



The Swaffham Crier

Volume 25 Number 2

February 2001



Editorial

Who made the whopping big **trench** in the grass verge at the bottom of Cage Hill? Or, having read Frank Redhead's letter, perhaps it should be "Quien ha hecho el trench mucho grande al bottomo de Cage Hill?" (*well, ish!*). Who pays for this damage? Why don't Monster Megatonnes visit Reach *first*? That tightish corner would wedge anything bigger than a Mini Car.

This month's cover artist was a little unwilling (understatement)! We need **more pictures** for the front of the magazine. Please send anything you think might be suitable to the Editors. We have a Village full of budding artists, just as we have a village full of budding correspondents — all pictures very welcome, send them in and we will publish.

As to the correspondents, we are grateful to them all. The *Letters* page is one of the most entertaining sections of this magazine and we are very fortunate to have so many contributors. This month, "**Name Witheld**" shrugs off adverse remarks re his appearance, but is concerned about the appearance of a **MOLE**. Meanwhile our *Roving Correspondent*, with an open mind and a watchful eye, has decided that Name Witheld is not, after all, the elusive 'Jack in the Corner'. Who is who, one wonders? Indeed.

But by far the most controversial issue on these pages is raised by our opening letter re the Dark Ages. Street Lighting!!!. As Charlotte Cane diplomatically and mildly remarks: "This is always a divisive issue". Too true, love them or loathe them. I loathe them! Yes, I was brought up in a village without them (pensioners carry torches, the rest of us know every kerb, rut, drain-cover by heart) and no, there isn't any more crime and yes, I do like to see the stars...but these are just my opinions. Thanks to Mr Hewitt for opening this debate, and let us have more views.

Meanwhile, in this month's issue, we have **Give us back our Eleven Days** by Margaret Stanier for a fascinating insight into the history of our modern calendar, and **Prior and Prejudice** for a fascinating insight into the annual Bulbeck/Prior Hockey Match.

Alas, the **Village Pancake Day** celebrations have been cancelled, so we'll all have to make our own again. Happy February!

Caroline Matheson

Cover Picture: *Pancake Day* by Bobby Matheson



Letters to the Editors



Dear Editors,

THE RETURN OF THE DARK AGES

It is not often that I am driven to write a letter of protest to the press, but the recent outbreak of vandalism, perpetrated by E.C.D.C. must not go unchallenged.

For many years we have enjoyed an excellent standard of street lighting through most of the village. This has helped to keep down the level of road traffic accidents, and to enable the observation and reporting of anti-social and unlawful activity. E.C.D.C. has decided that these benefits should be thrown away to placate the vociferous minority who have discovered the magic buzz words LIGHT POLLUTION. Light pollution is a serious problem to professional astronomers in some parts of the world, but I suggest that there are few of these active in the village.

Without consultation, even with the Parish Council, E.C.D.C. has disconnected the first class lights which illuminated the High Street between Station Road and the Village entrance, and replaced them with what I can only describe as lamps salvaged from the 1930s which have had the gas mantles removed, and a high pressure Sodium bulb mounted so deeply within the cap that any light generated by the bulb has the greatest difficulty in escaping to provide any worthwhile illumination. Doubtless E.C.D.C. will say that this is a lamp design which is on their list of approved apparatus. To that I would answer that they should modify their list and erase this model. It is appalling.

I must of course declare an interest in this matter. Unlike the members of the committee which has foisted this abomination upon us I actually live in the village, opposite the first lamp as one comes from Swaffham Bulbeck. This lamp, and the next, which has already given up the ghost, have no buildings behind them to reflect some of the meagre light output back onto the road. The result is that, as one enters the village, there are alternate patches of light and dark on the road. The only reasonably illuminated areas being on the footpaths immediately under the lamp.

As I told the Parish council at their last meeting, I phoned the Cambridgeshire police to see if they had any statistics which related road accident figures to street lighting levels. They could not provide such figures, but did express their amazement that there was anywhere in the area where street lighting levels were being reduced, as their experience was that improvements in this field had a very marked effect upon crime rates.

Obviously I am not speaking for everybody in the village, but I do know

that all of my immediate neighbours are furious about this state of affairs. Mrs Cane has kindly agreed to convey our feelings to the council, and to request that the original lamp standards should be left in position until the possibility of reversing this regrettable action can be discussed.

If E.C.D.C. have money to spare for this sort of exercise I suggest that they spend it on the repair and resurfacing of the footpath on the church side of the High Street. The condition of this footpath has been dangerous for years. The present reduction in lighting levels will make it lethal in any future slippery conditions.

SG Hewitt
63 High Street

Dear Editors,

Real Millennium Projects

Are there no commemorative projects proposed for the real Millennium year? Have I missed something? Was I sleeping? Am I too late? Consider a prominent local beauty spot, where sturdy metal sculptures displayed at the corner of Lower End and Cage Hill do much more than symbolize power to the people, they actually supply it. Although there may be some reluctance to change the special character of this part of the Conservation Area in the heart of the village, would something including a street map near the village sign also showing farm locations (in Spanish) be welcome? If not, strangers seeking directions can always rely on self-builders, as usual.

Frank Redhead
36 Lower End

Dear Editors

Apologies to "Jack in the Corner"

It can become very muddled when people write under a pseudonym but, if one keeps an open mind and a watchful eye, the truth can often be reached. The second letter from "Name withheld" shows that he/she is **definitely not** "Jack in the Corner". "Jack" would either have kept silent or would have replied to John Norris under his/her own name, and certainly not as obliquely. Perhaps it is time "Name withheld" quietly withdrew.

Alastair Everitt
Anglesey House

The **Friends of Bottisham Village College** would like to apologise to everyone looking forward to our **ceilidh** due to take place on 3rd February. It is with regret that we will have to postpone this event until the autumn.

Dear Editors,

I am grateful to Alistair Everitt's support since my October letter, although I am somewhat perplexed by his description of my physical defects. I had till now thought my features to be fairly regular, although I have never much liked the shape of my nose, I admit.

