245 per week including a 17% share of the Parish costs.

Many thanks to all the people who support St Edmund's, and freely give so much of their time to make it run smoothly. It is sad that Angela Stewart, who has given us such wonderful music over many years, is moving to Rugby, but rumour has it that she may still play for us on occasion! Brian and Jackie Bowsher

## **Thurlaston Neighbourhood Watch Report**

Thankfully another quiet year in Thurlaston and we can now look forward to a positive year and the operation of a Neighbourhood Watch scheme in the parish. After lengthy discussion with the Rugby NHW (Neighbour Hood Watch) and Warwickshire police it became apparent that for various complex reasons an official Thurlaston NHW scheme could not use the very good village internet messaging system for informing residents of any suspicious activities etc. in the parish, so the sensible way forward appears to be to officially re-launch our scheme.

This we will attempt to do in late June/July by organising a village residents meeting with Rugby NHW and the local neighbourhood police team present, explaining the operation of current local district schemes to us. There will be plenty of publicity regarding dates, content etc. of any meeting and hopefully there will be a good deal of interest in the scheme within the parish and a good turn out for the meeting.

Bryan Spann  
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## **Community Leisure Groups**

### **Thurlaston Ramblers 2014**



## **Walks included: -**

**Country Walk – March, 3 miles.** Six walkers. Frankton, a favourite walk. We take cars to the Friendly; the fit and healthy ones walk there and back. It always starts off at a good pace and slows down considerably from Draycote to Frankton. We are not into “hill climbs”. Two meals £10 is good value. Many thanks to Helen Creery for organising the walk.

**Blue Bell Walk – April, 4 miles.** Eight villagers set out from Windmill Inn at Badby on a cool fresh day. The sun came up as we strode through the fields of blue bells and back to the pub for a hearty lunch. Many thanks to David Cooper for organising the walk.

**Country Walk – June, 4 miles.** Another old favourite, Grandborough and the Shoulder of Mutton. Seven set off at a cracking pace down the concrete path, round the lake and up the Toft. A good meal, two for £10 plus a well earned drink or three. A beautiful summers day.

**Historic Walk – September, 2 miles.** The walk was to see and discuss Warwick’s history this including: - Mill Street’s domestic architecture, Thomas Oken’s House, Pageant Gardens, The Court House, The West Gate and Chapel, The Lord Leycester Hospital, The Great Fire of 1694, The Market Hall, Randolph Turpin (sculpture) The Abbotsford, the Former County Goal, Shire Hall, St Mary’s Church, Kings High School, Eastgate and Chapel Landor House. Lunch for seven was at the Roebuck Inn. Many thanks to Cyril Holcroft for organising the walk.

**Country Park – November, 3 miles .** We parked up in the shopping centre at Daventry and crossed over to the park. A crisp dry day about 15° C, which was good for the time of year. The threatening clouds managed to hold off until we got into the Boat Inn at Braunston. A good meal, two for the price of one.

I am handing the Thurlaston Ramblers “ Red Book” to Mo & Peter Steer who have an interesting programme of walks for the coming year.

Keep walking.....Mel Harley

## **Thurlaston Ladies Club**

This year is the 50th year that Thurlaston Ladies Club has been in existence. This is an excellent achievement for an informal organisation that seeks to promote friendship and shared interests. During the year we shall discuss how to commemorate this occasion. Although we are not a fund raising organisation, we always manage to give generously to charity. Two of the original members are still regular members at our meetings.

We started the year with an Italian meal with a menu of four hot dishes plus interesting salads and ending with a lemon pudding, lovely chocolates and tea or coffee. We also had a raffle and the event was very popular and made a great start to our fund raising thanks to the generous time given by the committee.

After the AGM in February, a cheque was handed to the Rugby Foodbank. Following a talk by Diana Mansell of the Rugby Foodbank last year, a box was placed in the church for contributions and villagers are proving very generous. In March we had an evening meeting on " The History of the Cancan. This was an interesting and fun talk which included some back footage from films. Sue Edwards joined us again in April bringing us a new selection of pictures to see and hear about, she is always a very welcome speaker.

By request, Jane Arnold and her mother came back to speak to us on "A Roman Women and her Slave". They brought a huge amount of artefacts to show us as well as some Roman food to taste.

Kay surpassed herself with this year's outing. We visited Madresfield Court which is still a private house, rarely open to the public. The house was beautiful with lived in grand furniture, keeping a homely feel. We then visited Ledbury where we all went off to find one of the many good restaurants. It was voted our best day out yet and over thirty people joined in the day. Unfortunately, the summer picnic had to be cancelled this year as too many of the committee were unable to attend.

