



The Swaffham Crier

Volume 27 Number 12

December 2003



Editorial



Happy Christmas *again* Dear Readers,

And Correspondents all,

Perhaps you might be wondering when this

Poem's going to pall (*not soon enough, evidently!*)

Yet with this year's edition,

XXVII we would point out, we won a ...

Major competition, (*ho yes!*)

As you've heard several times about,

So as we look back on past glories,

And wish you all Good Cheer,

Fet's raise a glass to Christmas, and

Let's see you all *next* year!

AWishing all our Readers a very Happy Christmas!

C*Mike Phillips, James Matheson, Ruth Stinton, Roger Connan, Caroline Matheson*

FPS. Brilliant Variety Show! Happy Birthday to Mrs Highwood, **102** on December 1st, and don't forget, Copy Date is

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White Page Ads ____ 13,18,19

102 on December 1st (no, se, Happy Christmas to ke us, 't be five minutes since it



Mrs Highwood

Cover Picture: by Thomas Newbolt



Letters to the Editors



Dear Editors,

Dencora Field

In October I asked about the discussions regarding Dencora Field reported in the previous issue. I am disappointed that none of the parties concerned have bothered to reply. I shall therefore ask again - several people have said to me that they were wondering the same thing - so can we have a response this time, please? I think we should be told. In case those involved have not kept their *Criers for posterity*, *here's the question again*:

I would like to know what has changed since the last I had heard not so very long ago, that Dencora were not allowed to propose anything again until 2006. Reported in the summer *Crier*, *various proposals have been flown between the parties to that former ruling*, without any reference in that report to that decision or dates by which anything could take place. Are these proposals post-2006, or was that decision set aside?

Seasonally yours

Mark Lewinski

Dear Editors,

World's Biggest Coffee Morning

The Macmillan Cancer Relief coffee morning which was held at our house in Swaffham Prior raised the staggering amount of £1,059.24! Congratulations to you all for such an incredible amount. Thanks to your generosity it has really made my tenth year hosting the annual coffee morning a very memorable occasion.

There was a variety of delicious cakes and pastries, all home made, and kindly donated; as were the many raffle prizes.

Thank you ALL very much for the cakes, donations and willing support. I look forward to welcoming you all again on Friday September 24th, 2004!

Ruth Scovil

Eds Note: Ruth's letter should have appeared in last month's *Crier* but technology got the better of us!

Dear Editors,

Christmas market bookstall

Thank you to the many contributors to the bookstall for the Christmas market. The **Quality Read** award goes to Ursula and Jimmy Henderson for their offering of an excellent and well-rounded mini-library of popular, leisure and serious reading. This is a newly instituted award (ie I just thought of it) - a bottle of something pleasant for the most interesting pile of books donated.

Festively

Mark Lewinski

GAY BULLEID AWARD

As usual this 'Good Neighbour' award, a picture of the working windmill, will be presented at the Carol Service in St.Mary's on Sunday, 21st December.

If you would like to nominate someone you feel is a good neighbour to the village or anyone in it, please send your request with a reason for the nomination to Margaret Phillips, Dyke End, 50 Lower End, or hand it to any member of the W.I. committee by 12th December.

Nominees must be residents of Swaffham Prior and have not already received the award.



Christmas Holly

Deck your halls again with boughs of Swaffham Prior Holly. Only £2.50 a bunch. All proceeds will go to the Church flower funds.

We shall be selling holly at Anglesey House (white gate next door to the churchyard) on:

Saturday 13th December 12.00-1.00

Sunday 14th December 12.00-1.00

CAROLS AT THE VILLAGE HALL



Please come and join us for the traditional singing of carols round the Christmas tree outside the Village Hall (inside if the weather is exceedingly inclement) on **Wednesday 17th December at 7.00pm.** The Cubs, the Scouts and "*The Cocky Fruit Tail and Bad, Bad Shepherds Band*" will all be there.

Make sure you wrap up warmly and please bring a torch. There will be hot mince pies, mulled wine and a delicious fruit cup to follow inside the hall.

We look forward to seeing you.

Janet Cooper

Secretary, Village Hall Management Committee

From our Reporter at the Parish Council Meeting

Life cannot be too bad if within a few days I am able to watch the England v France rugby match, report on a Parish Council Meeting, and go to the Village Variety Show. All achieved huge peaks of excellence and entertainment.

The PC meeting illustrated democracy at its best and proved that people do not enter public service for an ego trip or purely for their own gain. Each subject was discussed fairly and in depth. Starting at 7.30 we had by 8.45 reached item 5 out of 18 - and everyone still appeared to be as fresh as a daisy and totally committed and enthusiastic. This is more difficult for a mere spectator like me, who tends to nod off, and who has to remain silent and stifle comments. So I often amuse myself by making up replies and remarks for some of the participants and this month I reproduce some in "bubbles". James Fitch was as conscientious as ever but I'd like to take issue with his report in last month's *Crier* when he appeared to agree with complaints about overflying aircraft. Who has been complaining? In this village we suffer from complaints about bells, about clocks striking before 8.00am, about bill posting, about bonfires, and now about the relatively few and interesting varied collection of aircraft which fly over. I am sorry to see that James appears to be sympathetic towards the complaint.



