

# GAYTON NEWS – SPRING 2021



Issue No 151

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With thanks to Gayton Parish Council for their continued support funding printing the Gayton News. This edition is issue 151, its almost 38 years old!

Thank you very much to Jens & Manja for their kind donation to the Gayton News.



Many of us are taking the wonderful opportunity to get outside into the fresh air and walk.

Have a look at 'Walking in Northamptonshire' website for hundreds of walks to download and print for free. There are also books of walks, contact details for all the

walking groups in the county and much more. Whether you want to walk on your own or with a socially distanced group all the information is there in one place. With walks from half a mile to twelve miles plus and a note of suitability for pushchairs and wheelchairs, everyone can find a walk to enjoy. [www.walkinginengland.co.uk/northants](http://www.walkinginengland.co.uk/northants)

### Litter Pick

The spring village litter pick take place through the week of Monday 12 to Sunday 18 April. If you would like to help clear our village of litter please contact me to arrange to collect litter pickers, high viz tabards and rubbish bags.

Thanks very much

Karen

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We were so pleased to welcome the children back to school on 8<sup>th</sup> March. We have really missed seeing all the children at school and having them back, will enable us to return to a sense of normality, albeit under slightly different circumstances.

It has of course been lovely to still see some of the children across our Federation at our hubs at

Gayton and Whittlebury, which were open for children of keyworkers. Staff across the four schools worked across the two school sites and have been admirable in their approach to many changes over the months. Teachers were still able to connect with children at home via remote learning and pupils rose to many challenges set by the teachers! Technology has really been invaluable; it has kept us all in touch for those especially at home and remote learning. The children have shown real courage and resilience through these uncertain times and all staff are excited to have them back in their individual schools.

Staff will be working hard behind the scenes to keep a safe environment for all, infection control will be of paramount importance. Following Government guidance, on our return we can reintroduce Physical Education which will be wonderful for the children and their personal and social development. A broad and balanced curriculum is planned which will focus on academic attainment and pupil well-being, support plans will be created where needed.

It is such good news we can continue with Forest Schools which has been a huge success. The children have learnt a range of outdoor skills which staff are busy planning to use back in school, with plenty of new and exciting resources to discover! We are well prepared with new waterproofs for all, so we can continue our learning outside whatever the weather!! Assemblies and VIP assemblies for the current time, will be held outside where the weather permits or will be held virtually. One of the children's favourite virtual lessons before Christmas was making their own Christingle with the lovely Rev. Karen guiding them through.

We welcome back Rev. Karen to the school this term to begin our outdoor collective worships, the children had their first sessions with Rev. Karen on Monday and really enjoyed themselves. We are lucky to have teamed up with The Saints Rugby Club who will be hosting a virtual Tackling Health programme with our children throughout the term.

This term we will be hosting a mufti day on 19<sup>th</sup> March to raise money for Red Nose Day along with another mufti day on 26<sup>th</sup> March- Purple Day to raise awareness for Epilepsy.

Our children were greeted with a fantastic 'Welcome Back' entrance on Monday along with their very own red carpet, it was so lovely to see their happy smiley faces again.

We would like to thank our wonderful parents for their home learning support and for all the messages of kindness we have received.



The Pheasants and the Hartleys kept their money in the family enabling Anne Hartley to move to Gayton sometime after 1722, a wealthy widow with a young family. She invested some of her money in providing suitable accommodation for them in the form of a newly built house which became known locally as 'Hartley's House'. On 1 June 1732 Anne Hartley junior, who had been her grandmother Bridget Pheasant's heiress, married Thomas Marriott, who had been heir to his Uncle, Thomas Litchfield of Gayton. The young couple invested their wealth in property in Gayton, too, but that is a story for another day.

Anne Hartley, widow, died on 15 July 1741 in Gayton. She left a Will that left her house in Gayton to her daughter Mary Hartley, thus providing a home for her unmarried sons and a dowry for her unmarried daughter.