In September Judy Douglas talked with slides of the interesting life and sculptures of Benno Schotz. He was Jewish and born in Estonia but escaped to Scotland when he was 18. He was Head of the painting and sculpture department at the Glasgow School of Art for many years and a highly recognised sculptor of his day. In October, Sheila Woolf talked about Cordelia Lea of Stoneleigh Abbey, who played a huge part in WW1 looking after the Stoneleigh villagers and soldiers. She was more interested in helping the locals than looking after the Abbey. To redress the balance we shall be visiting the Abbey this year.

November was our last evening meeting. Richard Cook, who has been on country file, talked and demonstrated ways of reseating old chairs out of various types of rushes etc which would have been used in the past. He had a very busy life fulfilling the many orders that come his way. He also gave us ideas on making Christmas Decorations from woodland objects. Unfortunately, as mentioned last year, evening meetings have not been well attended and therefore not worth the extra work they demand.

Our Christmas lunch was a great success, this year, so we are hoping to return this year.

Guests are very welcome to any of our meetings and are under no obligation to join.

Judy Douglas

## **Arts and Crafts - Children's Art Event (16<sup>th</sup> /18<sup>th</sup> May 2014)**

All the children each received a personal invitation to the free event, allowing them to come to 2 sessions one on the Friday evening and another on the Sunday morning (the latter being by far the most popular).

We were delighted to see so many children turn up. We had Jareth, William, Archie, Phoebe, Ella, Emma, William, George, Louis, Heidi, Ewan, Pippa, Eloise, Josephine, Lucinda and Daniel. We were hoping to also encourage some of the older ones to get involved, but our timing was off as unfortunately most of them were busy with their exams.

Mo Steer was the main organiser, and at the events she encouraged the children and any accompanying adults to decorate a bunting piece to help Compton Verney with their longest bunting world record attempt.

During the weekend David Cooper lead the way on artistic encouragement and started the popular technique of paint splattering etc. in the village hall garden. Gill Dakin helped with stamping and paint mixing, whilst Vivien Sharp – amongst other duties of materials buying etc, provided three wonderful local scenes which she had drawn for the children to paint or colour in. Sue Winton was able to pass on some of her considerable watercolour experience to others including Jareth – who took home and finished a brilliant detailed entry. All the children showed great artistic skills, enthusiasm and were incredibly polite. Other hardworking helpers were Anne Boulton, Lee Wise (photographer) Jenny Cooper, Gavin (invitations) and Pete Steer.

All the children's work went on to be displayed in the Church at the fete and created much interest and admiration. Several entries from other village children were received after the event, these being Millie Guy who had drawn a lovely colourful entry of 'The Fete' and Millie Irish's super picture of the Church.

For all involved a most rewarding experience. Prompting us to think - that it would be nice to have more children's or family events in the village.

## **The Fete 2014**

The sun shone for yet another successful Thurlaston village fete. Proving popular with both villagers and visitors alike, the fete raised an impressive £2,265 net profit which was split equally between the church and the village hall.

Held on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> July, it was a lovely summer's day with plenty of flags and bunting providing a red, white and blue backdrop to the fete's theme of The Great British Union Jack.

Proceedings were opened by Michael Binnie, who gave a short speech about his time in the village, then the Chain of Office was handed on to Jenny Cooper.

There was all the usual fun of the fete, accompanied by Dunchurch Band, and a big thank you goes to all the Thurlastonians who helped to either set up or run a stall - the fete couldn't happen without you!

Busy stalls again included produce and plants, clothes and accessories, gifts and toys, bric-a-brac, books and bottles. Draycote Water rangers had a stand to promote the reservoir and newly refurbished Visitor Centre, while the Shetland ponies promoting their work with disabled children were a great attraction for all. Roland brought one of his tractors for the children to climb over and compère for the day was Steve Murphy, assisted by Mo Steer and George Eden.

Many visitors commented on the friendliness of the village, the patriotic theme and the safe and entertaining children's area with its games for pocket money prices, which was run by Ian and Erica Eden with help from Jean Russell, in the nursing home gardens.

The hot dog stall was as popular as ever, while the ice cream stall manned by Mary and Colin Cook was incredibly busy in the sunshine, as was the Pimms stall run by Sally and Ev. Ev also did a great job as treasurer. Other ladies multi-tasking included those in the hall selling homemade cakes and teas organised by Judy Douglas, and the church flowers organised by Veryan Hounson and assisted by Eileen Innes.