I am also shocked at his suggestion that I might at any time have been involved in or provoked in my absence any fisticuffs in the Red Lion. On my few visits to this most cosy rustic tavern I have found the clientele extremely placid. Some sort of apology seems to be due from someone, though from whom depends on the degree of truth in Alistair's allegation: if untrue, he should apologise for the slur; if true, the ruffians concerned should publicly declare on these pages that they will not behave in such a manner again, to preserve the good name of one of the last public facilities in this community.

I am concerned also that Alistair seems to think that my list of letter titles may have been in some way satirical. I have expressed my gratitude to both him and to Mr Norris for being the only readers to take the trouble to respond. I am no longer conciliatory as I was in my second letter (as the editors have most kindly noted). I now want some answers.

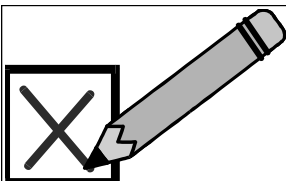
To begin with I have proof, as if it were needed, that someone is responsible for the loss of birds from my garden. Since I first wrote, some of the chaffinches, a couple of blackbirds and a wren are back. (I'm not counting the starlings — I never wanted them anyway). I now want the rest and some sort of apology from those concerned.

There is also a mole in my garden that was not there before. I think the cowardly perpetrator should remove it. Moles are not spontaneous, they are not like some sort of daffodil — they have to be planted, as he or she or some sort of transvestite knows. (At least Alistair Everitt is right insofar that I am not a cross-dresser, but he should know also that I can dress for the occasion as well as anyone).

In addition, my recycling bin generously provided by Cleanaway has been stolen from the kerbside (again) on the day after the last collection, Tuesday 12 December. Is there some sort of illicit trade in these things? If not, the theft of one individual's bin to allow the thief to recycle for the good of the community seems to be to miss the point somewhat.

Last, on a different but related matter, I think someone should explain who the Staine Hundred are, what they have done to be made to suffer so and who is persecuting them; and why no-one seems to be campaigning to aid their plight. After all (unlike this writer), there seems to be rather a lot of them.

'Name Withheld'



Polling Registration

New legislation comes into force on 16th February 2001, which will enable you to move your vote with you when you move home.

If you have moved or will be moving between 10th October 2000 and the 15th February 2001 you will be able to make a claim to move your vote with you.

Contact Mrs J Human or Mrs D Gawthrop on 01353 665555 ext. 214 / 338 or alternatively write to us with the number of claims required at the address below.

East Cambridgeshire District Council

The Grange,
Nutholt Lane,
Ely Cambs.
CB7 4PL



**EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL**

GRAND JUMBLE & NEARLY NEW SALE

IN AID OF THE VILLAGE HALL

Saturday 3rd March at 2.30PM

We require jumble, nearly new items, toys, clothes,
bric-a-brac, books - in fact, anything saleable

Items can be collected by or left with:

Elaine Malster, 28 Fairview Grove (743894)

Trevor Jones, Sheldrick's Cottage, Lower End (741197)

Alastair Everitt, Anglesey House, 59 High Street (742974)

Alternatively items can be delivered to the Village Hall

on Friday 2nd March 7.30-9.00PM

or Saturday 3rd March 12.30-1.30PM

We would very much appreciate your help

**FRIENDS OF
SWAFFHAM PRIOR SCHOOL
SOCIAL NIGHT**

SATURDAY 10TH FEBRUARY

**AT SWAFFHAM PRIOR
VILLAGE HALL.
LIGHT SUPPER INCLUDED.
BAR AVAILABLE.
STARTERS ORDERS 7.45PM**

TICKETS £5.00 EACH

**IF YOU'VE EVER FANCIED
BEING A JOCKEY
NOW IS YOUR CHANCE!!!!**

**TICKETS AVAILABLE
CLAUDINE BATEMAN 742317.
SALLY PEARSON 743966
SCHOOL OFFICE 741529**

Are you between 8 and 10 years old?

**Do you enjoy exciting
challenges and activities?**



**If the answer is yes,
join the CUBS**



The 1st Swaffham Prior Cub Pack meets every **Wednesday**
evening at Swaffham Prior School Hall from **6.30 - 8.00pm.**

For more details please phone 01638 743348 or 743966

KARATE
EVERY WEDNESDAY
7pm - 9pm

AT SWAFFHAM BULBECK SCHOOL HALL
QUALIFIED INSTRUCTORS FROM SAWSTON KARATE CLUB
FOR MORE INFORMATION ALL AGES WELCOME
Tel. DALE on 07909 511035 or 01638 742228



CHILDREN IN NEED DISCO

**THANKS TO ALL THAT HELPED, DONATED
PRIZES, BOUGHT RAFFLE TICKETS AND
SUPPORTED THE DISCO HELD IN REACH VILLAGE
HALL**

IN NOVEMBER. WE RAISED £555.00.

From our Reporter at the Parish Council Meeting

At the last PC Meeting the main theme was "Lights" And what a night we had of it, with Sidney Hewitt arriving late and adding more spice and fireworks in 'Open Question Time'.

Many villagers will have witnessed the installation of the new lampposts and have become aware that the PC had not been consulted about any details since the first informal meeting with ECDC in October 1998. Charlotte Cane found this difficult to believe and revealed (after the meeting) that she had been present on the two occasions when Reach PC and Bulbeck PC met ECDC officials, pored over a plan, moved the odd lamppost or asked for an additional one, and selected the design they preferred from those on offer. **Our Parish Council had no such discussion.**



Following the PC's letter of 18th December to ECDC, Charlotte had come prepared to talk about the latest progress but she was taken by surprise to discover there had been no detailed local discussions. In the language of a tabloid it is an "**Absolute Disgrace**". Is it the incompetence of our own Parish Council? or of ECDC's Mr Selby? A Public Inquiry may be over the top, but at some point there should be an official release on the subject.