But it is an element of democracy that all complaints should be taken seriously and Charlotte explained that District Councils now have to have a Comprehensive Performance Review. As a prelude to this they have had a Peer Review using officers from another district. This has reported that our ECDC is good at what it does but it has "No long term vision, especially for the next ten years". My golly, I thought, 5 year plans are bad enough and needed revising every 2 years - what an unrealistic nightmare a 10 year plan must be, particularly with central government occasionally changing. ECDC was also criticised for having insufficient synergy between the parish and district councils. What shall we do asked Charlotte to achieve more synergy - give you monthly newsletters and have bimonthly Parish Forums. Neither suggestion appeared to grab the PC. No one suggested Beetle Drives or similar social events when the groups could get to know each other really well.

A member did wonder why the PC's comments on planning applications were so often ignored without comment or explanation. The answer was simple - too expensive as another member of staff would be needed and the rates would go up. BUT after a new Act comes into force ECDC will have to say why it has approved any application whereas other changes will give industrial developers a freer hand to do as they wish. I hope I understood this correctly because it all sounds a bit of a nonsense. And ECDC is supposed to plan 10 years ahead!

But let's get down to the real nitty gritty of village life. Charlotte was asked why ECDC does not clear the leaves off pavements. "You asked me this last year". "Well". "As I said before, it is a very large district, the weather is changeable, it can't all be done at the same time." "But if someone slipped on the leaves you could be sued." I now introduce some of my bubbles and just suppose what Charlotte may have been thinking:- {Bubble 1 - "Whose leafy lifting leaves are they anyway?"}.

{Bub 2 - A gale is forecast tomorrow - maybe that will blow them off the pavements and the problem is solved"}. {Bub 3 - Hasn't anyone read Samuel Smiles' *Self Help*?}. Neither side shifted ground on this one. Those who read the 'official' PC report last month will have welcomed the news that 24Seven (who thought up this extraordinary name) have agreed to complete the Lighting Enhancement Scheme at the Top End of the Village. But, HOLD ON. 24Seven has reported that the Throw over the Church steps is not of the right specification and will need to be changed when the old motorway light is taken down. Surprise, Surprise! As our previous vicar told me with some relish - "Once they take down the motorway light they will *have* to install more lights in the churchyard." The PC understandably assumed that the Church had arranged the Throw because the PC had been very much sidelined when the Church discussed the change with ECDC. So close and yet so far from completion. If you take life seriously, all this must be very irritating. If you don't, it will be just a bit of a lark.

As with all meetings the same points do often arise again and again and it is always with some excitement that a *Crier* reporter reads an unusual item on the Agenda - such as item 12 - "Problems with Vehicles - Coopers Lane". There are two new horses in the field at the top of Coopers Lane and it seems the owners are removing the barriers near the cemetery because vehicles sometimes block the normal route to the field. I know there are no double yellow lines and it might have been supposed that the PC would recommend keeping the laneway clear. But not a bit of it. It seems that the horses' owner ought not want to drive up to the field, that they have no right of way, and that the barriers must not be removed. My own little bubble here:- {Bub 1: Who reported this to the PC?}. {Bub 2: "Why does the PC appear hostile to horse owners?"}.

Then it got worse. Item 13 "Use of Cemetery Water Supply - *fixed charge*" was another complaint about the horse owner. It seems she has been taking water from the cemetery tap and even using a hose (which has always been forbidden). At least the PC reluctantly agreed that the horses did require a little water. But they were irate. Again I wondered who had made the complaint. When we had our horse in that field we paid a sum to the Church for the use of the water. As far as I know every other horse owner has done the same because no-one told us the Church did not pay the water bill. Maybe the present owner also pays something to the Church. No-one appeared to have spoken to the owner, or wished to speak to her, but proposed to write formally to the land owner. Is this part of a plot to rid the village of all horses, is there a secret anti-hunting lobby here, is the PC miffed because horses have damaged 60-70% of the Vice-Chairman's young trees in Whiteway Drove?

I was surprised. No-one asked what kind of horses they were or appeared to have any interest in horses. And yet a very strong simple recommendation for anyone under stress is to keep a cow (a very soothing animal) in your backyard. This is not always possible. But almost as helpful is to have two horses in a field, not only if you are old and grumpy, but also if you have children who need a harmless diversion. I am a fan of horses in the village and think they should be encouraged. The meeting ended at 9.55pm.

Alastair Everitt



VILLAGE VARIETY SHOW



This was a great, great success. Perhaps some of us doubted the wealth of talent lurking behind the net curtains of our quiet village. I confess to a sinking feeling beforehand when told to expect a marathon three-hour experience, but there was a room full of friends, and a bar, so it could not be all bad. Well, we know better now!

We were then treated to music and drama from solo performers, duos, trios and quartets, serious, seriously good, funny and very funny. There was no self-indulgent limelight hogging, not even by the pink rabbit. When it ended with a (literally) show-stopping rendition of 'Daddy wouldn't buy me a bow-wow', we were still shouting for more.

Singling out acts for mention is unfair on the others, and there is not enough space here to include them all. However, it would be unjust not to say that the younger performers were superb, so I shall. The phrase 'something for everyone' must also be avoided because it suggests that not all performances were to everyone's taste, and I don't think that was so. For myself, I can say without fear of contradiction that I have not enjoyed myself so much since - - - well, I can't remember when.



Those able to let their excitement subside gently afterwards in the Pink Panther (lost its swimming costume in the deep end) marvelled at a thoroughly enjoyable experience, asking: 'When's the next one? We want to be there'. I nearly typed Pink Panda then, but that's a hairdresser's Fiat. (Jokes in the show were better than that, much better [*Agreed - Eds.*]).

