



The Swaffham Crier

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May 2003



Editorial

Vote, vote, vote for Charlotte Ca-ane...! Or, if you prefer, for Sandra Wilson, who's bravely standing against Charlotte in the Local Elections on May 1st. Yes, this is one occasion we won't be searching for the none-of-the-above box at the bottom of the voting slip. Never mind party politics, Charlotte's got a great track-record — when she's involved, and she mostly is, *it works*. That's what the Eds think anyway, but whatever you think, do vote, because in this election, it counts.

Meanwhile, bad news, newspaper crisis looming — no longer will the Daily Tree Trunk come torpedoing through our letter boxes: Prior has no deliverers. You can't be younger than 13, but you can be just as old as you like. Clear those idle teenagers out of bed in the morning — or how about a healthy stroll yourself? Get in touch with Bulbeck Stores if you can help.

And on the subject of tree-trunks, there's this month's *Crier*. Since we quite unaccountably won That Award, we've all thought "But we can do so much better...". *We've all done better at once!* As it happens, I have contributed a little something myself — you might just see it tucked away in the *Contents* panel in large bold letters — and, my goodness! Now I look, so has my Co-Editor! But surely, the Eds don't actually write in the *Crier*? Don't they snap and slam the door when it's even mentioned? What can have happened?

Readers can be assured normal service will be resumed shortly, and meanwhile they can enjoy the return of those old sparring partners A. Everitt and M. Lewinski, currently manning the *Crier's* Toad News Desk, Bells and more Bells, a charming retirement letter from Dr Ridsdill Smith and much, much more....

But the proof-reader has finally been *sacked* — where is *Page X*, then? And it's just 6 *bells*, we have! See you at the Feast, the Fair, the Assembly, and of course, the Polling Booth.

Caroline Matheson

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Cover Picture: *Thrimilci* by Clive Riggs (see note p. 2)



Letters to the Editors



Dear Editors,

Bert Aves

We would like to thank all relatives and friends for the very kind messages of sympathy received recently following the sad loss of Bert (Aves).

Our very sincere thanks to those who attended the funeral service, and for the generous donations in aid of “The Burwell Surgery” amounting to £200.

Grateful thanks to everyone,

Elsie and Barbara

Dear Editors,

RETIRING FROM BURWELL SURGERY

It was in Summer 1979, actually the day that the Burwell & District buses, decked with bunting and balloons, were running for the last time before handing over to Cambus. On that day I joined the Surgery in Harlech House where we had two consulting rooms, a waiting area in the hallway and office/dispensary in a broom cupboard. It was a jolly set-up and somehow each doctor survived 168 hours on call on alternate weeks (336 hours when covering for holidays). During that first year we converted the Red House which provided vastly more space, eventually to accommodate 5 doctors, Practice and Community Nurses, Health visitor and other visiting professionals. By the early 1990's, even the Red House was bursting at the seams and luckily a site became available to build the new Burwell Surgery just up the Newmarket Road ('up that hill' the fen folk say!) with much support from the Parish Council, The Burwell and District Medical Trust and the community. Burwell now has a surgery as fine as any in the country. But more importantly it accommodates a fantastic team of professionals — and patients, because care of our health involves working together. Things have certainly changed since that summer of 1979. Medical workload has increased enormously, but so have expectations and the NHS struggles to keep up. Sadly I gather that the bus service has decreased!

I must praise and thank all my colleagues for cheerful and unstinted support over the years. Back in 1979 a G.P. could feel very alone coping with complex problems in the Community. Now we have a 24 hour nursing service, community psychiatric nurses and physiotherapists to name just a few additional services.

But what about the patients? We hear daily of neighbourly acts, of folk putting themselves out to help others in emergencies. Community spirit is very

Cover picture: May - in Anglo-Saxon Thrimilci, the month when cows give milk three times a day, the dairy month. Clive Riggs is an Associate Member of the Society of Graphic Fine Art.

alive, humour too. A heavy lady, asked if she ‘knew’ about calories, retorted, ‘Oh, I never eat those!’. A doctor is often humbled by an individuals’ bravery and acceptance of advancing disease. Medicine will never have all the answers, but we aim to give the Old Reaper a hard time.

A GP’s work is with people and their families and this has been a great privilege. Personally I must thank you all for your support over the years, for your very kind wishes for my retirement and some splendid gifts including a ‘Giant’ de luxe bicycle, a digital camera and a large cheque which will be used to buy relaxing garden furniture, all contributing to the joys of retirement. Thank you all for everything and mind you keep well and enjoy life!

