



# The Swaffham Crier

Volume 22 Number 2

February 1998



## Editorial

We are now on our second issue, having heaved a big sigh after the trauma of getting the January issue through your doors before Christmas! The team is learning on the hoof, so to speak, but we trust the end results are to your liking. We have introduced some items which we hope will become regular monthly features but we do need your contributions. So, calling all young Swaffham Prior residents - we are very keen that you have your own page to air your views, write letters, articles, poems or jokes - please send them to us. Likewise the recipe of the month - keep them rolling in! We would also like your comments on the layout of the magazine, where you would like the regular contributions placed to make them easy to find, where you would like the adverts, areas you think we should cover etc.

One decision made is that we will take it in turns to be 'Editor of the month' - writing the editorial and introducing a feature of the month which could be a serious or light hearted topic relevant to the village. So February is my turn and I have chosen - Neighbourhood Watch. Did you know that an elderly gentleman living alone on the outskirts of the village has recently been burgled twice? Andy Badcock is hoping to rejuvenate the Neighbourhood Watch scheme with the backing of the Parish Council. He has been attending cluster meetings involving the police and the surrounding villages. I think all of us will be aware of the scheme but do you really know about it and what it involves? Do read the special article this month and support the meeting on Monday 23rd February and let us know your views.

If you are a summer person like me, the only advantage of February over January is that it is one month nearer the lighter evenings and warmer days. The village seems in partial hibernation still and February looks like a quiet month. However don't forget the W.I, Village Gardeners and Ladies Circle with their excellent talks as well as social gatherings. The social life starts to blossom again with the PTA planning a Race Meeting on Saturday 28th at Reach Village Hall where you will be able to fulfill a lifetimes ambition to be a jockey or even a trainer for the night - do support it. There is another major highlight in the month - to lovers young and old enjoy the 14th!

*Hilary Mengham*

**Cover Picture:** Plate of Pisces by Ophir Catling



## Neighbourhood Watch

Swaffham Prior has had a Neighbourhood Watch scheme in place for several years, but in recent times it seems to have gone into a state of decline. Perhaps it is time we had a rethink and gave the scheme a kick start again. Certainly Andrew Badcock thinks so, as he has been attending the cluster meetings on behalf of the village with the backing of the Parish Council.

What is a Cluster Meeting you may ask, in fact what is Neighbourhood Watch? Neighbourhood Watch is a nation wide initiative against crime, instigated not by the police but by communities themselves. It is the eyes and ears of a community which helps to combat crime in the area. In fact it is run by the village for the village - a self-help group identifying the problems of crime within the village and targeting resources.

Paul Davies is our Community Beat Officer responsible for 7 villages: Burwell, Reach, Swaffham Prior, Swaffham Bulbeck, Bottisham, Lode and Quy. Sadly at the moment we are without a Special Constable for our area as the two occupants recently resigned. All of the villages have an operating Neighbourhood Watch scheme. The regular monthly Cluster Meetings are where representative co-ordinators of each village scheme meet to exchange ideas, discuss problems, have question and answer sessions with Paul Davies or have talks from professionals relevant to crime prevention.

So is crime a major problem in our village, is it a problem in a rural area?

In 1997 there were 333 recorded crimes in the area covered by the 7 villages - this means they were reported to the police. Of this number 133 were from Burwell, 83 from Bottisham and 33 from Swaffham Prior (10% of the total). Of these 33 there were 2 assaults, 3 house burglaries, 7 burglaries from garages/sheds, 4 other thefts, 5 car thefts, 11 thefts from cars, and 1 taking without owners consent. These were just the reported cases and is probably the tip of the iceberg and does not include petty thefts and vandalism.

Perhaps it is the fear of crime that effects us all and makes us feel so vulnerable. The media highlights and focuses our attention to the violent nature of some crimes and in our everyday village life perhaps the perception of crime is greater than reality. However for those of you who, have experienced a burglary will know the trauma of violation and the time it takes to recover, if ever, from it. A thriving and viable Neighbourhood Watch Scheme goes a long way to help allay those fears and to provide support for the more vulnerable in our community like the elderly and house-bound.

How does the Scheme work? There is no standard format or blueprint, it is up to the village to organise it to suit their needs. But the most common format is like a pyramid system - having 'street co-ordinators' reporting to an 'area co-ordinator' who are in touch with other area co-ordinators and the police. Each co-ordinator must register to be known to the police and sign the Data Protection Act. They will then receive 'voice mail' from the police which is up to date information on suspicious persons or vehicles.

In Swaffham Prior we have 14 co-ordinators scattered across the village. However, according to Andrew the police list currently numbers 7 as having signed the Data Protection Act which indicates the state the scheme is in in our village.

This is something we can all become involved with. What we need is a co-ordinator for each street in the village, probably around 12 people. A street co-ordinator must be someone who is willing, has the time and the initiative and cares. Apparently there are resources available in crime prevention so now is the time to do something.

Andrew is organising a meeting in February as a start to rejuvenating Neighbourhood Watch in Swaffham Prior. If you feel you have a problem in your road come to the meeting. If you are already a co-ordinator come along and if you feel you would like to become a co-ordinator for your road come along and hear what is involved. It is important.

*Hilary Mengham*

***Come Along To***  
***The Neighbourhood Watch Meeting***  
***on***  
***Monday 23rd February***  
***at the***  
***Red Lion***  
***at 7.30 p.m.***

## From Our Reporter at the Parish Council Meeting



1997 was truly amazing. In May "New Labour", in December "New Crier". The similarities are clear. Self-discipline, the common good, the people's paper, advanced technology, and firm direction from above. Any "blue pencil" will be for the good of all. Run by a editorial team of five it is not yet clear who is to be the Tony Blair, the Peter Mandelson, the Harriet Harman. Also in 1997, a "New Clerk" of the Parish Council. And blow me if he doesn't write a pretty full PC report in the last *Crier*. Where does that leave the "Crier Reporter"? Well, for a start it means that he/she need no longer bother about any facts. This is welcome because facts are pretty tricky things and have always been an irritation. "New Clerk" can report on those. "Crier Reporter" will concentrate on other matters and with luck there should be little repetition.

But it's a lot of changes to cope with and it was such a relief to see the January Meeting Agenda. There it was with all the old favourites - Barston Drove, the Travellers, Neighbourhood Watch, Speeding - with the climax being **Play Equipment**. The sight of this nearly brought tears to my eyes as I remembered the years of debate it has consumed, and I could only feel gratitude that this subject continues to divert and to provide so much pleasure.

Henry the Chairman opened the meeting, but alas, alack, I soon discovered that he was "New Chairman". Fast, affable, witty, he rattled the meeting along and it finished at 8.23! "Is this a record?" was the general satisfied cry. It probably is and was helped by the absence of any CCC and ECDC representatives. And it was a jolly good thing that James Fitch was abroad as Elaine fired a furious salvo at the Park and Ride Scheme. With eyes flashing and raven hair whirling in the wind she scorned and lambasted James' advice to her at the November meeting to "give it a chance". "I've given it a chance and it is a disaster", she thundered; "anyone who travels knows they can't reach it because of the congestion." She punched her message out, detailing the disaster. In the middle of this Andrew Badcock muttered "Leave it all to John Prescott", but I wonder whether he really meant this. There was much more from Elaine and Martin supported her. One day he actually left his car in Barnwell Road and walked the rest of the way into Cambridge. Even the A14 gets clogged because of the Milton Road Park and Ride. I hope that James returns from holiday refreshed, as early morning drivers have four weeks of purgatory before the next meeting to keep their feelings at boiling point.

