



# The Swaffham Crier

Volume 22 Number 1  
January 1998



## Editorial

**A** hearty New Year greeting to all readers from the new editorial team, with heartfelt thanks to our predecessors for leaving the Crier in such good heart. From such firm foundations, we feel that the only way that we can build is sideways, we certainly couldn't get better! It is likely therefore that over the coming months you will notice some changes in the format, but these will be quite gradual, and we hope that you will give us some feedback with your approval or disapproval as the case may be.

Our aim is to entertain, inform and unify our readers, to allow everyone to have a voice in the village forum and to encourage those who have not yet contributed to feel that the Swaffham Crier is for them and by them. We note that some children's organisations have not said their piece for a long time. We need views from the elderly and the incapacitated, the disadvantaged and the local version of "Disgusted of Tunbridge Wells". Have you noticed the drug problem that appears to visit the village from time to time? What do you think should be done about it - if anything? Give us your views on speeding, the provision of starter homes for young people, housing associations, dog fouling, the Chinese situation, bonds or PEPs, hunting or poaching and hare coursing, single parenting, proportional representation or the quality of beer. We will enjoy a good honest "barney" from time to time, but what we will not enjoy is silence or an empty postbag!

A page of the magazine contains about 500 words and because of the way that it is printed and folded and for reasons of cost, we are limited to 36 pages maximum, reducing in increments of four pages if material is not available to fill them. It would be nice to fit one article onto each page and in order to include contributions from more organisations or individuals, we may have to ask our more prolific contributors to limit themselves to 500 words, or risk an editorial "blue pencil". Remember, however, that journalistically speaking "less is more" and if you want to contribute, be ruthless with yourselves.

*John Fidoe*

**Cover Picture:** *Winter Tree* by Pam Clocksin

# The Editorial Team

## Pat Cunningham

Most of you know me already! I've been associated with the Crier for 5 years since shortly after moving to Swaffham Prior from Liverpool so, if you like, I'm the "old hand" of the new team - literally. I am Secretary of the Village Hall Management Committee and a Parish Councillor so manage to keep busy even though officially 'retired'. My interests are gardening, crosswords, reading knitting/crochet and cooking and caring for husband, children, grand-kids and our two cats Jack and Eric. I love going to the theatre or cinema when time allows, but dislike housework, ironing and sewing of any kind.

Having moved around the country so much in the last 20 or so years, both Peter and I are very happily settled in the village where we have made many friends and can enjoy the benefits of living in a small close-knit community.

Carters Cottage will be the *main post-box for Crier copy* although of course you can pop your articles or letters through the door of any of the team as you pass by.

## John Fidoe

Notwithstanding the fact that the other people's spelling of my name has always been a very imprecise art, you will not - if you need to look - find very many Fidoe's in our telephone book or indeed in any telephone book. We all appear to be descended from John Walter FitzDeu (FiDeu - Fidoe - that spelling problem again), who was first recorded in Suffolk in 1324 and who was obviously more concerned with working his land than the begetting of children. The literal translation of FitzDeu is "The Bastard Son of God".

My part-time job is Skippering the cruise boat Georgina on the Cam and I am a volunteer with the Newmarket Citizens Advice Bureau on one or two days per week, so if you want to know into which part of the name I fit, you will have to ask my crew, passengers or clients, but probably, like most of us, it's a bit of each. I am a very "new boy" in the village but having lived in eleven villages during my life so far, each of which had a parish magazine, I am happy to say here and now that the Swaffham Crier is by far the best of the bunch. I hope we can keep it that way!

## Caroline and James Matheson

We are the most recent arrivals in the village of the editorial team having moved here from Cambridge on the sixth day of 1997. We live in Kent House with our seven year old son Bob and nineteen (!) year old cat Bonzo. It's been an excellent first year apart from accidents: Bob breaking an arm

just after Easter and James his leg recently; though even these have had a good side in the lovely response of people in the village. James' enforced immobility has also meant some extra time for work on the Crier. While new to Swaffham Prior, we're not new to (though some years absent from) village life having been brought up in villages in North Lincolnshire and Leicestershire respectively. Our main editorial role is likely to be in typesetting the Crier, based on our supposed expertise from working in computing. The proof of the pudding ... !

### **Hilary Mengham**

I've lived in the village for 5½ years and although you may not recognise the name you may have seen me around the village as I am taken for a daily walk by a black labrador called Sam! I was born and brought up in north London and came to this area 30 years ago to complete my training in Cambridge and decided to stay. I love village life and have sampled several in the area, living in Burwell, Fulbourn, Stretham and now here. I am a dietitian by profession and after working in the Health Service and in Further Education, I now work part-time freelancing - holding diet clinics for GP's, running food hygiene courses for catering personnel and writing articles for magazines and books. My spare time is limited but I enjoy tapestry and cross-stitch and am trying very hard to become fluent in French as France is fast becoming my second home!

## **Festival 1998**

The dates of next year's Swaffham Prior Festival are Saturday 16 May to Monday 25th inclusive.

Make a note in your diary now - and watch this space.

### **VHMC Quantity Quiz**

There was a draw to determine the winner of the First Prize of £20 and Robert & Julie Nunn of The Nook, High Street were the lucky ones "first out of the hat". The second prize of £5. went to Rob Hollingsworth Jnr of Lower End. If you would like to know the answers, you can see a copy by popping in here any time. Hope you found it fun.

*Pat Cunningham*

## Electricity Supply Reliability Improvement

The electricity supply to customers in the area between Burwell and Bottisham has been very poor for some time. Eastern Electricity would like to apologise to local residents for the inconvenience and distress resulting from the frequent supply interruptions. These have been due to faults on the 11,000 volt distribution circuit, from a primary substation in Burwell, feeding a part of Burwell, Reach, Swaffham Prior, Swaffham Bulbeck, Lode and Bottisham. The supply network is duplicated at higher voltages, i.e. a single fault does not result in a loss of supply to customers, but it is not possible to duplicate circuits at 11,000 volts, though customers are switched onto alternative circuits once the faulty section has been isolated. The main causes of these faults have been weather related (lightning, gale, etc.) and the deterioration of various overhead line components.

Eastern Electricity will implement a programme to improve supply reliability to customers on this circuit. The 11,000 volt spur line to Reach was extensively rebuilt during the summer and they now plan to refurbish or rebuild the overhead circuit between Burwell and Bottisham, including the remaining spur connections. They also propose to establish connecting links with adjacent 11,000 volt circuits in Newmarket, Swaffham Prior, Lode and Quy. A contractor (ESB International) has been appointed to complete the overhead line work before April 1998; a **start date of mid December** is anticipated. The circuit links involve negotiations with third parties but it is hoped to install most of them at the same time. The work will involve access to existing high voltage poles and lines, and vehicles moving around the area. Unfortunately, in order for the work to be carried out safely, there will need to be short supply interruptions to some customers while work is done. All the affected customers will be notified in writing a week in advance and Eastern Electricity will endeavour to reduce the periods without supply, to the very minimum.

