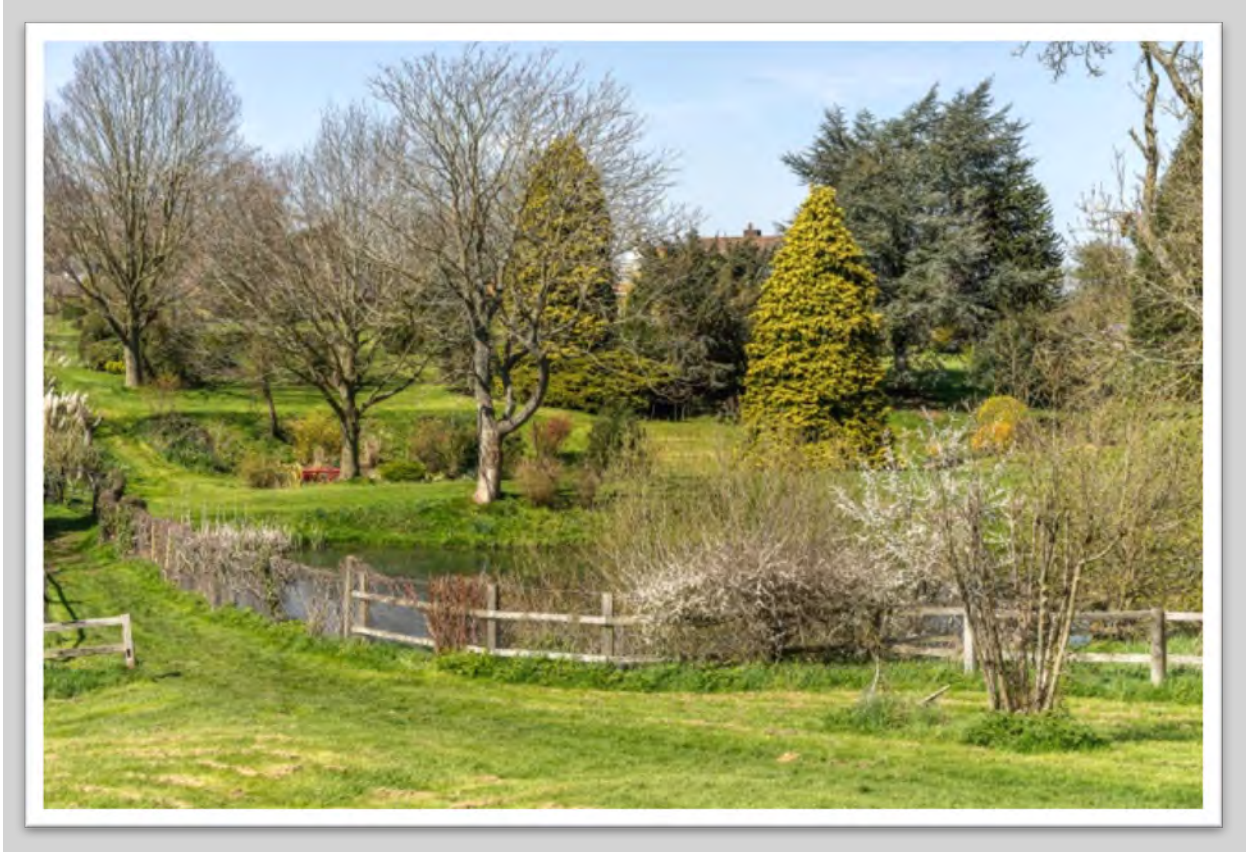


# Thurlaston Chronicle



**Patrick's Field, Thurlaston, Warwickshire.**

**May 2016**

**Contacts**

<b>Parish Council Thurlaston</b>	Chair	Gary Hartfield	Steve Murphy
	Councilors	Helen Creery Mary Cook Norman Lines Steve Murphy	Helen Creery Mary Cook Gary Hartfield Norman Lines
	Parish Clerk	Janet Wykes/ Sylvia Jacques	Sylvia Jacques

**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

**West Midlands MEPs.**

Anthea McIntyre, Dan Dalton, Jill Seymour, Sion Simon, Neena Gill, James Carver, Bill Etheridge

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### **Introduction**

Welcome to the latest version of the Thurlaston Chronicle. As always the Chronicle is issued mainly to provide an annual record of life in our village, to create interest for all ages, and also to inspire readers to be involved in village life. In previous years we have picked a theme for the Chronicle, typically the World War 1 commemorations, anniversary of the Chronicle, Queen's 60th Jubilee the Olympics etc.

This year in addition to the Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday and Shakespeare 400 death anniversary, it is Lancelot Brown's 300-birth anniversary. Lancelot (aka Capability) Brown is famous for garden designs for large land owners during his life time (67 years) and this is reflected in a number of National Trust properties across the land, in particular Compton Verney (see later article). Also we reflect on possibly the biggest water feature in Thurlaston. On the front cover we can enjoy a view of the garden at Patrick's Field (courtesy of Andrew Henning, photographer) lovingly created by Michael and Mary Binney. The garden is well known for its sheep wash which is the only brick built type left in Warwickshire.

The reports reflect activity in the 12 months leading up to the Village Meeting in March 2016. We have the formal committee based reports followed by the leisure group reports. Finally we have an eclectic selection of reports, reflections and reviews that we hope you will find interesting and inspiring.

Again I am grateful to Sue Winton and Gill Dakin who have done most of the hard work of encouraging people to prepare articles and to generally enthuse the production team.



Happy reading  
Brian Coleman

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

### **Thurlaston Parish Council Report**

Annual Village Meeting 2016

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 that 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 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 councilors.