Frank Readhead

An extract from one of Walter Morgan's songs from the evening

Now, my mama said I was a fool
To go and marry a
Man who couldn't buy me
A people carrier
And the neighbour says you use your car
As a ... thing extender
But it won't do you no good now
'Cos I've got my arse out to tender

I'm crying ... wow!
Oh Lord, please hand me down my shoppin' shoes
You can kiss goodbye to Janet Reger baby
Oo, Oo, whilst I have these 4x4 blues!





HOCKEY ON BOXING DAY MORNING

Last year we were lucky - or possibly we are just much better people than the Bulbeckians. We fielded our weakest team in the last ten years and Bulbeck turned out their strongest, determined to avenge their 5-1 defeat in 2001. But we still won and this says something - I know not what - about the Priorites.

We now need hockey players for this year. Do not be shy. Phone me on 742974, especially the young lady who turned up at the last minute last year asking if she could play. The offer extends to anyone staying in the village over Christmas.

As usual the match will take place on Boxing Day Thursday, on the Denny at Swaffham Bulbeck, at 11.00 am. A very good mulled wine is available for a small charge and there will be collection on behalf of Magpas.

Alastair Everitt

Come and support your local team!

RE-RUN OF BOAT RACE

THE only University Boat Race rowed away from the Thames will be celebrated next year on its sixtieth anniversary.

The present Oxford and Cambridge veteran crews will battle over a mile-and-a-half of the River Great Ouse near Ely on February 28 when thousands of people are expected to line the riverbank. Among the spectators will be some of the oarsmen who rowed in the original race in 1944.

They will also be invited to a post race dinner in the Monastic Barn dining hall at The King's School, Ely, where the speaker will be Olympic gold medallist Tim Foster – one of the Fab Four from Sydney in 2000. The dinner will be hosted by Cambridge rowing stalwart James Crowden, CVO, KStJ, JP, who was until recently the Lord Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire.

Among the teachers at the school is Jerry Dale, who will be rowing in the Oxford veteran crew. They will be hoping to repeat the Dark Blues' three-quarters of a length victory of sixty years ago – over the stretch of river still used for training by the Light Blues from their Ely boathouse

An exhibition of 1944 photographs and memorabilia, currently on show at The River & Rowing Museum in Henley on Thames until November, will be transferred back to Ely in the run-up to the February race before going on permanent display at The Prickwillow Drainage Museum, just a short distance from the 1944 course.

The big day – organised by a group called Diamond 44 – will also include a Service of Thanksgiving in Ely Cathedral followed by a wreath-laying at the grave of former Dean of Ely, Charles Merivale, in Ely Cemetery. While a student at

Cambridge University in 1829, he rowed in the first University Boat Race and it is believed he was responsible for instituting the event by challenging Oxford student Charles Wordsworth, a nephew of poet William Wordsworth.

"Over five thousand people attended the 1944 race, rowed from the River Lark to Queen Adelaide Bridge, and we are planning a full day of celebration for a similar number in February," said Diamond 44 secretary Jack Waterfall.

So please put the date in your diary and join us in marking this historic occasion.

For further information contact Jack Waterfall, Diamond 44 on 01353 665665 or e-mail jack.waterfall@eastcamb.gov.uk



Art Unwrapped '03

Fri 28 Nov - Weds 24 Dec

Open Tues - Sat 10am - 5.30pm, Sun 11am - 5pm

Exhibition Opening Friday 28 Nov 6.30pm - 8.30pm.

With the Babylon Gallery closed for refurbishment we are linking with the Ronald Pile Gallery at 38a St. Mary's Street, Ely opposite Oliver Cromwell's House) to bring you a sparkling Christmas Show. With work from over 30 local, regional and national artists & craftspeople there will be something to tempt you. Hand-made Christmas cards and decorations.

FREE. Open to everyone.

Caroline Cawley,
Marketing Officer.

Burwell & District Medical Trust

'Charity begins at home'

In our community there is a great fund of goodwill and the Medical Trust was founded to help channel this where there is need. Despite some grumbles our Health Service is amongst the best in the world, but there is always room for improvement and YOU can help!

I understand that at the Burwell Surgery a treatment room is being upgraded and a new operating table costing around £900 is needed. This will enable a wider variety of operations to be performed in the Surgery and in many cases rather sooner than in the hospital. Equipment purchased by the Trust remains the property of the trust and is given on "permanent loan" to the organisation or individual.

Next time you have some spare cash please remember the Medical Trust. You could be helping yourself! If you are a tax payer you can sign a "Gift-Aid" form which will add the basic rate tax to your donation.

Please send donations to Mrs Sue Hancocks (Treasurer), 51 Parsonage Lane, Burwell, CB5 0EN. Many thanks to all of you who have supported us in the past.

Patrick Ridsdill Smith

Bottisham Community Library.

New book stock in November

November saw the first of the monthly exchanges of book stock by the Cambridgeshire Library, so we should have 100 new books in by the time this is printed. Even if you couldn't find anything you wanted to borrow before, you should be able to now! We have had many positive comments about the excellent up-to-date stock of fiction - if you haven't yet visited us, please do come and have a look.

Thank you for donations

Many thanks to everyone for all the wonderful donations received. We have included as many of them as possible in the library. Our book sale in September raised over £400 pounds, which we will spend on new stock. We still have several boxes of books left to process, so we don't need any more books at the moment, but we would be very happy to take audiocassettes or videos to build up our collection. Perhaps you might have children's videos or storytapes that have been outgrown? We will have another book appeal next year.