After last year's Thurlaston Morris Men it was the turn of the Thurlaston Women to provide the highlight of the afternoon with some country dancing. The dancers were Ev Murphy, Mo Steer, Maggie Guy, Angela Bull, Mary Cook, Jo Robinson, Sylvia Jacques and Jane Green. Their practice nights were lots of fun with the final practice being just before the dancing on fete day, to calm the nerves. Their two dances - the Cumberland Square Eight followed by the Circassian Circle dance - raised great applause, and the audience joined in for an extra dance. Well done ladies! They were secretly coach by Sylvia's friend Ro Silvester, who was presented with a bouquet and a card by Steve Murphy.

This year's fete committee is again headed by Sylvia Jacques, who has been joined this time by Andrew Henning with support from Karen McLachlan, Mary Cook and Robert Ashford. The date is Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> July and the theme is yet to be decided, so watch out for details on the Thurlaston net.

Any help people are able to give with the fete - which raises much needed money for the village's two main focal points, the church and village hall - is always much appreciated, and for further information contact Sylvia Jacques at [sjacques5@talktalk.net](mailto:sjacques5@talktalk.net).

## **Progressive Supper 2014**

The 2014 Progressive saw 22 couples from the village meet in the Village Hall for a glass of sparkling wine before finding out where they would be going for their first course. The organising team were delighted that 2 new couples to the village were taking part. Once the envelopes had been distributed the starter hosts left for their homes ready to greet their guests.

The weather was mild and dry which is always a bonus when you are walking round the village on an October evening! As always there was much speculation as to who would be at which house and what they would be eating. From feedback on both the night and subsequent days I don't think anyone was disappointed and the 'newbies' thoroughly enjoyed themselves, one couple said "a delightfully relaxed and joyful experience".

The evening was rounded off with everyone joining up again to have coffee with much discussion about all the excellent food and wine that had been consumed.

## **Thurlaston Annual Village Golf Day**

Friday 29<sup>th</sup> August 2014 saw the coming together of Thurlaston's eager golfers to compete in the second annual village golf day. The stakes were raised this year as the competitors strived to win the newly donated Thurlaston Golf Day Trophy, which had been kindly donated by Colin Cook.

The weather was blustery and there was an occasional shower but nothing phased the hardy Thurlastonians as they shuffled their way around the 18 holes. Whitefields Golf Club was in splendid shape for the day and proved quite tricky when the wind blew across Draycote Water. In all ten players took part, three ladies and seven gents.

Although it was a close result, the cream rose to the top and the worthy winner was John Hall. Peter Wilson came in second place and last year's winner, Mary Cook came in third.

A hearty meal and a few drinks were taken after the competition and Mary presented John with the trophy, commenting that she would do her best to win it back next year! We are all looking forward to the 2015 event, which will hopefully be bigger than ever.

Andrew Henning



## **Christmas Lights Party - Friday 12th December 2014)**

A lovely evening organised by the village Hall committee. Everyone met at the oak tree by the village stocks for carols led and accompanied by Gill Woods, as the tree lights were switched on.

As a thank you for the number of households in Thurlaston who have used their services during the past year, Heartwood Tree Services from Barby, put up the village tree lights free of charge, a generous gesture on their part. Special thanks also to Gary and Jo Hartfield at Stocks House.

Everyone then made their way down to the village hall for a festive sing along with Peter Wilson and Martin Dakin on guitars with Steve Murphy leading the proceedings. It was a wonderful family occasion with Steve getting the children to sing 'Away in a manger'. The children gathered round the front and for the carol Jingle Bells, they were given musical instruments to accompany the guitars. During the evening, Ella Knight was very pleased, after four years of waiting, as she got her 5 gold rings paddle for the carol, 12 days of Christmas, always one of the highlights of the evening. It was lovely to welcome new villagers and their families to join in this popular annual event.

Santa came to the Sing-along. As people entered the hall they gave presents to Santa who was delighted to receive the magnificent number of 81 presents; six sacksful! He and his helpers were very busy indeed distributing them to the Young Carers in Rugby for Christmas. They were much appreciated. The tradition of 'bring a plate of food to share' for a buffet followed the music which in turn was followed by the pub night. Drinks were served, including delicious mulled wine, by Irene and Dawn.

## **Friday Morning Coffee**

The popular Coffee Mornings, initiated by St Edmund's, take place in the Village Hall on the third Friday of every month between 10am and 12 midday.