**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 this was 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 Committee Report**

The role of the Committee is to manage the maintenance of the Village Hall as per the Deed of Gift and Trust Deed by Miss Stanley in 1947. The Committee should comprise 7 village volunteers, who stand for a period of one year, once elected by

the Parish Council and Villagers. This past year, the Committee has comprised only 5 volunteers who have worked hard keeping the hall in good order. In 2015, the hall was used on 135 occasions. The funds to keep the hall in good order come from a number of sources including; profits from the Fete, Progressive Supper and Pub Nights, fees from non-resident hires and donations from residents, the Thurlaston Ladies' Club and the Friday Coffee Mornings. We appreciate the generosity of these contributions without which we would not be able to keep the fabric of the structure in such good order. We thank all the villagers who make these events happen.

The Village Hall Charges were reviewed by a subcommittee at the end of 2015. The subcommittee looked at charges made by similar size Village Halls in the local area and determined that, whilst there would be an increase in charges for 2016, residents would still be able to use the Hall for free for personal use. A revised schedule of charges was issued in January 2016.

The Christmas Party, which is the one social event organised by the VHC, proved very popular again. Stewart & Luke from Timber Tech volunteered to put the lights on the oak tree and made a magnificent job of it. So good, in fact, that we have decided (with the Hartfield's agreement) to leave them up there until next Christmas as we now use LED lights. Thanks to all committee members and others for making it such an enjoyable event.

In the past year acoustic clouds have been purchased to help reduce the ambient noise and I hope you would agree it is now easier to hear each other speak when the hall is full. The hall was refreshed at the start of 2016 with the walls and the kitchen area being painted. Unfortunately, 2015 was the time for the 5-year electrical inspection. All remedial work has now been undertaken. It has therefore been an expensive year with a deficit this year of £851.90. (see accounts circulated separately)

The Committee has also been putting together a Village Hall Manual to collate all the information for managing the Hall. At present, I am working with Noel Bell, Webmaster for the Thurlaston Net to promote our profile on the website by enabling us to add; meeting minutes, committee information, list of equipment is available for residents personal use, etc.

At our last meeting in January, we co-opted Simon Knowles, which brought our committee up to 6. Standing down this time are: Dawn Whitmee, Secretary, John Hyde, Treasurer and myself. I would like to thank them and the rest of the committee, Irene Spann & Mary Cook, for their tireless work.

**Claire Jinks**, Chair of VHC

#### 2014/2015 Committee Members

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

## 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**

All rents have been paid and the land is in good order.

Information about the charity has been posted on Thurlaston web.

Any other information required please contact the clerk or a Trustee.

If anyone is interested in an allotment one will be available from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016. Contact the clerk.

**Mrs. Kathleen Owens** (clerk) 3rd March 2016

The Trustees of the Charity are: - Mr. Roland Robinson (chairman)

Mrs. Claire Salmons

Mr. Darren Guy

Dr. Sheena Ashford

Mrs. Paula Irish                      (proposed)

## **Newcombe and Spier Almshouse Charity, Trustees Report 2016.**

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, 2015, was another busy year with regard to maintenance, repairs and improvements.

Our resident at number five, May Adams, who had moved to a nursing home in December 2014, passed away in January. 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 cost of this was about £5500 and the new tenant moved in at the end of June.

The routine maintenance necessary with buildings of this age continued throughout the year. This included improvements to the bathroom at number six, a new oven at number four and a new kitchen sink at number two.

The total expenditure for the year ending 31/12/2015 was £12,000, leaving a surplus of about £4,700 to recover some of the extra expenditure of last year.

The Charity's main investment, where all the income is reinvested, had an income of £6900 during 2015, although the overall funds were reduced by the overall decline in stock market values.

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

## **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 9<sup>th</sup> November 2015.

The trust has maintained its value over the last 12 months performing roughly in line with the UK stock market.

Following discussions the following areas have been approved for funding by the trust.

Contribution towards running Rock Solid Club	<b>£3,000</b>
Donation to the school in respect of extension to main building.	<b>£20,000</b>

The trustees are looking at making a **£20,000** donation in 2016 for the lower playground to be extended.

The next meeting of the trust is planned for 7<sup>th</sup> March 2016.

**Greg Irish** 28<sup>th</sup> February March 2016 (Report presented to the village meeting)

## **St Edmund's Church Report**

In 2015 we held 43 services in St Edmund's, with an average attendance of 14 at regular services. With our vicar Malcolm retiring last summer, we have been running in an interregnum period awaiting the appointment of a new vicar, and this is likely to continue for some time yet. Over this time, we have been very well supported by St Peter's and by two retired vicars, Clive Harper and Thurlastonian David Charles-Edwards, enabling us to continue to run Communion Services. Last Summer your Committee decided that in order to manage the interregnum more effectively, it was necessary to reduce the number of regular services at St Edmund's to 2 per month, with a 9.00am Communion on the first Sunday of each month and a 6.30pm traditional Evensong on 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday. On the other Sundays we are of course welcomed at St Peter's. Music has been a key part of our services, and the continuing support of Gill Wood and Angela Stewart (even though she has left our village) is very much appreciated. The reduction in the number of services has of course reduced the overall attendance figures and the income from collections, but support from the village in terms of half the Fete receipts, and the response to the windows appeal together with welcome donations, has enabled us to keep the fabric in good shape.

