

BENTHAM NEWS

DAZZLING NEW PANTO STAGED IN BENTHAM

By Trevor Blackwell

The Bentham Theatre Group brightened up the dark February nights with their new pantomime – **The Frog Princess** – and this year over a hundred children and adults aged 6 to 83 were involved.

Our pictures (courtesy of Jon Brook of Bentham Imaging) show the Frog Princess (Zoe Hargreaves) seated on her lily pad throne, and a scene from the end of the panto with Bob Webb leading the singing.



MARCH 2009

ISSUE 269

DUSTERS

By Shirley Brown

Encouraged by comments I've heard like 'I've found the most wonderful cleaners', 'they work as a double act and thus get the cleaning done in half the time' and 'efficient and cheerful and will even feed the cat', I thought it was about time I met the people who had inspired such praise.

So I arranged to meet two very enterprising young women, Charlie Driscoll and Yvonne Park, who have set up 'Dusters', to provide a service to help with domestic chores.

Both women used to work for Sedbergh Junior School, and were two of the 21 people who found themselves without a job when the school closed its Bentham premises in December 2008. Although both angry and sad to have lost the job they enjoyed, they knew they liked working together so took the opportunity to set up in business on their own. They want to 'work to live not live to work' so the prospect of being able to organise their work to fit around their family commitments was an attractive challenge.

They both love living in Bentham. Charlie has been here for 5 years and comes from a family of solicitors and financial advisors, although her chosen career path was in agriculture and she enjoys the rural life. Yvonne's husband is from Bentham and she moved here in 1990. She likes the fact that there's always something to do here, that you can do most of your shopping in the town and that there are good bus and rail links to places beyond Bentham.

Driving around this beautiful area to various customers' houses is one of the joys of the work, although minimising the travelling by expanding the business in the locality is also one of their objectives. They are prepared to do one-off or regular jobs, will undertake a range of domestic chores, including ironing and shopping, can do jobs which require two people like moving heavy furniture, and all this for just £20 an hour.

Charlie and Yvonne would like to thank friends and family for supporting them in their new enterprise, and existing customers



who have been so vociferous in their praise that word of mouth has proved their best advertising so far. They look great in their pink and black top-to-toe uniforms, and they are great, and we wish them every success. With the spring-cleaning season just around the corner, they could find themselves very busy indeed.

(For contact details please see ad on page 10.)

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FEBRUARY'S TOWN COUNCIL

By David Johnson

All the Cllrs were present except Cllrs Heigh and Taylor.

The District Cllrs: Maps are to be provided to enable the public (and the Cllrs!) to identify the District Council sites to be auctioned off over the next two years. Some residents claim they have parking and access rights to these areas.

Highways: There is not enough cash to repair the potholes that have appeared on our roads. The Cllrs have a long list that need urgent attention but because of resource limitations the authority can only carry out temporary repairs until the new financial year. North Yorkshire has promised a salt bin near the fire station and another on Lakeber Drive and to put some salt heaps on Mill Lane, Low Bentham. The Cllrs are considering filing additional requests for more salt bins. There has been no response to the Cllrs' request to salt Ravensclose Road.

Footpath: Cllrs agreed to the diversion of the public footpath in the field behind the proposed Wesley Close development to facilitate building work.

Grasmere Drive Public Toilet: Our District Cllrs have made their opposition known to the proposed closure of the public toilet in Bentham and the clerk will write registering a strong protest on the grounds that the toilets have only been there for six years, that the District Council provided no time for a proper consultation process and finally that the closure would inconvenience tourists. The crisis has been caused by the necessity for Craven to save £1 million to balance its books. It costs £6,800 p.a. to keep the loo open and this is only one of many cost cutting measures being imposed. The proposal came too late for the Cllrs to precept for the cost. (The toilets will remain open in Settle and Skipton!!)

Community Centre: By the time you read this Sharon Haslam will have stepped down

from her position in charge of the centre. North Yorkshire have now agreed not to sell the building and it could be offered on a lease to groups such as the Town Council if no other County Council department needs it. Volunteers will run the centre until the end of March.

Sedbergh Junior School Sports Hall: We learned that the school is already on the market and the future of the sports hall will probably be dictated by the requirements of the purchaser (or purchasers). If sufficient funds could be found to purchase the hall for Bentham it would still have to be maintained. The Cllrs decided to write to the school to start a dialogue to see what could be achieved.

Bentham Juniors Football Club: The club have applied to the Council for sponsorship. They are to be visited by Manchester United Soccer School and are seeking sponsorship to support the team members. The Council agreed to award them £50, as this is the maximum that can be given after a precept meeting.

The Annual Parish Meeting: This will be held on 22nd April 2009.

Farmers' Market: Someone wrote complaining that some farmers are excluded from the Saturday morning market because they wish to sell produce similar to that which is already on sale. The clerk explained that although the market was well supported there was not enough trade to support more than one stall selling certain produce. The opinion was that if more than one trader attended there would not be enough business for two and those who had been loyal to the market since its inception could be forced to leave.

The Provisional Date for the Bonfire is 31st October 2009.

Christmas Trees: The Cllrs thought the trees left lying around Bentham from the street display were the responsibility of those who put them up. Hopefully arrangements have now been made for their disposal but it was generally agreed that they were unsightly and a hazard to pedestrians.

WOMEN'S INSTITUTES

Low Bentham

By Jennifer Watkinson

After welcoming everybody to the AGM, President Mrs Ruth Sephton gave a brief resume of the year's activities. As the secretary was indisposed Vice-President Mrs June Harrison read her report. She was followed by the retiring Treasurer, Mrs Barbara Mason, who delivered her report which showed a slight deficit. However, assurances were given that the deposit account was still quite healthy! A copy of the accounts was distributed to each table for members to peruse. Mrs Harrison then presided over the election of the President.

Officers for the year: - President - Mrs Ruth Sephton, Vice President - Mrs June Harrison, Secretary - Mrs Sue Cooper, Treasurer/Posters - Mrs Christine Jennings, Programme Secretary - Mrs Pam Warbrick. Mrs Betty Atkinson, Mrs Sylvia Brennand, Miss Betty Dodgson, Mrs Edna Hewitt and Mrs Jennifer Watkinson are also on the committee. Afterwards, a tasty supper supplied by the committee was served. This was followed by several games of Beetle. Mrs Mabel Easterby, Mrs Sylvia Brennand and Mrs Sue Cooper were competition winners for the year.

The next meeting is on 19th March when Jane Mansergh's talk is entitled 'I want to make your flesh creep'. Competition is an old crime book. Tea-hostesses are Mrs Mary Murphy and Mrs Pam Parkin. Visitors or new members are most welcome.

High Bentham

By Anne Yaman

23 members and 1 guest attended the February meeting. The President, Miss Wendy Dowbiggin, led the business meeting with a report of the Lancashire Federation Quiz held for 80 people in the Town Hall (at which a Bentham team had come second), news of the forthcoming trip to Coulsons Restaurant at Lancaster and Morecambe College and a short report given by Anne Millar of the work done at St John's Hospice. The speaker for the evening was Chris Bibby of Bibby's coaches who kept the ladies well entertained first with a history of Bibby's and then some amusing anecdotes. He knew a number of his audience very well from chauffeuring them around and they certainly gave him a run for his money!! He raffled two model coaches, one old and one new, which were won by Isabel Joel and Kath Dempster. Ann Beck won the WI raffle and the competition for an amusing postcard was one by Isobel Carr. The next meeting is on Thursday 5th March in the Lower Town Hall when the talk will be on Turkish Cuisine and the competition is for an egg cup. All visitors are most welcome.

NEW GIRL GROUP FOR BENTHAM

NYCC 4 Youth Service are running a six week project to provide activities specially for girls aged 13-16. These will include group work and breakdance. You'll make new friends, learn new skills, be energetic and have fun! It will start on Tuesday 3rd March 7-9pm in the Community Centre. Contact Rachel Rabjohns on 01729-823312.

