

The Birches

Community Matters Newsletter

Kingsthorpe, Much Birch, Little Birch,
Aconbury & Wormelw April 2025



Birches Newsletter online www.birches.news & www.muchbirchparish.org.uk



Little Birch Village Hall Pantomime with director Jane Bolam centre front

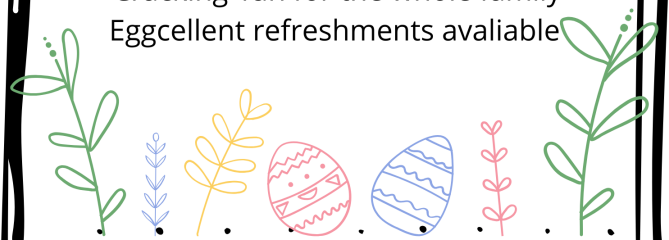


BINGO

EASTER PRIZE BINGO

LITTLE BIRCH VILLAGE HALL
FRIDAY 11TH APRIL
EYES DOWN AT 7:30PM

'Cracking' fun for the whole family
Eggcellent refreshments available



arts alive **FLICKS IN THE STICKS** at Much Birch Community Hall

Thursday 10 April - THELMA 12A

Inspired by a real-life experience of director Josh Margolin's own grandmother, THELMA puts a clever spin on movies like MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE, shining the spotlight on an elderly grandmother as an unlikely action hero. When 93-year-old Thelma Post gets duped by a phone scammer pretending to be her grandson, she sets out on a treacherous quest across the city to reclaim what was taken from her.

Tickets £5 (£4 under 16s)

Refreshments including hot dogs and ice cream available from 7pm

Coming up in May

Thursday 15 May - CONCLAVE 12A

Tickets available in advance or on the door (cash or card payments accepted)- for further info or to book tickets please email muchbirchflicks@hotmail.com or call 01981 540097

For further information about films and screenings visit www.artsalive.co.uk

FLICKS IN THE STICKS

FLICKS IN THE STICKS

Annual Lent Lunch

Come and join us for a delicious selection of home made soups at Little Birch Village Hall from 12.30pm on Friday 4th April. All donations will go to the Sight Savers charity, which does great work. We look forward to seeing you .

Art and Craft Space

Have an Art and Craft afternoon away from the hustle and bustle of life every Thursday at Little Birch village hall! 2-4.30pm. Bring your WiP or PhD in whatever Art or Craft you are working on. Or start something new. £3 per session includes refreshments. For more information contact Sally 01981 540001 or 07803032928 or email sally.nichol@btinternet.co.uk All welcome

Photography Group

We are a friendly local group who are keen and enjoy our imaging skills. We invite anyone interested to join us. Please contact Sally Nichol.tel. 07803 032928 or 01981 540001 sally.nichol@btinternet.com

King's Thorn & Little Birch Gardening Club

Meets on the last Wednesday of the month from 7.30 –9pm at Little Birch Village Hall. Tea & coffee served from 7pm

Next meeting April 30th
A talk on composting
by Mike Poultney

Coffee Morning with Book Exchange
Little Birch Village Hall
Thursday 3rd & Saturday 19th April
10-12 noon

Enjoy a cup of tea or coffee, some cake or biscuits. Make new friends, catch up with old friends. Take a book, leave a book or both. Families & well behaved dogs welcome

Table Tennis Tuesday 1st April
Little Birch Village Hall
7-9pm £3

Join us at the
Community Café
@ Much Birch Community Hall

Saturday 12 April 2025
10:00 - 12:30

and every 2nd Saturday of the month

10 May

14 June

12 July

For more information or if you are in need of transport contact Lydia on 01981 540323 or socialfabric@hotmail.com



A local group who want to bring people together, strengthen community links and provide relaxed and fun events for all ages.

Little Birch Village Hall Pantomime 2025

The annual pantomime, Cinderella, was another resounding success despite a couple of difficulties which had to be overcome. "The show must go on!"

The usual format was selected ie Friday 24th January evening and two performances on Saturday 25th. However, the two Saturday performances were virtually sold out well before Christmas so the decision was made to do two more performances on Saturday 1st February.