Meanwhile there is another problem - the PEOPLE. Some of them don't like it. And the perpetrators of the scheme have not been helped by the new light opposite the Chapel failing to work after the first few hours. Sidney Hewitt and his near neighbours are incensed about the new lighting and I was expecting the Village Hall to be stormed by a mob brandishing rakes and shovels. Instead only Sidney turned up, and what a good job he made of it.

Having found the new lighting totally unacceptable, his simple solution, supported by Eric, was for ECDC to reverse the decision and to reconnect the old lamps. Sidney's reason being that the reduced lighting is dangerous for buses and lorries, and that it could lead to increased crime. He had phoned the police asking for all statistics on crime and road illumination. There are no statistics but Sidney said the police were "amazed that light levels had been reduced as this leads to increased crime". Elaine questioned this as her daughter lives in a village with no street lighting and little crime. And the Chairman confirmed that Lower End was relatively crime free in spite of the people living there (*some mistake surely — Ed.*). Charlotte reminded the meeting that lighting is always divisive and that no decision will please everyone. One can go further and say it is likely to displease half

the people. ECDC once carried out a survey of Lower End residents and found that 50% liked the limited lighting in Lower End and 50% wanted more. It is likely to be the same with High Street residents.

Before all this the PC discussed the letter it had received from the Church Council asking for a light and additional hard standing for cars at the back of St Cyriac's. The light is needed for visitors to the cemetery, for evening services, and for concerts in St Cyriac's. The extra hard standing is needed because this year the ground has become churned up.

PC members had had a chance since December to consider the matter and the conclusions appeared to be: (Lighting) -- cemetery closed from dusk to dawn so lighting not needed, generally only one evening service per month, lighting usually provided for concerts, nothing wrong with a torch, not necessary in summer, a lot of expenditure for limited use; (Hard Standing) -- principally for the elderly and disabled, will not provide more parking spaces, a limited turning area anyway, parking available by the side of Cooper's Green, an exceptionally wet year and has never churned up badly previously, a great deal of money for little use unless used for permanent parking. I think the PC is asking for more information.

A few of the other topics. James Fitch will try to advise how the PC can make a more successful application for rumble strips on Mill Hill, but all funds gone for this year. James has also given up trying to put a footpath round the bridge on the way to Reach; instead he announced with great relish he now wants to "FLATTEN IT". Wait till the railway buffs hear. Eric on behalf of Neighbourhood Watch gave details of a large number of recent farm and industrial equipment thefts in Reach. Should this be put in the *Crier*? - almost unanimously the cry was "Reach things in the Reach magazine".

Charlotte gave an excellent account of the increased budget control in ECDC, for which it received an award. Trevor wondered if we could use Community Service people to maintain the cemetery, Elaine thought it an ideal time for them to suss out the village, and Eric wondered about the wisdom of having them wandering around with axes and saws. Undeterred, Trevor will be following this up. The occupants of Pulpit Corner are worried about the possibility of hundreds of people tramping through their homes at the official opening on Friday 16th February followed by lunch at the Village Hall. Some PC members have been invited, there may be others, but no other details were available. It should be a good day.

The meeting was so busy coffee was delayed until 9.30, with the meeting ending at 10.05.

Alastair Everitt

ART HISTORY

The Construction of Woman in Florentine Monumental Painting



An illustrated talk by
Ann Hollingsworth
Swaffham Prior Village Hall
Monday 5th February 2001 7.30 p.m.
Entrance £2

Using Ghirlandaio's frescoes in the Tornabuoni and Sassetti Chapels as a focus, what can we learn about women in Italian Renaissance society from contemporary art and texts?

Next talk 2 April 'The Easter Sepulchre in Eastern England'

ITALIAN FRESCOES

STUDY DAY AT BURWELL VILLAGE COLLEGE

Tutor: Ann Hollingsworth
Saturday 10th March 2001, 10 am - 4 pm

Enrol by 3rd March. Details from Burwell Village College 01638 741901

An illustrated course studying some of the beautiful fresco cycles to be found in Florence and other Italian cities.

More information from Ann Hollingsworth 01638 741613

SOS Unwanted Christmas Gifts

8th March - Bulb Walk and Coffee Morning

At the Manor, Lower End, by kind invitation of Mrs Rosalind Wood

If you happen to have any unwanted gifts or other such items suitable for our stall at the above venue we shall be delighted to hear from you:-

Gloria Fidoe (742666) 7 High Street

Jutta Reeks (743693) 44 High Street

There will be a produce stall, Bring & Buy and Raffle.

Watch this space for further details next month, but make a note of the date in your new diary now.

Priory Youth Club News

Town Close

We would like to thank everybody who purchased, sold tickets and gave generously to our Christmas hamper. We raised £175.00 which will be put to good use. On the question of raising money, our disco is still raising some money for us by doing private parties. Our next project is a plant sale e.g cuttings, pot plants, small animal statues etc. We are hoping to get a small stall on Newmarket market.

In the summer we had a day at Thorpe park, it was a super day out and are hoping to do it again this summer.

After ten years of trying, the youth club table tennis team won the Ely and district cup. Well done to Darren Stearn, Dale Badcock and Robert Hollingsworth. They worked really hard and showed true dedication representing the youth club.

Opening times.

Juniors 7.0pm-8.30pm. Ages 8yrs - yr 6 Tuesdays

Seniors 7.0pm-10.0pm. Ages yr 7-yr 11. Thursdays

Finally, the wooden curtains can come down, now we have funds for some glass, shame 90% raised has to be spent on this.

A & G Badcock

WASTE PAPER COLLECTION

This is a reminder to those who have forgotten, and an appeal to newcomers to the Village. We are able to sell old newspapers to a local firm which recycles them as horse bedding. The proceeds go to the Village Hall.

There are four sheds opposite the swings on Town Close and papers should be left in the one designated. You can't miss it. Newspapers should be tied in bundles if possible and stacked neatly.