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GARDENING IN MARCH

By Joyce Knapp

As I write this on a cold February morning, with snow lying on the ground, it's difficult to think ahead and envisage sunny spring weather when we will, hopefully, be starting to sow seeds of both early vegetables and some of the more robust, hardy flowering plants. Incidentally, I have found through years of trial and error, that there is not much to be gained by sowing seeds in February because those sown in slightly warmer conditions the following month will, invariably, catch up and often overtake them.

One of the first vegetable seeds to be sown is usually the broad bean and this can be sown directly into the ground. You may, however, find it is worth taking the time to rear the young plants in a cold greenhouse in order to get them off to a flying start. These seeds will develop quite a long root by the time they are ready to plant out (at about 15cm/6" tall) so they will need to be grown in a reasonably deep pot, but it is possible to grow 6 or 7 in each pot, separating them when planting. In March, we can also sow seeds of lettuce and plants from the brassica family e.g. summer cabbage, cauliflower and broccoli (calabrese) but these can be started off in trays of compost as they only produce short roots.

Along with the vegetables, there are some annual herbs that we can grow quite successfully from seeds sown this month, including both sweet and red basil and

several varieties of parsley. The parsley can eventually be planted out in the ground, either in vegetable beds or even in the flower garden, but basil originates from warm, Mediterranean regions so we will probably have to leave it to grow on in the protective environment of either a greenhouse or a windowsill.

Finally, we need to decide whether to grow our annual flowering plants from seed or, alternatively, buy them in as plug/fully grown plants. It may be worth having a go at growing some of the more hardy varieties such as marigolds and tagetes as these will germinate readily and are relatively easy to get established. The more difficult varieties such as Busy Lizzies may be better bought in as established plants, ready to be planted out after the last frosts of spring.

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CRAVEN CONCERNS : GRAVE ISSUES

By Cllr Manuel Camacho (015242-62074)

Craven District Council land disposals

If you are likely to be affected by the sale of a piece of land please note that if you have access, parking rights, or any other rights, your rights will remain after the sale is made. I am assured that residents will be consulted before the sale is made. Our solicitors will vet the deeds of the property just before the sale. In one case this has resulted in the property being withdrawn. (*My view is that this is a rather backwards way to do things, but hey, this is local government*). The auction will be open to anybody and you may wish to consider bidding yourself. Please contact Lin Barrington or myself if you have any worries.

Now to the important issue of a press release that I have only just received, detailing the financial state of the Council. As I am NOT an accountant, and have not had time to take advice, or even consider the statement at length, I feel it would be wiser to present the whole statement rather than attempting to précis it. Another reason why I think you should have the original is that the local press will re-write it with their own slant (*whatever that is at the time!*). Any comments from me will be in brackets and italics.

Press Release From Craven District Council:

Why Do We Now Need To Make Savings Of £2.5 million?

• February 2008 - Setting of 2008/9 budget

When the full revenue budget of £3,406 million for 2008/9 was set in February 2008 it included £1,054 million for growth projects. The plan at that time was to use £1,211 million from reserves which the Council proposed to replenish later and to use a predicted £500,000 underspend. In addition Council Tax remained at its previous level.

• July 2008 – Financial problems first come to light

Instead of a predicted £500,000 underspend for 2007/08 the Council actually used a further £792,000 over and above what it had already agreed to withdraw from its reserves. This is due to a number of reasons including an unpredicted charge to the Council's revenue account of £369,000 for the Skipton Developments programme – it was originally expected that the Council would be able to meet this expense from its capital funds. In July this year the Council agreed to suspend £643,000 of the growth projects which had not yet started and implemented a recruitment freeze. A financial review was instigated. The ongoing findings of the review are set out as they unfolded over the coming months.

(*This is the point at which I reported the emerging problem to BN using the method of presentation in use at the time. The rest is new to me and, I believe, most of the council*).

• October 2008 - Financial problems first reported to council

The financial problems were first reported to council in October 2008 when a report presented the results of a high level review of operational budgets for 2008/9. This information was measured against the previous two years outturns (2006/7 - £386,000 underspend, 2007/8 - £792,000 overspend). The financial review has shown that the Council faces unbudgeted pressures this year totalling £605,000 which have arisen partly from overspending carried forward from last year, falls in income and rising utility costs.

Increased Costs

Employees/agency staff	£184k
Audit costs and bank charges	£174k
Property maintenance	£175k
Concessionary fares	£69k
Utilities	£80k
IT costs	£29k
Reduced income (fees/ charges)	£189k

These costs were partly offset by increased income from aspects of VAT and increased net interest payable to the Council. Work continued to investigate the financial position of the Council.

• November 2008 – Updated report given to Leadership group

An updated report identified unbudgeted pressures facing the Council now estimated at £1,035m in 2008/9.

£1,035k broken down

Unbudgeted pressures originally identified	£605k
Employee cost drift	£200k
Additional cost concessionary fares	£100k
Adjustment for debt redemption	£130k

(*I will need this section justifying before I report further.*)

In addition to these further pressures a budget base error had been identified leading to a further £303,000 shortfall (i.e. the budget approved for 2008/09 was too low). **This amounts to a total**

estimated budget pressure of £1,338m to balance the budget for 2008/9 alone.

(If the above is what it says, it is a monumental oversight and staggers belief.)

Because of the recruitment freeze and the savings on non-essential expenditure, money was being saved which was provisionally estimated at £0.5m for the year. A statement was made at that time that the Council should look for savings of between £1m and £1.5m.

• **December 2008 – Conservative Group Meeting**

A revised position was presented based on the intensive work programme underway looking at the Council's finances. The original predicted £1,035,000 pressure was revised to £546,000 as a result of the savings from staffing and expenditure freeze, a revision to the excess cost of concessionary fares and increased income from Commercial Waste Collection. The budget base correction of £303,000 still needed to be made.

• **December 2008 – Policy Committee**

A report to Policy Committee consolidated the Council's Financial Position. The net unbudgeted pressures of £558,000 and the budget base adjustment of £303,000 was compared to the total available funding for the year 2008/9. This resulted in the total revenue expenditure (revised base budget, growth approved that had already gone ahead and net pressures) requiring to be funded by £1,372,000 revenue reserves. This means the majority of the Council reserves were used to balance the budget for 2008/9 and the Council now needed to look ahead and see how future budgets would be funded as well as replenishing the reserves. **Only £550,000 of reserves were left to fund expenditure in 2009/10.** *(The above is very serious and councillors will need an explanation.)*

• **Looking ahead to 2009/10 and 2010/11**

Looking ahead if no action is taken to reduce net expenditure the Council would have a funding shortfall of:

£819,000	2009/10
£1,422,000	2010/11

Total shortfall of £2,241,000. This gap is wider than expected. The funding the District Council receives every year from Central Government – Revenue Support Grant funding – is increasing at a lower rate than inflation which leads to financial pressures for the Council. This difference between funding and inflation leaves a gap of £50,000 in 2009/10 and £42,000 in 2010/11. This brings us to the new figure of **£2.5 million savings need to be made over the next two years.** This figure as well as allowing the budget to be balanced will also enable some money to be put back into reserves. It is crucial that the Council starts to build up the reserves again to be prepared for any unforeseen pressures e.g. planning enquiries etc. It is not good financial management to have such low reserves.

• **Conclusions**

We now have a two-year recovery plan in place. Most of the savings being put in place will improve the long-term outlook for the Council. It is worth noting however that even after we have implemented the Category 1 and 2 savings (dependent on Member approval) that have been put forward over the next two years, we still need to find a further £800,000 to reach our savings target of £2.5 million. We are already looking at what further steps need to be taken; for example, a fundamental review of how services are delivered that will include a review of the staff structure.

This is the end of the Press Release, and these are my initial conclusions. It is pretty obvious to me that there were several contributing factors:

1. Appalling accounting practices for a considerable period, which begs the question ... what were the audit commission doing for their considerable fees?
2. The cost of providing free bus travel was much more than expected, but it is mandatory and not funded by Government.
3. Too heavy a reliance on Skipton Developments to provide handsome returns, particularly as it collapsed due to the down turn in the property market.
4. Changes in accounting practice that made our revenue account look worse than it should.
5. Some very expensive staff exit costs last year.
6. There was no actual dishonesty involved and no money has gone walkabout.
7. Very high fuel costs and income reduction due to market conditions.