The pleasing thing was that several new faces were welcomed into both cast and crew and, importantly, a lot of new young people (under 16s), giving director, Jane Bolam, a wonderful headache of how to utilise them all.

During the few weeks in January, leading up to the first performance, "the pantomime cough/cold bug" attacked most of the cast and crew creating problems at rehearsals.

Everyone started arriving for the first performance only to find that the hall was in darkness as there was a power cut in the area. Some makeup was done by torch light and some at the nearby houses of cast members who were not affected by the power cut. A generator was organised by some good friends so that, if necessary, the stage could be lit up and sound could be produced. Fortunately power was restored and safety checks made a few minutes before curtain up, so it was all systems go.

There then followed three excellent performances to three full houses, that evening and the two on Saturday. Everyone involved gave there all. The main roles were superb and the interaction with the audiences produced classic pantomime environment. The youngsters performed brilliantly and supported the senior actors. It was plain to see that there are many talented young people in the area.

On to Saturday the 1st February. Two main performers were extremely unwell and unable to appear and a third was unwell but played her important part in one scene only. The pantomime cough/cold bug had struck with vengeance. Director Jane had to become a mouse and Tonya, wife of Bob Barnet, took his place as one of the ugly sisters and a fantastic job she did too. The performances again were of particularly high standard evidenced by standing ovations from large sections of both houses. The matinee was sold out and the Saturday evening show had very few seats left.

What a tremendous success and a great credit to Jane's directing, the talented cast and all the support crew who worked so hard behind the scenes to create such great entertainment.

When the decision was made to put on the extra day on 1st February it was decided to donate the money received from ticket sales for the matinee to St. Michael's Hospice. At the end of the performance, a cheque for the sum of £810 was presented to Jackie, a member of the Hospice fundraising team. Derek **Scrivens**

Jobs for the garden in April

Writing this in mid March the garden is now ablaze with daffodils both in tubs and in our wild area. They follow a magnificent display of snowdrops which started blooming at the end of January and are now fading – a number of clumps are quite large and ideally need splitting.

The catkins on the hazel trees seemed longer than usual this year. They appeared somewhat earlier and are also fading. The 'wall to wall' sunshine of the first few days of March enabled me to clear weeds, spread some fertilizer and mulch our raspberries, blackcurrants, gooseberries, blue berries, strawberries and rhubarb. Broad beans have been planted out, as have some salad leaves and beetroot plants, under a cloche for the time being. My efforts with a fluffed up cotton bud around the flowers of our small peach tree appear to have been successful as there are numerous tiny green pea like fruits beginning to show.

Here are a few ideas for April

- *Prune hardy fuchsias.
- *Basal cuttings of herbaceous perennials such as delphiniums and stocks can be taken this month.
- *Plant out autumn and winter sown sweet peas. Seed can be sown direct into the border now.
- *Mulch as much of the borders as possible with manure, compost or woodchips to a depth of 5 – 10 cms (2 – 4 inches in 'old money').
- *It is not too late to repot pot bound houseplants, moving them on to a pot one size larger than the one they are leaving.
- *Protect fruit blossom from frost with fleece if practical.
- *Plant early seed potatoes at the beginning of the month and main crop at the end, or beginning of May. If they pop their heads up and a frost is forecast draw soil over the leaves or cover with fleece.
- *In a prepared seed bed sow, beet, carrots, leeks, parsnips, spinach, salad crops including spring onions and peas.
- *Plant onion sets and seed grown onions.
- *Sow Brussels sprouts early in the month, and also small quantities of brassicas for successional crops through the summer.
- *Pot up tomato and pepper seedlings.
- *Sow squashes, courgettes, cucumber and sweet corn on a bright window ledge or in the greenhouse.
- *Keep listening/watching the weather forecast so that tender plants can be protected if a frost is imminent .
- *Nesting is now under way so keep feeding the birds and provide fresh water.
- *Sow a small patch of wild flowers if you have a bit of space.
- *Leave a little area of lawn uncut if practical.

Derek Scrivens

**Send items for May newsletter to
editorial@birchesnews.org.uk by 8th April**

Church Buildings - a Blessing and Sometimes a Burden - Revd Mark writes:

Every village loves to have its own church, and we are fortunate here in this part of Herefordshire that every village church is very different. We are the inheritors of churches that date back to pre-Norman times, though the evidence for this can be quite hard to find.