We regularly have around 35 people popping in through the morning to chat and catch up on news. A list of dates is on the notice board and reminders are put on the Thurlaston net. Everyone is most welcome!

Jenny Cooper

## **Thurlaston Annual Quiz Night – 17 January 2015**

Just as the excitement of Christmas and New Year had passed, along came the thrill of the Thurlaston Annual Quiz night. For some months, the organisers – Des and Helen Creery, Colin and Mary Cook and Andrew and Unni Henning had been

wracking their brains to put together the tricky questions needed. Planning meetings were held on a regular basis, although these seemed just an excuse for getting together to enjoy some great meals and a few glasses of wine.

This year the number of teams entering was sadly down to just four with six competitors in each team. The leader board changed continuously as we made our way through the 9 rounds. The teams were challenged on their knowledge of motorways, history, food, quotations, TV detective themes, general knowledge and cars. There was even a round where the questions were based on the UK Citizenship Test – sadly most failed to achieve the 75% pass rate required to remain in the UK!

Midway through the evening we all enjoyed a splendid fish and chip supper washed down with a beverage of choice.

In the end, after much nip and tuck, the winners were the Beech Nuts, and so congratulations go to Brian and Barbara Coleman, Nigel and Claire Jinks, Judy Brooks and Kay Thorpe.

The aim of the evening was to bring together folk from the village to have good time; it certainly seemed to fulfil this aim if the level of laughter could be used as the measure. In addition, £154 was raised which will be used to fund some small projects to add flowers around the village.

Next year's event is now in the secure hands of the "Better Halves" ladies team, who very kindly volunteered to take over the responsibility. We all look forward to another very good evening next year.

## **Bonfire Night 2014**

A wild and windy night greeted the hot dog and drinks team when they arrived at the bonfire to start preparations. It soon became apparent that all the hard work and thought put in by Roland to the careful placing of equipment had been thwarted by a change in wind direction just before the start!

Once everyone was relocated to a less smoky spot the roaring of the bonfire and sizzling of the sausages made the evening start to feel like a proper Thurlaston bonfire night. The tractor and trailer rides brought excited children and adults down to enjoy this very English event. The rain held off for a brilliant firework display that was enjoyed by all who attended and I'm sure by some who were travelling along the M45!

It is thanks to the hosts, Roland and Jo Robinson, assisted by Dawn Whitmee and her merry band of helpers that this annual event continues to feature in the Thurlaston calendar.

## **Myton Hospice Coffee Morning**

A fund raising event for Myton Hospice has taken place in the village for many years. For the last ten years it has been held as a Coffee Morning in St Edmund's at the beginning of December.

We have a Festive Decoration stall, a Bring and Buy and a raffle. The highlight, of course, is Christmas Carols, played on the piano by Angela. This year this popular event was enjoyed by all who participated and raised over £450.

Jenny Cooper

## **Our Readers Write**

### **World War II plane crash in Thurlaston.**

It was a typical February day, cold and cloudy with light winds, though sadly this February would see the death of two RAF pilots here in Thurlaston. On the 19th Feb 1945 with the Allies advancing on Berlin, Sgt Eric Kershaw of Bolton aged 26 was attending the 18(P) Advanced Flying Course at RAF Church Lawford. The purpose of the course was to advance his flying experience and techniques in the weather environment of England. This would be far removed from the weather Eric would have encountered in Canada, the most likely location of his basic flying course. He was flying the twin engine Airspeed Oxford, HN311 and part of the course would have been with the 1533 Beam Approach Training Flight. The second pilot and instructor Warrant Officer Frank Needham was aged just 24 from Whitwick and married to Gwendoline.

The aim of the BAT flight was to teach an instrument approach, which enabled the pilot to land when the cloud base was low over the airfield in poor visibility. This entailed homing in on a beacon overhead of the airfield. The beacon gave pilots a known location enabling them to descend to a safe altitude before flying away from the airfield to an outer marker. When over this marker they would do a procedural turn and descend further, turning in to establish on the inbound course with the runway. On passing over the outer marker for the second time the final descent was initiated to the obstacle clearance height (i.e. trees, buildings etc) for the given airfield. They would follow this track until the airfield was seen and landing completed. This is what WO Needham was going to teach Sgt. Kershaw on that February day.