PLEASE do not put heavy, glossy magazines (such as *Country Life*) or telephone directories in the shed. It just means *we* have to clear these away, because the paper collectors leave them behind. Even supplement-type glossy magazines are best avoided.

These papers generate a real income for the benefit of the community, and the horses love them. Let's see if we can increase it.

Village Hall Management Committee

PRIOR AND PREJUDICE

It is a truth universally acknowledged that a man in possession of a hangover must be in want of strenuous exercise. How else shall I account for my singular experience this morning? Christmas in Cambridgeshire at Mr Bonnet's plain house with his plain daughters, though they affect prettiness, is proving to be as level as the county's cultivations. I have no complaint of Mr Bonnet's table, which positively groans under a prodigious abundance of fowl, pudding and cheeses as fine as the counters of Waitrose can provide. However, I could wish better of the conversation. The intellectual possibilities of sugar beet harvesting and the convolutions of the latest soap operas are soon exhausted.

Elizabeth and her chattering siblings prevailed upon me to take a Boxing Day walk to witness the one available local diversion. Mr Bonnet did suggest, with some temerity, that we might drive to the nearest meet of fox hounds. Poor man! This harmless proposal met with such alarms and exaggerated protest, not least when Lydia declared hunting to be no more than the unspeakable in pursuit of the uneatable. How can such a silly minx have construed so wild an aphorism? She must surely have memorised it from some book

I cannot recall ever having witnessed a village hockey match. Or indeed any similar contest since my compulsory engagement in school games. The entire affair seemed to me extempore in the extreme.

The arena, I noticed, bore no resemblance to any hockey field upon which I had ever ventured. Elizabeth informed me that a football ground was the best that the combined resources of the rival villages could provide. "We possess neither pitch nor team, save once a year on Boxing Day", she said.

"And what is the purpose of those flags?" - I pointed at two pennants fluttering in the chill wind. Apparently, they indicated the necessary reduction in size between the target in football and that permitted in hockey. They were an indication of an impromptu and invisible goal requiring the marksman to imagine one smaller rectangle inside a greater.

"Am I to assume they are the teams?" - I pointed to a motley group of what I took to be assorted males, differing that is solely by age and physique but not gender; until, on closer examination, I noticed that this supposed masculine agglomeration was leavened by the presence of an occasional female. "There appear to be some women about to play." Elizabeth nodded - "The teams are of mixed sex. It's within the rules." This seemed to me an

intriguing forwardness I had scarcely elsewhere observed outside an assembly room.

"How can they possibly differentiate one player from another on the opposing side?" "Priors must wear something white and Bulbeckians something coloured." Elizabeth's tone was dismissive, I thought. "Do white faces and whiter legs constitute an adequate differentiation?" I asked.

The game commenced among the irregular tussocks of the football field. Almost at once the contest seemed to me unequal. Whether playing against the handicap of the sloping ground, or downwards with its benefit, the Priors appeared to have the upper hand, or should one say stick. I do not mean by this to detract from, or in any manner disparage, the spirit with which the Bulbeckians sought to repel the incessant attacks of their opponents. Indeed, despite the ferocity of almost continuous assault, only once in the first half of the challenge was the Bulbeck line breached, so that I sensed an element of apprehension among the Priors that a sudden thrust, a speculative, even a fortuitous, blow might yet deny them victory. I expressed as much to Elizabeth. "My dear Jane", she offered, "We shall continue to cheer, to stamp our feet, and raise our beakers of mulled wine. We will never surrender hope."

Alas! Her optimism was to receive no reward. The muddled Priors scored three more goals even as the struggle drew to its close. The Bulbeckians strove - I must not say manfully for fear of offending their sprinkling of Amazons - mightily. They were both desperately and perilously brave. I saw them foolhardy fall on the ball like Tom Brown before the on-rushing phalanx of School team.

Only once or twice did the hard pressed defenders make supplication to the umpires. Once a rising shot may have cleared the invisible crossbar; who, without accurate mental computation, could be beyond doubt. The other goal deemed illegal was so ruled whether from genuine uncertainty or some compensating prejudice I cannot and will not say. With the gallant Bulbeckians facing certain defeat, the Prior goalkeeper left his charge and joined in the melee before his opponent's line. He was strangely helmeted, and resembled, for all the world, a Greek hero storming the walls of Troy.

As we hurried home towards a large fire and another over-generous luncheon, Kitty skipped along beside us. "I bet you'll write all about our local hockey match in your next novel." "Hardly", I replied. "Why ever not?" Elizabeth asked. "Where is the sense, let alone the sensibility?" I replied.

J.A.

BRIGHT SPARKS DISCO

*

*

*

MUSIC 60's - TODAY

Tel 07909 511035

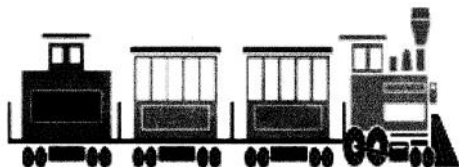
or 07796 184286

Fax 0870 168 9384

**LOCAL DISCO FOR ALL OCCASIONS - PARTIES,
WEDDINGS, ANNIVERSARIES ETC.**

E-Mail: brightsparks.disco@lycosmail.com

VERY COMPETITIVE RATES



Burwell Toy Library Reminder

Burwell Toy Library will be re-launching on Thursday 8th February 2001 at the Phoenix Room, Burwell Village College from 2.00pm to 3.15pm. We are delighted to have received generous donations from local companies totalling over £560 which has enabled us to purchase lots of new and exciting toys. We have also made the borrowing simpler and clearer together with a catalogue of all our toys so that you can see the full range of what is on offer. Membership is open to everyone and costs £3 per family. Toys are suitable for babies up to primary school age. Do come and see the new toys and make the most of being able to borrow good quality toys from as little as 40p.

So don't forget to join us for our special opening session on Thursday 8th February 2001. The Toy Library will then continue to open every 2nd and 4th Thursday on 22nd February, 8th March and 22nd March 2001.