Services have been reasonably well attended, with Communion being more popular, and special services such as Easter and Christmas Day, Harvest Festival and Lunch, Remembrance Sunday and the Carol Service (63 attending) being well supported. In common with a great many villages, we need to recognize that the types of service we currently run appeal to an older and ageing congregation,



and new generations and new forms of worship will be needed to secure the future of the church in Thurlaston. With this in mind, we were very pleased to be able to run an Easter Egg hunt in St Edmund's last Easter involving 19 children plus parents and carers including the reading of the Easter Story, and this year 24 children plus parents attended a film show plus picnic with a caring family theme, which will be repeated. For those wishing to move forward or question their faith a lent course was run at the Bowsher's in Stocks Lane last year, and will be followed up by lent reflections this year.

Jenny Cooper supported by other church members continue to run the monthly coffee mornings in the village hall (3<sup>rd</sup> Friday), which enables villagers and visitors to pop in between 10.00 and 12.00am for a chat and a good cup of coffee. The Warwickshire Nursing Home continues to be supported by David Charles-Edwards and Angela Stewart with regular visits and services which are very much welcomed. Collections for Christian Aid, the Poppy Appeal and Myton Hospice again have been very well supported by Thurlaston.

In St Edmund's, Thurlaston has a gem of a building offering peace and tranquility in a frantic world, but it needs your support to be more than just four walls and a roof. A small group of dedicated people keep it going for which we are all very grateful. We have always wished to keep the church open during daylight hours for villagers and passers-by to enjoy its ambience, but in recent days since the sad loss of Steve Watts it has been necessary to keep it locked. We expect to be able to re-open in daylight hours again, and if anyone is able to be on a rota for unlocking or locking up, please let a committee member know. This will enable the food bank collection and the library to continue again.

**Brian and Jackie Bowsher**, Deputy Churchwardens. 21<sup>st</sup> Feb. 2016

### **Thurlaston Neighbourhood Watch Report**

Again another quiet year in the village regarding incidents and again long may it continue. It must be a concern however that a recent NHW relay message contained eight incidents in the Dunsmore area over a period of two days in April with no follow up message of assurance that extra resources were being given to solve these incidents. Concerns have been raised.

Our Neighbourhood watch scheme seems to be functioning smoothly with 30+ residents / households signed up as members. Scheme members will have noticed that the Parish Council Clerk also places the NHW relay messages on the Thurlaston Net to notify residents.

This is not ideal as NHW members receive duplicated messages but after discussion with the PC it was decided to initially trial this duplication to reach a larger section of the village. Hopefully, we can encourage more residents to sign up for direct relay messages as we were encouraged to do by the local police safer neighbourhood team, however at this time we feel that it is important to have an active and expanding scheme so that all of our residents are aware of the current incidents.

Finally below are reminders of useful numbers and contacts

Warwickshire Police call centre Non-Emergency 101 number  
Give details of any vehicle involved, Reg. No, Make, Colour, any distinguishing features. also details of any person involved with the incidents. **(Of course in emergency always call 999.)**

Designated village PCSO.  
Katie Winfield PCSO 6119  
Rugby Rural South Safer Neighbourhood Team  
Rugby Police Station  
Newbold Road  
01788 853851

Rugby Rural South Team details:  
PC 621 Paula Haden  
PCSO 6119 Katie Winfield  
Tel: 01788 853851  
Email: rrs.snt@warwickshire.police.uk  
PC 868 Hazel Busch  
PCSO 6149 Helena Steadman

**Bryan Spann** May 2016.  
The Fylde  
Main St., Thurlaston, 01788 522882| Bryan-Irene.Spann@tesco.net

## **Community Leisure Groups**

### **Thurlaston Ramblers**



2015 was a splendid year for the group with good walks, generally great weather, excellent eating venues and convivial company. Our monthly walks included Compton Verney to Combrook, Thurlaston to Frankton, Ryton Pools, Charwelton to Staverton, Huntington to Eathorpe, Church Lawford, Lower Shuckborough, Ufton to Bascote, The Withy Brook Round and a short pre-Xmas stroll to Toft for mince pies and coffee.

Our dates are set at the beginning of the year to give folk plenty of time to pencil them in their diaries and for those prepared to arrange a walk to book their slot.

Dates for this year went out on Thurlaston Net and are also on the Village Notice Board. But in case you missed them the remaining walks for 2016 will be on, June 16<sup>th</sup>, July 20<sup>th</sup>, August 18<sup>th</sup>, September 14<sup>th</sup>, October 20<sup>th</sup> and November 16<sup>th</sup>. We sort out transport between us as required. Everyone is welcome to join us on the walk or for the pub lunch afterwards.

## **Mo Steer**

### **Thurlaston Ladies Club**

This year has been an exciting year for us as it was the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of the club. The club remains popular, especially with the retired ladies in the village, and continues to offer speakers, outings and social lunching.

January always starts the year off with an informal lunch and attracts about 30 members.

We celebrated Joyce Baugh's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday in February. She was a founder member of the club who now resides in the Warwickshire Nursing Home. Many of us joined her birthday party.

Our AGM is in February. In March a speaker joined us from Zoe's Place, a hospice for children under five in Coventry. They provide much needed help to both children and parents at a very difficult time in their lives. This was our main charity and we donated £250 to them this year and plan to do the same at the end of this year.

In April Peter Preece, a wild life photographer, and his wife gave us a very impressive slide show of his wonderful pictures. He spoke of the hours he spends waiting for a suitable picture. One of his loves is Kingfishers and Peter showed us his prize-winning picture of one diving into the water. They sold cards some of his best pictures of both birds and animals and these were very popular.

The May meeting was cancelled as many of our members wished to attend the funeral of Wally Mills. Our outing this year, arranged by Kay was to the Worcester area. We started off visiting Elgar's birthplace. We had a very interesting talk followed by time to look around the museum and garden. We then went to Worcester for lunchtime to look round the cathedral or other places of interest. Lastly we met up at the famous pottery museum. Once again a big thank you to Kay.