The work will greatly improve the supply reliability, but people may sometimes experience brief interruptions of supply due to the operation of automatic high voltage switches, preventing transient faults from causing a permanent loss of supply. Examples of this type of fault are wind borne debris (twigs, branches, straw, etc.), lightning, and impact by large birds (we install bird flight deflectors where geese and swans are known to take off and land). In dealing with these incidents, the switch will open very quickly when a fault occurs, limiting damage, then reclose automatically after a brief period to restore supply. If the fault is still there, for example when a branch remains on the line, the switch will lock open and the fault will need to be located and repaired by our operational staff.

This is a well established technique which is applied to all rural areas in the United Kingdom providing the most cost effective way of maintaining the optimum supply security. Approximately 50% of the faults that affect an overhead line are transient in nature and most customers agree that a momentary failure of supply is preferable to a permanent interruption - although business customers with computer equipment will certainly disagree!

If you want any further information on the project please call Richard Unwin, Network Projects, Eastern Electricity, on 01223-865311.

## **From the Crier 20 Years Ago**

### SHIRE HALL TITBITS

I have been contacted on numerous occasions during this winter by people seeking help towards restoration of electricity supplies and, although the County Council is not responsible for this part of public services, I have been very worried about the effect on local people of the large number of power cuts we have all suffered.

...

However it is admitted by the Board that some electrical equipment is obsolete and I believe it would be helpful if we put pressure on Eastern Electricity to speed up their modernisation and improvement programme. ...

Geoffrey Woollard (*Feb 1978*)

## **The School Launches a Time Capsule**

The Village Hall Extension and Refurbishment Project is privileged to have been offered a Time Capsule from the School. Class 4 sends a personal message to all those living at the millennium after next:-

*We are writing this letter to those who are not yet born. We are writing to our future children and their children....Today around the world there are lots of people fighting. Many are getting killed or seriously wounded. We feel it is important that we prevent serious arguments by talking and listening to each other. We don't want to destroy the world by fighting, but we hope that we can leave you a world that is at peace."*

Accompanying this are examples of work from all the school, photographs of their activities, and the school prospectus. It would have

been a very shy school indeed which did not include the 17 August 1997 *Sunday Times* article on 'Benchmarks of all-round excellence.' This selected the 112 primary schools in the United Kingdom which were "*beacons of excellence*." The Swaffham Prior School was one of five selected from the whole of East Anglia.

Also included are a pen, pencil, rubber and a rubber band - just in case the world ever moves into a sphere with no knowledge of these creative objects.

Apart from comments on the need for environmental care Class 4 ends its letter to all those not yet born:- "*We would wish all future children of the world a wicked, decent, funky cool time and that the world is still a groovy place to be in.*"

*Alastair Everitt*

## **CAMTAD**

Can you spare a *few* hours occasionally? CAMTAD, the Cambridge Campaign for Tackling Acquired Deafness, helps hard of hearing people by advising on aids to hear television, telephone and the doorbell. They issue equipment on behalf of Social Services, and over the years many people have been helped.

CAMTAD has been allocated a small amount of money to follow up on the use of this equipment. To ensure it is in use, and if so, the person realises the full potential of its use, we need people willing to learn about these simple pieces of equipment to support the clients in their use. A mileage allowance is available but normally volunteers would work in their own area. This is a very practical worthwhile project.

We are always looking for volunteers to help with our hearing aid retuning project that visits housebound clients in their homes.

If you are interested in either of these worthwhile ventures, require hearing help advice or wish to know more about the charity, please telephone CAMTAD on Cambridge 460616, preferably in the mornings.

*Sue Hempstead*  
CAMTAD Organiser

## **Village Hall Management Committee**

There will be a Committee meeting on **Monday 26th January** which all user-group and elected representatives are invited to attend.

The meeting will be held at Carters Cottage, High Street commencing at 8.00 pm.

As well as normal Agenda items, there will be the opportunity to update all members on progress of the Village Hall Project and for any questions to be answered.

*Pat Cunningham*

## **Not Just Hockey on Boxing Day**

The true nature of the annual *Prior versus Bulbeck Grand Hockey Match* was revealed for the first time in the February 1997 *Crier* by Tony Bowers, a lamentable descendent of the late Dr Wright-Tosher. Relying on his ancestor's published and unpublished material Tony was able to report with quite astonishing authority:-

*"This was no mere pallid game of hockey we were watching but the very stuff of history. However parochial this phenomenon may appear, Wright-Tosher's erudition proves we were witnessing something of the most profound cultural, spiritual and anthropological significance."*

**Come and witness the ritual yourself.** It will be played out on the Denny at Bulbeck, starting at 11.00 a.m. on Boxing Day. Mulled wine will be on offer and there will be a collection for Magpas.

For recent arrivals in the village the previous results have been (Prior first):- 2-4, 0-0, 2-0, 3-0, 3-0, 4-2.

*Alastair Everitt*

## **Burwell and District Day Centre**

The Day Centre, based at Ashgrove in Burwell, is the local day centre for adults of Swaffham Prior and the surrounding area. It is an open house for anyone, but generally ages are between sixty-five and ninety.

The Centre is open from 9 am to 3 pm Monday to Friday, and people can either drop in for a cup of coffee and a chat, or have a lunch at 12.15 pm cost £2.25 (soon to rise to £2.50) so it is good value for a nourishing meal and a warm, friendly environment.

There are added benefits of a hairdresser, a chiropodist, a manicurist and assisted baths for any who need help. There is plenty of singing, fun, laughter and entertainment, together with many outings to shows and drives

around the countryside in one ramshackle ambulance. Cards and dominoes are played every day and Thursday afternoon is Bingo time. No-one has to join in anything so one is free to read a newspaper or have a doze any time! The Elderly are collected and returned home by ambulance.


Why not come along with a friend to investigate our super premises and have a cup of coffee. If you want more information please ring me on 741638 or call The Day Centre on 743363.

*Shirley Wilkins*  
4 Adams Road



## The Red Lion



 John, Maggie and family would like to wish their friends and customers a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year and to thank them for their support throughout the past year.

### Holiday opening times

We are open as normal throughout the Christmas period with the exception of Christmas Day evening when we will be closed.

### New Years Eve

Fancy Dress with a theme of “Famous People”. We will be offering a full menu plus our famous blackboard ‘specials’ so please book early to avoid disappointment.

*John and Maggie Berry*

## Did You Know ...?

***Around 15% of all the world’s methane gas is produced by cows and other cud-chewing animals.***



# **Bottisham Burwell Linton Village Colleges**

## **Lifelong Learning**

The Spring Term brochure is now available from your local Village College, library or post office. Most courses start the week beginning **Monday 12th January**.