Patrick Ridsdill Smith

Dear Editors,

Council Tax

Mr Lewinski asks for a clear explanation in basic terms for the increase in his Council Tax over the last six years. Unfortunately it is difficult for one person to give him his answer because four different authorities are responsible for the charges. I will try to explain who is responsible for which elements of the charge. And then I will try to explain the increase in the District Council’s charge.

I do not know what Band Mr Lewinski falls into, so I have used Band D. If Mr Lewinski’s amounts are different, the proportions will remain the same. In 1998/99 the Band D tax was £647.56 and it is now £1,051.83 an increase of 62%. The County Council charges the largest amount – in 1998/99 the charge was £518.94 and it is now £797.40 an increase of 54%. The Police Authority come next – in 1998/99 their charge was £48.24 and it is now £113.31 an increase of 135%. Then the District Council – in 1998/99 our charge was £56.00 and it is now £107.29 an increase of 92%. Finally, the Parish Council – in 1998/99 they charged £24.38 and now they charge £33.83 an increase of 39%. I think I can speak for all authorities when I say that none of us likes imposing these increases. But we realise that many people, including some very vulnerable people, rely on our services. Each year we have to balance tax increases against service delivery. In my view the Council tax is a very unfair tax, where the pensioner can pay as much as the millionaire. I would like to see it replaced with a fairer tax, such as local income tax.

There are three main reasons why the District Charge has gone up so much: Central Government actions; decreased income from investments; and increased services.

Central Government has caused some of the increase in two ways. Firstly a general determination to move the charges for local services onto local taxpayers. Most of the cost of local services is paid for by government grant. For several years now this grant has been a smaller and smaller proportion of the

full costs, so we have had the choice of cutting services or raising taxes. In addition every year they instruct us to start new initiatives. They often do not fund these at all and when they do it is never the full cost. Again we have the choice of cutting existing services to find the funds or raising taxes. All our consultations with the people of East Cambs have shown that people value our services, so we have generally tried to protect the existing services by raising the Council tax.

Six years ago East Cambs had significant capital reserves and interest rates were high. So we funded some of our costs from interest. Over the years we have used some of these capital reserves, eg in grants for village halls, village play facilities and as match funds to draw in millions of pounds in grants from other bodies. So there is less money to invest. Furthermore, interest rates are at an all time low. So we no longer have significant investment income to effectively subsidise the cost of our services.

People's expectations of local services and demands on those services are increasing all the time. We have tried hard to meet those expectations. In many cases we have been able to increase services without increasing costs, by working differently or by making savings elsewhere. But sometimes we have needed increased funding for increased services. One service that has been introduced in the last six years is the kerbside collection of recyclable waste. In 1998/99 we did not collect this, in 2003/04 we will be collecting this waste from every village in East Cambs.

Finally, can I say our budgets and accounts are public documents. They explain where we plan to spend your money and how we have spent it. Auditors appointed by Central Government, not by us, audit these accounts and test our services to see that they are value for money. These audit reports are also available to the public.

Charlotte Cane

Dear Editors,

John Norris's Miracle

Towards the end of March, while walking down the High Street I met a frog/toad carrying a smaller frog/toad on its back - coming out of John's gateway. My bright "Hallo there" was met by four bright, rather doleful, unblinking eyes. I carried on. When I returned the frogs/toads were in the gutter walking rapidly towards Cambridge, with the smaller one still being given a ride. The chance of squashing by Miguel Cervantes seemed pretty high so I called to the rescue Hannah and Hesta Bowers who carried the frogs/toads to safety. Can anyone explain why the smaller frog/toad was being given a lift?

John's garden must be full of similar miracles, and perhaps he will keep us regularly informed about them.

Alastair Everitt
Anglesey House

The Village Feast 2003

Saturday 10 May

at

2.00 pm

You are cordially invited to join us for an afternoon of
fun and games including

Maypole Dancing *Bouncy Castle* *Can Shy*

Bowls *Children's Play Area* *Lucky Dip*

Egg Throwing *Raffle*

Teas & Home-made Cakes *Ice Creams* *Beer Tent*

Stalls Galore

Bottle Stall, Cakes and Preserves, Books, Plants

Gifts and Collectibles and more.....

Admission 30p. Children Free

Your help is needed....