In July, members decided that they were no longer able to provide the kitchen help for the teas at the fete. A new, younger team took over and did a marvelous job.

As this year was the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Ladies Club, instead of the summer picnic in August, we decided to treat ourselves to an informal lunch at the Bell at Ladbroke. The Bell looked after us very well and this may set a precedent for

future June meetings. Two ladies who have been in the club for the fifty years attended the lunch, Mary Binney and Jo Owen. It was a lovely occasion with Pimms, cake and chocolates in addition to our two-course lunch.

We had another trip out in September to Stoneleigh Abbey, after our interest was aroused by Sheila Woolf's fascinating talk last year on Cordelia Leigh. Sheila took us on a tour of the abbey which was followed by tea in the orangerie. In October Nick Channer, a free-lance writer and speaker gave us an interesting, illustrated talk on "The Mystery Of Agatha Christie"

In November, Kay gave us an interesting and amusing insight into the world of tourist guiding. It showed us her passionate interest and thirst for knowledge in the world around us. Also this month, Marilyn and Judy B organised a day out in Cheltenham. It was very well attended and we hope for another Christmas shopping trip this year.

This year we returned to The Bell at Ladbroke for another excellent Christmas lunch. This was very well supported by members.

A final reminder that all Thurlaston ladies are welcome to any of our meetings. The yearly programme is delivered to every house.

**Judy Douglas**

### **Thurlaston Community Engagement Group (CEG)**

Attendance at the 2015 Annual Village Meeting organised by the Parish Council was very poor, lack of support for the meeting, church, fete and low numbers attending the progressive supper meant there was a real fear that great Thurlaston traditions would die out. Communication and promotion of events was thought to be a key factor in what seemed to be a decline in community spirit. Following the meeting Andrew Henning, Steve Murphy, Brian Bowsher, Simon Knowles and Norman Lines met and put together a strategy to address the problem. Following this meeting a questionnaire was circulated asking residents to say what current events they wished to keep and any additional events or groups they would like to see within the village. A second village meeting was then called by the PC at which the questionnaire was discussed and the above group presented analysis which showed that some of the activities we were most worried about, i.e. the fete and progressive were amongst those most valued! Following the second village meeting which was very well attended, the above group was joined by Vicky Foster, Claire Jinks (Village Hall Committee), & Sue Winton and the CEG was formed. The CEG agreed their Terms of Reference as follows:

- Provide support when needed to other village groups and activities but not to interfere with any organisation or event unless requested to do so.
- Help connect like-minded people in the village
- Show leadership on village issues when appropriate
- Rally the troops when needed

- Not to provide organisational role for all village events

With this in mind the results of the questionnaire were collated and members of the CEG took on the task of contacting those who were interested in the most popular activities. Like-minded residents were put in touch with each other and several groups within the village have been formed. To date they include Bird Watching, Ancestry, Yoga and Archive groups and support has been given to the Fete and the Progressive Supper by villagers who offered their help via the questionnaire. Sue Winton put together a village diary which is now circulated to every household and goes out at least 3 times a year to help with communication of events in the village. Delivery of the diary and other information is by a dedicated team to ensure it reaches every household, further improving communication. Thurlaston net is also used widely to promote and share the success of events in the village and the CEG actively encourages this method of communication and also by visiting the village website [www.thurlaston.net](http://www.thurlaston.net) A year on from its formation the CEG continues in the above role.

### **Sue Winton**

### **Art Workshop**

Mo Steer, David Cooper, Gill Dakin and Sue Winton organized an art workshop for villagers in April 2015 with the theme of Spring. It was held in the Village Hall from 10.00 until 12.00 during the children's Easter break. Other helpers on the day were Andrew Henning (photographer), Anne Boulton, Jenny Cooper and Diane Graham. It was also lovely to see Vivien Sharp, who kindly came over from Leamington to help out.

It was a fun morning for children and adults alike, the hall was full of excited chatter and an eagerness to create something. They could decorate a small 3 dimensional lamb or a trendy bird with attitude, all prepared and made from recycled cereal packaging. The lambs were mainly decorated with cotton wool; pens, crayons and other embellishments were used for the quirky birds and all had their own unique character which made them so enjoyable to look at. The older children and some adults went on to paint pictures of their own, the younger ones coloured in pre-printed outlines whilst others were tutored in charcoals by David Cooper, where a funky ceramic chicken was used for a still life composition.

Tim and Julie Eastwood kindly provided Easter eggs and sweets for all the children; they were very much appreciated. £85.91 was donated on the day and with only a small deduction for essentials the remainder was put aside to fund similar workshops for the children who attend Rugby Young Carers.

Some families were away as it was the Easter holidays but we still had a great turn out; hopefully the ones away will be able to join us on the next one. Both children and adults alike thoroughly enjoyed the workshop and some of the work produced was exhibited at the fete in July, where it was much admired.

### **The Fete 2015**

Another successful Thurlaston village fete held on 4<sup>th</sup> July.

We were once again lucky with the weather, the sun shining, making the day a great success.

The popularity with both villagers and visitors alike showed with the fete increasing the takings from the previous year to an impressive £2,354 net profit. This was split equally between the church and the village hall.

The theme this year was Rugby Through the Ages, from William Webb Ellis and Tom Browns School days to the Rugby World Cup, giving the village another opportunity to decorate the village with flags and bunting.