These churches, some grand and some simple, have provided places for people to worship, celebrate and mourn for generations. Over the years, the churches have changed shape, been re-built and adapted for changing patterns of worship and life. Sometimes, like for example with the introduction of pews, the church's role had changed from being a place where the whole village could gather for entertainment and markets to purely sacred spaces. Sometimes, with the removal of the rood screen, that worship had been opened up so that all could feel part of the service.

All these changes have left indelible marks on our churches, and you can often spot them when you visit. You might find everything from an ancient font in a Victorian nave to an old Anglo-Saxon gravestone recycled as a window sill. Our churches are for all of us, whether we use them or not, and they need resources to keep them going. One off donations, cutting the grass in the churchyard, Saturday morning working parties – all these are vital and necessary to maintain and enhance these special places. So whether you have a faith or not, don't forget this vital part of your village, a centre of peace and quiet in a busy world and a place of prayer open to all.

Services for April

Sunday 6th – 5th Sunday of Lent	9.15 am at Llandinabo – Matins 11.00 am at Little Birch – Holy Communion
Sunday 13th – Palm Sunday	10 am at Pencoyd – Blessing of Palm Crosses 10.15 am at Pencoyd – Walk of Witness to Llanwarne 11.00 am at Llanwarne – Blessing of Palms with Holy Communion
Monday 14th – Monday in Holy Week	7.30pm at Llandinabo – Compline (A reflective service to end the day)
Tuesday 15th – Tuesday in Holy Week	7.30pm at Dewsall – Compline
Wednesday 16th – Wednesday in Holy Week	7.30pm at Little Birch – Compline
Thursday 17th – Maundy Thursday	7.30 pm at Much Dewchurch – Holy Communion and Tenebrae (Reading of the Holy Week Gospels)
Friday 18th – Good Friday	10.30am at Much Birch Village Hall Good Friday Reflection with pictures & music
Sunday 20th – Easter Day	9.15 am at Much Birch – Holy Communion 9.15 am at Much Dewchurch – Holy Communion 11.00 am at Dewsall – Holy Communion 11.00 am at Little Birch – Holy Communion
Sunday 27th April – Second Sunday of Easter	9.15 am at Llandinabo – Holy Communion in Traditional Language
Sunday 4th May	9.15 am at Llandinabo – Matins 9.15 am at Much Dewchurch – Holy Communion 11.00 am at Little Birch – Holy Communion

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Little Birch Parish Facebook Group

Find the latest news, events & business listings all in one place. You are welcome to promote your local business, advertise a local event or post news and information of interest to the village and local area.



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Much Birch Facebook Page

**It is not just about lost and found cats
and dogs, missing deliveries etc. You
will find a wealth of information here**

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call 07854 629193 by 8th April**

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Much Birch Parish Council Meeting

At Much Birch Parish Council Meeting on 6th March there was discussion about two local planning consultations, Re-consultation **243018** - Land at Helenswood Farm, Kingsthorne. Some changes advised. The parish council resolved that, in spite of the changes to proposals, there were still objections that would be reiterated to the planning department. Planning Consultation - **250312** – Land at Eden House, Eden Lane, Barrack Hill, Little Birch, was supported by the parish council. The parish council also discussed the findings of the parish tour with the Lengthsman, which had looked at drainage issues, and the parish council were looking at formulating an action plan.

The next Much Birch Parish Council Meeting will be on Thurs 3rd April, 7.30pm at Much Birch Community Hall.

Your Much Birch Parish Councillors are:-

Cllr Alison Cook (Chair) Jasmine Cottage, Wrigglebrook Lane, Kingsthorne, Hereford, HR2 8AW,

email: thecooks@wyenet.co.uk Tel. 01981 540703

Cllr Roisin Burge The Old Hall, Barrack Hill, Little Birch HR2 8AX email: roisinburge@hotmail.com

Tel. 01981 540724

Cllr Chris Pickering-Grey 4 Court Farm Barns, Much Birch HR2 8HT chris@pickering-grey.uk Tel. 07712 813218

Cllr Michael Agyeman Little Willow, Wrigglebrook, Kingsthorne, Hereford, HR2 8AU

email: magyeman92@gmail.com Tel. 01981 540840

Cllr David Irwin David.Irwin13@btinternet.com

Tel. 07766 135068

Cllr Steve Turner The Underhills, Hollybush Lane, Much Birch, Hereford, HR2 8HX, Tel. 07768 206296

email: turnersofcrossways@btinternet.com

Dates for the forthcoming meetings are advised as follows:

April 3rd, May 8th, June 5th, July 3rd, no meeting in August, September 4th, October 2nd, November 6th, Dec 4th.

