

Christmas House Competition

After last year's great success we are once again holding a Christmas House Competition. We are looking for the brightest, most exciting and fun Christmas decorations. We will be judging on 16 December with wonderful prizes for 1st, 2nd & 3rd. On this evening we will also be singing carols around our Christmas Tree (outside Bluebells on the Village Green) from 7pm. Mulled wine and mince pies included! Hope to see everyone there.



Dates for your 2023 Diary

Village Events not to be missed!

Flower & Craft Show at the Village Hall 5 August 2023. Plenty of time to start growing produce to enter for prizes and admiration from the village!

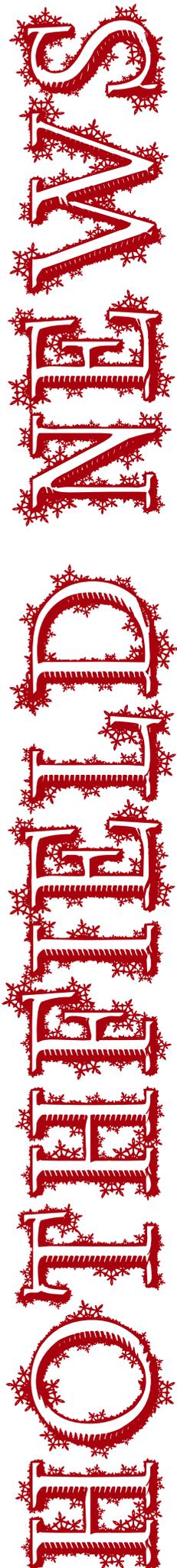
King's Coronation village event will be held at the Village Hall on 8 May. The Queen's Platinum Jubilee Royal Tea Party was an amazing success and we plan to hold a similar event for our new King.

Hothfield Parish Council Annual General Meeting will be held at the Village Hall on 13 May 10.30am.

The Chair would like to thank all our volunteer Parish Councillors for their wonderful support and hard work this year.

Merry Christmas to you all!

Sculpture at Godinton House



Saint Margaret's Church



2

For weddings, baptisms, etc. contact the Parish Office calehillpcc@gmail.com 07395 910317

Rector: Rev. Sandra Marsh The Vicarage Pett Lane Charing Kent TN27 0DL Phone: 01233 713996 email: revsandramarsh@btinternet.com

THE BENEFICE OF CALEHILL WITH WESTWELL



CHARING WITH LITTLE CHART, CHARING HEATH, EGERTON, HOTHFIELD, PLUCKLEY AND WESTWELL

Services in December

Sunday 4 1100 The Eucharist

Saturday 11 1100 Matins

Saturday 17 1530 Carols and Christingle

Sunday 18 No service in Hothfield

For services in our other churches, see www.calehill-westwell.uk

Sunday 25 CHRISTMAS DAY 1030 Family Eucharist

Sunday 1 January Benefice Songs of Praise in Pluckley

Festival of Angels

St Margaret's Church Hothfield TN26 1EL



Sat Dec 3rd
11am - 5pm

Sun Dec 4th
Noon - 5pm

See the church filled with Angels

Light lunches, cakes and refreshments served all day.