Andrew reported on the Neighbourhood Watch and when there is eventually a public meeting he will have done all the groundwork for the

village to have a top of the range version. All he will need is people. So if you are favour, tell him now. Maybe the meeting is being delayed until the Village Hall is ready. Certainly the PC cannot wait, and members eagerly enquired about progress as they groaned and squatted down on the tiny toddlers' chairs. Rogers Road is to have "French Drains". "What are they" some asked. William Hague's star is rising as some responded "We don't know. But if they're French they won't be any good." Soon Rogers Road residents will be putting on their faded blue overalls, wrapping onions round their necks and calling each other Frenchy.

A member asked if there had been a reply to the PC letter sent to "the society holding all the money" and the answer was "No". The "society" in question is the Sports and Social Club (SSC). The letter (with a copy to Malcolm Hall chairman of SSC) had been sent to John Plant of the Fenland Country Fair who had laid down certain conditions in 1988 when £11,000 was donated for an expansion of facilities at the sports ground. (John Norris was President of the Fair in 1988). The conditions made the PC in effect the watchdog of the money, though alas, the dog had gone to sleep over the years. The conditions stipulated that the money is "kept in an account which the Parish Council sees fit for the purpose".

As the PC has had no report from SSC for the Annual Village Assembly over the last 4 years or so, it wants to know whether the present account is "fit for the purpose" and the amount (with interest, estimated at £14-15,000). More important another condition is that "if the project failed to materialize" the money should be transferred to the PC for "upkeep of any other project" that the Fenland Fair has inaugurated or supported in the village. The project certainly hasn't materialised.

So the PC is putting together the names of people on the committee (including Malcolm Hall) and it is thought there is Andy Perris, John Berry, possibly Finny O'Dowd and others. Peter Mengham has been appointed the PC representative. Maybe the PC intends to tell committee members that they cannot duck their heads as they each have a personal responsibility for that money, which is for public use in the village.

Surprisingly no-one enquired about the use of the new free pooper-scoopers which so impressed the PC at the November meeting. Poop is still a problem and for a long time I've been puzzled about Coopers Lane. It is generally poopfree for several weeks and then suddenly it becomes poopfull for a few weeks. It appears to follow a pattern. It started to become poopfull again a day or two before the PC meeting. Is this a clue? Does anyone know the answer?

*Alastair Everitt*

## Let us Now Praise Honourable Men

Those Brutii who have sought to implement the Government policy of removing cars in favour of public transport.

They have created an excellent new Park & Ride facility on the Quy side of Marshalls car sales area, with a predicted journey time into Jesus Lane of approximately 15 minutes. **‘Oh good’** we cry! ‘Let us therefore use it to get to work, to the station, to the theatre, for our special visit to our favourite restaurants. So easy and cheap. Leave the car there, jump on a bus and let the driver cope with the traffic’ ....*Well no, sorry, it does not work quite like that!* To free up a bus lane, all other traffic is now forced into one lane while the buses can romp along at thirty miles an hour and hence the 15 minute journey...*Well no!* The road past Marshalls is too narrow for a bus lane, so the Park & Ride buses have to join the now congested queue of traffic until they reach the Fen Ditton traffic lights! *This bit took the bus in which our researcher was travelling, just under forty minutes, and then she had to wait for another bus to take her from Drummer Street to Brooklands Avenue where she works. Also delayed because of congestion!...So, no good for getting to work then!* ‘Never mind, we’ll use it to get to London. We can take the Park & Ride, catch a coach from Drummer Street, (much cheaper than the train) have a day in town, followed by a leisurely tea, wait for the rush hour to clear itself, jump on a return coach at about 6 p.m. and be home by about 8.30’ *Well No!* The coach takes 2 hours + and the last Park & Ride is at 7.43!...So, no good for a day out then! ‘Oh well, we can use it for a trip to the cinema, there must be a couple of late buses for people who would like to do that sort of thing!’...*Well No! Sorry!* ‘Nothing to the station?’ *Sorry!* ‘Nothing for me then at all?...*Well No!* but you will find an interesting bit of congestion in Quy or sometimes in Swaffham Bulbeck where traffic is held up trying to get to the A14 roundabout and that must reduce the number of accidents...*Well No!* the latest figures show etc.... but congestion is up by 45%!

Oh well, the Brutii might get it right one day!

Please may I make a suggestion!.....Ban all vehicles other than Park & Ride buses from entering or leaving Cambridge between the hours of 07.30 to 9.30 and 16.30 to 18.30 every weekday....Create very large new car parks well out of town, and set up a useable public transport system similar to Sheffield, with buses running between 06.00 and 01.30 every day except Sunday.



**John Fidoe**

## Trees in the Conservation area of the village.

Many of you may recall a news item at the end of December where a lady in Norfolk was taken to court and fined for having a tree in her garden reduced in size to give it a better chance in a gale.

Unknowningly, her part of the village was in a Conservation area so she should have had planning permission to have such work done.

If anyone in the Conservation area of the village feels the need to have similar work done to trees on their property, Mr. Mark Feather at East Cambridgeshire District Council would be only too pleased to advise and make a site visit if necessary. (Tel: 01353 665555 Ext. 336).

A map of the Conservation area can be seen by prior arrangement at the Parish Clerk's house.

*Andrew Camps*



**Advance**

**Notice for**

## Mobile Library Users

New timetables have been drafted as below, to take effect from April 1st, 1998. Owing to changes re Local Government reviews, Cambridgeshire will lose two of its mobile libraries to Peterborough City Council **and** increase its work load. Thus the routes and timetables will be re-organised. Please look carefully at the proposed changes and let us know if you have any comments. These are **DRAFT** timetables.

Thus Swaffham Prior's visits will be on alternate **Mondays** (not Thursdays as now). It is also proposed that the stop at Rogers Road is cancelled.

Mobile: Ely

Route 5

(Alternate Mondays)

- |                                     |               |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Swaffham Bulbeck, High Street    | 11.00 - 11.20 |
| 2. Swaffham Bulbeck, Commercial End | 11.25 - 11.45 |
| 3. Swaffham Prior, Post Office      | 11.55 - 12.15 |
| 4. Swaffham Prior, School           | 12.20 - 1.30  |
| 5. Swaffham Prior, Chapel           | 2.30 - 2.40   |
| 6. Reach, Fair Green                | 2.55 - 3.15   |
| 7. Upware                           | 3.35 - 3.45   |

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(Apologies for misreporting January dates - my fault. Tricia Harrison)

## **Electricity Supply Reliability Improvement**

Eastern Electricity's contractor, ESB International started work on the 11,000 volt overhead line refurbishment programme in mid December 1997. Lines at Bottisham Hall and Lode were completed by early January 1998. It is anticipated that work on the remainder of the overhead circuit between Burwell and Bottisham will be completed before the end of March 1998.

If you want any further information, please call Richard Unwin, Networks Projects on Cambridge (01223) 865311.

## **1998 Swaffham Prior Festival - May 16th - 25th**

Everyone who has read the January *Crier* will, we hope, have noted that there is another village Festival this year. Because there has been an influx of new people into the village since 1996 it seems a good idea to tell them what to expect, and at the same time to whet the appetite of everyone else.