Clerk: Mrs Alison Wright: muchbirchclerk@gmail.com

Much Birch Footpath Officer: David Irwin on

MBfootpaths@btinternet.com Tel. 07766 135068

Full minutes of the meetings and information etc. can be found on the Parish Council website following the link found in this summary. www.muchbirchparish.org.uk.

Hope Spring eCards

Anniversaries Birthdays Christmas

Easter Father's Day Mother's Day

New Year Valentine's Day

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Little Birch Parish Councillors

Cllr Steve Coles Cllr Tom Palfrey
Cllr Chris Atkinson Cllr Nick Deacon
Neil Barrington, clerk lbpcclerk@gmail.com

Footpath Officers

If you have any queries about footpaths contact:

Little Birch and Aconbury

Chris Fowler chrisfowler1@hotmail.co.uk
07931 292998

Much Birch including Kingsthorne:

David Irwin david.irwin13@btinternet.com
07766 135068

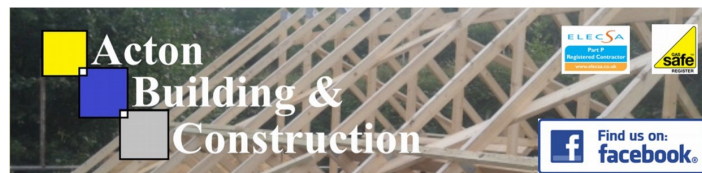
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We run a **FREE 24 hour Support Line 7 days a week** for farmers and their families within Herefordshire who are feeling distressed and need someone to talk to anonymously.

Counselling:

We provide **fully funded counselling to anyone in the Herefordshire farming community** who may be in emotional distress.

Training:

We offer **FREE mental health awareness training** to anyone living or working in or with the farming community in Herefordshire.

Social Events:

We run a series of **FREE social events throughout the year** to break the isolation often felt by the farming community in Herefordshire.

Befriending:

Befriending volunteers offer companionship and support to people who are isolated and lonely – they may visit you at home and/or phone for a regular chat. A befriender can offer conversation and a listening ear to those that need it.

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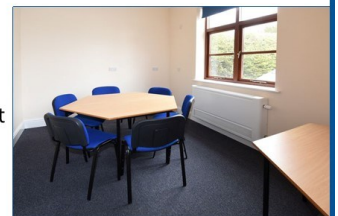
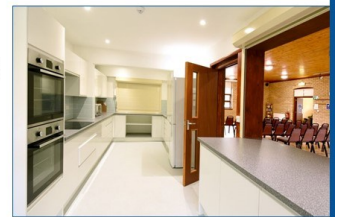


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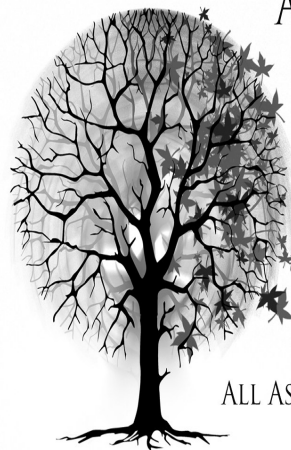
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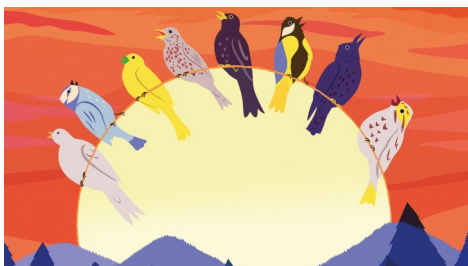
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Dawn Chorus Walk



Sunday 6th April 5.30am for 5.45am

Merrivale Farm HR2 8BA

The walk will be about 3 miles with lots of stops to listen to the birds. No dogs please.