Craft Stalls and raffle

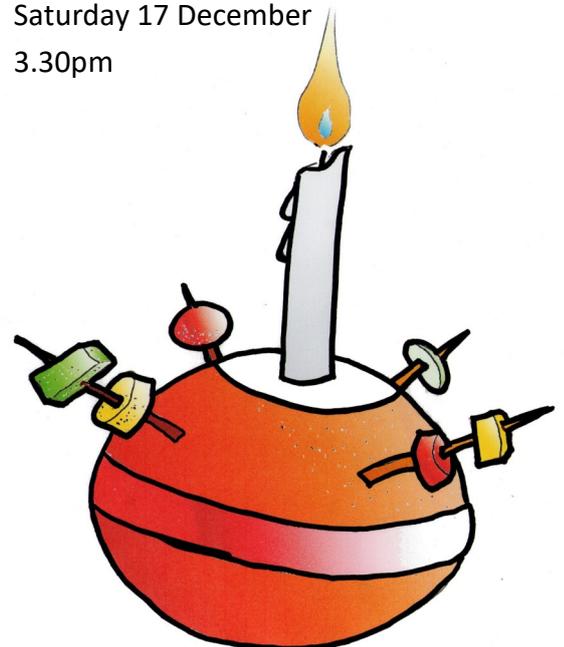
Free Entry

Registered Charity 1198602

Carols and Christingle

Saturday 17 December

3.30pm



Hothfield Parish Council

BOOKING CLERK VACANCY

We need a new Bookings Clerk at the Village Hall. The role involves looking after enquiries and issues as they arise, following up on bookings, booking forms and payments. Showing the hall to interested hirers.

Applicants need to be internet and website literate, as everything, from bookings to invoices and calendars are online. This is a paid part-time role.

Salary: £100 per month, plus 5% of monthly income.

Interested? Email hothfieldhall@outlook.com to apply.

For full minutes of meetings of Hothfield Parish Council, please either see the noticeboard outside the village shop, or visit www.hothfield.org.uk

PLEASE NOTE: The email address for the Parish Council is parish.clerk@hothfield.org.uk



We are now entering the winter period for 2022-23 and we would like to take this opportunity to remind you about KCC Highways & Transportation's winter service provisions.

Please take time to visit our website below:

<http://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/what-we-look-after/winter-service>

This section will provide useful information on:

- Salt Bins (including locations)
- Gritting Routes
- How and when we salt the roads
- Clearing snow in the community
- The latest weather updates
- How we deal with rural roads with help from the local farmers
- Tips on Winter Driving

Please also have a look at the Direct Gov Snow Code web site below, which you may find has some useful information and hints: <https://www.gov.uk/clear-snow-road-path-cycleway>

We also work closely with the local farmers and provide them with the necessary equipment in order to clear country lanes and act as extra resources when we are fully mobilised during a snow emergency.

Our website also provides information on all aspects of highway management, such as our tree policy, information on roadworks and planned works, crash and casualty data. It also allows you to report faults online at <http://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/report-a-problem>

Please take great care on the roads this winter

Highways & Transportation will continue to work hard to keep the roads as safe and clear as possible; however, you can also help us in the following ways:

Drive to the conditions of the road at all times, especially during times of rain, ice and snow

If we do get snow on the roads, please don't make any non-essential journeys

Thank you for taking time to read this information.

The Ashford Team
Kent County Council Highways & Transportation

Hothfield Educational Foundation

A reminder that the Trustees of the Foundation have two further meetings arranged for which they would appreciate applications beforehand.

These will be on 5 November 2022 and 7 February 2023. Please contact the Secretary on hothfieldeducation@gmail.com or 07973119462

THE THANET CHARITIES

Before his death earlier in the year, Martin Crompton very kindly donated to The Thanet Charities a wheelchair that he had recently purchased but never used. If you would like to borrow a wheelchair or know of a resident in Hothfield who would benefit from borrowing the chair, please call the Chair, John Coles, on 01233 625580.

Hothfield Village Hall

Regular weekly events

Mondays @ 4:30pm

Target Shooting School

<https://www.targetshootingsschool.co.uk/ashford>

Tuesdays @ 7:00pm

Bowls Club

Contact: John 07492862974

Wednesdays @ 5:30pm

Koba Dog Training

Contact: justine@kobadogtraining.co.uk

Thursdays @ 6:30pm

Fridays @ 6:30pm

Bowls Club

Contact: John 07492862974

HOTHFIELD HEATHLANDS IN DECEMBER



A busy time for work on the reserve: Heavy machinery has been digging shallow scrapes, essential for burrowing insects and pioneering heathland plants. The sand produced has been used to upgrade badly eroded paths and those that get very wet in the winter. The bigger areas were done with dumper trucks, with the volunteer team doing the more technical hard-to-access areas.

There will be more machines removing birch scrub from around the site, promoting new growth of heather, gorse and other sun-loving species that make a heathland the unique habitat that it is.

Some of the fencing, particularly near the village, where it is on its last legs, has been replaced, while more fencing within the reserve is being removed to allow the cattle and ponies freedom to roam at will.