Reverend Walter Griffiths, Gayton's Rector, wrote in 1753 that 'Hartley's House' was a 'new erected messuage' but whether it was newly built by and for Anne Hartley still remains to be discovered. In about 1751 Mary Hartley and her brother William Hartley sold to Richard Kent senior one 'newly' erected messuage and some small tenements and several closes. This sale was recorded in an Indenture of 1753 establishing an Agreement of Tithes payable on the property to the acquisitive Reverend Walter Griffiths, (who paid over the odds for the Church living of Gayton parish and was anxious to recoup his outlay) by Richard Kent senior, who not being a member of the landowning gentry, Reverend Griffiths feared that he may not be aware of his obligations!

And Whereas the said Richard Kent did afterwards purchase to himself in Fee a new erected messuage with the appurtenances situate standing and being in Gayton aforesaid with some small tenements or dwelling houses also in Gayton aforesaid standing near to the said new erected messuage and also several closes or inclosed grounds lands hereditaments lying and being in the parish of Gayton aforesaid of and from one Mary Hartley spinster and her elder brother William Hartley are now in the occupation of John Payne of Thrup and others and for which said premises purchased by the said Richard Kent of the said Mary Hartley and William Hartley the said Richard Kent and the former owners thereof have been used to pay to the former Rectors of Gayton aforesaid the yearly sum of £2 15s by like composition and agreement in lieu of tithes in kind.

Kent Archives, Ref: Hawley U850 T12/1 1753 Transcription: Rita Poxon

When James Hawley Esq was looking to buy Richard Kent's Estate at Gayton in 1757, he approached Revd George Tymms of Harpole, (a proper 'Mr Collins'!). Tymms spoke of Gayton Manor calling it a 'Great Mansion House' appealing to Hawley's desire to become a Country Gentleman. He next advocated the purchase of 'Hartley's House', which in 1757 was in the ownership of Richard Kent junior and on the market. Tymms described Hartley's House as a 'neat small house.' Implying it was a bit small for someone of Hawley's consequence to live in. But George Tymms had all the figures at his finger tips for James Hawley MD: Kent had bought the Estate for £950 and was renting the land to a tenant for £28 pa. Richard Kent's father, also Richard Kent, had already expended £300 or £400 on making the house his own.



Estate Late Hartley's of which the house and some ground is in Mr Kent's own occupation.  
The land is let to a tenant at £28 per annum Bought at £950  
Mr Kent never lived in the Great Mansion House which is an old but seemingly strong stone building. He had before bought Hartley's House which is a neat small house and he laid out 3 or 400 li upon that and made it his residence when in the county.  
Lincolnshire Archives, Ref: Hawley 6/2 1757 Transcription: Rita Poxon

John Darker's first appearance in Gayton was as a Freeholder when he bought Hartley's House in 1763.

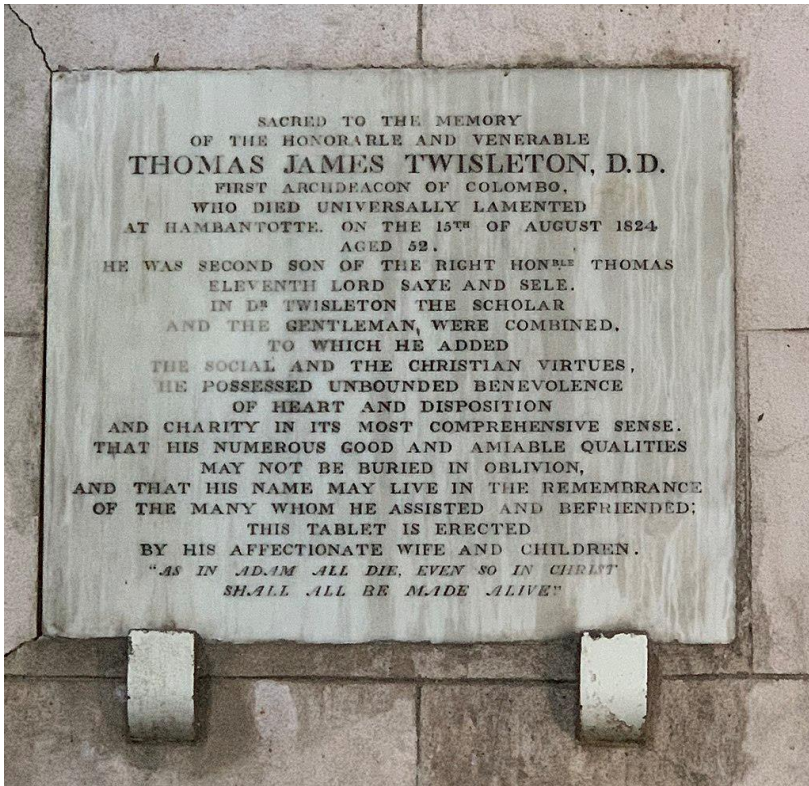
John Darker esq an eminent London merchant purchased a portion of the (Richard) Kent estate and adopted Gayton for his residence. He represented the Borough of Leicester in three parliaments and was one of the most active and useful members on all questions and committees connected with trade and commerce. There is an engraved portrait of him in Thoresby's Leicestershire, from a portrait in the Town Hall, Leicester. He died on 8 February 1784 possessed of the manors of Litchborough and Milton Malsor.  
Baker: History of Northamptonshire Vol 4: Gayton p277