Steve Murphy compered the Fete and the proceedings started with Sylvia Jacques handing over the Chain of Office to the new Squire, Darren Guy. Then George Shaw, who celebrated his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday during 2015, opened the Fete with a short speech about his time in the village.

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!

The stalls were all busy selling a variety of items including produce and plants, gifts and toys, bric-a-brac, tombola, books and bottles.

Many visitors commented on the friendliness of the village, the topical theme and the safe and entertaining children's area with its games for pocket money prices, which was run by Karen Mcroggan with her daughters Hannah and Emma, helped by Millie Guy, 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. Marilyn Hobday and Jo Hartfield lead the Tea Team in the village hall where they did a brilliant job at short notice selling homemade cakes and teas. The church looked splendid with flower arrangements organised by Veryan Hounson and assisted by Eileen Innes.

The 2015 fete committee was again headed by Sylvia Jacques, who was joined this time by Andrew Henning with Karen Mcroggan, Mary Cook and Robert Ashford.

The date for the 2016 Fete is Saturday 2<sup>nd</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 2015**

The Progressive Supper took on a new format for 2015. Firstly the starter course was changed to drinks and canapés in the village hall and this was well received on the whole. Feedback from the couples who joined us for the first time said it

was a great way to meet more people rather than sitting down at a host's house with fellow villagers that they may not have met before. 48 villagers took part including 3 new couples so 6 tables for mains and dessert.

For the second year in a row we were lucky with the weather enjoying an unseasonably mild and dry night which made moving around the village more enjoyable. Once canapés and drinks consumed it was off to the mains host homes where all were made welcome, fed extremely well and met up with friends old and new.

The second change for 2015 was that the dessert hosts also hosted coffee. In recent years coffee was held in the village hall or church but our dessert hosts have made their guests feel so comfortable that guests have either turned up late or not at all leaving the poor coffee hosts short on guests. The new format was devised and seemed to work well.

The Progressive Supper was one of the village events that Thurlastonians did not want to lose so please support the 2016 Supper which will be held on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> October. This year we raised £397 for Village Hall funds.

### **The Progressive Team**

### **Christmas Lights Party**

Christmas Lights switch on  
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.

### **Claire Jinks**

## **Friday Morning Coffee**

The Village Hall is open on the third Friday of each month for villagers and passing walkers to have coffee, to chat and share news. This very popular event has been running for over three years. We pride ourselves on the quality of the coffee and biscuits and welcome anyone who cares to join us!

The Village Hall will be open for coffee from 10am – 12 on the following dates:

17th June, 15th July, 19th August, 16th September, 21st October, 18th November, 16th December.

**J Cooper**

## **Thurlaston Annual Quiz Night – 16th January 2016**

The organizing team this year was the Better Halves who had volunteered in Jan 2015 as they had never run it before, but had enjoyed many evenings taking part. Sally Wise and Sue Winton were joint comperes, with other team members being Dawn Whitmee, Ev Murphy, Diane Hyde and Gill Dakin.

The cold night in January saw a great turn out and there were 7 teams in all, most had 6 members but a couple of teams had less, but still did very well.

The lead changed continually throughout the night but eventually after 10 rounds the Bagpipers (the Pudding Baggers re-hashed) were the winners. Mary Cook on behalf of Colin Cook, Andrew &, Unni, Henning and Helen & Des Creery came up to rapturous applause and collected the winner's trophy. They are a strong team who score consistently high on each outing but their specialty subjects this year were 'sweet flavours' and 'the silly nonsense round'. Their winning score was 110.5, only just beating, with 108, the Carmen's team, called Baileys friends. Joint third place was shared with a great score of 104.5 between the men's Densa team with Nigel as a temporary member (whilst Claire was unable to attend given her hip operation the day before) and the Coventry Road & Co team. In fifth place the very promising four-person Baby Brains team were only half point behind.

There were confused looks on some people's faces as they were not expecting to see Barbara Coleman, but I am sure you all know by now, her surprise party was being held the following day – we hope you had a lovely time Barbara and family, and congratulations on your special birthday.

The fish and chip supper from the Big Fish in Bilton seemed to be well received, as did the chocolates that followed.

Keep your brains highly tuned throughout the year and continue to store trivia, you never know when advertising slogans, composition of gases, or the date of David Jason's birth etc. might come in handy!

It was great to welcome some first timers to the quiz night, which is just a bit of fun and not overly hard. Next year's quiz will be run by the Carmen family who kindly volunteered to host the Thurlaston 2017 quiz, which will be held on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2017.

The quiz raised £225 and after a donation of £25 to Village Hall funds, we were able to donate £100 to Hope 4 and £100 to fund workshops for Rugby Young Carers

**Gill Dakin**



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

As 4 o'clock approached the sounds of summer filled Main Street; the ice-cream van had arrived and announced the Party 'open' with soothing background music Beech Drive soon became a lovely haven of friends and family literally 'chilling' together with its houses clad in bunting and bales (thanks Stuart) around the island.

Children of all ages were keen to play, perhaps not in the way intended but an interaction took place; the traditional games appeared to attract the most interest – skipping ropes and space hoppers!

As the afternoon sauntered into evening, the ice-cream van was replaced by a tractor with its topper (thanks Roland) which delighted both young and old; at one point there was queue to 'drive' the tractor. The picnics were brought out, the Ceilidh Band arrived and anticipation increased as the Drive prepared for some dancing.

More guests arrived for the evening session prepared for the elements; but after one dance it became apparent we'd have to pace ourselves – but we did warm up. The night began to darken, the wind began to drop and as if by magic the lights came on and illuminated the Drive – it really looked fabulous from Main Street – thanks Steve for the 'tree climbing' it was worth it.