As usual we are appealing for donations to the **Cake Stall**. Anything in the food line will be most gratefully received - cakes, flapjacks, scones, jams and preserves, etc. All offers to Janet Cooper (741326) or to the stall on the day.

Books, Books, Books - if you want to make space by clearing out some of your books, just give Alastair Everitt (742974) a ring, and they will be happy to receive or collect. But, if you have **Collectibles** or **Bric a Brac** please phone Elisabeth Everitt (742974).

We shall also be collecting for the **Bottle Stall**, and will be calling during the early part of May for anything you can offer.

Thanking you for your usual generous support

From our Reporter at the Parish Council Meeting

New local elections are coming up and yet again we can't vote in our Parish Council simply because not enough people are willing to stand. This probably matters little because our PC does get things done. Not that gratitude necessarily comes into it when people are given the chance to vote. Take Ken Livingstone - the politician nearly all parties love to hate. There was a problem with pigeons in Trafalgar Square - he got rid of them. Okay, you think that's easy. What about the traffic problem in Central London? He's solved it. It is unbelievable just how light the traffic is now. Congestion has vanished. What an achievement. And yet he might be voted out when the next mayoral election comes round. So perhaps it's just as well the PC keeps the number of candidates below 10, so that we can't vote anyone off - as if we would want to. On the other hand Charlotte Cane is being challenged for the ECDC seat by Sandra Wilson one of the PC members.



James Fitch always kicks off the proceedings with a lot of information and useful comment such as that CCC has a new financial executive who (and James is proud of this) used to play professional football for Dundee United (isn't this the sort of thing you keep quiet about). In spite of the injection of new cash into education, secondary schools in Cambridgeshire are £4 million short. There are only three schools without a deficit budget of which Bottisham is one.

Charlotte Cane gave her usual clear report and ECDC is obviously anxious to co-operate with the Government's wish to have everyone computer literate as soon as possible. Computer Training Centres have been set up in Reach and in Bulbeck but Charlotte would like one in Prior. One must wonder why. To have two set up within a space of four miles is a pretty good achievement though I doubt if it's going to help Blair's figures as I suspect most attendees are white, mature, middle class, female, and certainly not looking for a job. That is not the failing of the idea but just the kind of area we live in. Similarly it now turns out that ECDC has been pressing for Broadband not only to help businesses but also so that it can be provided for "socially excluded" groups as this may help children achieve more at school. Later, after Charlotte had left, the PC discussed it again and concluded that Broadband had very limited educational value (no more than that provided by the net) and that the young would generally use it for downloading games, films, etc. It would be interesting to hear the views of those in education - is Broadband going to improve the education of some of the young - or is this just another government fad? All this was pretty heady stuff so it was good to be brought down to earth with the latest update about the High Street improved lighting scheme. The original contractors (who have not been paid) will not finish the job and what remains to be done is so small that no other private contractor is interested. So ECDC, totally frustrated and embarrassed, has now passed it to CCC who may complete the work if it ever gets a similar

job in the area. It looks as if we are going to have that strikingly ugly and overbright lamppost near the Church steps for a very very long time. [*Isn't there plenty of work to do replacing all the other strikingly ugly and overbright lights further along the High Street? Eds*]

Then on to GARBAGE. There is increasing concern about the growing amount of waste spewing out of houses each week. As Charlotte said, "we can't just keep putting it into landfill." John Covill asked about the government idea that £1 should be charged for every extra bag and feared that even more rubbish would be dumped near him down the fen (recently he had collected 48 tyres). Henry said the answer was simple - put it outside your neighbour's house. In Germany, we were told, they examine your bags and fine people if there is a mix of non-recyclable and recyclable waste. Is this the way forward?

SPEED WATCH. A village working party has asked 100 people for their views on traffic (as my feisty sister-in-law always says, "They didn't ask me"). The results will be reviewed at the working party meeting on 16th April. I do not subscribe to conspiracy theories but there was a studied and highly significant omission of any reference to Citroën and Rover drivers. However I did notice that there were a number of hard looks in a certain direction. I trust our PC. I think they know.

At this particular PC meeting James and Charlotte had remained longer than usual. When the repair of the wall at the Beeches was mentioned, James jumped up saying "Ah, the Wall! If you don't mind I'm off." It appears that any one of three bodies could be responsible, all vigorously deny it, and this is something which will go round and round for even more years. Because of the imminent danger and the further deterioration following the February frosts Charlotte said that one organisation should make the repair and argue about payment afterwards. She advised that the weakest should be targeted. This will challenge the PC!, or was she sending out an invitation?