John Darker was a Fellow of the Royal and Antiquarian Societies and was chosen for Committees on Trade and Industry in the House of Commons. He was Treasurer of St Bartholomew's Hospital, London and on arriving in Gayton soon became a Subscriber to the Northampton Infirmary and this allowed him to refer Gayton people to the Hospital from 1763. A great number of Villagers were treated for their ills in this way. In his Will Darker left a bequest of £50 to the Infirmary.



Prior to living in Gayton John Darker had lived in Red Lion Square, Clerkenwell, whilst he worked for his father's business as a Smithfield Hop Merchant. He took over from his father in 1759. Red Lion Square was developed by the lawyer Simon Michell who lived at No 63, the largest house on a double width plot. It was this house that Darker bought after Michell's death in 1750. Nearly all the houses had three storeys and attics. Most of them had a basement as well. The larger houses were three bays wide with 20 foot frontages with simple brick plat bands marking the storeys.

When John Darker bought Hartley's Estate from Richard Kent there was only one tenant John Payne of 'Thorp'. However, during his time in Gayton he bought and acquired the leases on 249 acres 6 poles of land in Gayton which he rented out to William Payne of Thorp, John Wheatley, Elizabeth George and Thomas Cockerill.



### Red Lion Street

John Darker was a good and successful man. The style in which the family lived in Gayton can be established from what are in themselves rather dry documents! Whilst others were blocking up windows to save money on the Window Tax, John Darker paid £5 1s tax in 1768 as Hartley's House boasted 49 lights. It made the most of its excellent view over the countryside. In 1778 he paid tax on his Liveried Servants: a Footman, John Binder; a Coachman, Richard Cue; and oddly, a Gardener, Thomas Cottings, who must have had several responsibilities to warrant his livery.

John Darker died in 1784, and probate on his Will was not granted until 1791, but Mrs Darker moved out 'lock, stock and barrel' in 1789. There were 4 days of sales of all their goods. Evidently, the Darkers lived a comfortable life with much entertaining! The comings and goings in the centre of the village must have been a good source of gossip for the Gayton Villagers!

The Sale was advertised in the local press, to be sold by Auction by Edward Cox on 2 September 1788:

The neat and genteel household furniture of the late John Darker, Esq at Gayton. Consisting of bedsteads, with Chintz and other furniture; fine seasoned goose Feather-Beds (*the 'bed' was a stuffed tick on which the people lay: the more beds the more comfortable you were! These beds were stuffed with goose feathers*), Blankets, Quilts and Counterpanes; several fine carpets; Drawer tables and chairs in mahogany, Walnut and wainscot (*oak*); Pier and dressing glasses; a large kitchen range almost new, and every other article of kitchen furniture; two eight day clocks; a large assortment of excellent bed and table linen; about fifty lots of china, particularly a table service of fine blue, containing 112 pieces; a tea set of 46 pieces and a **Punch Bowl of twenty two and a half gallons**. Three milch cows and other live-stock, with a variety of other useful articles. Newspaper: Northampton Mercury, 23 August 1788