The aim of the Festival is threefold:-

- \* to bring together residents of the village;
- \* to enjoy all manner of events in this very beautiful village;
- \* to raise some money for the benefit of the community.

Previous festivals have contributed to the restoration of the church bells, to the screens used for hanging art exhibitions, to the repair of the organ in St Cyriac's, and to the current alterations to the Village Hall. In 1998 any funds raised will go towards buying a portable touch-sensitive electronic piano/keyboard for use in the churches and the Village Hall.

The Festival dates are May 16th-25th which is a little earlier than our usual July timing. Change is often a good thing, and we trust it will be so for the 1998 Festival.

This year's programme will be both similar and different to previous ones. Yet again we shall have talent from outside the village and from within. There will be a concert by Ian Moore's Cambridge Voices supported by a 60-strong Swiss choir, a one-man exhibition of paintings by a Norfolk artist, a talk on our local history by a Cambridge historian, a Question Time with an invited panel of "wise men and women" and a visiting choir for a service at St Mary's. Woven into this framework will be some old favourites: karaoke, brass bands, film show, dancing, quiznight, a quarter peal on the bells, open gardens, flower displays, cream teas, volleyball contest and beer tent. This year the Festival will open with the Village Feast in the refurbished Village Hall. Details of this programme and your booking form should reach you in



early April.

As you can imagine each event involves a lot of backroom work. If anyone would like to be involved, please let either of us know. We should be grateful for offers of help however small or large. People are needed to deliver programmes, display posters, act as ushers at events, tend bars, help with refreshments, move and set out chairs, and sit in at displays. In particular we need volunteer stewards to spend an hour or two at the art exhibition in St Cyriac's on both weekends and during the week. It is not arduous and it can be sociable and fun.

"And finally", we hope that there is at least one event in the programme to appeal to and be enjoyed by every resident of Swaffham Prior. See you at the Festival.

*Elisabeth Everitt (742974)*  
*Francis Reeks (743693)*



## **The Bottisham Players**



The Bottisham Players' next production will be "Table Manners", a classic, West-end comedy by the famous author Alan Ayckbourn. "Table Manners" is part of his 'Norman Conquests' trilogy. Norman's amorous weekend plans with his sister-in-law are thwarted by other in-laws, with very amusing results.

The play, directed by David Coles, has a talented cast including Rosemary Jolley, Jane Seakins, Lynda Ibbitt, Alan Milne, Grahame Radford and Richard Clarkson.

It will be staged in the Drama Studio at Bottisham Village College on 26th, 27th, 28th February at 8.00 pm. Saturday's performance will start at 8.15pm.

Tickets are £5 Adults, £4 Senior citizens/children available from Lushers newsagents, Bottisham or telephone Cambridge (01223) 812911.

*Philip Routley - Chairman*  
Cambridge (01223) 812693

## ***Congratulations....***

To **Ron and Betty Prime** who have won the 'Gay Bulleid' Award and who will be proudly displaying the painting of the windmill which they keep for a year.



## Festival Volleyball Contest

After discussions with last Festival's Tug-of-War captains it was agreed to have a Volleyball Contest this year. It will be mixed volleyball. As before there will be four teams from different parts of the village. If anyone is interested in playing contact the captain of your area.. The four areas are:-

A) The Bawds (Cage Hill, Lower End, Rogers Road -- Gregg Cotner 743891)

B) The Thargh Warriors (Tothill, Greenhead and Adams Roads -- Tim Doe 743656)

C) The Highlanders (Fairview Grove, Mill Hill and Heath Road -- still need a captain!)

D) The Fen Fun Guys (High Street, Station Road and down the Fen -- James Willmott 743472)

The Festival Volleyball match will take place on Town Close on the afternoon of Sunday 17th May, starting at 3.00pm. Full details and simplified rules will be supplied to captains nearer the time.

For those who don't know, or who choose to forget, the result of the 1996 Tug-of-War was:- Fen Fun Guys 8, Highlanders 7, Bawds 3, Thargh Warriors 0.

*Alastair Everitt*

### Bottisham Village College Music Society

**Friday 6<sup>th</sup> February 1998 8.00 pm**

The **Celebrity Concert** is cancelled due to illness of Helen Crayford.

Instead, there will be a recital by: **Andrew Lamb - Spinnet**

Tickets £4.50- £3.00 concession at the door



### “Red Lion” Tankard

The winner of the hand-painted Tankard by Barbara Jones in the recent Village Hall raffle was Rev. Mark Haworth. The winning number was drawn by Barbara and the sum raised for the Village Hall funds totalled

£200.



*Village Hall Management Committee*

## The Seven Year Glitch

"What ho, Greeves! Pack the thermals and the green wellies, we're spending Christmas with the Fowlports in deepest Cambridgeshire. We haven't visited the damp fens since 'Sticky' Mudlowe was up at Trinity reading the small ads." Greeves said something about "going up" to Cambridge being a geographical absurdity, mixed a cocktail and got on with the packing.

To rise before noon at the Fowlports on Boxing Day is a serious error of judgement. I was just tucking into my second platter of scrambled eggs and delicious devilled kidneys, when Aunt Priscilla sailed into the breakfast room like a camouflaged frigate, and whisked me off, with assorted children and canines, to witness the annual confrontation of the Swaffhams. Now for me a Christmas hockey match is only one step up from a dip in the silly old Serpentine. On the other hand, Greeves seemed almost enthusiastic, but then he smelled the chance of winning a fiver.

For half an hour or so there didn't seem too much going on. The tide of battle ebbed and ebbed between the Bulbecks and the Priors. The teams changed ends. Greeves thought it "a fascinating tussle of tactics." "Two equally matched colossi, two noble, horn-locked stags", he said. "More a question of a lot of chaps and chapesses who'd rather be in the local hostelry, running about to keep warm", I ventured; only to receive a withering look from aforementioned aunt. As Greeves pointed out, with all the aplomb of one of those professional commentator johnnies, "It's a game of two halves." (Four quarters to be exact, but I've learned not to point out such irrelevances to the omniscient Greeves).

Once the ministering angels brought out the citrous wedges and the jolly old mulled claret, things took a distinct turn for the better. The Bulbeckians swept forward in a ten minute burst of inspired athleticism. What's more they took the ball with 'em and scored two goals in as many minutes!

Stung by this double blow, the valiant Priors (mixed with a few sporty nuns) rallied, and to quote my very own John Motson, proceeded to "camp out" in the Bulbeck half, and "lay seige" to their opponents' goal. Greeves meanwhile was urging on the pale ranks of the Priors like Haig at the battle of the Somme. Wave after wave threw themselves, and occasionally the ball, at the entrenched Bulbeckians. To no avail. When all else failed, there was this goalie chap hitting and kicking the ball away as if it were a live grenade - "Just like Horatio holding the bridge." (Greeves again! Amazin' fellow, even knew the man's Christian name.)

At last the whistle blew, the foaming tankards beckoned. Bulbeck, it

seemed, had won a famous victory, the first in seven years. The winners were refreshingly modest in their triumph. None of that ridiculous huggin' and kissin' one sees on the television - despite a sprinkling of the fair sex!