Records show the weather that day wasn't great for training. However a slight improvement at 8 am, visibility 1500 yards, cloud base of 1000 feet, was enough to allow training to commence.....there was a war on you know. I guess that a number of approaches would have been flown and with the lack of modern approach lights they never saw the runway. The 10am weather reports a visibility of 1200 yards, an estimated cloud base of 800ft and a very light southerly. The

only other known fact is that at 9.50am the aircraft struck trees at Thurlaston Grange killing both pilots.

Now as a pilot I wonder why they did not divert to another airfield, maybe WO Needham had a trick up his sleeve passed on by other instructors; the 'press on get the job done' spirit of that time. Their final procedural turn would have been flown somewhere over Draycote village some 90 feet lower than the airfield. Had they gone deliberately low over a known safe area attempting to get below the cloud base, turning in over what is now Draycote Water before scud running (using visual rather than instruments) back to base? If so, they did not see the trees on the ridge by Thurlaston Grange in time crashing into them with disastrous consequences.

From the accident card, a summary used to look for accident trends, the altimeters were functioning and correctly set, the engines were working and no defect noted. RAF Church Lawford is 366 feet above mean sea level and at the time had a recorded obstacle clearance height of 100 feet. Thurlaston Grange stands on land about 360 feet amsl, 1½ miles out on the extended centerline and if it was an Elm tree that they hit, they are some 80-120' high. So why was the aircraft so low so far out, no one will ever really know?

This is the account of just 2 lives out of 8300 airman lost in training accidents in WWII.

Greg Winton

## **The Main Drainage of Thurlaston, Dunchurch and Cawston.**

In 1968 Thurlaston was a smaller place but still recognisable as the village that we know today. None of the modern houses between the motorway bridge and Stocks Lane existed. Thurlaston House Hotel on the left as you entered the village was in existence but its days were numbered. The Motorway (M45) was a very recent construction.

Prior to 1968 Thurlaston and Cawston did not have Main Drainage, Dunchurch had a primitive system that was not in good working order. There were serious public health risks in Dunchurch and in Cawston (Lime Tree Avenue). Cesspits were the order of the day.

At that time water supply and sewerage were the responsibility of Local Authorities. Rugby had two Local Authorities viz Rugby Urban District Council (RUDC) and Rugby Rural District Council' (RRDC). All the rural areas outside of the built up urban area were the responsibility of the RRDC. Thus it was that the RRDC through their consultants JD&DM Watson devised a scheme to put Cawston, Dunchurch and Thurlaston on to Main Drainage. The

work was put out to tender and the contract was won by C Bryant and Son Ltd of Birmingham. I was appointed by Bryant to take charge of all work on site. At that time I lived in Alcester a village between Stratford and Worcester and I travelled daily to the site.

This scheme involved the construction of a new Sewage Treatment Works on land between the Southam Road (A426) and the reservoir at GR 473702, approximately six miles of main sewer and rising main and four pump-houses. The pump-houses are located as follows:

- 1.Thurlaston. At the bottom of the concrete road that leads to the reservoir.
- 2.Dunchurch. On the west side of Southam Road at Grid Ref. 489709.
- 3.Dunchurch. Adjacent to the telephone exchange at Grid Ref. 486720.
4. Cawston. On the LHS of Cawston Lane at Grid Ref 474729 about 200 yards before the junction with the A4071.

The pump-houses were required due to the topography, which meant that in some locations it was necessary to pump the sewage up through a rising main to a high point from where it could flow by gravity sewer to the Sewage Works. Thurlaston was a case in point here the sewage flows in pipework from various parts of the village and finally down Church Lane, and alongside the concrete road and down to the pump-house at the bottom. From here it is pumped in a rising main to a high point on Toft Hill and from there it flows by gravity down to the Sewage Treatment Works. I should point out here that not all properties in the village were connected, Biggin Hall Lane being a case in point. Here a small number of remote properties did not justify the cost. Some properties in Stocks Lane were not connected because they were too low lying.

The construction of the reservoir was going on at the same time as the main drainage described above and was done by a company called Shand who hailed from Matlock and specialised in this type of work. The purpose of the reservoir of course is to provide a ready supply of raw water to be treated and passed into the public supply system.

There are many things that we take for granted in a developed civilised society, the efficient disposal of sewage and a ready supply of potable water are two good examples and both are vital to the public health and general well-being of the population.

Cyril Holcroft.

## **Thank you Noel!**

When we were living in Dubai, one of the ways of keeping in touch with Thurlaston life was by enrolling with Thurlaston Net. I was even sad enough to check the view from the clubhouse across the water!