### **Day and Weekend Courses**

**Sat and Sun 24/25th January:** Word for Windows - an Introduction

**Sat 7th February:** Basic Plumbing Skills; Body as Construction (A new perspective on Life Drawing); Chair Caning and Upholstery; Chinese Brush Painting; Colour and Style; Discover Shakespeare; Exploring the Internet; Fly Tying - Part 1; Homeopathic First Aid; Introduction to Yoga; Life Drawing; Patchwork Workshop - Part 1; Photographic Workshop for the Absolute Amateur; Picture Framing; Silk Painting and Batik; Traditional Thai Cookery.

**Sat and Sun 7/8th February:** Spreadsheets - an Introduction

### **Further information from the Community Offices at**

Bottisham Village College 01223 811372

Burwell Village College 01638 741901

Linton Village College 01223 892400

Two advertising signs spotted recently.

The first outside a pub in Exning:

“Staff Wanted

Landlady/Lover required - live in,  
Full or Part Time”

and the second at Swaffham Bulbeck:

“Potatoes - twinned with Pommes de Terres”

10/10 for initiative and humour.

Wonder if they were both successful?!

**The Prospects Trust**

## **National Lottery Success!**

The Trust has been extremely fortunate to obtain a grant from the National Lottery Charities Board. This grant is for the total salary costs for our full-time horticultural co-manager/support worker over the next three years. It will be invaluable in giving the Trust some extra stability and allow us really to concentrate our efforts to get the remaining funds needed to enable work to start on building our vegetable store and packing area. This will greatly enhance the range of training and work experience we can offer to our workers.

Our thanks to Phillippa Ashcroft and Jenny Pates who both put in a lot of hard work on the Lottery applications.

## **Other News**

We are sorry to be losing Phillippa as our Development Officer but she will still be in touch to help us on a voluntary basis. Bridget Orchard (our local fund-raiser) is to take over from her, and this means we will shortly be advertising her post. We have a good band of Friends (14 in all) to assist the local fund-raiser - so if anyone out there feels they would like to find out more about the job, please do contact us on 741551 or Bridget on 742388. The work is home-based, 4-6 hours per week at a good rate of pay - a sense of humour is essential!.

We have been very fortunate to have just received a grant of £2,000 from the Garfield Weston Foundation towards our vegetable store and packing area. The cost of this project is a lot more than was first envisaged with the steel frame for the building costing in the region of £13,500! Throughout the year we have received an anonymous donation of £1,000 and donations from a number of individuals and Swaffham Prior Parish Council.

Everyone at the Trust - workers, support workers, fund-raisers and Trustees - are all very grateful for the wonderful support we have had this year from our Friends Group and everyone else who helped us in any way.

We wish you all a very Happy Christmas and peaceful New Year.

***Snakehall Farm - Reach***



## **Recycling Scheme**

Thank you for your enthusiastic response to the East Cambridgeshire District Council/Cleanaway Recycling Collection scheme. Since March this year we have collected:

90 tonnes of Cardboard

770 tonnes of Paper

40 tonnes of Cans

You are helping to make our recycling scheme one of the most successful collections in East Anglia and helping our district to achieve its commitment to recycle 25% of household waste by the year 2000. Could we ask you to note that the recyclables market has changed recently so we are now only able to recycle the following materials:

Brown Corrugated Cardboard

Newspapers, Magazines/Pamphlets

Aluminium Food and Drink Cans (for hygiene, should be washed out)

NOT Washing Powder/Cereal Boxes

NOT Telephone directories, Catalogues, Books

To help us when we sort the materials, please flatten all cardboard boxes and put cans in a separate bag - old carrier bags are ideal.

Thank you for your support and if you have any queries regarding any of Cleanaway's services, please ring our Helpline 01353 863864.

aaaaaaaaaaaaa

## **Recycling Facility Sites:**

### **Milton:**

Opening Times: Weekdays 8 am - Dusk; Weekends 8 am - 6pm

Tel: Cambridge 01223 860674

You can recycle: Bottles, Cans, Textiles, Engine Oil, Car Batteries, Shoes, Books, Newspaper, Cardboard, General Salvage, Scrap Metal, Garden Waste (for composting) White Goods for recycling, Refrigerator/Freezer recycling with CFC coolant removal, General Waste.

### **Newmarket, Depot Road**

Opening Times: Daily 9 am, - 4pm Tel: Newmarket 01638 660808

You can recycle: Bottles, Paper, Scrap metal, Scrap Wood, Engine Oil, Cans, Garden Waste, General Waste.

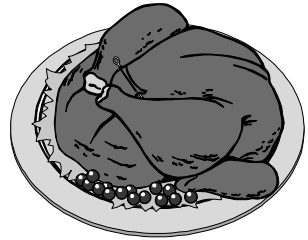
## Recipe of the month

### Turkey and Stilton Crumble

This is the ideal dish for using up turkey and cheese left over from Christmas in a way that is a bit different as well as being quick and easy.

#### Ingredients to serve 4:

1 small onion finely chopped  
12oz/300g cooked, diced turkey  
3oz/75g. margarine  
4 button mushrooms sliced  
2oz/50g plain white flour  
8oz/200g breadcrumbs (wholemeal or white)  
½ pt/250mls skimmed/semi-skimmed milk  
2oz/50g stilton cheese - crumbled  
½ level teaspoon made mustard  
Salt and pepper to taste



#### Method:

1. Melt 2oz/50g of the margarine in a pan and gently sauté the onion until soft, add the flour and mix well to form a roux
2. Mix in the milk and stir over the heat until the sauce thickens and boils. Add the crumbled stilton and mustard and stir. Mix in the mushrooms and turkey. Simmer, stirring regularly for 5 minutes.
3. Meanwhile melt the remaining margarine in a pan, add the breadcrumbs mixing well to coat all the crumbs.
4. Pour the cheese mixture into a 2pt pie dish. Spread the breadcrumb mixture smoothly over the top. Place under a hot grill until the topping is brown.
5. Serve with creamed potatoes and cooked vegetables of your choice or serve with a hunk of wholemeal bread and a green salad.



We would like to make 'Recipe of the Month' a regular feature in the Crier. There are a host of culinary skills in the village so how about sharing your favourite recipe with us. Just put it down on paper and send it to one of the editorial team. Looking forward to some mouth-watering ideas!