If you have any further questions or would be willing to help out with any of the sessions please contact Olivia Coles (PR officer) tel. 743434 or Hilary Betts (volunteer Co-ordinator) tel. 603656.

PLAYSCHEME 2001!!

Anyone interested in getting involved in this year's Playscheme is welcome to attend a preliminary meeting at

The Dyke's End, Reach on Monday 12th February at 8pm

Please do come along to find out more - absolutely no commitment!

(Traditionally — but everything is up for discussion - Playscheme has run in the second week of the school summer holidays for all primary-aged children in Reach and Swaffham Prior and, in addition, for children that have previously attended Swaffham Prior School. Organised by a group of volunteers, and run during the week by parents and carers of the children attending, as well as local teenagers, Playscheme has offered a wide range of craft, sport, musical and drama activities, outings and visitors. Well supported by local businesses and individuals, it is a week of great FUN, for children and adults alike!)

If you are unable to attend but would like to know more, please contact Mandy Kingsmill (742482) or Dee Noyes (743864) or via the School Office.



WI Notes

The W.I were very pleased to choose Kate Child as the recipient of the "Good Neighbour Award" picture this year and it was presented to her at the December Carol Service. Kate is a very good neighbour to Swaffham Prior, tackling jobs that no one else wants to take on and organising events to make them run smoothly and successfully. A very worthy winner.

Our speaker in January was Sister Sue Evans, a member of the East Cambs Primary Care Group which incorporates the Social Services, Lifespan Healthcare and Age Concern. The governing board consists of doctors from the seven surgeries in the area plus two nurses, one lay member and one representative of the Social Services.

This group looks at ways to combat chronic diseases, reduce road traffic accidents, give support to families of people with mental health problems and help people with chronic disabilities to live independent lives. It also looks at ways to reduce ambulance response times and give support to carers.

After telling us about this wide range of concerns Sue concentrated on

how we can prevent falls in the home and supplied us with many helpful leaflets. She stressed that one of the best ways of keeping healthy was exercise - so you may expect to see members of the W.I. walking round the village, or bobbing up and down like me!

Next month, on the 19th of February, our secretary will be telling us about her holiday in Borneo. At the time of writing she is visiting the Arctic Circle so it looks as though we have more treats to come.

Betty Prime

"Give us back our eleven days!"

As I took down last year's calendar and put up this year's, I thought about the Calendar, and the Year, and of how we take for granted the significant dates, festivals and bank holidays that occur annually. Two hundred and fifty years ago our British complacency over all this was deeply shaken. In 1751 an Act of Parliament that altered the date of the equinoxes by 11 days was greeted with riots in London and Bristol; and posters on display demanding "*Give us back our eleven days*". People thought their lives had been shortened by 11 days or (worse!) that they had lost 11 days' pay. Bankers protested about the confusion to their business by refusing to pay their taxes on the appropriate day, 25th March, but doing so 11 days later, on 5th April (which has remained income tax day ever since).

How did this situation arise? The answer takes us back over two thousand years. Our Neolithic ancestors needed no calendar. For them probably just four days were marked in the solar year. the shortest day, the longest day and the two days with equal lengths of daylight and darkness - the spring and autumn equinoxes.

But we need names and identities for the intermediate days. In 46 BC, Julius Caesar devised a calendar, with the help of an astronomer, Sosigenes of Alexandria: a 12-month year of 365 days, plus a leap year of 366 days. This, the Julian calendar, worked well.

Then, when Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire in the 4th century AD, it was necessary to fit Christian festivals and holy days into the Julian Calendar. This was done at a conference of all the Christian churches at Nicea in Turkey, called by the Emperor Constantine in 325 AD. What was the date of Easter? According to the Gospel stories, the events of Christ's death and resurrection took place during the celebration of a Jewish Passover, of which the date is determined by the spring equinox. So for hundreds of years, from this time onwards, Easter was celebrated on 'the Sunday after the first Full Moon on or after the spring equinox' which was fixed at 21st March, on the Julian Calendar for the year 325.

All went well for about 12 centuries, and throughout Christendom March

21st was used as the basis for computing the time of Easter. Then, astronomers were realising that the spring equinox was *not* in fact at 21st March but slightly earlier. The Julian Calendar had over-estimated the length of the solar year by 11 minutes and 14 seconds. This discrepancy had accumulated over the centuries, so that by the 1570's the solar equinox was ten days earlier, 11th March.

What was to be done? Pope Gregory XIII organised a Calendar Commission of learned astronomers who drafted a number of reforms. These were sent round Europe to heads of states, universities and learned bishops, and comments were invited. The comments, which came in from all over Europe, are still preserved in the Vatican Library. The King of Spain (Philip II) was quite satisfied with the proposals but insisted that the spring equinox must be placed at 21st March, because 'great expense would be spared' if the date did not have to be changed in all the missals and breviaries!

So the Gregorian Calendar was initiated by a papal bull of 1582. But it was left to individual countries to adopt it or not as they chose. Adoption of course involved deletion of about ten days from the then (Julian) calendar. Italy, Spain and Portugal adopted it almost at once; France, after a year or so. In the 'Holy Roman Empire', Germany and points east, a hotchpotch of small kingdoms and duchies, some Catholic some Protestant, each small state went its own way. In Britain Queen Elizabeth I would have been quite happy to adopt the new calendar and so would her bishops, but it was seen as 'popery' by the strongly anti-papist country; and Britain, and of course the British North American Colonies, continued on their 'Julian-Calendar' way for another 170 years. It was the same anti-Vatican feeling that prompted rejection of the new calendar by the Eastern Churches, Greece and Russia, and explains why to this day these churches still celebrate Christmas on 6th January.

It was not until 1752 that reason and astronomy prevailed in Britain, and the equinoxes were placed where they are now, 21st March and 21st September. The calendar was by this time 11 days out-of-alignment. So Parliament decreed that in 1752, September 2nd should be immediately followed by September 14th. Parliament foresaw and tried to minimise the problems arising. The Act made provision for all legal complications: banks' dealings, contracts, payment of wages, reclaiming of interest, coming-of-age: all to be '11 Days sooner than the respective Days whereon the same are now holden and kept'.