Christmas storytelling for children

There will be Christmas story-telling on Saturday Dec 6th at 10.30 in the library for children of primary school age. All welcome. If children are interested in joining the art group to help make decorations and prepare for Christmas, please contact Julie Bristow Tel: 813429

Canterbury Tales for adults

There will be an adult story telling evening of the Canterbury Tales with a glass of wine on Tuesday Jan 13th at 7.30 pm in the library. Please note that in view of the adult content of the Canterbury Tales, admission will be restricted to those 16 and older. For more details, or to reserve a place, please contact Gerry Lockett on 811236.

Tell us what you want!

Please let us know what you would like to see in the library. After Christmas we will be buying some new stock. We want to spend our money wisely, so we really would like to buy what you want to read. There will be a suggestions box in the library for your wish list. Tell us if there is a particular category of book you would like to see, or tell us about individual titles. Are you interested in borrowing audiocassettes? If so what sort of titles? Do you want a video or DVD collection? Please tell us.

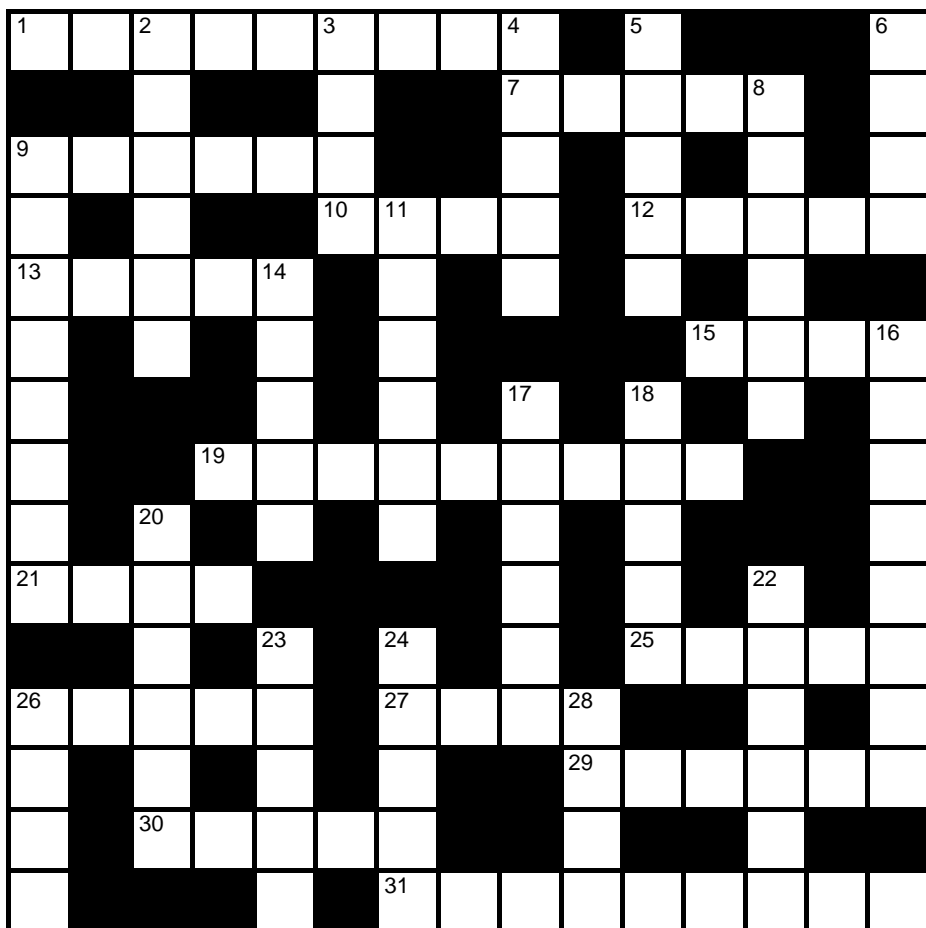
Library opening hours are still:

Monday	Closed	Thursday	3-5pm
Tuesday	3-5pm and 6-8pm	Friday	6-8pm
Wednesday	10-11.30am	Saturday	10am-12 noon

Bottisham also now has a mobile library service on alternate Friday evenings and Saturday mornings. Details of this are available in the library.

Catherine Wightwick

This month we have a jolly, seasonal crossword (19 across gives the theme of the puzzle). Send your answers to the editors by 10th December 2003. The first correct solution out of the hat will win a free meal at the **Red Lion** – See Lorraine at the pub for full details.



Congratulations to **Bob and Julie Nunn** (would you believe?), the winners of last month's crossword, who should collect their prize certificate from the editors. An honorable mention goes to our runner up, J. Harrison.

Across

- 1 Mix 25 in me for 19 treat? (5,4)
 7 Prunes the 6, or decorates it? (5)
 9 Crossword compiler reversing South (6)
 10 4, confused, removes Sikh leader and becomes Russian leader (4)
 12 They should be getting fat (5)
 13 Lad leaves landlady, for Thomas the poet! (5)
 15 Gel made from a rag (4)
 19 The theme of the puzzle (9)
 21 Portal held by Fido or Rover (4)
 25 Girly ingredient (5)
 26 "Gonna find out who's naughty or nice" (5)
 27 Singular 4 29ed here (4)
 29 See 27 (6)
 30 Musical 19 girl (5)
 31 Motel site designed for kissing (9)

Down

- 2 Northern Ireland, Bridget Bardot and the French get together for a bite (6)
 3 See 18 (4)
 4 Twinklers (5)
 5 Being drunk, overindulge (5)
 6 "Oh, 19 _____," (4)
 8 Guided by 9, 16 (6)
 9,16 Rudolph (3,5,8)

- 11 If you have enough 20, you could be full of the 19 _____ (6)
 14 "Twas the _____ before 19" (5)
 16 See 9
 17 1000 docked from parents for the rest (6)
 18 3 these early for 19 (5)
 20 Part of machine joined to front of nacelle. That's the 11! (6)
 22 Quiet, 14 (6)
 23 "Nobody loves a _____ when she's 40" (5)
 24 Bond's boss after genuine kingdom (5)
 26 Carried by 26 on his 8 (4)
 10 loses direction but gains a little time, stolen by knave (4)
 28 10 loses direction but gains a little time, stolen by knave. (4)

Solution to crossword no. 5



Crier Corrections (an occasional series!)