*Hilary Mengham*



## Children's Corner



### ***Camilla's Christmas* by Camilla Sampson**

I'm looking forward to Christmas and I'm hoping that I get a toy horse and a toy pony. I hope I enjoy them. I'm so excited because it's only 16 days until Christmas. My Grandmas and Grandpa come to stay and we may throw snowballs and play games. This year my Aunt and Uncle and my cousins will come too. I like the carols at Christmas. My favourite carol is 'We Three Kings'. I like the Christmas tree and the presents. I'm an angel in my school play. I like our big Christmas tree in the School hall and I am allowed to put decorations on it. I think the Christmas play is good and I hope you do too. Jesus was born on Christmas day. The angels told Joseph that Mary was going to have Jesus. Christmas is a very special time. I have a badge that says Jesus is the reason for the season.

### ***Stibbington Visit* by Catriona Towriss (age 10)**

On the 12th November 1997, Class 4 of Swaffham Prior School went back in time to 1896 and visited Stibbington Educational Centre near Peterborough. We all dressed up in Victorian clothes and attended a Victorian School. We were all given names of children who attended the School 100 years ago taken from the register. My name was George Woodward, as I was dressed as a boy, and my brother and sister Harry and Ethel also attended the School. I am writing to tell you about our day.

When the bell rang, we had to line up in two straight lines - girls in one and boys in another. We were told to take off our caps to show respect as we went into the classroom just as we had done going into the Church. We went into the classroom in single file, girls first. We stood behind our chairs and we only sat down when we were told. I got told off for looking inside my desk without being told. Miss Flack, our teacher, said a prayer and we sat down. We had to call Miss Flack Ma'am.

We took out our slate, slate pencils and cloth. We wrote our name and the date. We had to recite these spellings: beer, eels, cheese, rabbit and mutton. Afterwards we were told to recite the seven times table. We then did some sums to do with money using pounds, shillings and pennies. We had to say a prayer for the Vicar Trollop's visit on Wednesday. We had to stand behind our chairs because we were going out to the playground to do drill. Miss Flack called out numbers: number one was arms up, two was stand up straight, three was make a star, four was stand up straight, five was

touch your toes and six was stand up straight. First she said them in order and then she muddled them up.

We went back inside to do handwriting. Gertrude Bloodworth, the teacher's assistant, gave out the pens. They were a nib on a stick which we dipped in inkwells. It was very difficult to keep clean and we had to blot the work after each line. Charles Wingrove and Charles Smart made such a mess of their hands and their work that they were told to go outside whilst Miss Flack gave them the CANE!

We also had a Victorian school lunch which was a sandwich twice the size of a normal one with one slice of cheese! We had an apple and a buttered scone. We had some disgusting cold tea with no milk. Not everyone liked it. We had two playtimes in the playground. We played with Victorian toys such as spinning tops, marbles, cup and balls on a string, bird scarers and hobby horses. All the toys were made of wood - except for the marbles.

Some of the differences from going to school then and now are - the teachers were a lot stricter, the teacher stuck up for the girls, very funny sayings like "if a job's worth doing, it's worth doing properly" and everyone was in the same class from the age of 3 to 14.

I thought the day was really good. Funny and exciting. But I wouldn't have liked to have lived then.

### ***Our visit to the Kingswood Centre***

On 19th November a group of 18 children from our school went for three days to the Kingswood Centre in Norfolk. There were twelve year 4's, and six year 6's. We went with a class of year 6 children from Cheveley Primary School.

The centre is on the Norfolk coast near Cromer. It is a big place and can have as many as 300 children staying at one time. We stayed in dormitories and Miss Aisbitt did a dormitory inspection twice a day! Everyone liked the three hot meals a day but still enjoyed visiting the tuck shop!. We did lots of activities like aeroball, archery, computers - I.T., quad bikes, wall climbing, swimming and low ropes. Everybody thought it was good and we hope that other children from our school will be able to go in the future.

**Please send your stories, pictures or jokes to the editors.**





## Letters to the Editors



Dear Editors

### **Waste Paper Collection Service**

I would be pleased to know the reaction of other members of the village to the so-called “Waste Paper Collection Service” that pretends to operate within the area of your remit every second Tuesday.

I write on a Tuesday, after my wife has just finished clearing up the mess that they left behind outside our house. Paper that was blowing up and down the High Street together with bits of cardboard, bags, torn up receipts and bank statements, private letters, clippings from magazines etc etc. which were obviously lost during the process of emptying the boxes and representing a total disregard of the environmental and visual impact that such waste represents. I am also prepared to state categorically that this rubbish was not present before the pick-up van passed the house.

On an earlier date, I followed the offender over the hill towards Six Mile Bottom from Swaffham Bulbeck. On that occasion, paper was slipping past and under the tailgate every fifty or one hundred yards and promptly blowing across the fields. I was unable to pass the vehicle, because every time I attempted to do so, the driver swerved outwards and it was only when we both got to the Cambridge Road cross-roads that I was able to pull alongside and tell the team on board what was happening. I was told to mind my own business, there was nothing that they could do about it because it is a design fault in the vehicle!!

I regret that at that time, I took the number of the Company from the side of the pick-up but must have copied it wrongly and I failed to make contact with a complaint. This latest episode is just one too many, and I now think that East Cambridgeshire District Council should be asked to re-think a policy which so directly spoils the village and the surrounding countryside.

Yours faithfully

**John Fidoe,**  
7 High Street

Dear Editors

My wife Gloria was no doubt delighted to be welcomed to Swaffham Prior in the March edition of your excellent magazine, while I must admit that I was less than happy to discover that I am being cuckolded by some chap called Peter who obviously spends more time in my house than I do.

I accept and applaud the fact that the essence of good journalism is to

secure a “scoop” which, while being accurate and factual, serves to educate enlighten embarrass, anger, accuse or amuse the reader or subject of the article. I must confess to at least two of these emotions, but also feel that your intrepid reporter did not pursue the subjects of her “piece” with sufficient vigour.

Yours faithfully

**John Fidoe,**  
7 High Street

*Ed. Note: The ‘Welcome’ referred to Gloria and **Peter** Fidoe. This letter was not published before but as the writer was again incorrectly named in last months Crier (surname mis-spelt), he politely requested inclusion. We apologise.*

Dear Editors,

### **School Reunion**

In May of this year, my children organised a surprise birthday party for me and invited one or two old school friends which was really lovely. At this party we thought it would be nice to meet up with other school friends so through the Crier I am hoping that we can make this possible. Mary Benstead, Stuart Jacobs and myself are hoping to organise a school re-union for some time next year, probably April/May 1998.

We all attended Burwell Secondary Modern (as it was known then) and left late 1961/early 1962. Some of our friends living in Swaffham Prior were: Pauline Prince, Heather Gillson, Ian Scott, Christine Prentice, Sheila Lewis, Alan Fielden, just to name a few (all probably married now and perhaps living away).

It would be lovely to meet up again and remember our school days and see how we have changed over the years! If anyone reading the Crier and who was in the same year/class as us, or knows the whereabouts of any of the above, please could they telephone me on 01638 742585 or Mary/Stuart on 01638 664373.