Other members of our community have found it useful for finding cats, which have been mislaid, or for recruiting help for the village fete, or the many other uses that have been found for this communication tool.

However, all of us in our different ways are grateful to Noel for the effort he puts in to maintaining this resource, and I would like to thank him on behalf of the village.

Peter Steer

## **Who? What? Where?**

Where have you seen villagers popping up in the last year?

Steve Murphy was seen in the play in Dunchurch called 'Cash on delivery' playing brilliantly the character Eric Swann, who at one point has to play some with tourette's. He was said to have lost half a stone in weight during the plays performance week, due to the energy needed to play this leading part. It was also wonderful to see Guy Watt playing Norman Bassett, in the play as he returned to the stage after his terrible accident. Both performances were fantastic and the audience had a wonderful evening.

Mo steer was seen at Draycote reservoir visitors centre on 16th December, singing with the Dunchurch Singers, whilst lucky diners ate a Christmas lunch.

Andrew Henning received the 'Presidents award' at the Autumn Photographic society exhibition, held at the Rugby gallery and Library.

Joyce Baugh celebrated her 90th birthday on Thursday 26th Feb. Many friends joined her! Beautiful delicious cake made by Michele Carman.

George Shaw celebrated his 100th birthday with many friends and family on Tuesday 28th April.

Sadly in October 2014 - Vivien and Gavin Bone left the village to take up residence in Leamington. We wish them much happiness in their new home.

## **Beech Party – Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> August 2015**

This is a social event planned for the whole village; the afternoon will start from 4.00pm with background music, fun and games for everyone and ice cream!

Bring a picnic and chair for a leisurely chat with friends and villagers; bales of straw will be placed around the island to provide either seating or a picnic facility! Beech Drive will be transformed into a traffic-free area for everyone.

The evening event will be the very popular four piece Ceilidh Band with dancing a plenty in the Drive; the marquees will be erected to give cover from the elements should it be needed!

There will be a charge for the day but this is to cover the cost of the Band; **Tickets on sale** from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2015 – see flyer or posters or internet for details - £5.00 per adult and £2 for children over four; but tickets are limited due to the size of the street! **ONCE THEY ARE GONE THEY ARE GONE!**

This is purely a village event and will not be open to ‘outsiders’ but family members and friends will be encouraged; FUN and ENJOYMENT is the order of the day.

We would like to thank the residents of Beech Drive and immediate neighbours for their support for this event and hope to make as little disruption as possible. Look forward to meeting as many fellow Thurlastonians as possible.

Steve & Ev, Nigel & Claire, Danny & Dawn

### **A Brief Insight into the Last 100 years as recalled by George Henry Shaw.**

Born 28<sup>th</sup> April 1915 to Alice and George Henry Shaw, a cutler by trade, who lived in Rock Street, Sheffield. A sister, Anne soon followed, then Frank, Colin, who died of meningitis and finally John. Life was hard and money was short but the family had an abundance of love, companionship and faith, being members of the local Plymouth Brethren Mission.

The family shared many common interests but mainly sport and particularly music. His father was a member of the Sheffield Orpheus Male Voice Choir and the family, including cousins, aunts and uncles were gifted with good singing voices. George was a boy soprano and often sang solos in various concerts. He remembers one occasion, in the early days of electricity, singing ‘Cherry Ripe’ in the Montgomery Hall. He had just reached ‘Where my Julia’s lips do smile’ when the lights went out, George kept on singing, earning the headline in the following day’s paper – ‘The boy who sang in the dark’. On another occasion he had been



cast as Julius Caesar because he 'died' the most convincingly in the audition, but had to jump up, make a quick change to sing a duet with his sister straight afterwards.

George went to Owlter Lane Intermediate School, having passed for the grammar school but it was too expensive for him to go. He left age 15 but had not taken any exams. He worked for a short time as a trainee dentist technician then became a clerk and cashier in the wholesale fruit and vegetable market. He had a non-combatant role in the army during the war, mainly in the Pay Corp, due to his neat hand and head for figures. He was fortunate to have a mentor as his C.O. who encouraged him to take London Matriculation correspondence courses in History of the British Empire, French, Music and English, which enabled him to be accepted for teacher training after the war.