The Priors were up for a bit of what Greeves, rather morbidly, called "a post mortem". The captain said it was "a defeat of biblical significance." All that padre-like stuff goes right over my head, but Greeves said it was to do with "plagues in Egypt and magical numbers." Someone else blamed the Hale Bopp comet. According to Greeves, in that case it will be about 4,000 years before Bulbeck wins again!

"They lacked a striker you see, sir", said Greaves on the way to the welcoming mine host. "That's not the way it looked to me, Greeves. I saw one of the Bulbeck lot laid out cold and another poor fellow led off covered with blood." "Quite so, sir", said Greeves wearily in that tiresome tone he sometimes adopts. "Smart fellow your man, Greeves", said Aunt Priscilla later - "Took a tenner off me." When next seeing him I remarked "Had a bit of luck I hear, Greeves." "More of a certainty wouldn't you say, sir. Given the absence of a striker on one side and a semi-professional in goal on the other." "But, Greeves, why were you cheering on the Priors lot when you didn't want them to win?" "Ah sir, encouraged by my enthusiasm and suspecting I had inside information, your aunt increased her stake."

Greeves then lowered his noble brow and whispered "If we spend Christmas here next year, sir, may I suggest a small wager on the Priors? Your aunt is planning to turn out for this year's losers and I happen to know she was called 'Scyther' Fowlport at Roedean."

Bring on the paramedics!

*Tony Bowers*

PS. The generosity of the hockey fans on Boxing Day and the excellence of Rod Smith's mulled wine resulted in a cheque for £53.00 being sent to Magpas. Thanks to all concerned.

*Alastair Everitt*

## **Burwell and District Day Centre**

Our friends in the Day Centre had many wonderful events over Christmas. We had a coach trip to a Hunstanton Hotel for an early Christmas lunch. We had two further days of our own Christmas lunches with outside entertainers and also a special New Year's Eve lunch. We went by coach to the Tattersall's Carol Concert, to the Bottisham Pantomime, to the Country and Western Concert at the King's Theatre in Newmarket, etc. The list is endless and all events were greatly enjoyed by friends and helpers alike.

An amazing group of Burwell children staged some concerts for us, presenting us with a cheque for £1,000. There is definitely nothing wrong with the modern generation!

I must mention the major appeal we are launching to raise £25,000 for a new ambulance. Our present vehicle, which was originally bought second-hand is becoming increasingly unreliable and expensive to run., We are experiencing many mechanical faults including the sliding door sliding off regularly! We were unsuccessful in our application for a Lottery Grant last year but are trying again this month. However, even if we should be successful, we must be prepared to match any funding offered to us.

If you can help us, **please** put a donation, however small, in the enclosed envelope and leave it at either the Swaffham Prior Post office or at my house. Alternatively, you can phone me and I will collect it. Remember, this minibus is for the use and pleasure of elderly Reach and Swaffham Prior residents. On their behalf, many thanks

*Shirley Wilkins*  
4 Adams Road  
Tel: 741638



***Race Night***  
**with a difference!!!!**

**Saturday 28th February**  
Starters Orders 8 pm  
at  
**Reach Village Hall**  
**Tickets £3.50 each - supper included**  
Bar available  
**If you've ever fancied being a jockey, now is your chance!!!!**  
**Tickets available from:** Claudine Bateman  
742317, Mandy Manchett 610405,  
Penny Cannings 742184 or School Office 741529



# Children's Corner



## *Overheard in the playground*

“What do you call a teacher with no body, arms or legs”?

“A Head Teacher”

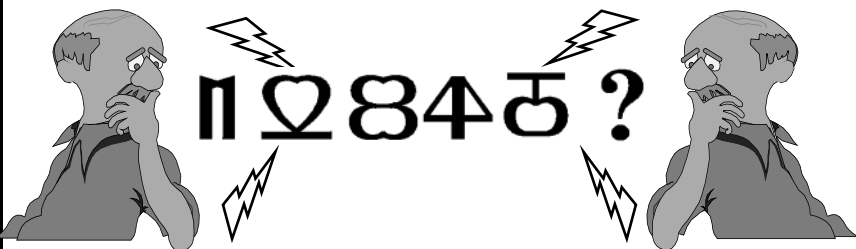
“What is a wasps favourite ice-cream”?

“A ‘Hornetto’..”

“What comes out of the wardrobe at one hundred miles an hour”?

“Sterling Moth!!!”

## **Children's Puzzle** - *for children young and old!*



## **HIEROGLYPHICS**

Can you draw the missing hieroglyphic replacing the question mark?

Answers, including name and phone number, to CARTERS COTTAGE OR Kent House by Feb 14, please. First out of the hat wins a special EGYPTIAN PRIZe!

*All prizes kindly donated by the Sculpture Gallery, Cambridge,  
tel: 01638 741182.*



## Letters to the Editors



Dear Editors

### **Police Helicopter**

I have replied directly to Mr David Carrington of South Lodge, Swaffham Prior in response to his letter in the December issue of the *Crier* as follows:

“I received a copy of the Swaffham Prior Newsletter from Councillor James Fitch within which was a letter from you relating in part to your views of the Force Helicopter.

The information that was quoted by Mr. Fitch was supplied to me at the last Local Consultation Group meeting at Cottenham Village College. The helicopter has been of great assistance to detect and prevent crime and has frequently been used to assist my Officers in their duties. We are certainly in favour of it here.

I have heard very few people express any opposition to it and indeed at the last Local Consultation Group meeting there was overwhelming support for it. Councillor Fitch clearly has an interest in this subject and I have therefore copied this letter to him.

I hope I have been able to reassure you that the Force Helicopter has been, and will continue to be, of great help to local Policing.”

**D H Howell**

Inspector

Histon Police Station

Dear Editors

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### **Eastern Electricity**

I'm sure many people were heartened by the somewhat belated apology from a representative of Eastern Electricity for the interminable history of power interruptions in this area. These overhead line faults are so common that they seem to have been accepted as inevitable by people living away from large residential areas where supply is more rarely interrupted.

The writer in last month's *Crier* states that 'Eastern Electricity will implement a programme to improve supply reliability to customers this year, by rebuilding and/or refurbishing the overhead lines'.

I started my career with Eastern Electricity at a time when the rural network was being developed immediately after the industry was nationalised the private sector (having largely ignored the needs of country folk), and was engaged in many long and fruitless discussions with colleagues as to the pros and cons of supplying rural areas by overhead

rather than underground cables. The faults in this, as in most other areas, are caused - as EEG readily admits - by 'wind borne debris (twigs, branches, straw etc), lightening and impact by large birds'. To avoid these obvious and predictable faults, causing for instance the recent '100,000 homes without electricity' for days on end, the simple solution would seem to be to put the cables underground as they are in towns and cities. The reason they are not buried - as water mains and gas mains and oil supplies and cable television and telephones are - is simply cost. Cost to the supplier, who is making fabulous profits anyway. The cost of not sinking the cables is borne very nearly entirely by the consumer - in loss of business, loss of time, loss of heating, lighting and power - always in the worst possible weather conditions - loss of safety for old people and children, and loss of peace of mind.

Of course it is more expensive, initially, to underground the electricity network. Nobody in the cable television/telecom industry hesitated for a moment about sinking their ducts and cables not only through towns and villages but along country roads as well, as we have seen. I have never been able to extract from anyone in the electricity industry any honest financial assessment calculated on a long term basis, of the two methods of power distribution. The human cost is incalculable.