We are eager to have this re-union so it would be nice to hear from anyone who would like to come along - details will be given later i.e. venue, date, time etc. Many thanks

**Sandra Butcher (nee Flack)**  
7 Rogers Road



## Pet Purri

Another year flown by. We've just been doing some sums, and realize that in cat terms we've at last caught up with the Upright in a Skirt being 9 years old. We may not be quite as nimble nowadays but at least we don't think we look our age 'cos we don't have grey hair or wrinkles like her. Why don't cats (or dogs) get wrinkles? Answers please on a postcard to the Upright in a Skirt as she's been trying, unsuccessfully, to solve the problem for a long time. And another question, why don't we go bald (sorry, thin on top!) like the Upright in Trousers? We'll let you into a secret if you promise not to tell anyone - our Uprights family nickname is "the Wrinklies" and they seem to answer to it quite happily.

All this strenuous mental activity is very tiring so we're off to enjoy a quick cat-nap in front of the fire.....

We hope the New Year goes well for all our four-legged friends and their Uprights. Keep well, keep warm and love one another.



## Pat Pourri

Ring out the old, ring in the new - this is the time of year to look back and ask yourself was it a good year, what did I achieve, did I try something new, learn something new, stick to that diet, give up smoking, listen more and talk less?. The answers in my case are: not much, yes, yes, no, no, no. Disheartening but as they used to say in my school reports "could do better if she tried". Maybe 1998 will be the year when I do my first parachute jump, bungee leap, conquer my arachnophobia, swim the Channel - and again maybe it won't!.

Him Indoors on the other hand has done much better. Having been "retired" a year ago, he was offered the job as Clerk of the P.C. (he finds it fascinating), then out of the blue, another job came his way, he's moved into the IT world of the Internet, E-mail and all the others. O.K. so we're not quite "surfing the net" yet, rather dipping our big toes in but we're learning. It's a bit disconcerting when your 9-year old grandson tells you what to do and how to do it - know what I mean!

1998 holds the promise of so many good things in the village. Its the year of the Festival, re-opening of the Village Hall, fetes, garden parties, Feast, Autumn Show and many many more. I hope we can all enjoy what is on offer in good health and heart. A very Happy New Year from Peter and me.

*Pat Cunningham*

## Nature Trail

### Jenny Wren

In the navy, lady sailors were known as WRNS, therefore wrens, and therefore Jenny wrens as the birds have been known in the countryside from time immemorial. Only four inches long, the wrens' cocked-up tails make them easy to recognise. They are obligingly unworried by humans and will dart about in low bushes near to us as we tend our gardens. Their tic-tic-tic voice is often all we see or hear of this little bird as he moves fast and furiously along a hedgerow.

Their courage vis-a-vis our cat Stripes is amazing - he knows he can't catch them, they are far too nimble, so he sulks and pretends not to notice them, whilst they harangue him with their ticking noise which grows to a crescendo when he disdains to notice them.

Their song is a lovely trilling warble, as clear as a bell and can be confused with the robin. They feed mostly on spiders and insects so tend to have a tough time in winter and cannot be assisted by the peanuts and seeds we put out for the finches.

Their recovery rate after a severe winter is, however, very fast and they quickly regain their numbers.

*James Chesterman*

## Village Gardeners



Bridget Smith, talking on 'Gardening with Nature', certainly commanded our attention at the November meeting by asking us what we thought 'Gardening with Nature' was all about. She then proceeded to give us tips on the use of fertilisers, how to garden with the least damage to the environment and the best way to deal with drought conditions. This was followed by slides illustrating her talk and showing plants growing in sunny and shady positions.

There will be no meeting in December and the next meeting is on 20th January 1998 at Swaffham Prior School Hall when Alison Davis will speak on "Plants used in Herbal Medicines".

*Betty E Prime*

## Neighbourhood Watch

A cluster meeting of seven villages was held on 25th November at Swaffham Bulbeck. There was a good attendance of co-ordinators and the meeting produced a discussion on all matters concerning the formation of Watches within the local communities as well as positive ways of ensuring a good working partnership with both Special Constables and our own Community Beat Police Officer Paul Davis. The current list of co-ordinators for Swaffham Prior was found to be out of date and is now being revised, as some people are not registered with the police as being in the scheme.

The overall aim of the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme was felt to be one of creating an environment in which the commission of crime was made as difficult as possible. It helps in making people aware of ways of reducing the opportunity for crime as well as encouraging residents to be more vigilant of the people committing crimes. It was also felt that communities should not be complacent about the level of crime in their area. People should not accept that petty crime such as vandalism is something that we just have to live with. The sight of damage to public property reflects on us all.

I hope to see all the co-ordinators for Swaffham Prior soon with a view to arranging a meeting. In the meantime I will attend the next cluster meeting in Swaffham Bulbeck in January.

*Andrew Badcock*



## **Ladies Circle**

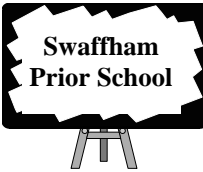
Our meeting held at the Chapel on Monday 24th November was a very light-hearted evening. Iris Stannett from Lode gave us some ideas for making our own Christmas gifts. Some of the ladies tried their hand at decorating bottles full of potpourri and bath oils, others made Christmas cards from hot wax. All in all, it was a very enjoyable evening.

We are now almost through our first year of the Ladies Circle and may I thank all those who attend so regularly each month. Its been a very enjoyable and successful year and we hope 1998 will be equally as successful.

We would be pleased to see any new members so do come along and join us.

*Sandra Butcher*

**PTA**



Whilst writing this report, we are in the midst of the Nativity plays at the School - what a wonderful evening it was. The children were just fantastic. Well done to all of them and the Staff for all their hard work. May I apologise for the confusion over the times of the Nativity Play. Unfortunately after the last Crier had already gone to print, it was decided, for various reasons, to change the times. Sorry!

Last month, I mentioned two trips that were taking place. The children's reports or in the Childrens Corner section of this month's *Crier*. I hope you enjoy reading them. They all had such a lovely time.

Brenda Wilson and Staff and PTA would like to say a huge "thank you" to Eric Day for all his hard work and association with the school over many years. Eric came to the school as a pupil in 1928 and his children and grandchildren followed in his footsteps. For many years, he has been a Trustee for the school and represented the Trustees on the board of Governors. We are truly grateful for all his hard work and dedication to the School over many years. Thank you once again Eric.

Finally, on behalf of the PTA and School, may we wish you all a very Happy New Year.

*Penny Cannings*



## **Swaffham Prior Women's Institute**

### **W.I. Notes**

Our social evening went with a swing - food provided by the members plus games and a lot of socializing. Do join us in the New Year, when we have a talk by Arthur Nutall on "Porridge". Our meetings start at 7.30 pm and are in the school on the third Monday in the month, which makes our next one on 19th January 1998.