In addition, a collection of pictures and prints, framed and glazed, were taken to London to Mr Hutchins Rooms in King Street and Hart Street, Covent Garden to sell by Auction:

The Genuine Collection of Pictures, a number of glazed Prints and Drawings of John Darker Esq deceased Brought from his late House at Gayton, Northamptonshire  
Newspaper: The Times, Monday 11 May 1789 p4, col A

When Mary Darker moved out of Hartley's House she rented it to some well-to-do people:

Reverend Thomas Fawcett took out insurance with the Royal and Sun Alliance Insurance Company on the property, and at the same time he was renting land from Mrs Darker until 1798.

In those years Thomas and Anne Fawcett had five children baptised at St Mary the Virgin, Gayton; Christopher Thomas James on 7 November 1790, Anne and Juliet, twin girls on 30 January 1794, Richard Twistleton on 11 June 1795 and John Hunter on 16 August 1796. Christopher Thomas James was buried, one month old on 21 December 1790.

Photo: DRD Lovell, Inside St. Peter's Fort Church, Colombo, Sri Lanka

The Honourable and Reverend Thomas James Twistleton paid land tax to Mrs Darker from 1799 until 1800 when she died. Thomas James and Anna Twistleton had Frederic Benjamin baptised on 12 September 1799 in St Mary the Virgin church, Gayton whilst living in Hartley's House. Also whilst in Gayton they rented the Ponds at Wood Farm, presumably to eat the fish but they may have enjoyed the Sport of fishing, too!

Mary Darker died on 14 March 1800 and was buried with John Darker at St Bartholomew the Less Church, London. Her Will had a most unusual preamble:

This is the Last Will and Testament of me Mary Darker late of Gayton in the County of Northampton, Widow First I devise that whether I die in or out of my Bed my Body may be laid out on the Feather Bed and the usual Cloaths laid over me as if I was asleep to awake again in this world till removed into the Coffin – and it is my request that my body may not be exposed for the purpose of washing but that I may be laid strait and my same only washed if necessary. I also desire that my body may be kept unburied as long as propriety will admit of and then interred in Linen in a Leaden coffin and my Funeral conducted in a plain and decent manner

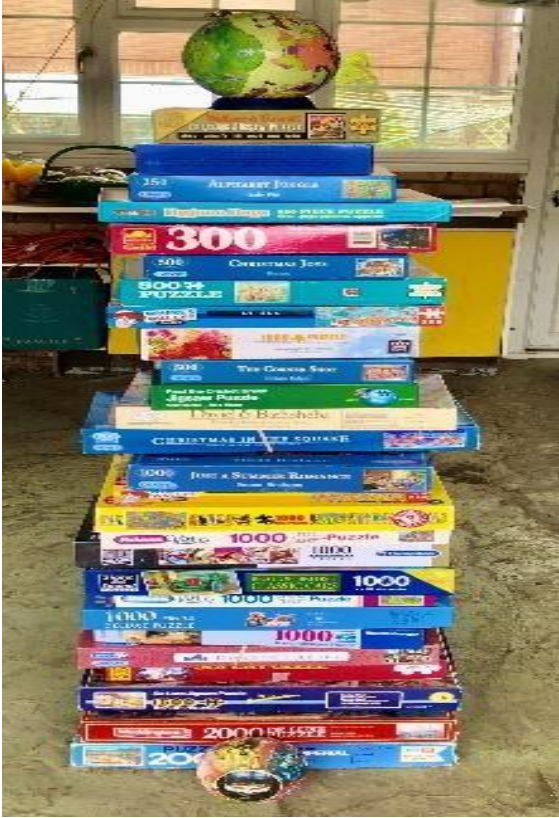
The National Archives: PROB 11/1338 Mary Darker. Transcription: Rita Poxon

Mary Darker's Estate devolved on Loveden Loveden and he rented the property to a Mrs Potts for a couple of years and then to William and Ann George, Farmers. The Estate finally devolved on William Blake who continued renting the property to William and Ann George who had lived there from 1805 to 1820 with the property deteriorating. This continued with Thomas Payne's occupancy. The entrepreneur in Reverend George Butler, Rector of Gayton, saw the opportunity to develop the estate and also to entice more of the well-to-do to move again to Gayton. Unfortunately, Thomas Payne was a sitting tenant and Reverend Butler did not wish to make him homeless himself, and insisted on William Blake doing the deed! Finally, on 3 April 1830 William Blake sent Thomas Payne a six-month notice to quit and in 1831 Reverend George Butler had the now-tumbledown, old Farmhouse pulled down.