George remembers working and living conditions as being very harsh. He and his brothers used to put the rug on their bed to keep warm in the winter, once they went on a short holiday to stay with a family in the country arranged by the Mission. The family were even poorer than they were and had an earth floor in their cottage whereas in Rock Street they at least had a stone floor. It was impossible to keep a shirt collar clean without wearing a scarf because of the dirty air. Times were particularly bad during the depression, if you had to go out alone particularly at night the safest place to walk was down the middle of the street His father was out of work and the worry and nature of his previous work had started to affect his health. There was no health service, so if you could not pay, it was very difficult to get any treatment. While at the market, George ran a 'penny in the pound' scheme so his fellow workers at least had a small amount of money in case they needed hospital treatment. (George will never forget July 5<sup>th</sup> 1948 when the National Health Service was introduced- he was digging in the garden and threw his spade in the air, nearly causing an accident!)

Following on the music tradition in his family, George, together with his brothers, friends and cousins formed the Firshill Singers {male voice choir} about 1946. They took part in a big concert of local talent in the City Hall for the then Princess Elizabeth, singing 'Old Man River' as a processional as their opening piece. They were televised singing 'Oh Mary don't you weep' in a competition in Manchester and organised countless concerts in local churches, hospitals and institutions over a period of 30 years. After moving to Thurlaston 20 years ago he enrolled at Rugby College on a piano performing course where he learned new techniques and made lasting friendships before the course was cancelled when the old college was demolished.

After being introduced to gardening by his father-in-law, he discovered a strong interest, particularly in vegetable growing, fuelled partly by the need to feed three growing girls! At one time, he had as many as four allotments, admittedly during a period of a decline in the numbers of people taking them on. He has spent many a pleasurable hour digging in the garden here, devising different methods which, he was convinced, completed the task much quicker!

After an eventful teaching career, George has maintained his interest in History, French, Music, Geography and reading and believe you me, he ain't done yet!

Hilary Flowers and family.

## **What is The Job of the Parish Clerk?**

The Councillors appointed to Thurlaston Parish Council have been voted for to make decisions on behalf of the village of Thurlaston.

As a local council the processes and procedures by which they make those decisions are governed by a raft of legislation that specifies how, when and by whom all the various functions and responsibilities have to be carried out. The Parish Clerk is appointed as the "Proper Officer to the Council" and thus has a statutory duty to carry out all specific functions, and to serve or issue all the notifications required by law to ensure that the instructions of the Council are carried out in connection with its function as a Local Authority.

The Clerk is expected to advise and assist in the formation of overall policies and to produce all the information required so that the Councillors can make both effective decisions and implement them constructively. In addition, they are accountable to them for the effective management of all their resources and have to report to them as and when required.

The various specific responsibilities focus on attending meetings, preparing agendas and minutes, receiving and forwarding correspondence within the Council and, when instructed by the Council, issuing official responses, letters and notices. Reading relevant reports and data on matters that have a bearing on Council activities in order to inform future discussions is also required. At times the Parish Clerk may have to act as a representative of the Council at events locally.

I have been a Parish Clerk for over 2 years now at another parish and look forward to working with the Councillors and residents of Thurlaston. So if you need to get in touch with myself or Thurlaston Parish Councillors you can either find our phone numbers on the Parish Notice Board in Village or under the Local Government Banner on the village website where you can also link into our individual email addresses.

My contact details are Janet Wykes 07425157716 or [parish.clerk@thurlaston.org.uk](mailto:parish.clerk@thurlaston.org.uk) , I live in Brinklow, and therefore I am generally only around and about on the day of the meeting but I do travel to Thurlaston between meetings as and when needed.

## **Sign of Hope**

Some will have noticed that over the front door of a redundant social club in Newbold Road adjacent to the town hall and police station there is a new sign which reads Hope 4 (Rugby) Ltd., Hope Centre. It is a place where homeless and badly housed people in Rugby can receive help to get back into proper housing and in the meantime receive food, use showers and laundry facilities ...and receive encouragement and direction.

What is that to do with Thurlaston? For the last ten years people from the village have been very involved in this venture in all its forms and without mentioning any names, some have given financial support, one of the Thurlaston clubs has raised funds for Hope 4 (and more recently the associated charity Rugby Foodbank) other people have been involved as active volunteers at the annual Rugby Winter Shelter and, in the Hope Centre preparing meals etc, others collecting hygiene items to distribute to those who need it at the Centre, and some who have been involved in the admin and management of the charity.

As Trustees Barbara and I would like to acknowledge with thanks the support this village has given to the charity.