Finally, the disfigurement of our precious countryside with pylons and cables is too obvious a profanity to need comment .

(I have sent a copy of this letter to Eastern Electricity).

Sincerely

**Ron Prime**  
1 Adams Road

Dear Editors

### **Post Office**

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After the sad loss of my mother, Mrs Elsie Smalley (nee ) who had lived in Swaffham Prior for 87 years, I was browsing through one of her Parish Magazines, an entry of which I think could add a little earlier history to our village Post Office (December *Crier*).

April 1918

Burials

April 1st Frederick Clark, Postmaster, aged 67

Mr Clark had worked at the Village Post office for 50 years, during 38 of which he had been Postmaster. In that time, he had seen great changes, from the office being a humble one of the old style to its' becoming the important place of business which it is now.



If my maths are correct, it seems we had a Post Office here in 1868. Lets hope our village Post Office is still here for another 130 years.

Yours sincerely

*Joan Sheldrick*  
21 Fairview Grove

Dear Editors

### **Neighbourhood Speed Watch**

In the December issue of the *Crier*, Mr. Chesterman raised the question of speeding vehicles passing through the village. He suggested that traffic calming measures needed to be considered. The County Council have since said that money is not available at the moment.

May I enter a word of caution. It seems that a research team from the Transport Research Laboratory has found that the introduction of traffic calming measures was not well received in some villages. The Cambridgeshire village of Thorney, near Peterborough, was one such village. The objections were centred around the increase in noise levels as drivers accelerated and braked hard between humps. Residents also thought there was increased vibration from the low frequency sound of commercial vehicles negotiating humps. Lorries made a tremendous impact and small commercial vehicles did not slow down because the drivers were not going to pay for repairs.

Whilst vehicles do exceed the speed limit, some drive within the limit but too fast for the conditions which may prevail at the time. The latter is difficult to deal with but the former should be within the realms of police attention. However, I have found that most people over estimate speed and distance and so it is necessary to know at what speed vehicles are travelling. One might hope that a police type radar gun could be borrowed from a council department but that is perhaps hoping for too much. By adopting the following procedure, an approximate speed may be obtained by two people, a flag and a stop watch.

First, measure a distance of 100 yards. The flag 'person' stands at the start of the measured distance and drops the flag as a vehicle passes. The second person at the end of the measured distance starts the watch, stopping it as the vehicle passes. By consulting the table below, the speed is obtained.

30 mph = 7 secs. to travel 100 yards	
35 mph = 6 secs	40 mph = 5 secs
45 mph = 4.5 secs	50 mph = 4 secs
60 mph = 3.5 secs	70 mph = 3 secs

Excessive examples may then be passed to the police to prove the point.

As the object of the exercise is to reduce the danger of accidents, this procedure could be taken one step further. The stopwatch operator would communicate with a third person some distance further on who would hold up a board with a chalked speeding figure for the passing driver to see. Might be interesting.

Sincerely

**David Carrington**  
South Lodge  
High Street.

Dear Editors

### **Kidnapping**

You've heard of the Phantom Gnome Kidnapper - well there is now a ~~Phantom Toadstool Kidnapper around the village. Someone~~ seems to have taken a liking to my toadstool and taken it off my doorstep. It is made of concrete (quite heavy), red with white spots and has a frog sitting on the top of it.

If anyone knows the whereabouts of this or found one in their Christmas stocking, I would be grateful for its safe return. The culprit can return it as mysteriously as it was taken. Thank you.

Yours sincerely

**Sandra Butcher**  
7 Rogers Road

PS I have since heard that quite a few people had Christmas wreathes taken off their doors and one person even had their front door mat stolen! It's certainly very mysterious.

### **Holly**

Thank you to everyone who bought holly before Christmas. We were able to give £148 to the church flower fund.

**Elisabeth Everitt**



## **Recipe of the Month**

This months recipe is easy, cheap and nourishing and will help 'warm the cockles' on a cold February day

### **Tomato and Potato Soup**

#### **Ingredients to serve 4**

2 tins of peeled tomatoes

½ litre/1pt. chicken stock (use a stock cube in water)

2 tablespoons tomato puree

1 large onion, peeled and finely chopped.

400g/1lb peeled and chopped potatoes

Salt and pepper to taste

Dash of Worster sauce (if liked to add a spicy taste)

#### **Method**

1. Place all the ingredients in a large pan.

2. Bring to the boil and simmer for 10 to 15 minutes until the potato and onion are soft.

3. Allow to cool slightly. Put in a food processor, electric blender or pass through a sieve to form a smooth consistency.

3. Return to the pan, re-heat and add seasoning to taste. Serve with a warm crusty roll or slice of bread. To make more of a meal sprinkle with grated cheese just before serving.

*Hilary Mengham*



**Burwell**

## **Surgery Newsletter**

1998 is starting off with a few changes at the surgery. Firstly, due to cut backs in the Community Children Services by the Health Authority radical changes are planned, resulting in the amalgamation of the health visiting and school nursing services to form a new Community Practitioner Service. We will keep you informed as and when further information comes available, but if you have any concerns in the meantime please contact Margaret Whiteway or myself.

The second change involves the out of hours service provided by the doctors. It is with mixed feelings that from 1st February 1998 we have decided to join Wesdoc, a doctors co-operative for 'out of hours' emergency work i.e. between 7 p.m. and 7 a.m. weekday nights and from midday

Saturday at weekends. This means that when our patients telephone The Burwell Surgery for medical advice during 'out of hours' their calls will automatically be referred to the duty co-operative doctor who will either offer telephone advice; an appointment at the Patient Care Centre in Newmarket Hospital, or a home visit, whichever is appropriate. Wesdoc is manned by local GPs including the Burwell doctors. The duty doctor will work shifts and have a car equipped with a radio, mobile phone and a driver with local knowledge.

The main reason for joining the Wesdoc co-operative is to reduce the overlong hours worked by doctors in the practice. Regularly a doctor will be working or on call from Friday 8 a.m. to Monday 8 p.m. (84 hours without a break). In days gone by this was manageable, but now with the increased demand for medical services it is proving too much. Indeed it has made recruitment of young doctors into general practice difficult. Other advantages are that the 7 hour shifts are more appropriate to doctors with their own families to care for. The car driver gives the doctor extra protection and security at night, sadly needed in these increasingly violent times.

We are assured by neighbouring practices using Wesdoc that the service works very well for both doctors and patients. If you have any queries or comments, please contact me.

*Aileen Allen, Practice Manager*

## **1st Swaffham Prior Scout Group**

We are sorry to announce that Kandi Lawrence has given notice of her intention to retire as Beaver Leader in July. She has been Brown Beaver for 5 years and has put in an enormous amount of effort. We wish her well and will miss her, she will be an extremely hard act to follow. The Scout Group now need to find a new Beaver Leader so that the Colony can continue to run from September. Obviously if we cannot find a new Leader, then the Colony will close at the end of the Summer Term. The Group are also without a Secretary and, after this year's AGM, our Treasurer also intends to stand down.