Am I embarrassed by all this? Of course I am, and I add my apology to that of Carl Lis. How we could have spotted the flaws in figures presented to us as facts is something that has given me sleepless nights. Frustratingly, due to the change of administration following the last election, we (the former administration) will not be involved in putting things right. Will the guilty be punished? I hope so, particularly as innocent people will suffer.

Finally, BN asked me, "Is there any good news?" Yes, I replied. We had no money invested in the Icelandic banking system!

PANTO APPRECIATION

By Iain Henshaw

Hopefully we delivered another splendid pantomime for you this year. It isn't a Panto without the audience participation, so 'thank you' to you, our audience. It never ceases to amaze me the number of people, young and old, in the town who give their time, and lots of it – I've calculated that there are around 1,000 hours spent in writing, pre-production, rehearsals and performance. The Panto is a real community event. Thanks to Pioneer Projects and all those who attended the props workshops. Thanks to all the production team for your support, and to the cast and technical team who put me through hell. Nobody should be singled out for praise as it's such a team effort, but well done Jane Learmonth for creating such a stunning set; the many hours you put into it really showed.

So the grease paint has been put away, the stage swept and shortly we will start work on our 2010, and I believe 25th, Panto – oh yes it is. Till next year, keep smiling.

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LETTERS



Editors' note: Just in case you think that concern about dog mess is a parochial issue and we make too much of it in *Bentham News*, according to *The Guardian* (12.2.09) a lot of people feel very strongly indeed about it and as a nation we write more letters to our elected representatives, locally and in Westminster, about dog fouling than we do about anything else. The Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996 made failing to clear up dog poo an offence punishable by a fixed penalty of £50 or, in court, a fine of up to £1,000. So please read on.....

Dear Bentham News,

As a local resident from Goodenber Crescent I am writing to ask if you could please send out a clear message to all dog owners within this area. The warning letters in the December Bentham News seem to be getting ignored and we have some very selfish people living in the area. Just recently I have noticed an ever-increasing amount of Dog Fouling on the paths around the Crescent and the problem is serious and becoming quite exasperating. I have two young children and every time I go through our front or back gates there's always droppings lying around. I find this rather disgusting and although I understand it's not all dog owners who are causing the problem I do think it's a definite majority. I think something needs to be done about it. Litterbins are available for disposing of droppings.

I am appalled by the amount of litter which is left outside my garden and I am sure I am not the only one either. Can we try and get this message over so we can attempt to keep our streets clean.

Yours thankfully
Name and address supplied

Dear Bentham News

Proposed swimming pool closures
I recently retired to High Bentham and I am one of many residents of the town who use the excellent swimming facilities at Hornby,

which is the nearest pool for the town. I generally go when the over fifties sessions are on which is three times a week. I now find that the Lancaster Council is proposing to close one or more of the pools at Hornby, Carnforth or Heysham. The Council recently announced that as from the first of April they would be providing swimming free of charge for the over sixties. They seem to be sending out mixed messages. If, as is suggested, going to Salt Ayres were an alternative I would point out that it would mean a round trip of perhaps 40 miles. I would also point out that more people than those residing in Hornby itself use the pool at Hornby. Unfortunately once a facility has been taken away it is much more difficult to have it restored.

David Dumpster
Low Croft, High Bentham

This month Bentham News also received an anonymous letter. However, it is not our policy to publish anonymous letters.

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YESTERDAY IN BENTHAM

Keith Hartley takes a light-hearted look at Bentham and its people, as first seen through the pages of the Bentham News edition of twenty years ago.

March 1989

With the "economic downturn" of recent months raising the spectre of possible unemployment once again, we can well appreciate how many of Bentham's workforce must have felt 20 years ago when *Angus Fire* declared a need to "rationalise the product range, simplify business and reduce overheads." I worked in the manufacturing industry for long enough to know that these phrases were invariably followed by redundancy notices. Thankfully for Bentham (but not for Morecambe works) the axe fell elsewhere and Angus maintained its faith in the local community.

Last month I mentioned the planning application for a proposed housing development on the land between Butts Lane and Robin Lane. I thought this had effectively been kicked into touch by the Planning Committee, but it seems the debate was still very much alive because 33 members of the public attended this month's Town Council meeting. They were to leave happy in the knowledge that the plans of the Wigan developer were unlikely to succeed. They also learned that a housing survey was to be undertaken to determine local housing needs, a *shopping survey* was to be undertaken to determine future parking needs, and that a letter was to be sent to the RAF complaining about low flying aircraft. *(Well worth missing Corrie for.)*

Always happy to look at the "bigger picture," Bentham News this month reported on the region's response to a proposal to build a *national* dry store for highly radioactive nuclear waste at Heysham. Over 12,000 people had already signed a petition raised by LAND (*Lancashire Against Nuclear Dumping*) in a protest that was gaining strong national support.

Dr N R Griffiths reported on the introduction of a new *emergency ambulance*, equipped with the latest medical emergency equipment such as a defibrillator, and manned by two "fully trained persons" (the word "paramedic" had yet to enter our popular vocabulary.) Dr Griffiths' article went on to remind BN readers that they needed to dig deep, as it was they who would be funding the defibrillator etc!

(Many local people have had cause to be thankful that the public do indeed dig deep for these things).

Doreen Park clapped so enthusiastically at the Pantomime (Pinocchio) that she lost the emerald from her ring! Fortunately the caretaker (Norma T) found it, so all was well.

Finally, it was reported that Craven District Council had received a grant from the government of £61,000 to cover implementation of the Poll Tax, the actual cost of which was £307,000. *(I think they use the same formula to calculate pensions!)*



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UTOPIA LIMITED

By Sandra Bamber

Hornby Occasionals will be presenting Gilbert and Sullivan's 'Utopia Limited' in the Hornby Institute at 7.30pm on 25th-28th March. Tickets are priced at £5 for adults on Wednesday 25th and £7 on other nights, and children's tickets are £3. These are available from Hornby Institute (015242-22227) from Monday 2nd March.

Hornby Occasionals would be delighted to transport you to the balmy shores of Utopia where you can share the tropical paradise of King Paramount and his subjects. We hope to see you there; enjoy the journey!

RELIGIOUS RITES ON INGLEBOROUGH?

Yvonne Luke will be re-examining what used to happen on the summit of Ingleborough at the Ewecross meeting on March 30th at 7.30pm in the Lower Town Hall.

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POSITIVE FUTURES

By Rosie Jackson, NYCC Adult Learning Services Community Development Worker

This is a new project to help people access learning and training opportunities in an informal community based setting with enhanced support at all stages. The support and learning activities will be very much geared to the individuals' needs and the aim is for participants to go on to either voluntary or paid work or progress to further training.

The project will help participants to access:

- New learning opportunities at different levels in an informal situation
- Opportunities to develop new skills and knowledge
- One to one support and guidance for training or personal development
- Advice on how to move forward, overcome barriers and gain confidence.

Participants need to be:

- Minimum age 19
- Working less than 8 hours a week or not currently in employment
- Resident in North Yorkshire.

The project will be run from the Café IN at Looking Well, Benthams, every Wednesday between 11.00 am and 1.30pm. For further information or if you are interested in getting involved please contact:

- Rosie Jackson (North Yorkshire Adult Learning Service) 07890 011298
- Linda Kellaway (Looking Well) 015242 62672.

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When did you last reflect on your spiritual well-being and discipleship? Take some time during Lent.

The older we get, the more it pays to keep a check on our health. That's not to say we should become morbid hypochondriacs, simply that we should keep an eye out for problems so that we can seek help to put them right before they take hold. If that is true medically speaking, it's true also when it comes to our spiritual health, for that can equally suffer as the years go by. Complacency, weariness, or disillusionment are all conditions that can steal up on us, sapping our faith of its natural vitality. Just as with our physical well-being, we need to be alert to the signs, regularly making time to examine ourselves.