Before then, we have a trip to the Pantomime at Bury St. Edmunds on 9th January to see "Puss in Boots". We only have five tickets left so if you are interested please contact Betty Prime on 741221.

A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

*Betty Fox*

## **Village Hall Project**

Work is progressing well, even with the vagaries of the recent weather which caused a slight delay in completion of roofing. However, this job will be finished by the time you read this, the scaffolding will be down, the new windows in and doors (albeit temporary) in situ to make the Hall weatherproof and safe. Sub-contractors (Heating, Plumbing and Electrical) are on site for these major elements of the project. The mud outside deepens, the cold inside bites, but we make our daily visits with alacrity, to enjoy the humour of the builders and watch the steady progress towards the end of each phase.

Looking back exactly one year ago (*Crier* Jan. 1997), we reported then that we had just started our 'application for funding' bids, following analysis of the village Questionnaire. So much happened, so quickly, we were faced with many difficulties (and some soul-searching) and yet, 12 months later, we can see the physical results of "sticking to one's guns" and believing that we *could* achieve what you told us you wanted.

Of course, we couldn't have done this without the help of so many of you who have, throughout the year helped with fund-raising, dipped generously into your pockets, baked and cooked (not just the ladies either!), cleaned and tidied, worked on the grounds and many, many, other tasks.

The Parish Council have assisted and supported us splendidly as too the Parochial Charities. Thank you all.

A very Happy New Year.

*Pat Cunningham*

Village Hall Management Committee

## **CPRE (Council for the Protection of Rural England)**

On 22nd October a meeting was held at the Maltings, Ely sponsored by the national office of the CPRE and the Cambridgeshire County Committee to launch an East Cambridgeshire group. East Cambridgeshire was the only area of the County which, up to that time, did not have its own group! The meeting was well attended and among those present were a number of Local councillors, including Mr John Robinson, Chairman of Reach Parish Council, a former Mayor of Ely and our MP, Mr James Paice.

Following the meeting a number of people have indicated their interest in the work of the CPRE and their wish to do something to help.

The CPRE, as its name implies, exists to protect the countryside. Threats come from three main areas - inappropriate development, clutter and damage to the environment. The CPRE works through the planning system and in East Cambridgeshire is a regular consultee. During the past few years, it has

made its voice heard over such matters as a proposed waste disposal site at Mepal, unsightly overhead cables, farm reservoirs (which in principle it supports) and water conservation, to name but a few.

Now that the CPRE has had a good launch in East Cambridgeshire, anyone who is interested in joining is invited to get in touch with me, or the County Chairman, Mr Christopher Bird, at 31 Hertford Street, Cambridge who will be pleased to give any further information. Members of CPRE are the eyes and ears of the Countryside, which has few other than ours. It exists to protect the countryside, not to stifle it, and is willing to work with all like-minded organisations.

*Margaret Cook*

## **Report from the Parish Council**

The meeting on the 11th of December was chaired by Henry Hardiment with all but one member present. There were also 2 members of the public present.

### **Matters arising**

**Barston Drove:** It was agreed that two members of the Council should undertake landscaping after clearing any rubble still there.

**Travellers:** Following the last meeting, CCC agreed to dig a ditch around the land on B1102. This is currently in progress. The area will then be landscaped and planted. The Clerk is to contact Steve Hill at ECDC about the mud on the road.

**Neighbourhood Watch:** Andrew Badcock reported that he has inserted an article in the Crier giving details of the next Cluster Meeting in January which he hopes coordinators will attend to revitalise the Scheme.

### **CCC/ECDC Reports**

Cllr Fitch's full report is included elsewhere in the Crier. Election for the vacancy on ECDC will take place on 22nd January 1998. Two items of particular reference to Swaffham Prior: he has arranged for Inspector Howell of Histon to reply to David Carrington's letter (Dec Crier) and in response to James Chesterman's letter (same edition); and said that although he is sympathetic to the problem, there is no money available for calming measures. The Council will discuss the matter in greater detail at the next meeting, when the Clerk has obtained budgetary costs for all traffic calming options.

## **Correspondence**

A Letter from Wicksteed Leisure following their annual inspection of Town Close play equipment revealed various repairs were necessary. The Clerk has costed the parts and will obtain a quotation for fitting. The Council agreed such repairs should be carried out as soon as possible.

## **Village Hall Update**

Pat Cunningham reported that progress was proceeding well and within the budgeted cost. The major sub-contractors were on site.

## **Planning Matters**

There were no objections to the Planning Application from New England Stud in Newmarket.

## **Coopers Green Sign**

The Clerk has a quotation for a new sign which will cost £96.11. It was agreed that this should be ordered.

## **Any Other business**

The Clerk had received a note from Mr. & Mrs. Marshall about disabling/removing the **water taps** in the village to further deter travellers. After discussion, the Council agreed that it wished to retain these features and the one removed from Town Close during alterations is to be reinstalled. The Council agreed to review the situation in six months time.

**The ditch** between Sheldricks Cottage and the Beeches has still not been cleared. The Clerk will write to ECDC again requesting prompt action.

## **Open Question Time**

Mr. James Chesterman from the floor expressed his concerns about speeding through the village. He had received a call from Cllr. Fitch expressing his sympathy for our problem, but he would like to know the views of the Council. It was generally agreed that “polite” notices did not deter speeding, that when costings for traffic calming measures were available, and after a village survey had been carried out, the Council would consider the matter again in detail.

## **From Our Reporter at the Parish Council Meeting**

The PC Meeting was held on 11th December and the final copy date for the *Crier* was the 10th December. Hence there is no *Crier* Report this month.

This then becomes a good time of year to reflect, and what I would like to reflect upon this month is the role of the *Crier* Report, and the role of the PC

Minutes. Some people think they are trying to do the same thing, but this is not so. When Ron Prime reported the April 1997 PC Meeting he noted that the minutes of an extra meeting of the PC were challenged by one member and that "there was a somewhat emotionally charged altercation with the Chairman." Ron goes on to say "I can't help feeling that there's a simple way to ensure that Council meetings are accurately recorded - that is to record them, magnetically. Parliament does it ... why not the PC?"

Alas, that would not have provided the answer. I attended that particular meeting and it was like Parliamentary Question Time, but with seven people speaking simultaneously, rarely listening to anyone else, and worse. A full transcript would not have helped, and most probably a transcript of any other meeting is likely to be beyond the resources of a parish council. Nor should one be necessary, as the *apparent* role of the minutes is to record decisions, providing the decisions have been clearly defined at the meeting, and generally there is no problem. It is quite remarkable how well over the years the *Crier* Report has slotted in with the PC Minutes of Ruth Stinton (until recently the Clerk for 25 years). They complemented each other.