A couple of errors crept into last month's article by Paul Ward about rats and mice. So "Even if you haven't put the poison down you are still at risk of fines" had fumes rather than fines. And "Pest control services are no longer free from the local authorities" was missing the word free.

Apologies to Paul and to readers for any confusion which may have been caused.



VILLAGE GARDENERS

On Tuesday, 18th November, Robert Good, secretary of Cambridgeshire Wildlife Trust, and founder of Bumblebee Wildlife Gardening, gave us an excellent talk with lovely slides: from leaf-cutter bees frantically cutting to house martins collecting mud for their nests from his newly dug pond.

Giving wildlife a helping hand and encouraging creatures to visit and even better, stay in your garden can be done. Dig a pond, plant wild flowers for the insects and butterflies, put up bird-boxes and feed the birds, and last, but not least, don't be too tidy! (*No problems there — Eds*) Leave a few nettles, garden canes and logs around — something will make a home there.

Our next meeting is on Tuesday, January 16th, when Richard Todd, Anglesey Abbey's Head Gardener, will talk to us about the joys of the winter garden there. Everyone is very welcome.

Margaret Joyce



WI Notes

At our November meeting Mr. Ian Powys gave us an illustrated talk on the history of Tiffany Glass. Louis Comfort Tiffany was an American painter, jeweller and silversmith, but he is best known for his glassware. As well as lamps he made beautiful ornaments, glass panels and windows, using oxides and other impurities to get richness of colour.

After his death in 1933 Art Nouveau with its square and triangle shapes came along and his beautiful delicate glassware went out of fashion. Much of it was smashed but fortunately some of it was saved and can now be seen in museums. The largest collection in this country is in the Haworth Art Gallery near Accrington where there are 130 pieces, and nearer home the Victoria and Albert Museum has 15 pieces. One of the Tiffany glass panels is at the moment in Japan and was lately valued at £150,000.

On December 8th we shall be having our Christmas party. Will all W.I. members PLEASE NOTE - it commences at 7 o'clock with sherry and cheese nibbles followed by a 2-course meal with wine. So please don't eat or drink beforehand! The competition is for a Christmas table decoration. See you there.

Betty Prime.

Christmas in the Courtyard

Saturdays 29th Nov and 6th Dec 10.30am - 3.30pm at Ely Museum.

This includes a Santa's Grotto and free admission to the museum for £2 per child. Children are invited to bring along their paintings of Santa for Santa's Painting Competition where they will have the chance to win a prize. A trail around the museum, refreshments, photos with Santa and a tombola are all part of the fun.



STAINED HUNDRED

The November Meeting was well-attended and members were rewarded by a most interesting talk by Mrs Cloe Cockerell, Field Officer for the Church Conservation Trust. This Trust was set up in 1969 by an Act of Parliament and receives 2/3rds of its income from the Government and the remainder from the Church Commissioners. There 16,000 Anglican Churches in England and one tenth of these have become redundant. Alternative uses have been found for over half of these, particularly in towns where they may become museums, exhibitions halls, day centres for the elderly, or be converted into dwellings or offices. Some 20% are demolished – a figure likely to increase in the future. But there are a core of churches which are of particular outstanding historic, architectural or archaeological national importance which come under the care of the Conservation Trust. At present they care for 330 churches and take on about six more each year. These remain consecrated and are used for occasional services and the Trust promotes public access.

“A thousand years of churches” was the title of the talk, and the speaker showed slides of these “churches in retirement” with features dating from Saxon times to Victorian times. We heard of some of the problems, such as a wood-shingled tower which was being attacked by woodpeckers and which had to be lined with stainless steel to keep out the wet; the meaning behind carvings and sculptures of mermen on fonts, cockatrices (half cock and half snake) on pew ends, wall paintings of 1400 warning against swearing and other vices; stories behind memorial windows; visiting the crypt containing 41 lead coffins to ensure that the humidity was right as it had once been flooded. We saw churches of all sizes from St Peter’s in Cambridge to a massive church of Portland stone built in the 18th century next to the stone quarry; and one with a gallery with a fireplace where the squire could look down on the congregation freezing below. We were encouraged to visit All Saints Church in

Jesus Lane which was built in the 19th century to replace the one in Trinity Street which became too small for the congregation, and where much restoration work has been done to return the work of William Morris and his associates to its former glory. Mrs Cockerell ended with Swaffham Prior, explaining that St Julitta died around 300 at the time of Roman persecution refusing to give up her faith and her 3 year old son Cyriac was executed at the same time.

The next meeting on December 10th will be an informal party evening with

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Mill Hill, Swaffham Prior, Cambridge



Over the last month I have been warning the parish councils that there may be a difficult **financial year ahead** for the County. In Cambridgeshire we are tremendously dependent on a good Government settlement, not only a payment of the outstanding ten million pounds we should have had last year, but a generous recognition that we have been on short rations for far too long.