Traditionally Lent is such a time, calling Christians to reflect on our discipleship and to ask ourselves if everything is as it should be. God wants us to conduct an honest self-appraisal and then to seek His gracious help in bringing inner healing and renewal. The cure does not lie within us but in recognising something is wrong and seeking help from the

Lent Lunches: This year there will be a Lent Lunch served every Wednesday throughout Lent, i.e. all Wednesdays in March, at High Bentham Methodist Church Hall from 12.30 to 1.30p.m. Each church will take a turn to be responsible for leading prayers, serving a simple lunch and presenting us with 'food for thought' on the subject 'Faith, hope and love'. Everyone is invited to come as they are able. Donations received will be used to cover expenses, and the surplus to be shared between Christian Aid and CAFOD.

Low Bentham Methodist Church: It is with great sadness that the members have reluctantly decided that they will ask the Methodist Church for permission to cease to meet.

Once permission is granted there will be a final service of celebration at the chapel for all who have attended through the years and to give thanks for the life and witness of this place of worship in Low Bentham.

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POST OFFICE NEWS

By David Alder

1 General News

The Royal Mail Group as a whole had a financially successful first three quarters of its 2008-9 financial year. It still however faces some uncertainty not only because of the recession and further planned restructuring but also as a result of the government's declared intention to seek a private sector partner for the Royal Mail.

2 Tariff Increase

There will be an increase in letter service prices from April 6th this year. The first class standard letter tariff up to 100 grams will rise from 36p to 39p and the second class from 27p to 30p. Full details will be given in next month's 'Bentham News'.

3 Securing the Future of the Post Office Network

The Business and Enterprise Committee of the UK Parliament has set up an 'online forum' to receive the views of individuals and businesses who use post offices. This will run until 10 March 2009 and the evidence collected will help to shape the Committee's recommendations to Government. The Committee is particularly interested to learn the general view as to which services, old or new, the public should be able to access through the 11,500 strong network of post offices. The forum can be accessed at <http://forums.parliament.uk/post-office-future/>

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BENTHAM'S POST OFFICE

By Peter Phillips

The Post Horn is no longer heard these days but perhaps it should be blown once more to remind us of the presence of such a valuable service to the community. No job is safe these days and the number of Post Offices has declined radically, especially in rural districts. So, what do we get for our money?

David Alder has been at the High Bentham Post Office since 1992 and has three to four part-time counter staff to assist him. As well as selling postage stamps there are letters and packets to sign for, special deliveries plus International and Parcel force services. Next come bill payments for Telephones, Utilities, Council Tax and Rent to name but a few, as well as issuing Motor Vehicle licences. Recently the Post Office has offered travel services with Foreign Currency exchange, travel insurance and passport checks. It also has to account for cash in and out for several banks and looks after card accounts for pensioners. There are also various savings and insurance products on offer mainly through National Savings and Bank of Ireland. All this work is carried out by the friendly staff who also help to run a shop selling greetings cards, stationery and a wide range of books of local interest.

What happens behind the scenes? Come rain, snow, stormy weather or sun we take the thud of the post dropping through our doors for granted with little thought for how it arrives. Four full-time and three part-time postal workers (to cover days off, annual leave and sickness) are responsible for both High and Low Bentham's mail deliveries. The mail is received by lorry from Preston Mail Centre via Lancaster arriving around 7 a.m. The sorting, depending on the amount received, takes up to two and three-quarter hours and the mail is sorted into rounds or 'walks' in the small sorting office at the rear of the post office. The delivery then begins about 10 o'clock. There are four walks covering High and Low Bentham and Mewith



The photo shows Maurice, Sue and Louise busy sorting the day's mail.

and a total of 1,550 delivery points. Two of the walks are done entirely by van; one is by cycle and foot and the last is entirely on foot. The longest, by van, is 37 miles in total.

There are many problems encountered when delivering our mail. These might include heavy rain, unpredictable dogs, muddy tracks, stiff or small letterboxes, doorbells that don't work, slippery paths and insufficiently or ambiguously addressed items. So, a post person's lot is not always a happy one - I've heard of keeping the wolf from the door but the postie??? Perhaps we tend to take the arrival of the post for granted. I think we should thank the people who do the daily round and wish them fair weather.

PS. It's time Carl looked out his shorts for the summer!

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THE BEST BIT ABOUT BUSES

By Richard Wilson

Life on Yorkshire's western frontier has many attractions, but also some frustrations.

Consider Wennington: just two miles from Bentham, but in Lancashire. I've nothing against Wennington – very pretty, set around its village green, with a station, and a pub down the road in Tatham. But I do envy them their 16 buses each weekday to Lancaster (15 the other way).

Because Bentham, despite being quite a bit bigger, only gets 6 buses to Lancaster (4 the other way, to Ingleton – two with connections to Settle), and some very long gaps between services. The Wennington buses that don't visit Bentham are to/from Kirkby Lonsdale, so they already have to make a detour to go through Wray and Wennington. Why not Bentham too?

Perhaps we live in a local authority bus-

BEST

subsidy black hole, with Lancashire authorities unwilling to pay for their buses to come to Yorkshire, and Yorkshire authorities unwilling to pay for a better service to Lancaster. But public transport services should be able to ignore political boundaries; that's what Joined-up Government is supposed to be about.

We are constantly urged to use our cars less, and public transport more, but without a regular hourly service, the Green Option looks inconvenient and even risky.

Sadly, we may have to wait a long time for better Bentham buses – and for Joined-up Government, if the recent announcements on the Severn Barrage ("this demonstrates how seriously we take climate change") and Heathrow's third runway ("this demonstrates ... ?") are anything to go by!

BEST stands for Bentham Environmentally Sustainable Town. The next BEST meeting is on Tuesday 3rd March at 7.30pm in Looking Well, King Street. All our meetings are open to everyone; do come along and help make Bentham a greener town. If you'd like to know more about BEST, phone 63399 or email BEST@tathamfells.me.uk

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ARE YOU A COLLECTOR? CAN YOU HELP ME COMPLETE MY DEGREE?

By Lydia Baines

I am a final year University student, based in Cheltenham, studying photography. However I come from Kirkby Lonsdale and spend a lot of my time at home doing my photography work. I am currently undertaking my final major project, which will be exhibited, and am looking for individuals with large interesting collections.

I am aiming to do a series of portrait photographs of individuals with their collections, and you will, of course, get copies of the photographs. Collections can be anything from garden gnomes, teapots, memorabilia, cuddly toys, vintage radios etc. You name it!

If you have a large collection, or know anyone that does, and would be kind enough to help me out, I would really appreciate it if you would get in touch. The success of my project and therefore my final degree result is really dependent on public support.

I can be contacted on email at lydia_baines@hotmail.com (that's an underscore between lydia and baines!) or by mobile phone on 07827-668391.

I look forward to hearing from you and meeting you! Thank you very much.

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LOCAL EVENTS IN MARCH

Sun 1st 9.30am Footpath Group meet at Low Bentham car park for 8.5 mile walk in Melling. Leader: E & S Badley (Tel: 62502).

Mon 2nd (& every Monday) 9.30am. Gentle walks for women leave Lairgill.
(& every Monday) 9.30-11.30am. Initial training for classrooms assistants. Looking Well.

(& every Monday) 10am-12.30pm. Craven Customer Services in Lower Town Hall.

(& every Monday) 10-11.30am. Toddle-In for parents/ carers and babies and toddlers. Methodist Church Hall.

(& every Monday) 12noon-2pm. Access to working in schools – literacy. Looking Well.

(& every Monday) 1-3pm. Community Link Café, Victoria Institute, Low Bentham.

(& every Monday) 1.15-3.15pm. Exploring creative textiles. Looking Well.

(& every Monday) 1.30-3.30pm. Indoor bowls in Town Hall.

(& every term-time Monday) 4.30-5.30pm. Adventure Group for 4-6 year olds. Methodist Church Hall.

(& every term-time Monday) 6.15-7.30pm. Springboard for 7-10 year olds. Methodist Church Hall.

6.30-8.30pm (& for 4 weeks) Singing in Melling – new fun session for people who want to sing. To book Tel: 01524-831997.