A letter to the editor of the Gentleman's Magazine of September 1752 took a humorous tone. "I went to bed on Wednesday 2nd September, and on waking, my eyes caught the date on your paper, Thursday 14th September. There are very few things that the British Parliament could NOT do, but I should have guessed that Annihilation of Time was one of them"

Margaret Stanier

Prompt Courteous Service



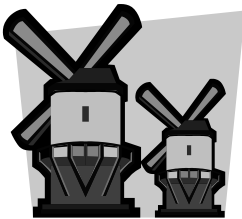
MARTIN CLAYDON
TAXI & COURIER SERVICE

AIR CONDITIONED ESTATE CAR & 7 SEATER

SHORT LONG JOURNEYS, ALL CONSIDERED

Tel: 01638 741367 Mobile: 07768 744450

NEED TRANSPORT? THEN TRY ME.



Little Windmills Playgroup

Reach Village Centre

Monday to Thursday

9.00—11.45 am

Little Windmills Playgroup has places for
2½ to 5 year olds.

Come and visit one of our friendly sessions or for more
information contact Brenda Doe (01223 860680)

Donations!

Thank you to the Foxes, the WI and the
Village Church for their very kind
donations this month. As you know every
penny received goes into the printing of
the *Crier*.

Relaxed
Comfortable
Surroundings

Free
Consultations

Experts
In colouring
Techniques

Beauty service
Available

*James
Stanford*

Hairdressing

Come to James Stanford
hairdressing
and experience
hairdressing at its
best.

Whatever you need
we will help you.
Come and see for yourself

**Js
Hairdressing
27b High Street
Burwell
Tel: 01638 741251**

Appointments not
always necessary

No one
Understands
Your hair
Better

Barbers
For Men

Special prices
For 60 plus

Ample parking
Late night
Bookings

Cleanse, Condition, Style and Finish
Beautiful hair begins with

Js
James Stanford
Hairdressing



The District Council faced a very difficult budget round this year. If we are to continue to provide services at the level which people have told us they want, we will have to increase the Council tax nearer to the average for similar Councils. This year this average is £91. This is for many reasons, but the main reason is that for years the services have been funded largely from interest on our capital reserves. But as we have spent these reserves on capital projects the interest earned has decreased. The consultation carried out this year showed that most people did not want a significant rise in Council Tax, but nor did you want any cuts in the services and activities on which we asked for views. So we have restricted the increase in Council Tax for 2001/2 to 5% - 26p per week for a Band D, making the total to £64.21. This will raise one and a half million pounds and we will need to take a further £677,000 from reserves. This rise is slightly above inflation but still leaves East Cambridgeshire as one of the lowest taxing authorities. Over the next year we will be carrying out a fundamental review of the Council's budget to look for further savings. We will also carry out a more in-depth consultation to find out how much people are prepared to pay for the services which the Council provides so that we can decide which, if any services to cut; which, if any, to enhance; and what level of tax to charge.

This year there will definitely be a County Council election and probably a General Election. If you are to vote, you need to be on the Electoral Register. If you are not already on the register locally, you have a second chance to be included on this register, which will be used for all elections between 16th February and December 2001. If you have moved house since you completed your registration form you can complete a claim form now and move your right to vote to your new address, this will take effect from 16th February 2001. Please see page 5 of the *Crier* for details.

The auditors have given us their comments on how the Council was run in 1999/2000. They have commended members for actively monitoring the Council's spend against budget, which led to a much better delivery of services during the year and to a spend which was much closer to budget than it had been in previous years. They also highlighted the 'sea-change' in the use of information technology, which I hope will enable our staff to offer a better and more responsive service to the community.

Charlotte Cane



Over £15m. to spend on Cambridgeshire's **Transport Plan** is this month's good news! The Government has responded to the County's bid in this positive way by adding £8m. to the nearly £7m. announced in November.

Some of the new money will be spent on safety schemes, investment in **Park & Ride at Trumpington**, bus priority measures, cycleways and reduced through traffic in the City centre. The earlier November money will be spent on repairing local 'A' roads, bridges and other roads this year.

Already I have noticed survey work going on near Quy roundabout where traffic lights will eventually be put in at the junction of **A1303 and B1102**. In addition I am pressing for action on the badly needed cycle/footpath from **Longmeadow to Swaffham Bulbeck**.

Meanwhile, work has now started on the new Cambridge Millennium Cycleway, opening midsummer, which will link Newmarket Park & Ride with the City centre. There has been much support for this project from Marshalls. The route will run via Ditton Meadows and Stourbridge Common. Eventually this path will form part of the National Cycle Network.

Another aspect of Transport was a useful meeting councillors in the Cambridge area had with Mr Inglis Lyon, the new head of **Stagecoach**. Mr Lyon is running Stagecoach East which is a merger of Cambus, Viscount and Northampton. He has a new team around him and already he has claimed improvements such as reliable running of buses. The buses are now regularly washed. New low floor, low emission double deckers are starting to arrive on the 113 Service and will appear on other routes later. It is a slow process so do not expect new buses soon. Mr Lyon referred to the need to develop reliable routes into and out of Cambridge (e.g. to/from Newmarket). He recognises that growth of housing in our area gives real potential for a better, viable bus service in our direction.

For complaints it is useful to know that Michelle Hargreaves is trying to improve response times to them. Also needing improvement is putting up of timetables in all bus shelters. Another promise for the future is to introduce smartcards. Megariders are now available at Drummer Street. Mr Lyon is looking at the possibility of sale through post offices - **Good!** Time table enquiries 0870 608 2608 7am—8pm.