The immediate problem is that the Leader of Council has announced proposals to peg the County's share of **Council Tax** to an increase of not more than 6%. In case you wonder what this might be, assume just over 90p per week for a Band D household.

Meanwhile, the Local Government Association announced in October that on average local authorities would need to increase Council Tax by twice what is projected for Cambridgeshire in order to stand still. Cambridgeshire Council Tax is the **third lowest** of all **county** councils in England.. Just so that you can put the county's Council Tax share in context, assume that about three quarters of the bill you get next April will cover the County's services and the rest will consist of District, Parish, Police and Fire and Rescue needs to run their services.

The County pays for education, social services, environment and transport (including roads) and various much smaller items such as births, marriages and death registration and emergency planning.

What concerns me is that compared with the year we are in at the moment, we are going to need a lot more money than 6% to cover the increases foreseen already in the two big spending departments, Education and Heritage and Social Services. A good settlement from the Government will obviously help a lot but my fear is nowhere near enough. Assuming there is little extra to come from Business Rates, we may be facing some very unwelcome choices by January.

In the past the County has put in money from **Reserves** but that is a short-term assistance. Anyway, Cambridgeshire has below average Reserves at about 5½ % of spending (compared with an average of 7½ % among the shire counties).

The County controlling group has an unenviable task ahead facing many difficult choices that seem, at this moment, worse than I can remember. As a member of the main opposition party I shall do my best to ensure that we act responsibly and constructively when the choices come to be made. I prefer the position of critical friend to destructive enemy. When the situation is as serious as it seems to me at this moment, political point scoring is unlikely to help. I hope all three parties agree.

May I wish a good Christmas / New Year break to you all, with particular thanks to those who have to work on our behalf during this period. Greetings!

James Fitch



East Cambs is one of the fastest growing districts in the country, and this puts huge strain on the infrastructure including affordable housing, schools, GP surgeries, roads and public transport. To help address these problems, we have joined with other Local Authorities, the East of England Development Agency and the Greater Cambridge Partnership to set up an independent company called The Infrastructure Partnership. This will oversee delivery of new housing and support infrastructure, such as transport and affordable housing, across the Cambridge Sub-region.

The Partnership will have members from local councils, including one board member from East Cambs District Council, regional organisations, community and business sectors. It will bring in specialist skills and resources and give a strong voice to the area in attracting Government and private sector funding. But Planning and Development Control powers will remain with local authorities.

Another aspect of the pressure of growth is that we are finding it increasingly difficult to recruit and retain good staff. They cannot afford the cost of living in the area, and our neighbouring councils are paying more for the equivalent posts. So we are phasing in a pay rise over the next three years, which will bring our staff's salaries up to the average for councils in this region. This will cost £225,000 over three years.

This is one of the main additions to our budget next year at £90,000. The Local Development Document will add £120,000 and rolling out Green Waste collections across the district will add £162,000. The biggest addition to our budget is £210,000 for inflation. Then there are a variety of other additions which total £834,000. Against this we have found savings of £422,000, deferred £20,000 to next year and got additional grants of £272,000. We will also raise an extra £5,000 in Council Tax by reducing the discount previously allowed on second homes. All this leaves a shortfall in the budget of £110,000. This could be covered by an increase in the Council tax of about 4% which would take the Band D rate to £111.43. But it is likely that the Council will instead make cuts to services to keep the tax at its present rate of £107.29. The final decision will also depend on how much grant the Government give us for next year and we won't know that until after the copy deadline for this article.

Another year has rushed by, and already it is nearly Christmas. Once again, I look forward to it with that mixture of horror at everything I need to do before December 25th and anticipation of celebrating with friends and family. I hope you and your families have a Happy Christmas.

Charlotte Cane

Notes from the Parish Council November Meeting

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

Reports

Councillor Fitch reported to the meeting.

Councillor Cane reported to the meeting.

Matters Arising (reports for information only)

Enhancement Scheme: Following a further meeting on site, Chris Sproston of CCC confirmed that the 'throw' over the Church steps is not of the correct specification and will have to be replaced. This is because once the adjacent lamp post is removed, the current 'throw' will not provide sufficient lighting to the area. It is hoped a lighting manufacturer will soon visit site to inspect and then recommend a suitable replacement.

Wall at The Beeches: The condition of this wall continues to deteriorate. The Clerk again contacted Hereward Housing to ask that they check their records to confirm ownership. A reply was received noting that they hoped to respond to the P.C's request by Christmas.

Parish Forum: Several members attending this meeting at ECDC's offices.

Additional Insurance Cover: This was agreed.

Confirmation of Budget/Precept for 2004/05: The budget was agreed. The estimated Precept figure for 2004/05 was kept at £11,000 with no increase on the 2003/04 Precept figure.

Grasscutting Season - 2004: Contractors are to be invited to tender for this work.

Pruning /Felling of Trees – Village Hall Car Park: The necessary cutting back, etc., was agreed at a meeting on site with the Tree Officer of ECDC. Estimates will be obtained from contractors.

Problems with Vehicles – Coopers Lane: It had been reported to the Clerk that the barrier across Coopers Lane was being removed to allow vehicles to pass. Following discussion on how to more securely fix the barrier, it was agreed to leave any decision until the next P.C. meeting in order to allow members to look at the area. It was noted that limited access would need to be available for the grasscutting contractors.