In view of all the matters which need to be discussed concerning both Beavers and Cubs, it was felt that it would be appropriate to call a special meeting on **Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> February at Reach Village Centre starting at 6.30 pm.** It would be appreciated if we could have a representative from every family involved in the Scout Group at the meeting. Many thanks

*Clare Brooks GSL*



## French

### Partridge or Redleg

A partridge in a pear tree? The bird I speak of may have come initially into my neighbour's garden to look for pears, if not **in** a particular pear tree then **underneath** it where old fruit littered the ground. The French partridge in question had then made its way next door into my vegetable patch which is surrounded with and topped by fruit netting through which he had already inveigled himself when I arrived on the scene. Of course, he flew up furiously inside the netting at my approach and I hoped he would find a hole to let himself out. But he had tired himself out and sat in a huddle in one corner of the net disconsolately viewing the dreaded MAN through one beady eye. I was able to get close and pick him up, pinning his wings so he remained unharmed whilst I backed out of the fruit cage to put him down on the lawn outside.

Now, the lawn at this point is actually on quite a steep slope facing downwards to our house. I released him gently expecting him to fly off as he had come to no harm. Instead of which, he started to run for dear life away from me gathering speed because of the slope, until he was quite out of control and went head over heels to the bottom of the slope, turning over and over for a good 20 yards or so, and losing several feathers in his descent. I stood at the top of the hill roaring with laughter and thinking to myself that our hill must have been totally alien to this Fenland bird where flat land is the norm. He shook himself a little, then took off and sailed over the village hall.

We have the two varieties of partridge in Britain - the French variety, or RedLegs as he is commonly called because of his long red legs. These long legs serve him well in running away from danger (as we have seen!) and for foraging through the snow in bad winters. His greater size allows him to survive more readily than the smaller, English bird which has all but disappeared in Britain. I wish shoots would leave alone such English birds as are left and concentrate on the Frenchmen. After all, if the French block us in Brussels at every turn, why don't we get our own back on their



## Village Gardeners

Our speaker this month was Alison Davis who talked about 'Herbal Medicines and the many uses of some of the plants we grow in our gardens. The common marigold has antiseptic properties and sage leaves, besides being tasty with pork chops, can be infused and used as a gargle for sore throats. Even the humble dandelion roots and leaves have varied uses. A most interesting talk illustrated with slides was followed by an explanation of the herbal products that Alison supplies. Her garden in Comberton is open to the public on the first Sunday in July.

Our next meeting is on 17 February at Reach Village Hall starting at 8.00 pm when Geoff Peek will give an illustrated talk on 'Garden Ponds and Bog Gardens'. You are all welcome.

*Betty Prime*



## Swaffham Prior Women's Institute

### W.I. Notes

'Porridge' was the subject of Mr Arthur Nuttall's talk at the January meeting. Mr Nuttall had been associated with prisons for thirty years in several different capacities and locations. At one time, he was in charge of a prison that manufactured many goods that are in the shops today (including some items of clothing) and housed the biggest laundry in Europe.

We learned the difference between the various categories of prisons and what happens to a convict from the time he/she is arrested to the beginning of a sentence. Mr Nuttall had several amusing anecdotes to tell us and was asked a great many questions which led to a lively discussion. Altogether a very interesting evening.

Next month, the W.I. will be visiting Waitrose at Ely on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> February.

*Betty E Prime*

## Staine Hundred

The January meeting of the Local History Society attracted a large audience to hear Brian Hicks, retired Education Officer, answer the question 'Was Shakespeare an Essex man?' He gave convincing reasons as to why the William 'Shakespeare' of Stratford (1564-1616) could not have been the

famous playwright. What little information remains about him suggests that he was illiterate, he was a businessman who travelled only between Stratford upon Avon and London and acquired enough money to buy the second largest house in Stratford by pursuing his debtors but gave his daughter no education. Whoever wrote the plays, saw through the eyes of an aristocrat, was well educated, had knowledge of the court and politicians of the time, travelled widely in Italy, and was a sportsman with great knowledge of falconry and horses and was well versed in legal matters.

Brian put forward a case for the author being Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford (1550-1604) who was born at Castle Hedingham, who would have been Viscount Bulbeck until his father's death. The Bulbeck badge is a lion with a broken spear, and it is thought that from jousting he had the nickname 'Spear shaker'. He was an outstanding scholar, went to Cambridge, Oxford and Gray's Inn, and spent 16 months on the Continent, mainly in Northern Italy. He was granted an unconditional pension by Queen Elizabeth in 1586 and her most famous speeches are in the Shakespeare style. It would not be acceptable for a member of the nobility to be known as a playwright. It was a thought-provoking and interesting talk and though much of the evidence is co-incidental, Brian made a good case and convinced most of his audience.

The next talk will be on February 11th at 7.30p.m. in the Lecture Room, Bottisham Village College, when the popular speaker Mike Petty will be talking about 'The Fen and Town Floods'. The outing will be on June 9th to Fotheringay and Broughton House.

*Peggy Day*

## **Village Hall Project**

We are now over half way through the Project and the major building works are finished. Now all the sub-contractors can really get cracking with the new central heating system. re-wiring and the many other refinements included in the original specification.

The monthly Site Meetings are now falling into a routine pattern and are followed closely by completion of the monthly "Application for Funds" documentation to major co-funders. It all takes time as these documents require great attention to detail but, so far, so good. We have had site visits from one co-funder (21st Century/Millennium) who went away well satisfied with progress and anticipated project completion.

And talking of completion, which many of you have asked about. The main contractor estimates this to be "around Easter" i.e. mid April so we should certainly be functional for the Village Feast and Festival in May.

*Village Hall Management Committee*

## **Priory Youth Club News**

I thought I would start the year with some facts that I think are not known about the club. Priory Youth Club is actually a registered charity, which means that all the leaders are totally voluntary. There are no wages, no perks, no fees for anybody - the club is totally self-sufficient and is not allowed to make a profit (actually, that part isn't a problem!). All our books have to be audited every year and sent to the Charities Commission in London but we are lucky that a top firm of accountants in Worthing, Sussex will do this for free. Hopefully, these facts will clarify certain aspects of the club to you all. Certain people thought I and other leaders were getting paid and doing all this for gain - not true, we do it because we **enjoy** it.

Unfortunately, we now only have 4 Leaders and two very good helpers, one of whom comes from Cambridge. This is a very thin team and we are desperate for more help, especially someone who could actually become a 5th Leader and help with some tasks for the club. On an average, the two nights we are open see about 50 children, which is not bad. Other villages are having to close down clubs which can only cause problems elsewhere. Hopefully, our club can carry on a long time yet, even if the Leader doesn't.

In the summer break, we decorated some of the club. Of course, we asked parents of children who use the club for their help. I would like to take this opportunity to thank those who helped, Jim for the emulsioneering and Kevin who did a great job creosoting the outside of the whole building. When you look back at the figure of attendance I referred to earlier, that's not a bad percentage, is it.

The youth club table-tennis team are doing very well, currently lying 2nd in the Ely League Division II. One player has just been chosen for Cambridgeshire County Junior team. Once again, anybody wishing to play is always very welcome to come along - we play for fun .

Finally an issue of great concern. Can something be done about the "scud" missiles we keep finding near our club doors?. If it's carried in on shoes, it's not only repulsive and dirty, there is also the germ factor, especially when young children are involved. Should we have a complete ban on dogs on all of the Town Close playing area?

If you could spare some time to help in the Youth club, please call me anytime on 742228 - I would be delighted to hear from you.

*Alan Badcock*

## **From the Parochial Church Council**



The meeting began with prayers. Jenny Moseley has kindly offered to be Stewardship Officer. Contributions for the 'Welcome' leaflet are almost complete. The Prayer desks and Credence table have been much admired and the feeling was that they blended in perfectly .