So, what is the role of the *Crier* Report? Ron Prime made the comparison between the Parish Council and Parliament and perhaps we should look at the history of parliamentary sketch-writers for the answer. James Grant, a Whig journalist, initiated sketch-writing in the 1830s. A few others joined the game in the 1850s and 1860s but it was not until the 1870s that the steady growth began. Disraeli was soon to lament:-

"'Our Own Reporter' has invaded Parliament in all its purlieus. No longer content with giving an account of the speeches of its members, he is not satisfied unless he describes their persons, their dress, and their characteristic mannerisms. He tells us how they dine, even the wine and dishes they favour, and follows them into the very mysteries of their smoking room."

But the parliamentary sketch-writer has a more positive role. T.P. O'Connor, an Irish Nationalist MP and also a sketch-writer, maintained:-

*"The reporting columns of a newspaper do not always give an accurate and rarely a vivid picture of what really takes place in a legislative body. Columns appear of speeches which have been delivered to empty benches, and which, therefore, have influenced the fortunes of debate little, if at all ... The speech that reads convincing and eloquent may, owing to the physical defects of the orator, have not been listened to at all. Equally a speech which appears dull and cold in print may have produced wild outbursts of enthusiasm or of anger. It is assuredly as important that there should be some record of how the speeches influenced the assemblies to which they*



*were addressed as of the mere words of the speeches themselves. Nor can any account of a speech be entirely complete which does not convey some idea of the man who makes it, his manner of speaking, his appearance, his character, his career."*

If this applies to the full reports of speeches which once appeared in newspapers in plenty, how much more does it apply to minutes. Minutes are not going to record a remark like "We don't want Poverty Row down there" or any other similar delicious quotes from the PC. Minutes need to be more discreet. While the *Crier* Report is a poor thing compared to the great parliamentary sketch-writers, it does follow the same tradition and without fear, will be lively, irreverent, critical, factual, informative, as well as seeing the PC as theatre, or, as Norman Shrapnel of the *Guardian* once wrote of Parliament, "a famous but ever-struggling repertory company."

*Alastair Everitt*

## **From Our Local County Councillor**



**Cambridgeshire  
County Council**

Christmas may have passed by the time you see this letter, but at least I can wish you a happy, rewarding and stressfree New Year.

At the end of November, I was pleased to introduce Alan Barnish, the new County Chief Executive, to Burwell Parish Council and Parish Chairmen of Bottisham, Reach and Swaffham Bulbeck (v.Chair). It was a pity that Lode and Swaffham Prior were unable to be present. This was the first visit Alan Barnish had made to any parish in Cambridgeshire. There are more than 200 still to go.

Having outlined his Welsh Marches background, Alan then foreshadowed some of the challenges facing him, such as the tight Budget settlement, the separation of Peterborough from the rest of the county and the completion of the changes in the Social Services Children's sector.

It is too early to say how Council Tax will be affected by the budgetary settlement, but early indications are that the County charge will rise at more than inflation, maybe by as much as a tenth. More news on this as the fog of uncertainty clears. We members will be briefed on the process on 15 December after this letter goes to press.

I have been much involved in the Charter Mark awards this year, and attended this year's ceremony in the Queen Elizabeth Hall to collect a second award for East Cambridgeshire District Council relating to its financial services. We are proud to be one of only 75 bodies in the U.K. to be honoured with a second award for the same service. Next to us at the

ceremony was John Edwards (County Assistant Director Transport) who was also collecting an award on behalf of the Highways Division.

The county also won first awards for the Multicultural Education Service and the Upware Field Studies Centre. Only 364 Charter Marks were awarded this year from nearly 1000 applications. Both authorities have cause for satisfaction to offset some of the bad press and less than best standard Children's Services earlier this year.

At November's full council, three resolutions were passed. The first was to urge the Government to place the fight against Global Warming at the top of its foreign affairs agenda. The second was to ask the Government to reverse its recent decision not to allow for the wind chill effect when calculating bad weather payments. The third was to oppose Anglian Water's application to greatly increase the taking of river water from the Gt. Ouse and the Nene. We are all worried about the effect Anglian Water's plans would have on the internationally important Ouse Washes.

In the next few days I shall be discussing with the Leader of the County Council the Concessionary Bus Passes scheme. In these discussions I shall be representing East Cambridgeshire. Let us hope some assistance to our hard-pressed elderly friends and relatives emerges.

*James Fitch*

## **Election of new District Councillor.**

Mrs Shulver has resigned as District Councillor for the Swaffhams and Reach Wards. The election for the vacancy will take place on 22nd January 1998.

### **Interim arrangements**

In the interval before the election of a new District Councillor, I am readily available to act on any parishioner's behalf in their dealings with East Cambridgeshire.

As you probably know, I am a District Councillor for Bottisham Ward and, until April 1988, I am Chairman of Council.

*James Fitch*

# **The Parish Church of St. Mary, Swaffham Prior**

## **Church Services for January 1998**

Sunday 4th	11:00 AM	Parish Communion
	6:00 PM	Evensong (BCP) and Sermon
Wednesday 7th	2:00 PM	Deanery MU Epiphany Carol Service
Sunday 11th	11:00 AM	Family Communion
	6:00 PM	Evensong (BCP) and Sermon
Sunday 18th	11:00 AM	Parish Communion
	6:30 PM	Ecumenical Service - Zion Baptist Chapel
Sunday 25th	8:00 AM	Holy Communion (BCP)
	11:00 AM	Mattins (BCP) and Sermon

## **Notes and Other Dates for January:**

Friday 2nd	11:00 AM	Standing Committee at Vicarage
Thursday 15th	9:30 AM	Church Architects quad inspection
Tuesday 20th	7:15 PM	Fordham Deanery Synod - Chippenham
Tuesday 27th	7:30 PM	Fordham Deanery Churchwardens Meeting - Reach

Bellringing - Practice nights in St. Cyriac's belfry - every fortnight from 6th January. Sundays at 10.30 am and before Evensong.

Holy Communion is also celebrated every Wednesday in Burwell Church and every Thursday in Swaffham Bulbeck Church, both at 10.00 am.

Evening Prayer is said every Wednesday in Reach Church at 5.00 pm. The Vicar would be pleased to know of anyone in need of a home or hospital visit.

+++++

## **Advent by Candlelight**

The evening of music and readings for Advent held on Sunday 7th December raised the magnificent sum of £300 for the work of the Salvation Army - our thanks to all who were involved with the evening at the two churches.

## **Communication, Christmas and Epiphany**

Most of the problems we encounter in life are, in many cases, down to bad communication ... misunderstandings, sometimes born out of us hearing what we wanted to hear, rather than what was actually said! We are also often guilty of speaking too much and not simply listening; “even the dull and ignorant, they too have their story” runs the poem ‘Desiderata’.