7.30pm NSPCC's AGM at the Black Bull, followed by supper.

7.30pm. Town Council Meeting in Lower Town Hall.

Tue 3rd (& every Tues) 10am-12noon. Craft Club in Town Hall Wenningdale Room. All welcome: tel: 62074.

(& every Tues) 11am-12noon and 6-7pm, Yoga Class in Town Hall with Sandra Tallon. Tel: 62248.

(& every Tues) 2pm Tuesday strolls leave Looking Well.

Wed 4th (& every Wed) 10-11.30am. Coffee morning in Methodist Church Hall. Donations to local charities.



(& every Wed) 11am-1.30pm. Café IN at Looking Well (see page 24).

(& every Wed in Lent) 12.30-1.30pm. Lent Lunch with Churches Together in Bentham. Methodist Church Hall.

(& every Wed) 11.30am-2pm. Community Link Café – light lunch provided. Victoria Institute, Low Bentham.

(& 18th) 1.30-3.30pm. Citizens' Advice Bureau at the Health Centre. No appointment necessary.

(& every Wed) 2-3pm. Moving Well – gentle exercise to music at Community Centre.

(& every Wed) 2-4pm. Art for beginners at Looking Well.

7.30pm. Bentham Community First Responders meet at Looking Well. Come and talk to us about joining. (Tel: 63346).

Thu 5th (& every Thur) 8.45am. Swimming at Hornby for over 50s, men & women. £1.60. Tel: Barbara 62873 or Carol 61233 to arrange transport.

(& every Thur) 9.30-11.30am. NYCC Exploring multi-media art. Looking Well.

(& every Thur) 10am-12noon. Bat & Chat. Victoria Institute, Low Bentham.

(& every Thur) 11am-1.30pm. Cancer Support Group drop-in, art session, lunch & therapies.

(& every Thur) 1.30-3.30pm. Indoor bowls in Town Hall.

(& 19th) 2-4pm. Welcome-In, dominoes for all ages in Methodist Church Hall. For transport contact Nigel or Kath 62272.

(& 12th) 6.30-8pm. Tai Chi at Looking Well.

High Bentham Women's Institute meeting (see page 4).

Fri 6th (& every Fri) 10am-12noon. NYCC Creative Greeting Cards at Looking Well.

(& 13th) 1.30-3pm. Tai Chi at Looking Well.

2pm. Women's World Day of Prayer at Methodist Church. All welcome.

- Fri 6th** 10am-2.30pm. Age Concern at the Masonic Hall. Talk by Mabel Parr. (& every Fri) 6.30-7.30pm. Karate in Community Centre. Beginners welcome. Drop in for more information. (& every Fri) 6.30-7.30pm. Yoga in Lower Town Hall.
- Sat 7th** 9.30am-2pm. Farmer's Market. Lower Town Hall.
10am-12noon. Goodenber Play Area coffee morning. Town Hall Ballroom. 
9.30am Footpath Group meet at Lairgill for 6 or 10 mile walk at Cinderbarrow. Leader: B Ellershaw (Tel: 62078).
7pm. Ceilidh at Methodist Church Hall. Tickets £5 include supper. Contact Liz 61230 or Mary 61534.
7.30pm Bentham Film Group showing of 'The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas' (12A) in Victoria Institute, Low B. (see page 23).
- Mon 9th** 7.30pm. Work of the RSPB in the North West. Illustrated talk at Townhead Court, Settle. All welcome.
- Tue 10th** (& 24th) 2-4.30pm. Singing at Looking Well – open to all (see page 24).
(& 24th) 2-4pm. Child Health Clinic at the Health Centre.
2.15pm. Bright Hour at High Bentham Methodist Church. Speaker: Wendy Holt.
7.30pm. Public meeting re: proposed parking changes. Town Hall.
- Fri 13th** 10am-2.30pm. Age Concern at the Masonic Hall. Extend Exercise with Colin Etherington.
1pm Bloomin' Bentham volunteers gather in painted bus shelter. Tel: 61608 for more information.
(& every term-time Fri) 7-8pm. GFI for school years 6, 7, & 8, and 8.15-9.15pm for school years 9+. Methodist Church Hall.
- Sat 14th** 10am-12noon. St Boniface coffee morning in Lower Town Hall. 
10am-12noon Book Swap. Victoria Institute, Low Bentham.
- Sun 15th** **COPY DEADLINE FOR APRIL BENTHAM NEWS**
2.30pm-4pm. Street Dance with Kat Irving at Melling Institute. Tel: 21233
- Tue 17th** 9.30am Footpath Group meet at Lairgill for 8 mile Langcliffe Loop. Leader: D Cairns (Tel: 07706-912682).
2pm Thornton & Burton-in-Lonsdale Mothers' Union in Burton Church room. Rev. George Ayoma, Mission to Deep Sea Fishermen.
(& every Tues) 2pm. The Enormous Turnip Club – gardening for all. Looking Well (see page 24).
- Wed 18th** 7.30pm. Red Squirrels in the Dales. Illustrated talk at Townhead Court, Settle. All welcome.
- Thu 19th** 7.30pm. LASRUG meet in Wenningdale Room, Town Hall.
7.30pm. Low Bentham WI in Victoria Institute (see page 4).
- Fri 20th** Waste Paper Collection at Lairgill, 8.30am-11am. Proceeds to NSPCC.
10am-2.30pm. Age Concern at the Masonic Hall. John Henderson entertains.
7.30pm Estonian group Rotoro at Melling Institute (see page 22).
- Sat 21st** 10am-12noon. Agricultural Society President's coffee morning. Lower Town Hall. 
- Tue 24th** 2.15pm Bright Hour at High Bentham Methodist Church. 'Flowers' with Anne Duncan and Jean Fawcett.
- Wed 25th** 9.30am Footpath Group meet at Lairgill for 7 mile walk at Gargrave/East Morton (pub lunch option). Leader: B Moody (01535-215467).
7.30pm Meeting 'Three Peaks Focus for Peace & Healing' – finding inner peace: promoting world peace. Looking Well. Tel: Gavin Wilshaw 62760.
- Thu 26th** 7.45pm. 'A Day in the life of an RSPCA Inspector' – talk by Sarah Hayland (Area Inspector) at Dalesbridge Centre, Harden Bridge, Austwick. Entry free & preceded by B&D Pet Rescue AGM at 7pm.
- Fri 27th** **APRIL BENTHAM NEWS PUBLISHED**
10am-2.30pm. Age Concern at the Masonic Hall. Video.
- Sat 28th** 10am-12noon. Homing Society coffee morning in Lower Town Hall. 
- Mon 30th** 7.30pm. Ewecross Historical Society in Lower Town Hall for a talk by Yvonne Luke on "Rethinking Ingleborough".

CAN YOU HELP THE POLICE?

By PC Barbara Yule

We would be very grateful for any information regarding an incident and two thefts that have occurred locally during February.

There was an incident overnight between Monday 2nd February and Tuesday 3rd February where someone driving a Citroen motor vehicle knocked down about 8 foot of dry stone wall near Langber House. The Citroen will have near side damage. The driver failed to stop to report the incident (incident number 12090018573).

A theft took place over the night of Wednesday 4th February, when parts including front weights, alternator, radiator, battery, front fenders and rear link bar were stolen from John Deere Tractor at Bull & Cave Farm in Clapham.

And again over the night of Wednesday 11th February, there was another theft when an alternator was stolen from a Massey Ferguson tractor at Nutgill Farm in Nutgill Lane near High Bentham.

If anyone has any information regarding either the incident or the thefts please contact me, PC 830 Yule at Ingleton 08456-060247, extension number 3091.

I would encourage farmers to be extra vigilant at the present time and report any suspicious vehicles or persons to North Yorkshire Police.

Many thanks for your help.

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FREE ADVICE FOR RURAL BUSINESSES

By Paul Agnew

Experienced accountants are to field financial questions from the Lancaster region's rural business community at a special seminar entitled "Capital Taxes" to be held at 7.30pm on Thursday March 5th at Bentham Golf Club.