What a lot of Correspondence is sent to the PC each month! Karen now lists it out and there appeared to be about 35 items. Did they want all the correspondence read out? Henry hastily said he was more than happy just to read the list, but Karen insisted that some letters should be looked at. And some were, but I reckon this change has knocked 10-15 minutes off the meeting. The highlight of the crime report was that a cat had been shot in the High Street at about 8.00am on 27th March. They didn't give the colour or type of the cat and I don't think anyone has been caught. But no mention was made of the brilliant interception by the police of two robbers of the Red Lion in the early hours of the morning at the beginning of April with a helicopter hovering overhead for about 15 minutes. It seems that nearly all the very light sleepers living near The Red Lion were unaware that anything had happened. See elsewhere in the *Crier* for the Full Report.

Alastair Everitt

Be a rubbish revolutionary....

Are you worried about the environment? Think we should be doing more..
.but one person can't make a difference, right? **WRONG!**

If you want to do more to help your local environment then the Cambridgeshire County Council's Master Recycler scheme could be just the thing for you. We are looking for 150 volunteers from around Cambridgeshire to sign up to the new Master Recycler scheme. Training to become a Master Recycler takes just one day; a morning learning about the benefits of recycling and how your kerbside collection works, followed by an afternoon visit to a Materials Recycling Facility so you can see what happens to your rubbish. Lunch will be provided.

Once trained as a Master Recycler your role will be to make sure you know what your kerbside scheme takes and that your box is put out on the correct day - it's that simple. Your District Council will keep you informed of any changes to your scheme and you can then let people know about the change in whatever way you choose. Additional activities such as survey work are welcomed but not compulsory.

If you would like to sign up for the Master Recycler scheme please contact Emma McCrea, Waste Campaigns Officer for Cambridgeshire County Council on 01223 717572

or email emma.mccrea@cambridgeshire.gov.uk.

Available to Rent - 8 Berth Caravan.

Three bedroom caravan based at a Park Resorts caravan site in Scratby is available to rent for £210 per week plus site access fee (£16 -£36 per week depending on length of stay and dates).

The site provides dedicated entertainment for children aged 5 to 18 three times a day and activities for adults such as competitions, line dancing, aerobics, darts etc. There is a swimming pool and three amusement arcades.

The evening entertainment includes a cabaret for the children as well as a late night adult cabaret.

The beach is a five minute walk away and is ideal for long walks, sandcastles and paddling.

The caravan is equipped with all bedding, TV/Video, CD player separate shower and toilet rooms and fitted kitchen with microwave. Cleaning after stay included in rental cost.

There are two twin bedded rooms and one double room. The lounge has the facility to sleep two people on a temporary bed.

For further details, sight of the brochure or to make a booking please contact Sandra Wilson on 01638 742091.

ANNUAL VILLAGE ASSEMBLY

TO BE HELD ON
THURSDAY, 15th MAY 2003,
7.30pm AT THE VILLAGE HALL

Everyone welcome!

If you have a topic that you would like added to the Agenda please contact Karen King on 742358 no later than Wednesday, 7th May 2003.



Broadband Is Coming ...

Meeting held at the Village Hall on March 26th

David Greenfield, who had arranged the meeting for the village, introduced Richard Nuttall and Mark Hugo from Invisible Networks (the company who will be installing and running the network) and John Harris, one of the pioneers of the network in Bottisham.

Richard Nuttall started by explaining the background and described some of the advantages of having this type of high speed network - including its potential for changing working practices, for example people spending a day or more a week “teleworking” from home. He then explained that most of the network is wireless but some of the links between villages and back to the Internet are provided by wire. The typical coverage of each wireless transmitter is a circle of 400m diameter, so Swaffham Prior is likely to need three or four transmitters. He covered the levels of service provided (details on <http://www.invisible.uk.net/services/>) and stressed that, apart from email, all that is provided is the basic connection to the Internet. They are however in discussion with other local companies who may provide other services.

He then discussed timescales. They intend to have a service running in the village by the end of April. They then intend to upgrade the capacity of the network during the summer as the number of users increases, with the aim of always keeping ahead of demand.

John Harris spoke about his experiences of using the network in Bottisham. He has been very impressed and gets data rates between 300kbits/sec and 1Mbit/sec (6 to 20 times a good dial-up modem). Peak use (and hence the lowest speed!) is between 5:30pm and 8:30pm on weekdays and mid afternoon on a Sunday.