Use of Cemetery Water Supply – *fixed charge*: Following reports that this water supply was being used to water the horses in the adjoining field, it was agreed that the Clerk would write to the owner of the field and ask that a contribution be made to the metered costs of this supply.

Correspondence Received: This was reported to the meeting.

Accounts for Payment: These were agreed.

Planning Applications:

The Gables, 28 Lower End – *extension of two bedrooms, bathroom & music room.*
There were no objections to this application.

Planning Approvals:

New Gant Farm, Swaffham Prior Fen
Land adjoining 5 Cage Hill – *new dwelling.*

Any Other Business

The Clerk had contacted CCC about the continuing problems with the interactive signs on Mill Hill. CCC confirmed that the manufacturer of these signs had been asked to visit site and correct the problems. It was also confirmed that the trigger mechanism on the signs could not be dismantled as this would make the signs illegal.

Open Question Time: There were no questions.

The next Parish Council meeting will be on Thursday, 11th December 2003 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

Karen King, Clerk of the Parish Council

POSTERS!

It seems that someone has been removing posters from telegraph poles before the event they advertise has taken place. It is very kind of people to take them down, but please, PLEASE could you wait till AFTER the event. Thank you.

Making money grow - magic envelopes

It has been brought to my attention that not everyone understands the envelope system of giving in church collections. It's known as Gift Aid and can only be used by taxpayers. Each person is given a pack of envelopes, one for each week of the year. Each time he or she comes to church the collection money is put into the envelope before putting it into the plate. You don't have to give any more than you would give if you just dropped your donation loose into the collection plate, or commit yourself to a specific amount. (Of course we would be delighted if you got into the habit of putting money into the envelopes every week even when you didn't attend church.)

At the end of the service, envelope donations and loose money are totalled separately. The Gift Aid figures are then sent to those magical people at the Inland Revenue who check our taxes and they very generously give back to the church 28 pence for every pound given by this method. So our income grows - perhaps not as quickly as the beanstalk but enough to make it worthwhile. It all adds up. Think about it. If you're interested in joining the scheme let me, or anyone else at church, know.

Brenda Wilson

Hate DIY?

Can't tell one end of a screwdriver from the other?

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April's Alternative Therapies

(For that laid back, scrape me off the floor feeling!)

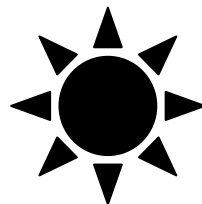
Offering a range of therapies to businesses or in the comfort of your own home:
Reflexology; Indian Head Massage; Back Massage; Reiki.

To treat various ailments, for example: stress; migraine; insomnia; hormone imbalance; circulation; back problems; depression.

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01638 743371

Mob: 0773 4441647



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Church of England Services

December 2003

	ST MARY'S Swaffham Prior	ST MARY'S Swaffham Bulbeck	Bottisham
Sun 7	11:00am Holy Communion 4:00pm Christingle Service	8:00am Holy Communion [†] 9:30am Family Service	11:00am Holy Communion 4:00pm Christingle Service
Sun 14	8:00am Holy Communion [†] 11:00am Family Service	9:30am Holy Communion & Nativity	11:00am Holy Communion
Sun 21	11:00am Holy Communion 6:00pm Carols by Candlelight	9:30am Village Communion	11:00am Holy Communion 6:30pm Carols by Candlelight
Christ mas Eve 24	11:30pm Midnight Communion	4:00pm Carols around the Crib 11:30pm Midnight Communion	4:00pm Carols around the Crib 11:30pm Midnight Communion
Christ mas Day 25	11:00am Holy Communion		11:00am Holy Communion
Sun 28	11:00am Matins	9:30am Holy Communion	8:00am Holy Communion [†] 11:00am Family Service

[†] Book of Common Prayer

Should you wish to contact the Vicar, David H. Lewis, do telephone on 01223 812367, or email RevDavidHLewis@aol.com.

Dear Friends,

The Christmas season is almost upon us, and many people are busily writing Christmas Cards once again. Many cards will have jolly, heart-warming Christmas images printed on them, with cheery Christmas greetings inside, and people will write cheery messages on them to family and friends.

A striking Christmas card was once published with the title "If Christ Had Not Come". It was founded upon Jesus Christ's words "If I had not come." The card represented a Vicar falling into a short sleep in his study on Christmas morning and dreaming of a world into which Jesus had never come.

In his dream he found himself looking through his home, but there were no little stockings in the chimney corner, no Christmas bells or wreaths of holly, and no Christ to comfort, gladden and save. He walked out to the street, but there was no church with its spire pointing to Heaven. He came back and sat down in his library, but every book about the Saviour had disappeared.

The doorbell rang and a young man stood on the doorstep asking the Vicar to visit his poor, dying mother. He hastened with the young man, and as he reached the home he sat down and said, "I have something here that will comfort you." He opened his Bible to look for a familiar promise, but it ended with Malachi. There was no Gospel and no promise of hope and salvation, and he could only bow his head and weep with her in bitter despair.

Two days later he stood beside her coffin and conducted the funeral service. There was no message of consolation, no hope of heaven.

The message of that Christmas Card reminds us of the crucial importance of the Incarnation – the Word made flesh. I think the Incarnation is such a difficult concept for us to grasp that so often we tend to shy away from it and instead seek refuge in the more comfortable and safe images of Christmas stockings, santas, holly and reindeers.