Rita Poxon



## Gayton Jigsaw Puzzle Exchange



The Puzzle Exchange that we started last October is working well. We have a stock of puzzles in our garage, all donated, usually about 2 dozen, from 100 pieces up to 2000, mostly 500 and 1000 pieces and covering a wide variety of themes. Some are intended for children, some have large pieces – ideal for people with poor eyesight – and some are very challenging.

We charge £1 per 500 pieces and we encourage people to return them when they have finished them, so we can resell them. We donate all proceeds to Gayton and so far about £230 has been shared by the Church, the Village Hall and Gayton Educational Foundation, which makes grants to young people living in Gayton. At least as important as the fundraising element of the Exchange is the enjoyment that it seems to be providing to many in the village. Early on in the pandemic, we found that a few minutes every day with a jigsaw puzzle exercises and stimulates the brain as well as helping to relieve the

boredom of lockdown. It's been very satisfying to discover that so many others in the village feel the same way and have become regular customers and contributors to the Exchange. Every 10 days or so we advertise, via the Gayton Facebook page and the Email Messaging Service, the new puzzles donated to the Exchange. People let us know which puzzles they would like us to reserve for them and make an appointment to come and collect them or to browse our stock alone in the garage. So please keep on donating any jigsaw puzzles you have finished with and if you haven't yet been bitten by the puzzle bug, why not give it a try!

Barry and Wendy Steer. Tel: 58886

## Gayton Walkers

Not a lot has happened since the last Gayton News was published. In fact, no organised walks have been possible, but hopefully, there may be some progress as we come out of hibernation.

Colin and Sue Simmonds will, I am sure, be in contact when they can start again. In the meantime, do keep exploring the local footpaths and report any paths/stiles that need attention. I will then try to get the Chain Gang motivated to re-start their repair work. At present, they are "furloughed"!

If you have enjoyed discovering walking during "lock-down" and would like to join us, we would usually meet at Fiveways cross-roads on 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of the month at 10 a.m. for approx 2 hr walk. It sometimes means going by car to find a suitable starting point- usually a pub (I wish!) Robin Kelso



## **Gayton and Tiffield Community Minibus**

We collected our new Minibus from Stoke-on-Trent at the end of January. It is fantastic to drive and the front and rear-view cameras, electrically operated passenger door and electrically heated and adjusted side mirrors make it easy to set up and drive compared to our old minibus which we have owned and operated for 12 years.

Sadly, we are still restricted by the Covid-19 situation which limits our current service to providing essential transport services to our villages for those without access to transport. When the Covid restrictions finally allow us to commence our normal operations, which will probably be mid-summer, we can then start the process of expanding our service to include Eastcote, Astcote and Caldecote. This should provide us with more regular passengers which will assist in safeguarding the future of our service. We have also had several recent requests from residents in Rothersthorpe to provide a regular scheduled shopping service to their village as many residents have to walk approximately a half mile to the nearest bus-stop which limits the number of shopping bags they can carry on the return journey.

So hopefully we can soon start planning a consultation process, initially with the local Parish Councils in Rothersthorpe, Eastcote and Astcote which will include distributing flyers to elicit responses from potential regular users for a scheduled service to their villages. We will also start the process of trying to obtain a significantly increased annual grant from NCC. They have recently started funding several new community transport services that have replaced many of the scheduled services to surrounding villages as part of essential cost reduction measures. We can also explore the potential to obtain small annual grants from the Parish Councils in the areas that we serve as this will further support our planned extension of our services.