On our return to the farm the Masons will be providing bacon butties/toast/marmalade and tea or coffee with donations going to charity

If you would like to join us please let me know to help with planning.

Chris Fowler 079312 92998

(Please text as I sometimes miss emails)

Advertising Rates

11 editions per year (no August newsletter)

1/16 page £4.20 per issue or £42 per year

1/8th page £4.80 per issue or £48 per year

¼ page £5.40 per issue or £54 per year

½ page £9.60 per issue or £96 per year

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Allensmore Locks Garage

Backney on the garage wall at Market Gardens Cottage

Bridstow on the outside of the village hall

Garway on the wall outside the Garway Moon pub

Harewood End at Harewood End Inn on outside of the pub at the back in the beer garden.

Little Birch on the outside of the village hall

Llanwarne on the wall by steps leading up to the village hall

Much Birch on the outside of the church hall

Much Birch Axe & Cleaver on the side of the pub

Much Dewchurch outside Steiner School, first building after the church

Peterstow at the Yew Tree pub

Sellack on the outside of the parish hall (key code needed)

St Weonards old BT phone box off the A466 between the church and Forge Cottage

Wormelow at the Cricket Club & Carrot & Wine shop

Wilton on wall at the BP garage on the roundabout

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Kenya October 2024 (continued)

We stayed there with the top elevated, watching the impala being devoured. They were so close, so fast and so beautiful.

We were late back, so a quick lunch and out again. More hippo, lots of giraffe, gazelles are every where, some ostriches, more cheetahs and a hyena slinking away. Lots of birds, a hamerkop (like a stalk), lots of rollers(colourful), kingfishers (a few varieties), hornbills and a few eagles.

In the evening we were out again, but this time we go down the other side of the plateau. The terrain is different, a lot more trees and scrub. Now there elephants, lots of them. We stop in amazement as they just appear out of the tall trees, more and more, big tuskers and very young calves. They cross the road. We stop to let them pass, dozens of them and more Thompson gazelle and also some water buck.

There are so many different birds here, lots of kingfishers, herons and water birds, also a few giraffes. It's amazing how different this is. It seems more peaceful. We haven't seen any predators. Perhaps that's why. It's getting dark so we head back to base. Tonight the Maasai people are doing a dance for us.

lizards, and flowering shrubs.

We have already seen lots of Elephants in the wet areas with water half way up their bodies, At 16.30 we set off on our first safari. We are all very excited because from here it's possible to see Kilimanjaro, the highest mountain in Africa,(5895m). Which actually is in the next country Tanzania.

So many different birds here, lots of Kingfishers, herons and water birds, a few Giraffe. It's amazing how different this, it seems more peaceful, but we haven't seen any predators perhaps that's why.

It's getting dark so we head back to base. We seem to have had just meal times to chat and find out about our friends but tonight the Maasai people are doing a dance for us. Our three truck companions seem to be sticking together, we chat to Anne and Philip from Gloucester, they to have done a lot of travelling, but the stars of this trip must be the three nurses who trained together years ago and even thought they work in different parts of the country they meet regularly. This is their first Safari, and to see the joy and excitement on their faces at what they see

Is really great. Actually Anne and Philip, Doe and I were sort of first to meet Lennox at the airport. So we chatted.

The Dance, I suppose was typical of the warriors stomping and then doing their jumping thing.

We eventually got to bed about 23.00 after packing our cases ready for 08.00 start to our next resort

Sunday 6th

Our first Safari in Amboselli, Out at 0630 and our first animal was a Hyena busily feeding on somebody's left overs. There¹² are lots of animals and birds wherever we look but I must feature on the main ones. Next is a herd of Elephants with a

Our three truck companions seem to be sticking together, we chat to Anne and Philip from Gloucester, they too have done a lot of travelling, but the stars of this trip

Our first Safari in Amboselli, Out at 0630 and our first animal was a Hyena busily feeding on somebody's left overs. There are lots of animals and birds wherever we look but I must feature on the main ones. Next is a herd of Elephants with a few calves, and it's only 07.15 am.