Sunday and Tuesday volunteers have been working in the bird sanctuary area, clearing young birch to encourage low-growing plants – ling, orchids, sphagnum moss, reeds and grasses. This work is particularly beneficial for the 50 to 60 snipe that over-winter here, feeding in the soft ground for tasty invertebrates. Our next Sunday volunteer session is on 11 December, meeting at the Hothfield Heathlands car park at 10:00. If you haven't been before, please register here: <https://www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/volunteering-opportunities/ashford-area-practical-team-volunteer>

A new boardwalk to replace one of the muddiest stretches of path should be completed by now. It will improve access, but also protect the ground and reduce the need for people trampling the surrounding vegetation to keep their feet dry. The base is recycled plastic, the top is timber with anti-slip strips. We will see next year if the lizards prefer wood or plastic for basking.

And then, after the headline-grabbing baby bison at Blean (<https://www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/wilderblean>), there were Red-Letter Days here in mid-November with the arrivals of a great grey shrike and two Dartford warblers. 'Bloomin' amazing' was Ian Rickard's reaction. 'Makes all the thousands of hours of volunteer work worthwhile', commented a volunteer. This, the largest European shrike, *Lanius excubitor* (Latin *Lanius* = butcher, *excubitor* = watchman or sentinel) is an uncommon winter visitor from its breeding grounds in Scandinavia, less than 200 arriving each year. Here, it is a solitary and fiercely territorial bird, so the days this one spent on Hothfield, its ideal habitat, caused great delight. The size of a starling, it has a hooked beak, narrow black mask from beak to ear coverts, and grey plumage. It eats insects, small mammals and birds, using high perches or short hovering flights to scout and hunt, and storing the catch on any handy thorn or spike of barbed wire, hence the name butcher bird. Some prey is stored for several days to allow any toxins to disappear. Thus impaled, larger prey can be torn apart by the hooked beak, as its claws are not strong enough. Chaucer mentions it in the Friar's Tale.

The Dartford warbler *Sylvia undata* (Latin *undatus* = with wavy markings) crashed to ten breeding pairs in the 1960s, recovering slowly to over 3,000 pairs now, still restricted to mostly southern lowland heath and dry scrub and still on the UK Amber List of birds at risk. A small dark brown bird, it needs mature gorse bushes for protection in hard winters, and a good supply of spiders and caterpillars. Flimsy cup-shaped nests of grass, moss, wool and spider webs are built near the ground among heather and gorse, so are easily disturbed. We hope they will eventually breed here.

November's other bird highlights included: showy stonechats; hawfinches; woodlarks, fieldfares; around 50 siskin by the water

meadows; a hen harrier; red kite and raven; goldcrests, redwing, lesser redpolls, bullfinches, yellowhammers, green and greater-spotted woodpeckers, a jay, meadow pipits, fieldfares, thrushes and various finches.

I can only repeat, "Bloomin' amazing. Makes it all worthwhile."

There are lots of ways of supporting the Kent Wildlife Trust;

please visit <https://www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/get-involved> to find out about volunteering, membership and donations.

Margery Thomas

MORE ON HOTHFIELD HEATHLANDS FROM IAN RICKARDS

The work to improve the reserve for wildlife and visitors will continue through the winter and involve heavy machinery, so please take care and follow any safety signage. For more information, please visit <https://www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/hothfield-heathlands/precious-peatlands>

Many of the internal fences are being removed, allowing cattle and ponies to roam at will. Be prepared to come across them unexpectedly, and to control your dogs. With more rain, some paths will start to get muddy. As ever, we ask you to wear appropriate shoes/boots so you can stick to the paths and avoid damaging fragile path verges, which are valuable habitats in themselves.

Everyone is welcome to visit Hothfield Heathlands, but please remember that this is first and foremost a haven for wildlife. Please keep dogs close to you at all times, do not let your dog run and play off the paths and through the areas of heather and gorse. Make sure anything you bring with you leaves the reserve with you. Remove litter and dog mess, and place all dog bags in the bins.