The position in the churchyard for the interment of ashes has been moved, at the suggestion of the Archdeacon, to the area between the rear wall of the churchyard and the path. It was felt to be a quieter area and less likely to be disturbed by visitors. The PCC approved this and a faculty will be applied for. The small wall safe near the guides and histories table is broken and until it is replaced, the other wall safe will be used. A simpler central heating timer is to be investigated. The cost of a new flag of St. George will be ascertained. The problem of damage to the hassocks was discussed with the possibility of them being placed on the pews before and after use.

Michael Cazenove has been co-opted as Treasurer and Covenant Officer. It is hoped to find somebody local who could audit the accounts prior to the Annual Vestry Meeting. The Social Working group reported a very successful Advent by Candlelight with £300 being raised for The Salvation Army. During the Festival, the church will have a Flower Festival which will run over the final weekend, 23<sup>rd</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> May. Full details of the Festival will be published later.

The Drama Workshops and activity productions were praised. Hilary reported that she had made successful enquiries about securing the carpet so that it could be rolled and easily returned to its position. She had also located a source of underfelt to be put under the pews to minimise floor damage. The materials would be supplied and an enthusiastic working party could complete the task quite quickly.

The Vicar reported details of Lent Groups and services for Lent and Holy Week.. An Easter card with details of services would be available. A Passiontide concert is to be held in Burwell on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> March at 6.30 pm. Anybody who would like to join in the singing is very welcome. Rehearsals are every Wednesday evening. Confirmation Classes will be starting soon. Frank Riggs has decided not to stand again as Churchwarden after the Annual Vestry meeting. It was agreed by all that he would be sadly missed. However, he is happy to continue as a member of the PCC.

The next meeting will be on February 9<sup>th</sup> and the Annual Parochial Church Meeting will be on 27<sup>th</sup> April. The meeting ended with the Grace.

*Ruth Scovil*

## From Our Local County Councillor

Each year end Councillors receive a copy of the Report to Members by the District Auditor. It makes unbiased independent comment of the preceding financial year. So the one before me now refers to 1996/7. I do not want to explore the report in detail but I was reassured by its main findings. Value for money is the section that I look to first. The Auditors looked at some main services to test the value we gave you for your money.

As an example, their opinion was that the County and City of Peterborough had handled the division very well with particular success over the many staff problems arising as people move from old Cambridgeshire to the two successors. As Chairman of the Personnel (now Human Relations) Advisory Panel at the time, I was pleased at the supportive findings.

Moving forward to 1997, the major problem in the year was the continuing trouble experienced by our County Social Services Department highlighted by the Neave and Laverack disasters. The independent reports prepared by our own and national enquiries last summer are now being acted on, so that when the inspectors come again in the Spring, it will be possible to show reforms and changes that meet their criticisms have been made.

It is not going to be easy to achieve this with the very limited spending imposed on the County as a whole by the new Government. They will not change their predecessors' policy of severe 'capping' which controls how much Cambridgeshire may raise through Council Tax. The situation is made worse by the continuing refusal of the Government to divert some of the cost of living money, available for counties around London, to Cambridgeshire, where all available evidence shows we should be allowed some £9.8m extra grant.

I foresee the unpleasant prospect of above-inflation increases in Council Tax but cuts of varying severity in most services - always a difficulty for new political bosses elected on pledges they cannot deliver!

In spite of the above comments, there is plenty to be optimistic about, such as the highest level of good exam results at Bottisham Village College, excellent local school inspection reports and the prospect of slightly more money for our schools and fire service and just a little for remedial work done by our hard pressed road maintenance colleagues.

Perhaps I should be cautious in wishing you a rewarding 1998. Also I thank a majority of you for personal support last May at the County Elections.

***James Fitch***

## **Notes from the Parish Council**

The first meeting for 1998 was held on Thursday 8th January with Henry Hardiment in the Chair.

Matters arising from the December meeting. CCC have agreed to install French drains in Rogers Road to hopefully solve the drainage problem. The Council thanked Greg Cotner for his offer to refurbish the sign post. Andrew Badcock advised the council of reported crimes in the village during 1997 and confirmed the next Co-ordinators meeting of Neighbourhood Watch would be on 13th January. The Clerk is arranging for representatives from CCC Highways Department to attend the February meeting to discuss the speeding problems in the village. Wicksteed Leisure have been requested to proceed with repairs to Town Close play equipment

There had been no planning applications received since the last meeting and there were no reports from either CCC or EDCD.

There were various complaints raised and recorded concerning increased traffic problems on the Newmarket Road following the bus lane implementation. The Clerk was tasked to write to CCC expressing the views of villagers travelling this route.

The next meeting will be on Thursday 12 February at 7.30 in the Mobile Classroom.

***Peter Cunningham***

Clerk of the Parish Council

## **Application**

### **Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982**

Notice and Application for Renewal of Public Entertainments Licence

I, Patricia Victoria Cunningham, of Carters Cottage, 17/19 High Street propose to make application for a public entertainments licence for Swaffham Prior Village Hall, 36 High Street, Swaffham Prior, Cambridgeshire to commence 1st April 1998.

Any objections should be submitted, in writing, to Mr. S C Clements, Environmental Services Manager, East Cambridgeshire District Council, The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely, Cambs CB7 4PL.

**STOP PRESS - DISTRICT COUNCIL ELECTION**

**Charlotte Cane** (414 votes) has been elected. Full details in the next



## St Mary's - Services for February 1998



Sunday 1st	11.00 a.m.	Parish Communion
Sunday 8th	11.00 a.m.	Family Service
	6.00 p.m.	Evensong & Sermon
Sunday 15th	11.00 a.m.	Parish Communion
	6.00 p.m.	Evensong & Sermon
Sunday 22nd	8.00 a.m.	Holy Communion
	11.00 a.m.	Mattins & Sermon
Ash Wednesday 25th	7.30 p.m.	Sung Eucharist with Ashing

+ **Holy Communion** is also celebrated every Wednesday in Burwell Church and every Thursday in Swaffham Bulbeck Church, both at 10 a.m.

+ **Evening Prayer** is said at Reach on Wednesdays at 5 p.m. in Reach Church

+ **Bellringing** - practice nights in St Cyriac's belfry every fortnight at 8 p.m. from 3rd February, Sundays from 10.30 a.m. and before 6 p.m. Evensong. Contact Margaret Stainer 741328

+ **Mothers Union** - usually meets on the 1st Monday each month at 2.15 p.m. at Swaffham Bulbeck Contact Mrs Norton 01223 811509

+ **Drama Workshops** resume on Sunday 1.30 -5.30 p.m. Contact - Hilary Sage 742978

The Vicar would be pleased to know of anyone needing a home or hospital visit or would like to receive Home Communion.

### *From the Parish Register*

November - December 1997

#### *Holy Baptism*

Christian Brooks Brewer

#### *In Memoriam*

Elsie Smalley

**Dear Friends**



## **“Failure”**

One of the things that continues to haunt our human existence is the threat of failure. Sometimes we can manage it, if only we know about it e.g. a New Year resolution not kept; but the fear of public failure can be quite overwhelming and is always debilitating.