Finally Gregg Cottner spoke about his negotiations on behalf of the village to get grants to help towards the setup costs. This had become more difficult than it was when Bottisham had had a successful bid; the rules now favour novel uses of a network within the community rather than provision of the basic network. The best hope on installation costs seems to be that these will reduce as the

number of subscribers increases, possibly in 6-8 months.

During a very helpful question and answer session, the following were among the points covered:

- Whilst in many cases it is possible to access an existing email account over the broadband network or redirect that email address to one of those supplied by Invisible Networks, this is not possible with AOL so their customers must either change email address or keep a modem to dial up to access email.
- Because, with broadband, computers are usually permanently connected to the Internet, there is a greater opportunity for intrusion by hackers. Some form of firewall is thus advisable. This may either be provided by the computer's operating system or by a separate box which Invisible Networks can supply (around £90).
- As the network uses wireless, there is a risk of others listening in. Many Web sites now encrypt sensitive information (eg credit card details) to avoid this problem and the links to Invisible Networks' email service are also encrypted. It is advisable to encrypt other sensitive data, eg for teleworking, and this can be done using the firewall box.

Afterthoughts ...

Some survey activity by Invisible Networks has been taking place in the village but their Web site now says that "target service date is in May" for Swaffham Prior.

There may after all be some hope on the grant front - see Charlotte Cane's report. ECDC are showing enthusiasm for ensuring that their rural areas do not lose out on the next generation of networking and Charlotte is actively promoting this locally.

By contrast, there appears to be a disappointing lack of support from our Parish Council (see page X) especially given the large number of villagers who have expressed an interest. In the context of the work which our Local Education Authority are doing on high speed networking for schools and the educational uses that universities are hoping to make of a higher speed Web, their view that "Broadband has very limited educational value (no more than that provided by the net)" is particularly surprising!

Once the network is installed, the *Crier* hopes to have its own Web site with an archive of back copies, etc. Watch this space!

James Matheson

Free Computer Training from East Cambs On-Line (ECOL) at The Dykes End Pub, Reach. There are currently vacancies at your ECOL Access Point. You do not need any previous experience of computers to start learning. Contact Access Point Organiser Theresa Donovan on 07 766 602 165.



The AGM of the VHMC

The Village Hall Management Committee is holding its AGM on Wednesday 7th May at 8pm in the Village Hall. All are welcome.

Janet Cooper

Secretary of the Village Hall Management Committee

Midsummer Music

A Concert of Sacred and Secular Music
by

Cantilena

in

Saint John's Church
Little Wilbraham

Saturday 28th June 2003
7.30 p.m.

Tickets £5.00 (£4.00 concessions)

Pay at the door
Light Refreshments

Proceeds to support this historic Church

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including Sunday papers!



The spring production this year is a comedy *Beyond a Joke* written by Derek Benfield. As always the production is put on in association with Samuel French.

The play centres round the home of Andrew and Jane who live in a rather pleasant house in the country. They have a daughter Sally who has a boyfriend Geoff. The house is “accident-prone”, six people have met “accidental deaths”. Geoff arrives for the weekend and during a conversation gets the idea that the deaths are sinister. To add to the problems another dead man is found in a cupboard and the Vicar dies in the garden. Geoff’s parents arrive unexpectedly and after that things go from bad to worse.

Farce at its best as only Derek Benfield can write it. Come and have an evening full of laughter and fun.

Dates for your diary are Thursday 15th, Friday 16th and Saturday 17th May 2003 at 7.45p.m in the Drama studio at Bottisham Village College.

Buy your tickets from 20th April 2003 direct from Lushers Newsagents in Bottisham or through our telephone booking line (not Lushers) on 01223 812779 price £6.00 for adults and £4.00 concessions (not Saturday night).

Any reserved tickets must be paid for before the date of the performance. Tickets will be available on the door at each performance subject to availability.

Burwell and District Medical Trust

The Trust was set up in 1996 to provide “equipment and facilities not normally provided by the NHS”. Patients in the Burwell Practice have benefited enormously from the purchase of over 30 pieces of equipment ranging from an ear thermometer to an ECG machine and pressure-relieving mattress.

The funds for these have been provided by donations of *all* sizes from numerous people within the catchment area of the Burwell Surgery. In the seven years since the start of the Trust over £31,000 has been raised, which is an incredible amount. People have been so generous and the doctors and patients are extremely grateful.