With new drivers including Pete Baxter and John Rogers from Gayton soon to join our dedicated team, a new state of the art minibus and the potential to increase our service area and obtain extra funding, the future does indeed look extremely exciting. So, our thanks to our dedicated team of drivers which includes Manja, Jens and David from Gayton and especially to Cate Gardner for her superb work with our finances. So, let us look forward to a summer heatwave and a brighter and Covid clear future.

Rae Spencer - Chairman - rae.spencer@btopenworld.com Tel: 01327-353352 – 07784 561268

## **Gayton Evergreen Club**

The last time I wrote about the Gayton Evergreen Club was after we had taken the 'window of opportunity' in September that allowed groups to meet in the Village Hall. Since then members have been unable to get together. We have however done our best to keep in touch with each other by telephone.

Gayton Evergreen Club will continue to warmly welcome new members, who are 55 and over, once we are able to do so. Full details of meetings, including timings and costs, will be available on the Gayton website or from one of the committee members.

If you are interested in joining this friendly and lively club when it reopens please contact one of the committee members Carol Coppock (859645), Jan Leeding (859275), Manja Ronne (859253), or Naomi Sheehan (859814).

Carol Coppock

## **Gayton Alms Charities**

Gayton Alms Charities have been established for over 100 years. Today they are called the 'Gayton Relief in Need Charity' and the 'Gayton Educational Foundation'.

### **Gayton Relief in Need Charity**

This charity exists to provide assistance to any person living in the Parish of Gayton\* who for whatever reason find themselves in need, hardship or distress. Usually this assistance is financial, with money paid directly to the successful applicant.

Examples of where this charity might be able to help are with the purchase of food, clothing, heating costs, and grants to assist with funeral expenses.

### **Gayton Educational Foundation**

This charity exists to provide assistance to people living in the Parish of Gayton\* who for whatever reason find themselves in need of financial help with their education. Money may be paid directly to the successful applicant but the trustees are able to grant money to organisations in the Parish of Gayton whose purpose is to educate or improve the lives of people through leisure-time activities.

Examples of where this charity might be able to help are in the provision of books, equipment, computer software, IT hardware, musical instruments, travelling expenses, music or dance tuition, residential educational experiences, university fees or anything else not normally provided or funded by an educational institution such as a school, college or university.

The charities receive their modest income from land rent and returns on investments. Trustees meet twice a year to review income and expenditure, and to consider application for assistance under the terms of the scheme for administering the charities.

Any villager who feels they might be eligible for help under the terms of either of the Gayton Alms Charities should contact the Chair of Trustees who will provide the appropriate application form. The Chair of Trustees is happy to offer general advice about an application and/or assist with the completion of an application form.

\*In exceptional cases the Trustees may give assistance to people living just outside the Parish of Gayton. These people must be able to satisfy the trustees that they ought to be treated as if they lived in the Parish.

David Coppock  
Chair of Trustees  
(01604 859645)



**Gayton Evergreen Club - down 'memory lane'**

Thanks to Carol Coppock for these wonderful photos from the Evergreens Spring Lunch in 2014







## Gayton Village Hall Management Committee

Many will be aware that the village hall is 'closed' during this uncertain time of the Coronavirus (Covid-19). With the government announcement in February, we are now working towards an 'opening date' of 17 May 2021 when we can re-commence activities in the village hall.

In preparation for 'resuming normal service' we have several maintenance activities scheduled for March and April. In February we discovered a minor roof leak which cause damage to the ceiling in several areas of the rear extension. We have been fortunate that our arched roof has survived for many years without the need for repair. However, the gable ends need some work, and a roofing contractor has been engaged to effect repairs as soon as possible.

To meet our health and safety commitment and a requirement of our village hall insurance, our electrical wiring needs regular checks (every 5 years). A local company will carry out this inspection in April.

During the period of 'closure' the committee room has been redecorated courtesy of the McConnachie family. We are fortunate to have many people in our community who volunteer their services to maintain 'vital services' such as our village hall.

We do plan to replace most of the external doors to the village hall this year, but we are struggling to find a trade that will give us a quote. If you know of a reliable company who replace doors please let me know.