The ambience of the lights, bunting, tractor, bales, ale/cider and the band in a traffic-free environment was a day to treasure; all with a bit of community 'Drive' spirit it came together beautifully. It was a team effort who enjoyed the banter in putting it together and dismantling – the biggest thanks go to the residents of Beech Drive, plus Brian & Barbara Coleman, for the disruption it created and their active participation.

We took a gamble and went ahead despite ticket sales not meeting the break-even point; but a raffle soon balanced the books (thanks Ev).

**Dawn Whitmee**

## **Bonfire Night 2015**

Following a wet and windy day, the evening of Thursday November 5th saw the annual Thurlaston Bonfire with only the odd shower to contend with. The usual ride down on the tractor and trailer had to be abandoned due to the persistent heavy rain making the ground too wet. Thanks to the preparation beforehand by our hosts Roger, Roland and Jo Robinson, everyone arrived to a huge blazing bonfire. Once again Dawn Whitmee and her merry band of helpers provided hotdogs and drinks, all much appreciated, in fact so much so that for the first time ever we ran out of everything! This annual event culminated in an amazing

firework display and our thanks go to John Woods and Nick Glasheen for overseeing them.

This very special village event continues to feature in the Thurlaston calendar and long may it do so.

**Sue Winton**

### **Halloween Revellers**

A fun afternoon was had by both children and adults alike at the end of October 2015 in the Village Hall. It was a memorable event and provided some wonderfully creative treats. It was also great to meet new families to the village and to realise just how many small children we now have. A big thank you to all of you who welcomed the trick or 'treaters' to your door. Thanks go out to Paula, Jo, Julie, Bryan and Irene for their help before, during and after the event. See image of the event inside the back cover.

**Jo Hartfield.** (adapted from the Thurlaston net)

### **'Robots'**

In January this year a very successful film show for young people was organised by the young mums of St Edmund's and St Peter's churches and took place at St Edmunds, with 24 young children plus their parents watching the film 'Robots'. Each child was given a simple pack of food and drink to sustain them at the front of the church and the parents were provided with tea, coffee, cakes and biscuits to keep them going. Some craft activities were also provided. Further events are being planned throughout the year alternating between the two churches.

**Brian Bowsher**

### **Myton Hospice Coffee Morning**

The annual Coffee Morning, which takes place in St Edmund's, was held on 29<sup>th</sup> November last year. We were very pleased to be able to send £448 to the Hospice. This was the result of hard work by willing helpers on the Bring and Buy table, the Christmas stall and the raffle. We were delightfully entertained during the morning with seasonal music from Angela which helped the occasion to start the Christmas season.

The 2016 Coffee Morning will be held on 2<sup>nd</sup> December. Please come along to support this very worthy cause.

**J Cooper**

### **New Beginnings...Links with the Past**

The Ancestry Group first met in October 2015 and now a group of 6 villagers meet monthly on a Thursday morning in the Village Hall. Initially we discussed our own family history and took along family heirlooms that had been part of our ancestor's lives.

As most of the group had done some (or in some cases, quite a lot) of their own family research we have moved on to looking at Thurlaston history. The village

has many archives and it was decided to look at the period from when the properties belonging to the Buccleuch Estate were sold in 1919. In the archives there is an original sale inventory so we have a framework to start with.

As this article is written we are just starting to speak to villagers who live in the houses listed, to see what information/ deeds/ photos they may have. We know of former villagers are willing to help us with the task. So the group has plenty to do over the summer months.

From time to time people researching ancestors with links to the village do make contact with Brian Coleman, who is honorary 'archivist'. Brian had been contacted and asked to look for information for Paul Kench, a name that crops up many times in the archives. Fortunately, thanks to Brian & Barbara planning a holiday in New Zealand, they were able to meet up with Paul in Christchurch to pass on the information.

Perhaps next year we will be able to have the Archives displayed to show how we have done!

If you would like to come along to the meeting do contact me, you would be very welcome.

**Claire Jinks**

## **Around the Patch**

### **World Challenge trip to Southern Tanzania**

I am writing this article about my World Challenge expedition to Southern Tanzania which I undertook in July 2015. It was two years in the planning which consisted of many group meetings, where we discussed and planned everything from itinerary, group fund, organising fundraising events and our weekend practice trek and camp in the UK.

The main challenge before the trip was for us all to fundraise to pay for the trip, equipment, vaccinations etc. Fundraising events included car washing at school, packing bags at Sainsbury's, a spring ball at Draycote hotel and I personally ran a stall at Thurlaston fete selling homemade bracelets and hair accessories.

Now onto the expedition itself, after travelling for many hours we all arrived safely in Dar es Salaam (Dar) the capital of Tanzania, where we spent our first night.

The journey to our accommodation, was a journey to remember as our eyes were opened to the chaos caused by the traffic and road conditions in Dar.

The start of our adventure was a three day acclimatisation trek, which began with our first amazing animal encounter, as we witnessed some elephants crossing the path ahead of us, our group of challengers then had to cross a river in a hand carved canoe and after a short walk we met and ate lunch with some of the village children. The first purchase of group food had to be undertaken and I was one of the first three from the group to do this, after which we received a cooking lesson from one of the local women (two volunteers from our group had the unenviable task of killing two chickens!). We also undertook a small trek up and down the rough terrain to a waterfall which was such a lovely spot to stop for a while and have a refreshing dip in the pool beneath.