If you would like to support this worthwhile charity as a volunteer, trustee or with a donation, please contact the secretary, Mrs Ruth Scovil, on 01638 743720. Alternatively, if you just want to find out more, please do not hesitate to get in touch at the above number.

We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Bottisham

Village College

NEWS FROM BOTTISHAM VILLAGE COLLEGE

We are very proud at the college that we have received national recognition for all our community education work. The government has finally recognised that schools have a really important part to play at the heart of their communities and we have been recognised as an Extended School. We have been set up by the government as a demonstration project so that teachers, governors and LEA's from all over the country can receive information about what we do and can share our good practice. We received some additional funding in order to help us do this.

We are very proud of our community tradition at Bottisham which goes back nearly 70 years. Through our link with Burwell Village College and Linton Village College we are able to run an impressive programme of adult education with 250 classes and 2000 adult students. We are also responsible for all of the youth provision in our area and we do a great deal of work with adults who have special learning needs and disabilities in partnership with the local charity, Turning the Red Lights Green.

There are great benefits to be gained by the pupils at the college working in such a strong community environment. The Village College is much more than simply a school and we believe that our pupils develop a real sense of community as a result.



Peter Hains
Warden



Fordham Prom

Fenland Music Centre (MD: Kathy Faelber) at Fordham
With many of the finest young musicians in Cambridgeshire



CIMA
Cambridgeshire
Isleham
Music Agency

String Orchestra & Full Orchestra • **Matthew Gunn**

Brass Band (& **Fordham & Isleham Schools Young Musicians** • **David Notley**

Dance Band • **Clive Baker** Intermediate Orchestra & Strings • **Andy Shaw**

St Peter & St Mary Magdalene, Fordham, Ely, Cambridgeshire

Saturday 28th June 7.30pm

Unreserved Tickets: **£5** Concessions **£4** from: Artists Corner, Ely • Soham Books
Discus Music, Newmarket • D N Jenkins, Fordham • The White Pheasant, Fordham

With the generous support of **David S Smith Corrugated** - Fordham

ART THAT SHOOK THE WORLD

*A SPECIAL 5 WEEK COURSE
AT SWAFFHAM PRIOR VILLAGE HALL*

WEDNESDAYS 10-12 AM. 4TH JUNE—2ND JULY

PLUS OPTIONAL VISIT TO NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON

We will explore many images that have shocked or fascinated by their sheer audacity of invention and scale of ambition. Artists include Botticelli, Leonardo da Vinci, Van Eyck, Rembrandt, Monet, Picasso, Dali and Rothko.

FOR MORE DETAILS/ENROLEMENT FORMS, *please ring the Tutor, Deborah Monteiro on tel: 743259*

Seeking exchange

with an English-speaking family.

A flat in PARIS near MONTPARNASSE is available during summer 2003 in exchange for a stay within a family for a 16 year-old boy for conversation and visits, family life.

The boy is uninterested in sports, prefers visual arts. The flat in Paris is very quiet, can house five people; there are 2 bathrooms. It is 5 min from an underground station. Precise date is negotiable. Alternatively, exchange against a 1-bedroom apartment at the same location for 2 months is possible.

FAX : +33 1 4567 5642 ; E MAIL : michelepalla@wanadoo.fr

Cleaner / Housekeeper Required

3-4 hours per week (flexible) for family in Swaffham Prior.

Good Salary for the right person.

Two references required please.

Please telephone 01638 741 750.



Dates: 4-8 August, 2003, 9.30am-12 noon
Venue: Swaffham Prior School and Village Hall
Fees: £2.50 per day; £6 for a family ticket
Activities: Craft, cookery, basketball, art attack, dance, drama, music, fishing, animals, trips, visitors..... and much, much more!

Thank you to all who supported the last meeting – we have a great crowd of enthusiastic helpers, who will be putting together a very exciting programme. We are particularly grateful to have received offers to run the crèche and the computer administration - both huge tasks.

Can you help? We need to borrow:

Basketballs

Small sized croquet sets

We'd be delighted to hear from you on the number below. Thank you.