Turning to **Police** matters, we continue to recruit a dozen potential officers every month to make up for losses. There is, however, a slightly alarming increase in sickness within the force. This now amounts to one in

seven officers sick and off work. One source of extra stress is the extra policing required to protect Huntingdon Life Sciences at Huntingdon. Much leave has had to be cancelled and officers are working long hours to try and cope with their routine jobs as well as the demands of HLS. I am reminded of the same problem that arose over the Molesworth nuclear missile protests of the late eighties.

Greetings and a Happy 2001 to you all.

James Fitch

Notes from the Parish Council January Meeting

Mr T Jones chaired the meeting with 5 members and 2 members of the Public.

Matters Arising.

Traffic Barrier for Recreation Ground: Three estimates for this work have been received and after discussion it was agreed to employ N & G Marsh of Burwell to carry out the works.

Additional Lighting & Hardstanding for Car Parking at St Cyriac's: It was reported that the cost of providing an extra light at the back of St Cyriac's had been looked into before and found to be prohibitive. The hardstanding for car parking was discussed at great length and it was agreed to defer until the next meeting to give Councillors time to visit the site and assess. In the meantime, the Clerk is to write to the P.C.C. to request further justification for both the lighting and hardstanding

Village Enhancement Scheme: Mr John Selby has contacted the Clerk and told her that the Contractor, Ringways, were awaiting delivery of the lamp-posts. Also due to concerns expressed about the lighting over the steps to St Mary's, an archway with lights over had been agreed. This last item was causing some difficulties with connections through 24seven. The P.C. expressed concerns about the lack of consultation with ECDC throughout this project. Councillor Cane noted that the choice of lamp, etc., should have been discussed with the P.C. and finding it had not, agreed to pursue the matter further.

Grasscutting - New Season: The Clerk is to contact ECDC & CCC to confirm the areas of grasscutting in the Village. A definitive map is then to be drawn up and prices obtained following the next meeting. It was noted that an early cut may be needed this year.

Provision of extra Grit Bins: Following correspondence received, this was discussed and prices for 3 new grit bins are to be obtained. It is hoped to place the bins at the bottom of Cage Hill & Rogers Road and on Coopers

Green opposite the junction of Tothill Road/Green Head Road. The Clerk is also to look into the possibility of applying for a grant through ECDC.

Reports:

Councillor Fitch reported to the meeting.

Councillor Cane reported to the meeting.

Correspondence Received:

ECDC: “Appointment of Chief Executive”. John Hill has been appointed. Details of new rolling Electoral Register has been received. See additional item on page 5 in the *Crier*.

Accounts for Payment: These were agreed.

Planning Applications Received: No applications/approvals to report.

Any Other Business: Work to strengthen ‘baby’ swings at the play area have been carried out. New flat seats are to be ordered to replace the faulty tyre swings.

Open Question Time: With reference to the Village Enhancement Scheme as reported above, Mr S Hewitt addressed the meeting noting his considerable concerns about the type of street lamps that have been installed. The P.C. and Councillor Cane noted his concerns and these will be looked into further.

It would appear that one of the new street lamps has already failed. The Clerk is to report this to CCC.

The next Parish Council meeting will be on Thurs, 8th February 2000 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

Karen King

Clerk of the Parish Council

From the Parish Registers for November/December

In Memoriam: Frederick (Ted) John Reeve (80), {SP}
Harry John William Struthers (child), {SB}
John Leslie (Les) Gilbert Sheldrick (74), {SP}
Rosetta Rogers (90), {SP}
Albert William Lloyd (83), {from SB}



Church Services February 2001

	ST MARY'S Swaffham Bulbeck	ST MARY'S Swaffham Prior	ST ETHELREDA & THE HOLY TRINITY Reach
<i>EPIPHANY</i> 5 Sun 4	8:00am Holy Communion [†] 9:30am Family Service	11:00am Parish Communion ^{cw} 6:00pm Evensong [†] and Sermon	3:30pm Candlemas Family Service
<i>SEPTUA- GESIMA</i> Sun 11	9:30am Parish Communion ^{cw}	11:00am Village Communion ^{cw} 6:00pm Evensong [†] and Sermon	8:00am Holy Communion [†]
<i>SEXAGES- IMA</i> Sun 18	9:30am Village Communion ^{cw}	11:00am Parish Communion ^{cw} 6:00pm Evensong [†] and Sermon	8:00am Holy Communion [†]
<i>QUINQUA- GESIMA</i> Sun 25	9:30am Parish Communion ^{cw}	8:00am Holy Communion [†] 11:00am Mattins [†] and Sermon	6:00pm Evening Service ^{cw}
<i>ASH WED.</i> Wed 28		7:30pm Holy Communion and Ashing	

Holy Communion 1st Thursdays 10am, Swaffham Bulbeck Church (followed by Home Communion)
Evening Prayer Tuesdays, 5:30pm, Swaffham Bulbeck
 Wednesdays, 5:30pm, Reach
 Thursdays, 5:30pm, Swaffham Prior
Bellringing Tuesdays, fortnightly 8pm. St. Cyriacs. Contact: Dr Margaret Stanier on 741328.
Mothers Union 1st Mondays, 2:15pm, c/o Free Church, Commercial End.
 Contact Win Norton on 01223 811509
Toddlers Service 3rd Thursdays @ 11:30am for 15 minutes in Reach Church or Centre

The vicar is never too busy to **visit** anyone on urgent pastoral or spiritual matters.

Dear Friends,

I need to use my allotted space in this issue to bring the villages up-to-date on a number of things; first a retrospect....

The Travelling Crib, known also as 'Posada' in Mexico, knitted figures of the Holy Family, moved from family to family from Advent Sunday to Christmas Eve covering all our villages, culminating in a very well-attended Crib Service at Swaffham Bulbeck; thank-you to everyone involved and those who gave them 'room at the inn'.