The next phase of the experience was the project phase, where, as a group we had raised funds to cover the cost of the roofing of the new classrooms at a school, and we were given the job of repainting two of the existing classrooms, (where we DID literally have to watch paint dry between coats!) When the children returned to school from their summer holiday we helped teach maths and sang songs with the younger children – they particularly enjoyed head, shoulders, knees and toes and all the actions it involved. We also exchanged the singing of national anthems and we discovered that the children had to sing their anthem at the start of each school day. Whenever a camera was brought out all the children were like magnets and found it amazing how they could see themselves on it instantly, so I have many pictures of happy smiling school children! Although the children were all happy, the facilities at the school were very basic, with the children having to bring in daily rations of firewood to allow the school meals to be cooked. As I knew it would be, it was a large contrast to schools in the UK and I feel that if a group of students from Tanzania visited the UK, they would not receive the same reception as we did and my time spent there will and the memories made will always be in my heart.

After saying an enthusiastic “goodbye” (the schoolchildren, not us.) We had a six-hour minibus ride to the next campsite, where the group made careful decisions of food supplies to purchase for the trek as we had to carry everything with us. We always knew the trek was going to be the biggest challenge and we were all proved right, from the ice covering the tents some mornings to the rollercoaster hills and valleys we had to navigate and people battling sickness we had to pull together as a team and this we did well. The sense of achievement for all of us after we reached the peak of Mt. Rungway at 2981 meters above sea level (twice the height of Ben Nevis) was huge; especially when the porters looked very surprised to see us at the peak so quickly and were slightly worried we were going to catch them up on the way down. For the whole trek we were blessed by beautiful views and interesting stories from our guides who we were very sad to say goodbye to.

The next stage of our adventure was far more relaxing but equally as amazing and we had an opportunity to eat meat for the first time in three weeks! I hoped the safari I was to go on would be amazing but in reality it blew me away and within minutes of entering the national park we saw Elephants (including babies) followed by Hippos, Giraffes, Crocodiles, Impala and many other forms of wildlife. The biggest impact on the group was when a pride of lions came within touching distance of the jeep and we watched them for several minutes, (paparazzi had nothing on us as lots of photos were taken of this event).

The final leg of our journey was to spend three days in Zanzibar where we had our first chance to contact home, (although families had been kept up to date with blog updates on the school website.) In Zanzibar we enjoyed not having to cook and experienced the buzzing night market where we saw all varieties of food from kebabs to Nutella and banana pizzas. The second day the group went snorkeling, and sailed across the sea to visit Prison Island with its beautiful beaches and giant tortoises, some of which were 150 years old!! We also went on a spice tour where we saw the variety of produce grown in Zanzibar star fruit, coco plants, cinnamon, vanilla, aniseed etc. this also included a trip to a slave cave, this was

where slaves were kept before being transported to other countries, (another eye opener for all of us!) Our trip ended with bartering for many souvenirs to take home to friends and family.

To summarise IT WAS THE BEST EXPERIENCE OF MY LIFE SO FAR and I would do it all again in a heartbeat. I have hundreds of photographs to keep my memory alive but at the moment it is as fresh as if it were yesterday. I am sure I must have bored all my friends and family in retelling my experiences and have also had the opportunity to recount the memories in school assemblies. I had travelled a bit before this experience but it has made me more determined than ever to travel the world and soak up all the culture and diversity it offers.

**Haidee Eden** age 18

### **Compton Verney Art Gallery and Park – The Capability Brown Festival 2016**

At March's Ladies Club meeting, Gary Webb (Head of Landscape at Compton Verney) gave an illustrated talk about the history of the property from the 1150s when it was known as Compton Murdak. From 1435, the house and landscape at Compton Verney was owned by the Verney Family – later created the Lords Willoughby de Broke - until 1921 when the 19<sup>th</sup> Baron sold the estate.

Lancelot Brown was employed by the 14<sup>th</sup> Baron to lay out the grounds in keeping with the new modern taste for a more natural landscape. He was paid £120 on 17<sup>th</sup> November 1768 for his survey and plans, which included taking up the earlier formal gardens at the front and side of the house, and removing the canal on the west lawn and the avenues running east to west. He replaced them with grassland and trees - planting cedars and over 2,200 oak and ash saplings that provided copses as cover for the introduction of game birds. In addition he removed a dam between a series of "fish" pools, to create a lake with rides on trails along the edges. The two bridges currently in place over the lake are dated 1770 – 1772, when both Robert Adam and Brown worked at Compton Verney. It is thought that Robert Adam probably designed the bridges and Brown used his own builders to construct them. In 1769 the foundations were laid of a classical greenhouse, and in 1772 Brown built an ice house and demolished the old medieval church of Compton Murdak to open up the views from the house. Brown replaced the chapel with his own plain Palladian style chapel which was built between 1776 and 1779 at a cost of £981 10s 4d. Today it is a rare example of a building designed by Brown.

Although a relatively small Grade II listed parkland of 120 acres, Compton Verney does contain a surprising number of Brownian features.

2016 marks the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Lancelot "Capability" Brown; a designer who created a style that shaped people's picture of the classic English countryside. Brown's work was extensive, as research has linked him to over 260 sites in England and Wales. Many of those sites, including some that are privately owned, will be arranging openings, events, exhibitions, guided tours, talks, art and photography events and competitions within their own particular landscapes. Compton Verney is the regional hub for CB300 and has received £2.5 million from

the Heritage Lottery Fund to preserve and restore the park as part of these tercentenary celebrations.

To find out what events are on during the coming year go to the Capability Brown Festival website: [www.capabilitybrown.org](http://www.capabilitybrown.org)

## **Mo Steer**

### **Thurlaston Archives**

It is many thanks to all those from the village have spent many hours over the years to research family ties that provide people from far and wide information about their past.