The seminar will be hosted by Haworths Chartered Accountants, the long-established accountancy practice with a speciality on rural business matters, which recently merged with Bentham-based Wood and Co. on Station Road. Haworths have advised farming and rural businesses for the last 14 years from their other offices in Settle and Accrington. Mark Schofield, managing partner at Haworths, said:

"Rural businesses are beset by constantly changing regulations, red tape and highly complex taxation rules. This upcoming seminar will address the considerable changes that have taken

place concerning capital taxes, with particular reference to inheritance tax. These are two crucially important taxes for rural/farming businesses who are asset rich and want to either pass their assets to the next generation or sell them to convert to cash - or a mixture of both. Our aim is to simplify the situation through information and advice and help people plot the best route forward."

The event is free, includes a free bar and parking, and anyone wishing to attend should contact either 01254 232521 or 015242 61424.

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By Tim Culshaw

I have booked a number of local gigs throughout March to suit a wide variety of tastes – come along and enjoy the sounds.

Friday 6th at The Black Bull, High Bentham, rock and pop covers from the awesome **ACE FACE**.

Saturday 7th at the Top Club in Ingleton, sensational one man band **BILLY D**.

Saturday 14th at the Masons Arms in Ingleton, breathtaking Rock Chick **FIONA**

Saturday 21st at the Byres in High Bentham, astounding rock duo **FEEDBACK**

Friday 27th at the Masons Arms in Ingleton, northern soul and much more with **VICKY LORENA**

Saturday 28th at The Three Horse Shoes in Ingleton, Blues at the Shoes with **THE BAD TASTE BLUES BAND**.

A PREMIERE FOR MELLING

By Sue Flowers

At 7.30pm on Friday 20th March an Estonian group, Ro:toro, make their first UK performance at Melling Institute! The group has its origins in the Valjandi Cultural Academy of the University of Tartu and its members regularly perform at folk festivals in Estonia and abroad. They play traditional Estonian melodies with female pipers, an improvising saxophonist and a mad percussionist who plays plastic bowls in a waterbed! They work largely with traditional bagpipe tunes and have also been collecting songs from remote parts of Russia, which they will be including in the concert. You may also see a flat foot waltz and enjoy the plethora of items such as wood and bicycle wheels that make percussive sounds. For tickets phone Green Close Studios 015242-21233 or contact info@greenclose.org

JAZZ: The famous Philip Clouds Quartet is at Whoop Hall on Thursday 12th March at 8pm. (Tel: 015242 71284).

ENJOY AN EVENING OF OPERA AND OPERETTA

By Lyn Cox

Sarah Cox, who was BBC Choirgirl of the Year in 1987 and was a pupil at Bentham Grammar School, is now a professional opera singer. Come and hear her again with three other young, talented, professional singers in a concert on Saturday 21st March at 7.30pm at The Grand Theatre in Lancaster. The programme will include well known and much loved arias, duets and ensembles from such popular operas as Carmen and La Boheme. The performers are: Mezzo Soprano - Sarah Cox, Tenor - Christopher Steele (Sarah's husband), Soprano - Elinor Moran, Baritone - Andrew Heggie and Accompanist Peter Noke, who teaches in Lancaster. If you wish to travel by coach from Hornby you may book coach and theatre tickets from Thelma Bennett (015242 - 22499) at the inclusive price of £14. Numbers are limited so please get in touch soon if you'd like to have a seat in the coach. Tickets for the concert are £12 (£10 concessions) from The Grand Theatre. Tel: 01524-64695.

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ENTERTAINMENT FOR MARCH

Sat 7th March Dave Carling
 Sat 14th March Tony Martell
 Sat 21st March Lorraine
 Sat 28th March Dave Lee Harper

BENTHAM FILM GROUP

By Stella Hall

'The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas' (Cert 12A) is the film chosen by Bentham Film Group to be shown in March. It is set during World War II and tells a story as seen through the innocent eyes of Bruno, the eight year old son of the commandant at a concentration camp, whose forbidden friendship with a Jewish boy on the other side of the camp fence has startling and unexpected consequences.

The film will be shown on Saturday 7th March at the Victoria Institute, Low Bentham commencing at 7.30pm. During the interval there will be refreshments to purchase and a raffle. Tickets are £5 on the door but may be bought in advance at the **reduced rate of £4.50** from Low Bentham Victoria Institute on Mondays and Wednesdays 10.00am-12noon and from High Bentham Community Centre on Fridays 10.00am-12noon. **The Little Red Bus** is available for transport from High Bentham to the film show - please phone Bentham 62083 to reserve your seat, as places are limited.

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LOOKING WELL NEWS

By Clare Hucknall (tel 62672)

Spring is in the air at the Looking Well and we are launching a new gardening group- *the enormous turnip Club* (or *etc* gardening club) will take root from **Tuesday 17th March** at 2pm. The group is open to all and will have a programme of working-and-learning, beginning with seed sowing, seedbed preparation (including mulching), potato and onion planting and composting. We welcome anyone with an interest in gardening - either sharing their gardening skills, wanting tips, increasing garden know-how, enjoying outdoors or just 'mucking in'. It's free to join, refreshments and plenty of friends to 'pull and pull' together are available. Trips out are also planned. We are on the lookout for a few garden-related items; a list is in the Looking Well, so if you could pop in and offer any 'spare' plants/seeds/small pots etc. please let us know. PS: It's not just about growing big vegetables!

The **Café IN** now has a regular volunteer who is able to help with your **basic computer/IT queries**. We have a number of laptops to practise on and Internet access is available. So if you are stuck sending e-mails, want tips for searching the internet or buying on line, help using packages like Word or Excel, do drop in on Wednesdays between 11am and 1.30pm. Cakes and coffee/tea and yummy homemade soup are also available.

Singing for All continues in March on alternate Tuesdays (10th and 24th) from 2.30-4.00pm and sessions are open to anyone who enjoys singing well known songs from yesteryear (and not-so-yesteryear). New members and suggestions for 'old favourites' are always welcome.

Lost Property - We have a number of articles of clothing. Please can everyone take a look before we send them to charity next month?

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WHAT IS HAPPENING TO BENTHAM COMMUNITY CENTRE: AN UPDATE.

By Brian Cowling

First of all I want to thank all the people in Bentham who have been in to see us to express their concern about the possible closure of the Community Centre, and to offer us their support.

The good news is that there are some indications that North Yorkshire County Council is now reconsidering its decision that it might sell the Community Centre building (Editor: see David Johnson's Town Council report on page 3). So we have some hope. And we also have a strong committee who are passionate about keeping the Community Centre open as one of Bentham's vital assets. We want to keep the function of the Centre intact, and to promote the use of the building for all our existing user groups, and many more. Will you help us by signing the petition, or writing a letter of support? Or could you have a word with one of your town councillors, or write to your M.P.?

Unfortunately Sharon Haslam has come to the end of her contract with the Bentham Development Trust to manage the building, though she will be carrying on in a voluntary capacity until we can source new management funding. The office will now be open on Fridays from 10am-12noon.

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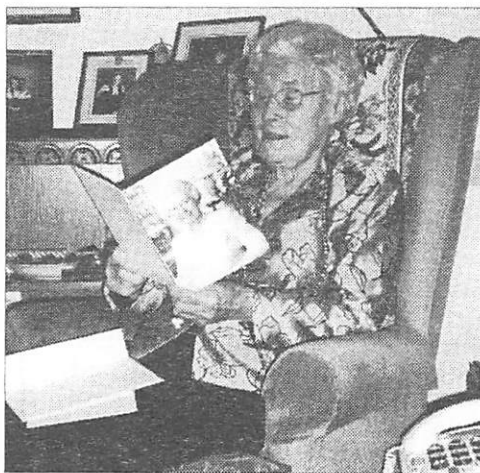
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R.I.P. RUTH ALICE PARKINSON 2.12.1908 – 29.1.2009

Ruth Parkinson (formerly of Pye Busk Close, Bentham) passed away peacefully in Addenbrookes Hospital, Cambridge on Thursday 29th January after a short illness following a fall in her flat.

