

Methodist news

Garden Trail

The 2009 Garden Trail takes place on June 13 & 14. The 16 open gardens are all in the Roman Road & Curzon Avenue areas of Birstall. This is a record number of gardens open to visitors – no less than sixteen. A few are only have the 'front' garden open. The church is grateful to all those residents who have kindly opened their gardens for this popular village event.

Funds raised from the Trail will go to church funds and to Multiple Sclerosis. To buy a 'passport' in advance is slightly cheaper than buying one 'on the day'. It does contain a wealth of information about the various gardens. The cost is £3 (or £3.50 on the day).

As in past years there will be teas, ice creams, plants and a raffle as well as a free competition for children as they 'search' each garden in a treasure trail with a small prize for those who find the treasure in each garden.

The Garden Trail is sponsored by Birstall Garden Centre, where you can obtain a passport. They are also on sale from Birstall Shoe Repairers (Sibson Road), Went Road Newsagents, Kingsgate Newsagents and Wanlip Lane Newsagents as well as McColls Newsagents. Both Sibson Road butchers (Michaels & Mark Patrick) are selling passports along with Stonehill Post Office, Retreat coffee bar in the Meadway, Anne-El-Maria ladies hairdressers by the traffic lights and of course the church Coffee Shop when it is open.

Why not invite your friends who live out of Birstall for what promises to be an afternoon to remember.

Fair Trade Stall

A small 'Fair Trade' stall has operated in the Friday Coffee Shop for a few years. It sells a variety of 'Fair Trade' goods. The stall turned over £2836 in the last year. This made a small profit of £107. This profit has enabled another bicycle and a smoke-free stove

Hotpec Orphanage in Cameroon

David & Joy Bark have worked tirelessly in setting up the 'Bark Foundation' whose objective is to raise funds to build a nursery at the Orphanage in The Cameroon. Many friends from the Methodist Church, and many others have supported the fund raising which to date has raised a little over £12,000 in about 18 months.

Work has started on the nursery, footings, and concreting, and building blocks have all been made & paid for and the buildings footings and concreting floors are now under way.

Sadly as the British Pound has devalued, it has hit hard the value of the money. In January 2008 £1000 sterling equated to 1,000,000 African Francs. Now £1000 will only realise 693,000 African Francs

From Tony Moore

Cromwell soon succeeded in offending Henry and was beheaded a year later. The buildings however still belonged to his family so the beautiful house was largely built on the abbey's foundations by his son during Elizabeth's reign.



Many other families occupied the house over the centuries, but the last owners, the Colemans generously gave the house to the diocese of Leicester in 1957 to be a retreat and conference centre.

Since then many thousands of people, both groups and individuals, including people from Birstall, have enjoyed a day, a weekend or longer in the peace and quiet of this lovely location, talking together or being silent, according to their needs.

Now however, some major repair work is needed to the building, if it is to remain open for all-comers. You do not need to be a member of the Church of England - or of any church - to stay a while on your own or with a group or just to spend a day at Launde. The warden Tim Blewett can be contacted if you want to enquire, on 01572 717254.

The Archbishop of Canterbury launched an appeal for donations towards the vital repairs recently in the press. The first large money-making event was held at Launde on the May Bank Holiday in the form of a Spring Fair, but others are planned, including the annual Open Days over the August Bank Holiday. so please watch this space for further details!

From Beryl McHugh

Launde Abbey

IF YOU have ever taken a drive along the minor roads through the rolling countryside south east of Leicester, heading towards Oakham or Uppingham, you may have come across the beautiful Launde Abbey.

It stands in the middle of 600 acres of farmland, and the front of the house where sheep graze peacefully is clearly visible from the minor roads, which bisect the green fields. Near to the stone-built Elizabethan house is a small chapel, which gives the clue to the origin of this idyllic location.

The chapel (open to the public when not in use for services) is all that remains of a priory church, the centre of a monastic community, which existed here from the 12th century.

Henry VIII was responsible for its break-up, and his "Vicar General" Thomas Cromwell, arrived at Launde and saw it as an ideal home for himself and his family. In 1540 the King gave Launde to Cromwell but

Car's the star

A BIRSTALL couple's 1950's American car helped create a special atmosphere at Highcross Leicester for a screening of the film 'Grease' by Cinema De Lux.

Andrew and Corinne Burford's Ford Skyliner was parked in the shopping precinct outside the cinema while hit songs from the film were played and cheer leaders performed dance routines.

The charity screening of the film helped raise funds for LOROS and Rainbows.



Gentle exercise workouts

SPACES ARE now available on four popular exercise classes which aim to improve the health of inactive people.

The Active Lifestyle Exercise Referral Scheme gives people who do no exercise or have a condition that could benefit from physical activity the opportunity to take part in gentle workouts. Run in partnership between Charnwood Borough Council, Serco Leisure, GP Practices and other health care professionals, the hour-long classes are the perfect way to get active.

Spaces are currently available on classes held in Loughborough, Birstall, Sileby and Syston and cost £2.30 for people who have been referred through their GP or £3.30 for those who simply want to try out the sessions. Nita Pearson, Charnwood Borough Council's Active Lifestyle Development Officer, said: "Physical activity provides physical, social and mental benefits and promotes an overall improvement in quality of life to people of all ages, male or female. The Referral Classes are the ideal way for people who have had little or no exercise to get active. All the sessions are held under the guidance of qualified exercise professionals and will help improve fitness and general wellbeing".

Spaces are available on the following classes:

- Gentle Exercise to Music at Sileby Community Centre on Tuesdays between 12noon and 1pm
- Gentle Exercise to Music at Birstall Village Hall on Tuesdays between 2pm and 3pm
- Gentle Circuits at Syston Community Centre on Fridays between 10am and 11am
- Gentle Pilates at St Peter's Community Centre, Storer Road, Loughborough on Fridays between 2pm and 3pm.

To find out more about the Active Lifestyle Exercise Referral Scheme, call Nita on 01509 634 594, log on to www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/exercisereferral or email nita.pearson@charnwood.gov.uk

Children's free activities

A NUMBER of fun, free activities for children and toddlers have been arranged by Charnwood Borough Council.

The Authority's Play Rangers have put on daily activities for youngsters up to the age of five at venues in Anstey, Birstall, Loughborough, Mountsorrel, Quorn and Rearsby during term times. And there are also after-school events for children up to the age of 16 taking place at Anstey, Loughborough, Mountsorrel, Sileby, Shepshed, Syston and Thurmaston between Monday and Thursday.

The popular activities – funded by the Big Lottery Children's Play Initiative Programme – include Mini Mover sessions, which are designed to allow early-years children to play, investigate and explore movement in complete safety. They run until the summer holidays. There are also open play sessions, circus skills, pond dipping and urban dance.

Matthew Forsyth, Charnwood Borough Council's Play Ranger, said: "We have tried to offer a varied and challenging programme which caters for all ages and interests. These sessions have been very popular in the past as they are enjoyable and free of charge. Some of the sessions have limited places so booking as advisable but we hope to see as many youngsters as possible taking part and having a lot of fun".

For a full list of the times and dates of all the sessions, log on to www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/playrangers

Alternatively, to find out more about the Play Rangers tour, call Matthew Forsyth on 01509 634836 or email matthew.forsyth@charnwood.gov.uk

Birstall sessions:

Mini Movers (ages 0-5) at Birstall Library, Thursdays, 1.30-2.30pm

Mountsorrel sessions:

Urban Dance (ages 6-11), Mountsorrel Library, Tuesdays
Mini Movers (0-5), Mountsorrel Library, Thursdays 10.30-11.30am

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