There on the corner there are three very big birds, they are " Bustards", and like everything else we see they are not concerned that we in their space.

Then we see Lion, a big male and three females, then another herd of elephants, Thompsons Gazelles, zebra, impala and on the limbs of a long dead tree there are ten vultures waiting for something to die or be killed.

And it's only 08.33am.

We were out for two exciting hours and then headed back for breakfast

There are massive wet, boggy areas here. There are lots of water birds, we even see a pelican amongst a herd of hippo's

One of the famous things about this reserve are the columns of spiralling dust devils that we see quite regularly. As we approached this reserve I could see these columns rising high in the distance. I thought how strange to see so many fires in the distance, now I know what they were, dust devils, dirt twisters or even whirlwinds a peculiarity to this park.

Our next trip out took us to a Maasai village, a bit difficult to find initially because the whole village had a man made hedge of thorn bushes (I think from the fever tree) and blended in with the surrounding area. We were met by the village chief who spoke of how they lived. Then all the tribe marched out singing their welcome, then formed up in front of us singing their greeting and doing their high jumping routine.

We were then invited into the village to see how they all lived. In the centre of the village was the coral, where the cattle were kept over night away from any lions.

We entered a hut to see how they lived, but actually it was like midnight in there. They were all so friendly. But actually I don't think we saw any women while in the village, where did they go to.

The cattle would be kept in the coral every night, consequently the dung pile would grow higher and higher. It was at that point they would dismantle the whole village and move to a new site

Before we left them we were encouraged to look around their market where each family, at least the women had all their touristy type goods on display. Actually it was cheaper and in better condition to buy at the hotel. I think most of us made a purchase.

Back for lunch and a few hours till we went out again. We all took this time to mix and mingle again. Just beyond the fence there is a lot going on, there are quite a lot of monkeys close by, lots of birds and lizards. Then a large herd of

Friday 4th October

Early start, bags must be outside our door by 07.30. But most are up and having breakfast and on the road at 08.00 back across the reserve, the Rift Valley and back to our first hotel

"The Tamarind Tree" at Nairobi. The weather is still in the 30's

It's amazing how soon we become used to the animals we see, no more oh's and Ahs, it's just, seen that, done that, that's another one, as we speed out of the reserve.

We had a long way to go. Doe and I had a bit of competition between our selves. " who could take the best picture of the lone acacia tree". Result is still pending, there were lots of them.

Arriving at the exit from the reserve we have the same crush of trinket sellers, we used the toilets at the gate, not impressed.

We are still in Maasai country as we drive across the rift valley, once again I am surprised at the numbers of cattle, sheep and goats that are being herded by Maasai people across such poor ground, most of the cattle look so fit and healthy. The biggest surprise was the amount of litter in the villages and towns we drive through, so much.

Interestingly they sell water from tankers here, I saw two tankers sucking water up from a dirty shallow river, I hope that was not sold as drinking water.

One area we travelled through was very cultivated and there were stalls along the road selling all sorts of fruit and vegetables.

At one place they were drying maize on huge sheets or tarpaulins, I did see a few small combine harvesters which seem to have come from the arc, but they were doing the job.

The other strange thing to see was what could be carried on motor bikes, this one chap actually had a three seater settee across the back of his bike taking up half the road, others carried the full family, two or three sacks of grain was quite common.

The towns were very busy, with huts as shops for every thing, hotels, churches, chemists etc.

Every where the biggest businesses seemed to be lorry repairs and tyre changes. But the litter was terrible at times just filling the gutters. And, yet, we had seen the occasional man with a sack on his back picking up what I thought was old plastic bottles.

In some areas that had been ploughed we could see about four or five men breaking freshly ploughed ground with mattocks, and yet it had been ploughed with a tractor? Why not use the tractor.

The other oddity was to see so many men sleeping along the roads and in the villages, why aren't they working, yet every where we see women carrying heavy loads or doing hard manual work!!!

Along the road there were occasional communal stores that sold mainly the craft of the area, mainly animals supposedly all hand crafted locally.

Every one was so friendly, but pushy in a gentle sort of way. 15

Doe (as she does) got chatting to one of the ladies, in no time they were laughing together and suddenly they were