The story we engage with this month and last is The Greatest Story Ever Told, the coming to humankind of God Himself in the person of the Christ-child, Jesus.

The communication of this stupendous fact was, of course heralded by the prophets of the Old Testament, then by an angel to Mary, that she would give birth to the Saviour of the World. We remember this event on Lady Day, 25th March. John the Baptist announced that he was not the Christ, but as Isaiah had prophesied, a voice that cries in the wilderness, “make straight the way of the Lord”. He was communicating the news that the angels had announced to the shepherds; God’s messengers playing their part in salvation history.

It was left to the 3 kings or wise men to actually carry the news from Bethlehem to the world. At Epiphanytide, the 12th day of Christmas (the date when the Eastern Orthodox Church actually celebrates Christmas), we remember that they journeyed back to the east by another route to avoid Herod who would have suppressed the news along with his infanticide designed to remove the rival monarch. That they succeeded is our great joy, the Gospel was ‘made manifest’ to a world in sore need of his healing forgiveness and peace.

‘The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us’ records St John and it is this coming to us in human form, God’s identification with us, that is the hallmark of our faith. God became real and through His Holy Spirit, He continues to be real; the practice of our religion is not to hide Jesus in words and songs, for that would be to reverse the very intention that God had. We need to face Him in our daily lives and in our prayers and to remember why He came in the first place .. to save us from our sins and to be our advocate in heaven and to bring us to eternal life.

My New Year prayer for you all is that in however small a way you might communicate something of the love of God in your own lives, reflecting to a needy world the image of God that lies in each one of us.

Happy Epiphany, With love

***Mark Haworth***

# Zion Baptist Chapel

## Services For January 1998

Sunday 4th	10:30 AM	Family Service
	6:30 PM	Steve Ayres followed by Communion
Sunday 11th	6:30 PM	Tony Buttress
Sunday 18th	6:30 PM	United Service - Week of prayer for Christian Unity
Sunday 25th	6:30 PM	John Sargent

## A Step Into The Unknown

Whenever we set out on a journey we like to know where we are going and how to get there. As a lad I remember that before we went on a longer than usual journey my dad obtained a route from the AA - the posh name was an 'itinerary'. It would detail every junction and turning and, if followed properly, guaranteed there would be no wrong turnings or risk of getting lost. It was more up to date than a road map, took account of known major road works and provided a brief description of places of interest along the way. It indicated how many miles the journey was, as well as how long it would take.

If only all our 'journeys' came with such a helpful set of information, but the most important journey of all, the journey of life, does not. It is a journey into the unknown - unknown destination, unknown length, and as for what we will meet on the way ... who can tell! For such a journey we need a guide - someone who can take us safely through each day and into the unknown of each tomorrow. My guide for this journey is the best guide of all, who knows the way well, and has proved Himself to be someone I can trust completely. I refer of course to my Father in heaven. At the start of a new year may I suggest that you also need such a guide - you won't find one better. I recently came across these well-known words, quoted by George VI in his Christmas Broadcast of 1939. For me they express these thoughts very powerfully.

*"As I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year, 'Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown.' And he replied, 'Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way.'"*

A happy New Year to you all.

**Steve Ayres**

# Roman Catholic Church, Newmarket Parish

## Masses

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

Kirtling: Sun 0945; Soham 1700

Christmas Eve: Newmarket: 1800, 2130 Soham 1830 Kirtling: 2130

Christmas Day: Newmarket: 0900, 1030 Kirtling 0945

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

*O Come, all ye Faithful* may well be the most popular of all Christmas carols; certainly in churches and quite possibly on the canned High Street tapes that do so much to induce that feeling of carol fatigue by Christmas! Its words are over-familiar, and yet if we take the time to think them through, they are strong stuff. *O Come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant*. It is you and I who are joyful and triumphant. Joyful and triumphant because the birth we celebrate is a birth that gives us the promise of eternal life. The birth we celebrate was doubtless a joyful one; but it was hardly a triumphant one. An anxious Joseph and a frightened Mary, weary from three days' journey to meet the bureaucratic demand of a remote government that everyone return to their place of birth to be assessed for taxation, found every inn overcrowded, and had to plead with a harassed innkeeper to get a barely private place in an outhouse to give birth: a powerful image of a family pushed around, vulnerable, marginalised. This is how God chose to come to share the lot of mankind: to take on our careworn condition. *God of God, light of lights, lo! he abhors not the Virgin's womb*. What a coy, almost prissy way of putting it! God chose to encase Himself in flesh, to become 'incarnate', to endure the limitations of human life, the limitations and the buffets, the injustices which are the consequences of bad human choices, and the injustice built into the political, economic, social structures rooted in bad human choices. He chose to limit Himself, to draw that injustice onto himself, to challenge it and to die reviled, beaten and spat upon for having challenged it. No, He did not abhor the Virgin's womb. He shared our humanity so that we could understand that His will is to share Himself with us; so that we could understand that we had a share in His divinity. This is why we must fight that carol fatigue and be joyful and triumphant. As we hear that carol yet again, let us dwell on the refrain and realise that every word can bear emphasis:

o come, let US adore him

*o come, let us ADORE him*

*o come let us adore HIM - Christ the Lord*



## Dates for Your Diary - January 1998

Thu	1	<i>"Happy New Year"</i>
Fri	2	
<b>Sat</b>	3	
<b>Sun</b>	4	Festival Committee Meeting , 44 High St, 7:15 PM
Mon	5	
Tue	6	
Wed	7	Term Starts
Thu	8	PC Meeting, Mobile Classroom, 7:30 PM
Fri	9	
<b>Sat</b>	10	
<b>Sun</b>	11	PCC Meeting, Vicarage, 7:30 PM
Mon	12	Village College Lifelong Learning Courses start
Tue	13	
Wed	14	<i>Crier</i> <b>Copy Date</b> (to Carters Cottage) Staine Hundred, Bottisham Village College, 7:30 PM
Thu	15	Mobile Library, Outside Post Office, 11:20-11:40 AM
Fri	16	
<b>Sat</b>	17	
<b>Sun</b>	18	
Mon	19	WI, School Hall, 7:30 PM
Tue	20	Village Gardeners, School Hall, 8:00 PM
Wed	21	
Thu	22	ECDC Election
Fri	23	
<b>Sat</b>	24	
<b>Sun</b>	25	
Mon	26	Ladies Circle, Zion Chapel, 7:30 PM Village Hall Management Committee, Carters Cottage, 8:00
Tue	27	
Wed	28	
Thu	29	<i>Crier</i> Collating, Zion Chapel Mobile Library, Outside Post Office, 11:20-11:40 AM
Fri	30	
<b>Sat</b>	31	