As the celebrated theologian Jim Packer puts it: *'God became man; the divine Son became a Jew; the Almighty appeared on earth as a helpless human baby, unable to do more than lie and stare and wriggle and make noises, needing to be fed and changed and taught to talk like any other child. And there was no illusion or deception in this: the babyhood of the Son of God was a reality. The more you think about it, the more staggering it gets. Nothing in fiction is so fantastic as is this truth of the Incarnation.'*

It is staggering, but it is also true, and the very name 'Christmas' is about the celebrating the coming of the Christ-child, and that is what should lie at the very heart of this time of year.

Someone once said that *'Christmas began in the heart of God. It is complete only when it reaches the heart of man.'* and that is so true. One of my favourite Christmas Carols is 'In the Bleak Midwinter'. Its haunting melody and those wonderful words of Christina Rossetti seem to speak so much of the longing that lies inside the heart of so many of us to discover the true meaning of Christmas:

What can I give him,
Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd,
I would bring a lamb;
If I were a wise man,
I would do my part;
Yet what I can I give him-Give my heart.'

I hope that you will, indeed, give your heart to the Christ-child once again this Christmas-time, and I wish you all a very happy and blessed Christmas.

May God bless you all,

David

Roman Catholic Church, Newmarket Parish

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

From John Morrill, Deacon to the Roman Catholic Community

Although I am writing this even before Advent arrives, five weeks and more before the big day, I am aware that Christmas is coming. I have bought my Christmas cards, arranged with Frances that our present to one another will be a New Year break in Paris, and even found a new website from which I have acquired some favourite malt whiskies at delightful prices (although they may not stay sealed until Yuletide!). So I do feel able to wish anyone who bothers to read this column a very happy Christmas. I am still dashing up and down to Manchester to help my ailing mum with my ailing dad, but it is not all bad news. I have found listening to the wonderful Naxos recordings of Shakespeare plays absolutely wonderful (try the Richard III or the Othello). They are co-produced by Naxos and Cambridge University Press and are available for a snip from the Press Bookshop on the corner of Market Square and Trinity Street (it might even solve the odd present problem!). The plays all last slightly longer than the journey to Manchester, so if I hit a traffic jam it is good news – it means that I will get to the end. I had a clear run when I was listening to King Lear, and as I parked my car, Cordelia had snuffed it but Lear was still ranting! And since these journeys also take me past my grandson's door (and my daughter and son-in-laws come to think of it), there is compensation for the sadness that takes me north. But it is all causing me to get very behind with things – sorry about the continuing intermittence of these columns!

Anyway, I do need to let you know of the changes in the parish. With both our priests retiring, we have only one replacement, Fr Michael Griffin, who looked after us while Fr Paul was on sabbatical about 4 years ago, and someone we already know and like. But we have had to cut the number of Masses. Instead of the five Masses we have had recently, we will for the foreseeable future have three: on **Saturday**

evenings at 630pm and Sunday mornings at 1030am in Newmarket and on **Sunday mornings at 900 am in Kirtling**. There is also still (but for how much longer?) at 9am Mass in St Mary's Bottisham, served from Cambridge. And at Christmas there will be Masses as follows

24 December: 6pm Family-centred Mass (Newmarket)

24 December Midnight Mass (Newmarket – carols from 1130pm)

25 December 9am Kirtling

25 December 1030am Newmarket

And as usual there is a free Christmas lunch for anyone on their own who would like to get together (and anyone who would like to help – ie for anyone and everyone) in the Parish Hall on Christmas Day. It would help greatly if you could let us know that you want to come (01638 662492, any morning or phone me at 01223 811822 and leave a message anytime). But if you decide to come on the day, you will not be turned away. As a Christian community, we can hardly say that there is no room at our inn!

And, come to think of it, have a very good new year too!



CHRISTMAS FAIR

8th DECEMBER 2003

3.00pm - 4.30pm

SWAFFHAM PRIOR SCHOOL HALL

Stalls

Refreshments

Raffle

Gifts

Lucky Dip

and more



EVERYONE WELCOME !

Dates for Your Diary - December 2003

Sat	6	Christmas in the Courtyard, 10.30-3pm Ely
Sun	7	
Mon	8	WI Christmas Party, 7pm VH School Christmas Fair, School, 3- 4.30pm.
Tue	9	Mobile Library, Cage Hill 2:40-3:30, Chapel 3:35-4:00pm
Wed	10	Staine Hundred Party, BVC Crier Copy Deadline
Sat	13	Christmas Holly Sale, Anglesey House, 12-1pm
Sun	14	Christmas Holly Sale, Anglesey House, 12-1pm
Mon	15	
Tue	16	
Wed	17	Carols at the Village Hall, 7pm
Thu	18	Crier Collating, Village Hall, 2:30pm
Fri	19	
Sat	20	
Sun	21	Carol Service + Gay Bullied Award, St Mary's
Mon	22	
Tue	23	Mobile Library, Cage Hill 2:40-3:30, Chapel 3:35-4:00pm
Wed	24	Christmas Eve
Thu	25	Christmas Day
Weekly Events		
Sun		11am, Boules, Village Hall Car park
Tue		2.30-4pm Baby & Toddler Group, Village Hall Jamsing, 10-10.45 (0-18mnths), 11-11.45 (18-38mnths), Village Hall Water Colour For Beginners, 1- 4pm Village Hall 7-8.30pm, Youth Club
Wed		Cubs, Village School, 6pm-8pm. Scouts, 7.45-9.15, School
Thu		Messy Play, 2.30-3.15, Village Hall 2.30-4.30pm Teas Village Hall 7-8.30pm Karate, Village Hall 7-10pm, Youth Club