The popular press would have us believe that the ‘institutional church’ has failed and its’ shortcomings are always very public; I am firmly of the opinion that the converse is true. What is more important than that though is that Church is a place where people are allowed and seen to fail and are forgiven; there is a fund of understanding and empathy in the Christian community.

As February sees the beginning of Lent on Ash Wednesday (25th) our thoughts are turning towards Easter, and what seemed like history’s greatest failure, Jesus. Parodying John 1 “The Word was made failure and died among us” wrote one commentator. Yes, his death seemed a failure; his success is the Church and its’ 2000 years of ministry.

We shall be recalling Peters’ disowning of Jesus but after the cock crowed thrice, Peter received forgiveness and a new vocation in the very moment of realising that he has failed utterly and so has to repent. The price of attaining hope, is facing up to failure. Those who find themselves humiliated and rejected should always recognise the One who Himself was despised and rejected and who continues to bear our griefs as we open ourselves to Him. If we cannot endure failing and being weak and being seen to be so, we are not yet in a position to love and be loved.

God has dealt, and still deals with our human disasters not by some grand gesture from afar but by coming down into it with us and transfiguring it from within so that its’ whole meaning is changed. That is what Christmas and Epiphany were all about.

So, be not afraid. With love

***The Revd Mark Haworth***

## **Church Fabric Matters**

(Yes it does!) - seriously, we are convening an open meeting, in Church, on Thursday 5th February at 7.30 p.m. to bring everyone up to date as to the state of play of our various plans, and to which we would particularly value your help on our ad-hoc Fabric and Finance Working Group, the next date for which we will set at that meeting.

***Mark***

# Zion Baptist Chapel

## Services For February 1998



Sunday 1st	10:30 AM	Family Service
	6:30 PM	Steve Ayres
Sunday 8th	6:30 PM	Jack Chalklin
Sunday 15th	6:30 PM	Bob Short
Sunday 22nd	6:30 PM	Gordon Dann

### **“Back Home”**

A recent newspaper article told how a Maltese nun discovered her brother, who was believed to have been lost at sea early in the second World War. For years he had been living as a stranger in this country, recently as a tramp in Devon, with nobody knowing who he was or where he came from. Perhaps the saddest part of the story was that he himself didn't know who he was. But now he has been found, and, hopefully, will be properly looked after in safety and comfort. One of the clues to his true identity came when somebody heard him talking about his home country, Malta, but he was finally identified because, like the lost brother, he had a cross tattooed on his arm. His sister had refused to believe he had been drowned, and has prayed for him through the years. Now her prayers have been answered.

Sometimes we come across people who have lost their identity in a different way. They have become isolated from their 'home' and are unable to find their way back. Sometimes they mention this home but have forgotten where it is, what it is like and have no idea of how to get there. Jesus described such people as 'lost sheep' and said that he was the 'Good Shepherd' who would not rest until he had found them. It may be that more than one 'lost sheep' is reading these words, and would like to find their way back to their spiritual home. It's not so difficult as you might think - you just need the courage to take the first step back home. It may be as simple as talking to a christian friend, or calling out to God in simple prayer, maybe talking to someone at your local church. We don't like to think of ourselves as spiritual tramps, but for some people it is the realisation that they are that prompts them to start the journey back. It always feels good to be back home when you've been away for a while; it feels particularly good when you have found the way back to your spiritual home. So why wait another minute before you start the return journey - your heavenly Father will soon be meeting you on the way. Read all about it in Luke Chapter 10, verses 11 to 24.

*Steve Ayres*

# **Roman Catholic Church, Newmarket Parish**

## **Masses**

Weekends: Newmarket: Sat 1830; Sun 0900,1030,1700;

Kirtling: Sun 0945; Soham 1700

In Bottisham Parish Church: Sun 0900 (Served from Cambridge).

## **From John Morrill, Deacon to the Roman Catholic Community**

For many centuries Christians built their lives around a series of festivals that gave them periods of quiet and contemplation and periods of celebration and conviviality. The forty days before Christmas and before Easter were periods of reflection and abstinence when the churches were decked in purple; and the forty days after Christmas and after Easter were days for celebration and festival, when the churches were decked in white. Nowadays that sense of preparation and then of celebration have broken down, just as the preservation of Sundays as a special day is breaking down. Christmas decorations are now up for longer before than after Christmas, and Christmas Day is often the culmination of a series of office parties, rather than the beginning of a period of celebration after a period of reflection: more's the pity, I rather think!

The forty days of Christmas end on 2 February in what is known by various names: as the Feast of Our Lady's Purification, as the Feast of Our Lord's Presentation in the Temple, and as the Feast of Candlemas. It marks the Biblical story of Joseph, Mary and the infant Jesus's visit to the Temple in Jerusalem to give thanks for Mary's safe delivery of her son. The most usual name for the celebration of this story is Candlemas, since for the past 1500 years the service has centred around a great procession in which everyone carries a lighted candle to represent the light which Jesus brings into the life of every baptised Christian, and the light that baptised Christians bring to a needful world. Thus 2 February represents the moment at which the Church stops celebrating its own birth and takes up the challenge of bringing the faith, hope and love of the Christian message to 'the Gentiles' - that is to everyone who has yet to receive the gospel. This February, this darkest and gloomiest of months, not many of us will be parading around with actual candles; but we can still undertake that which the candle symbolises. We can make a conscious effort to reveal the difference Jesus has made to our lives to some of those who have lost sight of Jesus or who have never known him. I am thinking of ways in which I can do that without boasting (wave a candle too vigorously and it goes out, after all; or hold a candle against someone and you set them on fire!) Abandoning ancient

## Dates for Your Diary - February 1998

Sun	1	
Mon	2	Mothers Union: "Drugs", S Bulbeck Village Hall, 2:15 PM
Tue	3	School Trustees Meeting, Goodwin Manor, 7:30 PM
Wed	4	
Thu	5	Parochial Open Meeting, St Mary's Church, 7:30 PM Mobile Library, Outside Post Office, 11:20-11:40 AM
Fri	6	
Sat	7	
Sun	8	Drama Classes resume, St Mary's, 1:30 to 5:30 PM
Mon	9	PCC Meeting, Vicarage, 7:30 PM
Tue	10	
Wed	11	Staine Hundred, Bottisham VC, 7:30 PM
Thu	12	PC Meeting, School, 7:30 PM
Fri	13	Confirmation Class, The Vicarage, 5:00 PM
Sat	14	St Valentine's Day <b>Crier Copy Date</b>
Sun	15	
Mon	16	WI, School Hall, 7:30 PM
Tue	17	Village Gardeners, Reach Village Hall, 8:00 PM
Wed	18	
Thu	19	Mobile Library, Outside Post Office, 11:20-11:40 AM
Fri	20	
Sat	21	
Sun	22	
Mon	23	Neighbourhood Watch Meeting, Red Lion, 7:30 PM
Tue	24	Pancake Day School Governors Meeting, 7:30 PM
Wed	25	
Thu	26	<i>Crier</i> Collating, Zion Chapel, 2:30 PM
Fri	27	Confirmation Class, The Vicarage, 5:00 PM
Sat	28	PTA "Race" Night, Reach Village Hall, 8:00 PM Concert: Vivaldi ' <i>Gloria</i> ', S Bulbeck, 7:30 PM

**Advance dates:** Mon 27 April - Parochial Church Meeting, 7:30 PM  
Sat 25 May - Festival Feast