Finally, during the roof inspections to determine the cause of the leak, we discovered that once again children and youths are climbing onto the flat roof of the village hall. I would like to highlight the dangers of this activity. Of course, there is the simple risk of falling during this activity. Additionally, there is the danger of falling through the roof – perhaps not expected by the inexperienced children and youths. AND most importantly, I discovered that the electrical cabling supplying the external lights had been ripped from its fixings to the fascia boards – the climbing activity might also have ended with electrocution. Electricity to the external lighting has been isolated and external lighting will only be available once we have had repairs to the 'wiring' completed.

For bookings contact our booking clerk, Mrs Victoria McConnachie, using the contact number 07841 720865 or e-mail [gaytonvillagehallbookings@gmail.com](mailto:gaytonvillagehallbookings@gmail.com)

David Ayre



**Thank  
You!!!**

**Many thanks to everyone who volunteers and works so hard to make Gayton such a special place to be. Thank you to everyone who has contributed articles and wonderful photos for this edition of the Gayton News, please keep going..... Please send me your articles etc for the Summer issue by Friday 25 June.**

**Best wishes Karen**

**[karen.cooper@mortimers.uk.com](mailto:karen.cooper@mortimers.uk.com)**

**Tel: 07753 638180**





## Foodbank update

As always, I must start with a huge thank you to each and every one of you who have donated since I opened the collection point at 20 Baker Street just over a year ago. I had no idea how successful it might be at the time of starting but I am pleased to say that to date, we have distributed over 700kg of donations as well as a generous monetary donation. The kindness in Gayton never ceases to bring a smile to my face.

As the country prepares to open up again, many families find themselves in a very different place to where they were 12 months ago. The Foodbank continues to support all those who need it, so if you are struggling to afford food the Foodbank can help. Ring 07724832043 Mon, Tue, Thurs, Fri between 10am-11.30am or email Towcester Foodbank at [info@towcester.foodbank.org.uk](mailto:info@towcester.foodbank.org.uk)

If you would like to donate, the current items most in need are;  
Sponge puddings (Twin packs) \* Tinned fruit (esp. pears & mandarins) \* Squash \* Tea (40, 80 or 160 bags) Tinned fish \* Tinned meatballs, casseroles, stew etc \* Pasta sauces (esp. carbonara) \* Rice (250g, 500g or 1kg packs) Savoury crackers (eg Ritz, Tuc or similar) \* Jam \* Rice pudding \* Washing-up liquid \* Laundry powder

**As the Foodbank storage space is limited we ask that in order to help manage stock levels of other essential items, please *avoid* making donations of pasta, soup, baked beans or tinned vegetables at this time.**

I wish you all a very Happy Easter and lots of Spring sunshine in the days ahead.

With best wishes, Sami

## CHRISTMAS QUIZ

There was much interest in the Christmas Quiz last year, the subject being living plants - flowers, shrubs and trees - being popular. Entrants all did very well - knowledge of gardening matters is obviously very great in the village,

Winners were:

1<sup>st</sup> place - Joan Wood

2<sup>nd</sup> place - Elaine Footitt and Sue & Colin Simmonds.

Congratulations to these, who scored 100 and 99 per cent respectively and all other entrants who scored very highly. Wendy Steer



**A big thank you to Wendy for yet another superb Christmas Quiz to keep our minds busy and enjoy**

## And Now It's Spring .....

The grass is green across the hill,  
But yellow blooms the daffodil.  
It's sunshine on a little stalk,  
A friendly flower, I bet they talk...

Of little kids, too long inside  
They burst outdoors to play and hide.  
Tracking mud and bringing bugs.  
Look, there's footprints on the rug!

Tiny whirlwinds, these little tykes,  
They skin their knees while riding bikes.  
They rip and roar, they're running wild!  
What fun it is to be a child.

It grows warmer every day.  
Shoo the children out to play!  
Pick the flowers, play in mud.  
Too much rain, here comes a flood!

My snowy, winter days are gone.  
I mourn them, but I hear a song  
Of birds in trees; wind chimes ring.  
I guess it might as well be spring!