In Claire's article above she mentions Paul Kench. Barbara and I met with Paul in Christchurch, New Zealand earlier in the year. Paul is a retired police inspector who during his career was the inspector responsible for reporting to the Coroners Court for the 184 people who died in the earthquake disaster in 2011. Paul's great grandfather emigrated from the UK to New Zealand in 1908. The Kench family history in this area includes Philip Kench attending Rugby School during the early 1700,s and William Kench attending the school in the late 1600's. During the late 1700's a Philip Kench was a farmer in Toft and Thurlaston. The family has associations with the Barnwell, Fawkes and the Worcester families of Dunchurch and were mentioned on the Duke of Buccleuch's landowners register. There is currently a record of 11 generations of the Kench family and Paul would like to hear of any other information that might be available in the area. He is particularly interested in photographs from the press etc that could be accessed.

## **Brian Coleman**

### **Yesteryear**

They say hindsight is a wonderful thing! It can also be quite entertaining.

Looking back through some dusty documents in the village archives I noticed two letters, one from 50 years ago and the other from 70 years ago.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> of May 1936 the surveyor from Rugby Rural District Council, wrote to J R Frankton the clerk of Thurlaston Parish Council replying to a letter from the Parish Council in which they were requesting a Refuse Collection for the village. The reply, and I quote, "A weekly collection of House Refuse and Night-soil will cost £52 per annum". This would be £3300 in today's money...cheap but not a pleasant task I guess.

In 1966 the Clerk to Thurlaston Parish council wrote to the chief Planning Officer of Rugby Rural Council regarding the 'Proposed Development of Thurlaston House Hotel'. For those who are unaware the THH existed on the left as you entered the village over the bridge just to a point in the middle of The Gardens roadway. The letter did not contain details of the proposed development but indicated that the proposal would include a facility with 22 bedrooms, a 150-person dining room and a function room capable of taking 235 people and for that

reason considered the parking and site access to be inadequate. The Council were therefore against the project.

There is nothing readily available in the file to say how this turned out save to say Barbara and I had our wedding reception at the hotel in 1969 (with a lot less than 235 guests). We know our current house was built on part of the site in 1973, so I guess the proposal most have been approved, if only for a short life.

**Brian Coleman**

### **Changing Thurlaston.**

Pat Hossak shared some memories in the 1986 Thurlaston Chronicle.

“ I came to Thurlaston one misty November lunch time in 1953. I had recently come to Rugby to take a job with a local firm of architects and wanted to find some land on which to build a house. At that time you needed a building licence and the total floor area could not exceed 1,500 square feet- equally building costs were about £3 a square foot and a skilled bricklayer earned 3/6d (17 1/2p) per hour.

I had seen that the land at Dunchurch fell away sharply to the South and assumed it would do the same at the next village to the west shown on the OS map. There was of course no M45 (not until 1959) and therefore no bridge: one came into the village directly past Thurlaston House, a large Victorian house, the grounds and garden of which are now The Gardens and Beech Drive. Here lived a charming maiden Lady Emily Haslem and, sharing part of the house, Squadron Leader Harold Crowhurst and his wife: he had been billeted on Emily when he commanded the RAF Regiment unit at nearby Lawford Airfield and had stayed after the end of the war.

The village was still largely as it had been in the 1930's and the land all around was actively farmed, mostly by Tom Gray, Albert Cockerill or John Bowie.. As I moved slowly into the centre of Main Street I stopped and asked a tall weather-beaten man, who had a sack over his head and shoulders if he knew of anyone who had land for sale in the village. This was Mr. Gray himself. I indicated that I was interested in buying part of the orchard at the south end of Main Street just before a lane dived to the left down a steep slope and he eventually admitted that it belonged to him. At that time this field that is now known as Gray's Orchard and our house was the nearest one belonging to the farmhouse (now Mr. Wardley's House {now Stanley's Farm}) and because of this was used for in-lamb ewes and chickens, and sometimes cattle being prepared for market were held there waiting transporters.

Although no deal was done that day, by Christmas 1953 I had become the owner of the orchard and of what had become the village tip, a large worked-out depression below the orchard, which had as I subsequently learned once been worked to provide clay for a local long forgotten brickworks. We had to fence off the rest of the orchard with a substantial “stock proof” fence, and it was hard to remember to keep the gate closed and this is the reason for the cattle grid at the entry to Grays orchard.

I started building by direct labour in April 1954 and moved in March 1955 some six months after John Lunt had completed his new bungalow, Little Mead on the other side of the road. They were the only new houses completed until the early sixties

when the development of the Biggin Hall Lane houses began just before the announcement came that the valley was to be flooded to form a reservoir. People often say how lucky we were to have such a magnificent view, but there was a lovely valley there before, and I still remember mushrooming and blackberrying with the children and it was possible to walk down the lane beside our house which was an Old Farm lane reaching the main road on the sharp bend at Kites Hardwick, the line of which is still visible at both ends.

One of my few sad memories of this house is of sitting one winters afternoon watching the great forest Elms and other trees in the hedgerows being blown up by the contractors clearing the valley of vegetation before filling began; they put a small amount of explosive under the bole of each tree, which would rise vertically in the air for a few feet, hover for a brief moment before crashing to the ground, roots, trunk and all. It was fearful sight.

In all other respects I have never regretted for one moment that lunchtime journey in 1953. I cannot think of a nicer village to live in nor one which could have been kinder to us. **Pat Hossack** (1986).



Jo Owen and Mary Binney celebrating 50 Years of the Ladies Club





World challengers having fun with local village children.  
Haidee Eden



Halloween Party 2015



Thurlaston 'Bonfire' Fireworks as seen from 'The Gardens'