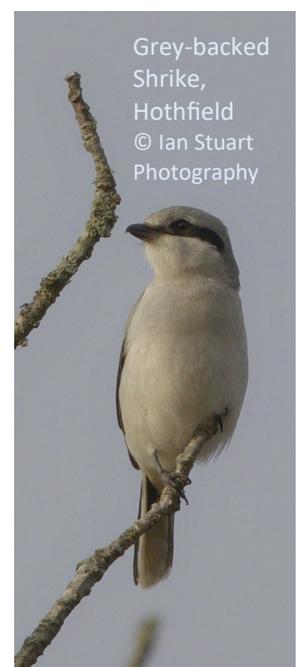
Hothfield Heathlands is one of the best spots for wildlife in the county; with your help we can keep it that way, and continue to provide safe habitats for the uncommon birds we welcomed in November. Thank you for your support this year.

Looking for Christmas present ideas? There's a fantastic range of Christmas presents on the KWT website <https://www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/wildlife-shop>

Ian Rickards, Area Manager, Kent Wildlife Trust



Dartford Warbler, Hothfield
© Val Butcher



Grey-backed Shrike,
Hothfield
© Ian Stuart
Photography

5 THE CONSOLATIONS OF BRIDGE

When I was 15, one of the school's cheerier prefects told me I must take up bridge. "You'll love it!" he said; so I promised I would – and did, 45 years later. Exams, and work, and marriage, and running a business had always got in the way. It was only when illness forced early semi-retirement that I got my act together.

Since then it is now a twice-weekly treat (Tuesdays at Little Chart, Thursdays at Lenham) I can only regret my tardiness. More gallingly, the twin prejudices I always harboured – that it would be fiendishly difficult, and bridge players would be frightfully serious – have proved rather silly.

Anyone wanting to play bridge socially, as opposed to professionally, can pick up the basics surprisingly fast. Though it might take years to perfect your skills, it's possible to acquit yourself among seasoned players in no time, provided you're prepared to invest in a teach-yourself book or even better – as I did – a handful of lessons.

As for bridge players: you do occasionally meet individuals who take it terribly seriously; but the vast majority regard it as easy-going entertainment. Though most players are over fifty, bridge is genuinely unisex, and players come from a remarkable variety of backgrounds, from farmhands to finance directors, mechanics to musicians. All are united by a desire to socialise around a card table instead of a coffee table – although we still get our hot drinks and biscuits, chats and laughs.

Bridge being a two-person team game, you obviously need a partner. This might appear a difficulty, but clubs are particularly adept at pairing up newbies, or finding partners for players whose regular is away. I met mine at the first trial game arranged for my benefit, and we've stuck together ever since. It's certainly a tidy way of bringing a solid new friendship into your life.

Beyond camaraderie, there's the added dimension of friendly competition provided by this ingeniously designed game, an addictive test of skill and luck. That rare blend accounts for much of the game's enduring appeal. Whether you think of it as an excellent excuse for socialising, or a mind-sport involving human contact, it works equally well. No fancy internet game can match that.

Bridge has its origins in whist, going back half a millennium. Its one slight disadvantage compared with, say, chess is that there are different rules around the world. The form we play, however, called Acol – which ultimately gets its name from the Kent village – is pretty well standard across Britain.

Joining a club costs peanuts, and the value for money is tremendous. You might get to play as many as eight other teams in a session. In this era where society has become strangely agoraphobic, not to mention adversarial, the mental-health benefit of mixing regularly with kindred spirits can't be overstated.

And then there's the game itself. Challengingly stimulating, by turns frustrating and exhilarating, it could have been tailor-made as a mental workout to ward off the effects of losing millions of brain cells naturally every year. I like to think of it as my brain's regular visit to the gym. I just wish I'd heeded that friendly prefect's advice long ago.

If you're interested in taking up bridge, see www.bridgewebs.com/littlechart/ or www.bridgewebs.com/kentschool/ for details, or email Sue Johnson at sue@sjohnson42.plus.com.