Ruth had a wonderful December celebrating her 100th birthday in style with several parties. She was excited to receive her card from the Queen. Ruth also became a Great Gran again for the ninth time and she enjoyed all the Christmas festivities.

A service of committal and thanksgiving, celebrating Ruth's wonderfully long, active life was held on Wednesday 11th February at the Abbey Lane United Reformed Church in Saffron Walden.



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PEOPLE PAGE

THANKS



Ruby Pridmore would like to thank all her friends and neighbours for their cards, good wishes and beautiful flowers, especially those from St John's, also the family for the lovely party to celebrate her 90th birthday.

Phyllis Tomlinson would like to say 'Thank you' for all the cards and good wishes she received during her recent stay in hospital.

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FOUND

MOBILE PHONE found in field by footpath north of Lakeber Drive early February. Please ring 62575 giving a description.

CHARITIES THANK YOU

Bentham Line Dancers and Mrs Jean Newhouse recently donated £150 to the **Settle, Bentham and district M.S. Branch.** This is the latest contribution to a local charity by this group.
From Audrey Shallcross.

The Friends of Tatham Fells School would like to thank everyone who supported their casino night in January. It was a fantastic evening and just over £600 was raised towards school funds. If you would like to support their next event they will be holding a jumble sale at **Ingleton Community Hall** on **Saturday 21st March at 2pm.**

From Lisa Oliver-Hannis.

ADVERTISING RATES

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Bentham, Burton-in-Lonsdale, Ingleton, Clapham –
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Normal commercial rate £125.

Bentham People Page Thanks, Birthdays etc 10p per word. Items for sale wanted, sits vacant etc 20p per word.

Advertising must be prepaid, when booking, and must be booked by copy deadline - 15th of month prior to publication.

To place an advertisement in the BN contact 62492 or call in at The Gallery.

FOOTPATH MATTERS



By Maureen Ellis

On Sunday March 1st the 8.5 mile Melling walk starts at 9.30am from Low Bentham car park (NOT Lairgill as stated in the BFG programme). It will go to Old Wenning via Goodenbergh bridge, then along the road and track to Melling and over the hill to Tatham Church and back through the fields to the east of the railway. The exact route will depend on conditions underfoot on the day.

On Saturday March 7th we meet for the Cinderbarrow walk at Lairgill at 9.30am and then start walking at New England near Capernwray. We set off together for the first 4 miles as far as the canal. Here there is a choice of carrying on with the leader for a further 6 miles to Cinderbarrow or continuing along the canal bank back to the start of the shorter walk, a total of 6 miles. The longer 10 miler is easy walking.

On Tuesday March 17th we meet at 9.30am at Lairgill for the 8 mile Langcliffe Loop, but starting walking at Langcliffe car park. The planned route, depending on the weather, goes up to Windskill Farm, across to Catrigg Force and on to Catrigg Moor. After some 100 yards down the road it's across Settle Scars to Attermire and then, skirting Settle, it's back to the cars by a lower route. There are lots of escape routes in case of bad weather.

On Wednesday March 25th we meet at Lairgill at 9.30am for a 6 miler and start walking from the car park in Gargrave where we meet at a café popular with bikers opposite the bridge over the River Aire. The canal meanders through countryside following contours of the local hills. Although the route is flat alongside the canal the views are constantly changing. We go past a number of locks before reaching the double arched bridge number 161 where we leave the canal to go up to the Cross Keys pub. It is optional to buy a meal or take sandwiches. The return journey is across fields (part of the Pennine Way) and back to Gargrave.

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BENTHAM AND DISTRICT PET RESCUE



By Sue Arnott

There's nothing more distressing for a pet owner than if their beloved friend goes missing. Even worse is to never know what happened to their pet, perhaps after months of searching. Did my cat jump into a delivery van and find itself deposited in some strange place far away? Is she trying to find her way home? My dog ran off after a rabbit and didn't return? Perhaps someone found him and is caring for him? Of course no one wants to think the worst.

It's a sad fact that most road accidents involving cats occur during hours of darkness so it's always better to keep them in until daylight if you can. We know of at least 7 cats killed on roads in and around Bentham last year.

When animals are brought to us, whatever the circumstances, we do everything we can to find their owners but it's not always possible. Identity tags (with a surname and phone number) make the job of re-uniting a lost pet with its owner easier, but collars can come off leaving no clues as to its home.

Identichip your pet for only £15

Throughout March, Dalehead Veterinary practice is offering to identichip dogs and cats at the discounted price of £15.00 (usual price £27.77) including VAT. This involves inserting a tiny microchip under the skin around the neck, which can be scanned to reveal a number that links to a national register of contact details for each chipped pet. That means that if your cat or dog goes missing, there's a much greater chance that animal rescue organisations like ours can bring him or her back to you.

To take advantage of this offer at Bentham or Settle, book an appointment with a vet nurse on 01729 823538.

Remember: the law only requires a lost pet to be held for 7 days before it can be re-homed – or in some cases destroyed (although that is not our policy).

For general queries about B&D Pet Rescue, or if you'd like to get involved as a volunteer, please ring 61127.

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NOTES FROM LOW BENTHAM

By Christine Hodson

The closure of the Low Bentham School last year was a sad 'end of an era' event. Now local residents have been left wondering what is going to happen to the school building and the lovely attached field. On their website North Yorkshire County Council says 'consideration will be made as to the use of capital receipts arising from the school'. In the current economic climate who knows what this means, or when anything will happen? Does anyone out there know more?

Driving past the Sun Dial I couldn't help notice that the pub business is up for sale, and I believe that the Punchbowl is also changing hands. I hope to provide further information about these changes in a future edition of Bentham News.

We have just received sad news regarding Low Bentham Methodist Church. See page 13 for further details.



24/7

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NEWS FROM HIGH BENTHAM COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

By Catherine Boocock (Head teacher)

Posts Available: We are looking for relief midday supervisors and we still need a school crossing patrol person, so please contact Mrs Whitfield our school secretary on 015242-61412 if you are interested in either post.

Nursery & Playgroup: If you have a pre-school age child then please feel free to ring school and arrange to visit our excellent Nursery which is open from 9-11.30am each school day. We have a super setting with extensive outdoor play areas and caring staff. From April 2009 we will be running a Playgroup for a couple of afternoons, initially for 3 year olds, so please contact school for more information.

Voluntary Work in School: If you are interested in doing voluntary work in school, we always welcome people to come and help whether it is to hear children read or to help with classroom activities. You would need to complete a CRB form, which usually takes a few weeks to be cleared.

To find out more about our school then please look on our website
www.high-bentham.n-yorks.sch.uk

Interested in Childminding? An information evening for anyone wishing to become an Ofsted registered Childminder is being held on Monday 18th May at 6.30pm at North Craven Children's Centre in Hellifield. For further information contact Caroline Hannah, Childminding Support Officer on 01609-533378 or 07817-291847.

VILLAGE ART SHOW

On Saturday 14th March 11am-4pm at Melling Institute there will be a celebratory exhibition of artwork by over 300 local school children. Not to be missed!

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BURTON UNDER FIVES FREE ACTIVITY WEEK



By Viki Hindle

There is a lot happening at Burton Under Fives during March. On March 25th we will be hosting 'Cooking on a Budget' which is being run by The Children's Centre. If you would like further information about this please contact The Children's Centre on 0845-0349408. There is a crèche available but booking is essential.

We will be running a **free** activity week from Monday 30th March until Friday 3rd April. During this week parents and carers with their pre-school children are invited to come and join in with our activities. Booking is essential.

- Monday 30th March – Angela's Easter craft session
- Tuesday 31st March – visit by some piglets and/or lambs
- Wednesday 1st April – story time, library and book start information
- Thursday 2nd April – Laura from Helen Howard School of Dance – dance session
- Friday 3rd April – Easter egg hunt, Teddy Bears' picnic and visit from Vicky Stephenson the North Craven parent support officer.