I have now reviewed last year **church statistics**, and while I would like you to come to the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (April 23rd) to hear more, I'm sure you would like to know that, in the face of the national doom-and-gloom merchants, our *usual Sunday attendance* at the two churches in the parish is 27, a fall of only 2, but we had 17 baptisms, a rise of 12, and the Easter & Christmas communicants were 54 and 68 respectively, up by 3 and down by 3 on 1999 figures.. So we are just about 'holding our own', but I'm sure you would also expect me to say that **week-by-week commitment and giving priority to worship** is vitally important for the building up of our community, and we need to draw from it future office-holders, PCC members and others, who will carry the word forward in the years to come. There are usually services to choose from in the two churches every week, plus Swaffham Bulbeck, so please feel welcomed.

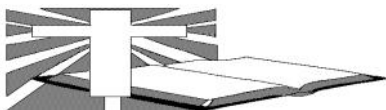
Bishop Anthony, our new Bishop of Ely, is taking the Deanery Confirmation Service on Saturday May 5 in St Andrew's Soham at 5.30pm. Anyone aged 11 or over at that date who would like to be prepared for **confirmation** should get in touch with me now please.

The 3 churches of our group have embarked on an '**Emmaus**' course, a modular adult education scheme to lift the lid off the uncertainties about Church and the Christian life in the minds of existing churchgoers, and those of currently no church. Why not join us on the Journey of Faith? (details from me because of copy-deadline). As a post-script to the first course (6 sessions), we are having a **Parish Audit** on Saturday 24th March at Hengrave Hall near Bury St Edmonds, from 10 'til 4, when we hope to **listen** to one another, and reflect on the life of our Church (again, further details from me).

This month sees the beginning of **Lent**, with the traditional Ash Wednesday service at 7.30pm in St Mary's; all the details through to Easter Sunday are now available in the special folded leaflet freely available from church.

Your parish priest,

Mark



Zion Baptist Chapel

Services for February 2001:

Sunday	4 th	10.30am	(No service)
		6.30pm	Communion - David Bousfield
Sunday	11 th	6.00pm	David Bousfield
Sunday	18 th	6.30pm	P. Wells
Sunday	25 th	6.30pm	J. Sargent

Have you heard...?

A recent newspaper article declared that children at school learn more about Buddhism than Christianity. Children can tell you the story of Buddha's birth, enlightenment and death, and are equally well-informed about Islam and Ramadan, Hinduism and The Kumbh Mela festival. Yet many children who do not attend Church schools can only shakily tell you the story of Christmas and vaguely know anything about why we celebrate Easter.

Whether or not you are a Christian believer, Christianity is the bedrock of the culture and spiritual values in this country. Children, therefore, need the opportunity to learn about the faith that has formed and moulded their culture, their society and, of course, themselves.

Surveys show that two thirds of the UK population have not read anything in the Bible during the last twelve months. In order to help you know what the Bible has to say, the Bible Society has produced on cassette tape a spoken version of half the Bible, the New Testament. It is available in a variety of translations and languages costing between £21 and £28. You could listen to it getting ready in the morning or on the way to work. Do you have a friend who wants to listen with you? You might even listen to it with your children before or after school. In this way you would help them know more about the Christian foundations of the country and culture we live in.

If you would like to order a set of tapes, or simply want to find out more about our Christian background then get in touch with me on the number below. Alternatively, come along to one of our services where you will find others who are probably asking the same sort of questions you want answers to. In any case you will be made most welcome.

David Bousfield

For further information, transport, or a home visit please call
David & Janet Bousfield on 01223-563307.

Roman Catholic Church, Newmarket Parish

Masses: Newmarket: Sat 1830; Sun 0900, 1030, 1700;
Kirtling: Sun 0945;
In Bottisham Parish Church, Sun 0900 (Served from Cambridge).

We hope that **John Morrill** will be back next month.

Bottisham, Burwell, Linton Village Colleges

Lifelong Learning

Day and Weekend Courses

Saturday 3rd February

Basic Food Hygiene

Saturday/Sunday 3rd/4th February

Computing for the Terrified

Saturday 10th February

Chair Caning & Upholstery: Clay Workshop

Introduction to Computing: Italian Cookery

Life Drawing: Portrait Painting

Saturday/Sunday 10th/11th February

First Aid for Childcarers

Reiki - The Usui System of Natural Healing

Sunday 11th February

Computers & the Internet

Counselling Workshop - Family Education

Further information from the Community Offices
at the Village Colleges: Bottisham: 01223 811372
Burwell: 01638 741901, Linton: 01223 892400



Dates for Your Diary - February 2001

Thu	1	Village Voices, Swaffham Bulbeck, 8:00pm
Fri	2	
Sat	3	<i>Poetry by the Fire</i> , The Abbey Undercroft, Commercial End, 7:30
Sun	4	
Mon	5	Art History talk by Ann Hollingsworth, VH, 7:30pm
Tue	6	Mobile Library, Cage Hill 2:40-3:30, Chapel 3:35-4:00pm Youth Club, 7:00-8:30, Town Close
Wed	7	Cubs, Village School, 6:30-8:00pm
Thu	8	Toy Library re-launch, Phoenix Room, Burwell VC, 2:00pm Youth Club, 7:30-10:00, Town Close PC Meeting, Village Hall, 7:30
Fri	9	
Sat	10	Social Evening, FoSPS, Village Hall, 7:45pm
Sun	11	
Mon	12	Playscheme 2001 Meeting, Dyke's End, Reach, 8:00pm
Tue	13	
Wed	14	Crier Copy Deadline Cubs, Village School, 6:30-8:00pm
Thu	15	
Fri	16	Official opening of Pulpit Corner
Sat	17	
Sun	18	
Mon	19	WI, Village Hall, 7:30pm
Tue	20	
Wed	21	Cubs, Village School, 6:30-8:00pm
Thu	22	Toy Library, Burwell VC, 2:00pm - 3:15pm Crier Collating, Village Hall, 2:15pm
Fri	23	
Sat	24	
Sun	25	
Mon	26	PCC Meeting, 7:30pm
Tues	27	Shrove Tuesday (Pancake Day)
Wed	28	Cubs, Village School, 6:30-8:00pm