John Bunyard

HOTHFIELD POST OFFICE STORES

Sunday	0900 To 1200	Post Office closed
Monday	0900 To 1300 1400 To 1800	Post Office closes 1730
Tuesday	0900 To 1300	
Wednesday	0900 To 1300 1400 To 1800	Post Office closes 1730
Thursday	0900 To 1300 1400 To 1800	Post Office closes 1730
Friday	0900 To 1300 1400 To 1800	Post Office closes 1730
Saturday	0900 To 1300 1400 To 1800	Post Office closes 1230

Sheila's Homemade Jam: Damson with Damson Gin



Delicious and ever-so-fruity jam made with lovely Hothfield damsons and homemade damson gin.

Large (13oz/370g) £3.50

Made in small batches

Back by popular demand

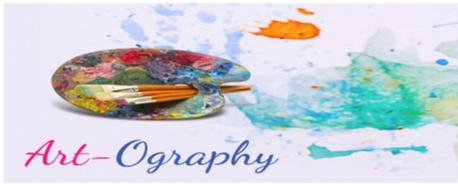
Makes an ideal Christmas gift

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☎ Sheila: 01233 624 105

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For more information on courses, areas covered and tuition fees, please go to www.learnitalianinkent.co.uk

TRADITIONAL MOLE CATCHING



(NO POISONS USED)

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Joseph Ellis
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Email: renewgardeningsservice@gmail.com
£15 per hour
Free no obligation quotes



HOTHFIELD NEWS

is edited by Hedley Grenfell-Banks and financed and published by Hothfield Parish Council.
Email: hedley@grenfell-banks.com

The deadline for the January 2023 issue is 20 December.

Letters and articles for publication are always welcome. Advertising is free to businesses working in, or for, the Parish of Hothfield. Email the Editor for information on advertising prices for outside companies.

Hothfield History Society

Season's greetings from Hothfield History Society

Best wishes for the festive period to everyone, including those past Hothfield residents reading the newsletter from around the world. In a spirit of recycling, here's an image of a Hothfield Christmas card from over 100 years ago.

Past resident, Mike Bates, recalled his childhood Christmases: "At Christmas a lot of the village lads met by the church, and the local farmers used to pick us up in a cattle truck and drop us off near to various woods; we had to walk through the woods making as much noise as we could to scare the pheasants out in front of the men with guns. We stayed out for hours and were paid ten shillings and got a bottle of pop each as well."

Whereas the Reverend Russell's research of Hothfield's history records a very specific Christmas request by the Archdeacon of Canterbury in 1580: "that in every parish there be provided before Christmas a comely pulpit, three or four feet higher than the pews be, with a convenient carpet or covering to lay upon the same when the sermon shall be." And in 1760 the Churchwardens accounts recorded that 2 pound of candles were bought for the singers at Christmas (which cost 1 shilling and 2 pence).

Ideas for Christmas

For a special local Christmas present you could do worse than surprise someone with a copy of the History Society's publication "Hothfield in the 20th Century", originally published in 1999, or the extensive research by Reverend Russell on the parish of Hothfield from 600AD up to 1902, which are both available on USB memory sticks and CD as Word/pdf documents. Also, the 20th Century book is available in paperback for £10, or CD/flash drive for £5; Reverend Russell's works are only available electronically for £10 (CD or memory stick).

For more information please e-mail: hothfieldmemories@hotmail.com or visit www.hothfieldmemories.org.uk where other publications are listed with Hothfield connections, such as the Wreck Hunter by Melody Foreman and other publications by our resident social history author.



Raising Awareness of the risk of flooding in Hothfield

Is your home at risk of flooding?

Over 5 million homes and businesses in England are at risk of flooding Is yours one of them?

The average cost of flood damage to a home is £30,000, and the mental health impacts are long lasting

You could be out of your home for an average of 5 months.

Crucially taking steps to prepare for flooding can reduce the damage to your home and possessions by around 40%.

With winter fast approaching, now is the ideal time to check if you're at risk of flooding: gov.uk/check-flooding

How can you prepare?

Sign up for warnings at gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings

Create a flood plan gov.uk/prepare-for-flooding
Find out how to protect your property here nationalfloodforum.org.uk

Check your insurance to see if you are covered
Have a flood kit of essential items at home
For help and advice call Floodline free on 0345 988 1188.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO IN A FLOOD?