Brian Coleman

## **Thurlaston's four legged friends**

There are some residents of Thurlaston that you may not have all met yet, which is why I am taking this opportunity to introduce them to you. They reside at the end of Main Street with views of Draycote Water and live surrounded by scenic views of the Warwickshire countryside, they probably have the best home in Thurlaston! Their names are Harry, Cali, Troy, Alfie, Charlie, Mr Mouse, Princess and Molly aged from 3 to 21 years old and all with different characters. If you have not guessed yet they are rescue horses, ponies and Miniature Shetlands, they are often to be seen being walked or ridden around the village accompanied by members of the Yard (please slow down if you see us!). There were two other Shetlands at the yard, Bambam and Dolly, who have recently left the village for pastures new in Warwickshire, I have been to visit them and they have both settled in very well to their new homes and quickly made new friends. The yard relies upon donations for its upkeep, feeding and health needs of the animals and this is an on-going challenge to ensure that there are sufficient funds to cover the expenditure and unexpected vets fees.

There is a lot involved with taking care of the animals which I have found out over the last year, this includes regular grooming, cleaning feet and hooves as well as yard and field maintenance which entails poo picking (I prefer Strawberry picking) checking and repairing boundary fences/hedges, keeping the fields free of

litter/debris and keeping drains running clear. In addition it is very important to ensure that the water troughs are kept clean as algae that forms can be dangerous and that the food supplies are always available.

The horse, ponies and miniatures play an active role in the Thurlaston community and over the last 12 months have attended the Thurlaston Fete, visited coffee mornings at the village hall, taken part in residents Birthday parties including a three year old and a 100 year old, had stands at the Draycote Water Summer and Winter Fairs and went to the Rimo Winter Warmer Event. Furthermore, they also enjoy visits from residents from the Warwickshire Nursing home many of whom have owned or cared for horse during their lives and therefore meeting the means a lot and brings back happy memories – the horse, ponies and Shetlands like visitors who bring treats like carrots, so as you can see they have a very busy social diary!

I like being involved with the yard because I like spending time outdoors, it is rewarding when you develop a special bond and trust with the animals. In addition, I like to ride them when I can or take them for a walk around the village. Furthermore I really enjoy when the farrier visits because his job is quite unusual and interesting to watch how he trims the hooves and takes care of their feet.

If you ever see us in the village please feel free to stop and talk to us, we don't bite!

George Eden (13)

## **Thurlaston Archives**

Some villagers will be suffering withdrawal symptoms soon since the dust has not been blown off the archives for their annual airing at the Village Fete (last year nor this year).

The documents/maps/ artefacts have been displayed annually this way since I took over from Jess Cummings as Custodian of the Thurlaston Archives when she 'emigrated' (or was repatriated) north of the border about 8 years ago.

During that time John Hall has done a good job in cataloguing what we have and a list is available. Others have helped on 'display days' which has been encouraging.

It is nearly always good to take a fresh look at what is done and that is what is happening now.

Displaying at the fete has its disadvantages since those working on the usual stalls don't have opportunity to visit the church for a look-see at the exhibits and those on the Archive Display don't get to participate in the Fete very much (what is all this about village people Morris Dancing?)

The Village Archives got a 57% thumbs up in the recent survey of the things in Thurlaston that 'would be supported and are valued'. Currently the aim is one of preservation and availability. Much of the material is stored in a fire proof safe and it comes out on request or on special event. There have been no official additions to the Archives since about 2006 with one exception (see last year's Chronicle where a mystery tool from the garden of Dr and Mrs Bemand was presented to the Archives).

The future could include the following:

- A joint special event with the Arts and Crafts Show at the end of September with the Archives on display.
- Formation of a group of enthusiasts or interested people who would like to be involved with the archives in some way (just a few hours a year or a major/specific role).
- The material needs bringing into the 21<sup>st</sup> century to be available in electronic form to facilitate easier access and ensure preservation. This would need expert advice and execution. This would incur a cost. The 'Thurlaston Archives' has no funds. Fund raising through events or grants would be necessary and anyone with that skill would be an asset to the group if it is formed.
- The prize-winning map displayed in the Village Hall was a great expression of community spirit, vision and talent. There is still scope for similar expressions e.g., a book about Thurlaston, children/young people preparing a scrapbook approach to today's events that will eventually be part of Thurlaston's past record, or a digital equivalent.
- The availability of the Archives on the Thurlaston net, the practicalities of which will have to be discussed with Noel.

I know a number of people are interested, please contact me at 1 The Gardens if you can help in some way to enhance this village asset.

Thank you

Brian Coleman



George's 100th



Brian, Barbara, Kay, Judy, Claire and Nigel,  
Quiz winners 2015





The Easter egg hunt 2015



George and George with a four-legged friend.