During the week we will also be running a colouring competition, which will be judged by a special guest on Friday 3rd April. Our opening times are Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 9am-1pm; Tuesday and Thursday 9am-11.30am. If you would like to join us for lunch you will need to bring your own packed lunch.

For further information about the activity week or to book your free place, please contact us on 015242-62126 or by email at burtonunderfives@btinternet.com

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HIRING ROOMS AT THE SPORTS CLUB

By Lee Hayward

If you need to hire a room on a regular basis or for a one-off event, have you thought about using the Sports Club on Wenning Avenue? As we move into spring and hopefully warmer weather, the Club has the advantage of having both indoor and outdoor spaces available. Rates are reasonable, there is parking available and, if you think it is a bit far out of town we can arrange for you to be picked up and collected from Low and High Bentham using Bentham Community Transport. For more information, or if you would just like to come and have a look at what we can offer, please contact Lee Hayward by phone on 015242-62929 or by email leehayward75@btinternet.com

BENTHAM SHOW QUIZ NIGHT

By Val Lawson

Thank you to the 26 teams who attended our 10th annual quiz night in February at Bentham Town Hall. After eleven rounds of questions set by quiz master John Whitfield, the winners were as follows: 1st with 92 points M Knowles, R Lewis, D Ibbetson and S Harrison. 2nd equal with 85 points were G & L Taylor and M & J Dobson, and the Leck Fell House team of J Knapp, P Parker and A & B Middleton. 4th with 82 points were A Gujral, J Marshall and N & D Perrins.

The amount raised was £250 and the first of ten raffle winners was Janet Dobson.

We look forward to seeing you all at next year's quiz.

PUBLIC MEETING: Proposed parking changes in High Bentham. Town Hall on Tuesday 10th March 7.30pm. Come and make your views heard.



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BENTHAM CRICKET CLUB – START OF A NEW SEASON

By Tony Atkinson and Mark Chamberlain

The cricket club is looking forward to another successful year. Although last year we failed to get promoted by only six points, the decision by the league to revert back to five divisions means we actually move up a division. We are always on the look out for new talent whether in the form of enthusiastic youth or reliable experience, so anyone interested please contact either Tony Atkinson (61645) or Mark Chamberlain (61283).

We also would like to encourage any cricket fans to come down and support us. A copy of the fixtures can be seen down at the sports club on Wenning Avenue or alternatively you can look it up on the league website www.westmorlandcricketleague.co.uk

The sports club would really appreciate your custom and even if you're not a cricket fan, families and kids are always welcome and it can be a very pleasant afternoon - if we get the weather ...

Groundsman Wanted

If we can get the necessary authority we may also be sharing our ground this year, so we are keenly seeking a groundsman who can look after the square and prepare a weekly wicket, for a small fee of course. The fixture list hasn't been published yet but we generally start in late April with initial work on the square commencing shortly. We have our own equipment and are currently fundraising for a new roller, so again anyone interested in helping us out please contact Tony (61645) or Mark (61283).

ARE YOU 10 OR 11 YEARS OLD AND WANT TO PLAY FOOTBALL?

By Lee Hayward

Bentham Juniors Football Club are seeking boys who will be aged 10 or 11 in September this year for the under 12 team for next season.

If you are interested in playing regular junior league football, please contact me on 015242-62929 or 07895-861459, or by email leehayward75@btinternet.com

Alternatively just turn up on a Wednesday night at Wenning Avenue Sports Field in High Bentham from 6.30pm-8pm and play football.

BENTHAM JUNIORS & MANCHESTER UNITED SOCCER SCHOOL

By Alan Collins (for Bentham Juniors Football Club)

Booking is now under way for the Bentham Juniors Football Club and Manchester United Soccer School, which will be taking place in Bentham from 25th-27th May 2009.

This is what you have to do to book your place:

- Visit www.manutdsoccerschool.com
- Then select club development courses
- And on the table select 25-27 May Bentham Juniors Book Now
- Enter the code BEN09 (capitals BEN numerals 09)
- Enter parent/player details
- Enter payment (there is a 1% booking fee so the total is £85.79)

The club would like to thank all the local businesses that have donated sponsorship for the event. Bentham News will carry an update each month on how many bookings have been made and how many places are left. We need as many as possible to book as soon as possible to ensure the success of the event.

CHARITY FOOTBALL GAME IN MEMORY OF BILLY NOBLE

By Lee Hayward

The picture shows Bentham Juniors Football Club manager, Lee Hayward, receiving the Billy Noble Memorial Shield from Bill's daughter, Jill, at Bentham Sport Club. The presentation followed a charity game played at Bentham Sports Field with Bentham Juniors FC players and coaches 'v' Bentham Veterans. The match was won 2-1 by the Bentham Juniors team. The game was arranged by Lee Hayward, Ian Guy and Billy's daughter Jill, to pay their respects to Billy. He was a fantastic servant to Bentham football club playing into his fifties and continuing to support the teams right up to his death late last year aged 82. Billy will be very sadly missed by everyone connected to Bentham Football Club. A raffle was also held after the game and £50 was raised towards Leukaemia Research, one of Billy's chosen charities. A big thanks to everyone for turning up and supporting the teams on a cold December afternoon.



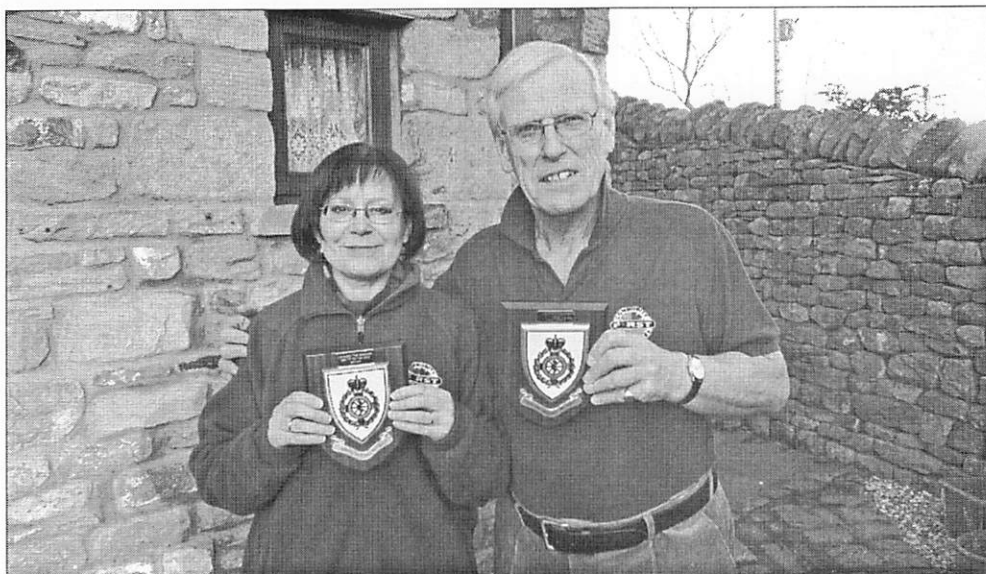
BENTHAM FIRST RESPONDERS WIN TWO TOP AWARDS

By Wanda Lewcun

On 31st January a mini-coach load of Bentham's First Responders attended a reception held in York hosted by the Yorkshire Ambulance Service and sponsored by Ramada Fairfield Manor. They were surprised and delighted when it was announced that the Bentham First Responders has been selected as the 2008 Team of the Year for Craven District, and Wanda Lewcun, the group's coordinator, went up to collect the commemorative plaque.

No sooner had she got back to her seat that she had to go up again to collect another plaque which was for Robert Holland who had been selected as the 2008 Volunteer of the Year. Robert, who was not able to be there in person due to family commitments, was thrilled to receive the reward. However when he found out about it he stressed that his award was really due to the hard work, enthusiasm, support, good humour and patience of all the volunteers in the group and that, in any case, he is just the group's ultimate control freak!

Despite these two successes Bentham First Responders are still looking for more volunteers and anyone wanting to find out more should come to one of the regular monthly meetings which are now held at the Looking Well on the first Wednesday of the month at 7.30pm.



The photo shows Wanda Lewcun and Robert Holland with their plaques.

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