FLOOD ALERT PREPARE	FLOOD WARNING ACT	SEVERE FLOOD WARNING SURVIVE
 Pack medicines & insurance docs	 Move things upstairs or to safety	 Follow emergency services' advice
 Visit the flood warning information service	 Turn off gas, water & electricity Move family, pets & car to safety	 Immediate danger? Call 999 Stay safe

Visit: check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk/plan-ahead-for-flooding

Help make a difference in your community and help in times of flooding - sign up to become a volunteer Flood Warden:

<https://www.kentprepared.org.uk/flood-wardens>

AUNT JEMIMA'S CHRISTMAS QUIPES

Melanie White: "My husband's idea of getting the Christmas spirit is to become Scrooge."

Garrison Keillor: "A lovely thing about Christmas is that it's compulsory, like a thunderstorm, and we all go through it together."

Kin Hubbard: "Next to a circus there ain't nothing that packs up and tears out faster than the Christmas spirit."

Shirley Temple: "I stopped believing in Santa Claus when I was six. Mother took me to see him in a department store and he asked for my autograph."

Kin Hubbard: "Nothing's as mean as giving a little child something useful for Christmas."

Jerry Seinfeld: "That's the true spirit of Christmas; people being helped by people other than me."

Larry Wilde: "Never worry about the size of your Christmas tree. In the eyes of children, they are all 30 feet tall."

Bob Phillips: "There are three stages of man: he believes in Santa Claus; he does not believe in Santa Claus; he is Santa Claus."

Johnny Carson: "The worst gift is a fruitcake. There is only one fruitcake in the entire world, and people keep sending it to each other."

Bernard Manning: "I once bought my kids a set of batteries for Christmas with a note on it saying, toys not included."

Author Unknown: "Christmas is a race to see which gives out first—your money or your feet."

Maya Angelou: "You can tell a lot about a person by the way they handle three things: a rainy day, lost luggage, and tangled Christmas tree lights."

Melanie White: "Sending Christmas cards is a good way to let your friends and family know that you think they're worth the price of a stamp."

Winston Spear: "I haven't taken my Christmas lights down. They look so nice on the pumpkin."

Melanie White: "A Christmas miracle is when your family doesn't get into a single argument all day."

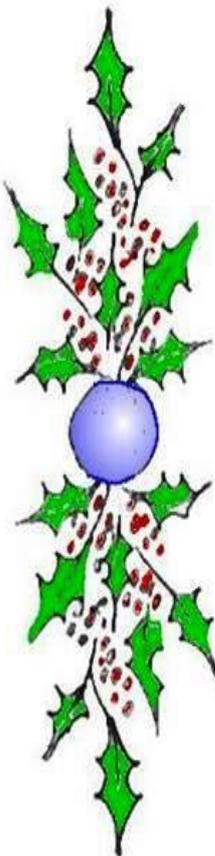
Andy Borowitz: "Christmas sweaters are only acceptable as a cry for help."



I'm writing this just after returning from the Remembrance Day march and service in Charing. I'm so proud of our young people and leaders. It was a wonderful experience. I'm also delighted that we had two young people in uniform at the Westwell service. Our two explorer scouts who are to represent us at the World Scout Jamboree in South Korea are trying to raise money to pay for their trip. On Friday 13th January we are arranging a quiz evening at our headquarters in Pett Lane. It would be lovely to see the hall full of teams. More details later but please save the date and get your teams together.

We are now getting ready for Christmas and looking forward to several more weeks of fun scouting before our Christmas parties

Terry
Group Scout Leader
07748818660



Saturday December 3rd

7:30pm to 11:00pm Hothfield Village Hall
Park Drive, Hothfield, Ashford TN26 1EQ
Only 5 minutes from M20 J9



**Exercise your
mind, your body
and your smile.**

**No experience or
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everything.

Barn Dance
Band: Hot Rats
Caller: John Sweeney

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Bring your own drinks & refreshments.

Further Dates:
Check Web site

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