Some basic info: Playscheme is for all primary school aged children resident in Swaffham Prior or Reach, or from elsewhere who attend, or have attended, Swaffham Prior School. Registration forms will be circulated through school in June; if you have children who are eligible and will not

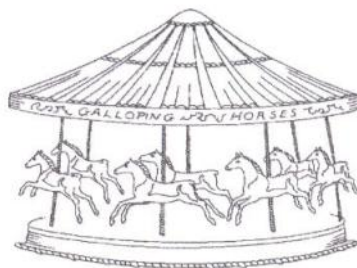
A Good Way to Spend Sunday Morning?

For those of us who were there, the children's service at St Mary's on April 13th was yet again a great pleasure. The parents who organise these monthly events (Dee Noyes and Mandy Kingsmill) are going from strength to strength and the children's acting and speaking is better every time as their confidence grows. The service is normally taken by Roger Bowen who knows his Harry Potter well and creates a real rapport with the assembled company. (His adult fan club doesn't like to miss the occasion.)

This month, being Palm Sunday, he skilfully drew the children through a short communion service as well, explaining as he went, and appeared to have their interested (certainly silent) attention. Caroline Matheson played us beautifully through the "hymns" on the organ (pitched at a level that made them actually singable for once) and the "songs" on the piano. She rounded off with a stirring wedding march which led us seamlessly into coffee, sherry, squash, biscuits and chat. So why am I saying all this? Because although there was good voice for the hymns we need more help from the young with the songs, that they know better than we do. And because some people who don't come (because it's church) might find they really enjoy it. The next one is on May 11th.

Elisabeth Everitt

Reach Fair



Bank Holiday Monday
5th May 2003 - 12 noon - 5 pm

Grand opening by the Mayor of Cambridge
Knights of Chivalry / Music and Dancing / Country Crafts
Stalls / Arts and Crafts / Children's Entertainment
Hog Roast / BBQ / Bar.....Plus lots more

Free Admission - Programmes £2.00

Grand Prize Draw

Registered Charity: 280601

Calling all Children **Help for Playground Maintenance Needed**

At the April Parish Council Meeting the constant minor damage and the need of repair at the park was discussed. To help reduce minor vandalism we would like to try and set up a group of willing children who would form a playground action team which would find and fix these minor damages (under supervision).

The playground is a place where many families meet and children play and if the youth of the village could be encouraged, and given the power to take care of the park, we may find that over time instead of having to pay out to repair vandalism we would be open to suggestions on making it a better and more enjoyable park, i.e adding a roundabout or a climbing frame!

Any under 16's interested (or anyone else if they're interested!) should contact Parish Councillor Sandra Wilson on 742091.

Swaffham Bulbeck Summer Theatre

The Grand Duke Gilbert & Sullivan

Don't miss Swaffham Bulbeck Summer Theatre's unforgettable performances of Gilbert & Sullivan's, 'The Grand Duke'. Geoff Reed, our director, has fine-tuned the libretto and the show races from one situation to the next. Gilbert wrote the most complex plot of his life in this, the last operetta by the celebrated pair. As a result the show was rarely performed until recent times, despite Sullivan's music being some of his best and most lively.

Ludwig, the leading comedian of a touring theatrical company, gets himself four wives in the space of one day. He still manages to find time to statutorily kill off his manager and the Grand Duke to take control of an insignificant mid-European state. A lot hangs on the conspicuous consumption of sausage-rolls and a pack of playing cards. All is resolved by the eventual arrival on the scene of roulette entrepreneur, the Prince of Monte Carlo and his daughter, together with the resurrection of the undead.

Make this an evening to remember! A theatre has been built inside a 19th century barn at the edge of the fens, creating a unique setting. A programme, and a light interval snack are included in the cost of your ticket. There is a licensed bar. Toilet facilities (including disabled) are available.

*The performances will take place in
Mitchell Lodge Barn, Quarry Lane, Swaffham Bulbeck
on*

5th, 6th and 7th June at 7.30pm

Matinee (as well as evening performance) on Sat, 7th June at 2.30pm

Tickets cost £5.50 Thurs, £6.50 Fri and Sat and £3.00 Sat matinee

*Tickets available (from 2 May onwards) from Swaffham Bulbeck shop or
phone Rosemary Upton on 01638 612173 or email: upton1@ntlworld.com*

Item seen in the **Frogham Croaker**, April 1 2003:

Toadwatch Campaign

Unpleasant scenes took place on the night of 11th March last when toads turned up on the lawn by the pond during the annual Frog Hop. The usual social activities were in full swing and a good time was being had by all when a group of rough-looking Toadyboys edged onto the dance floor. They claimed they were now in full control of the pond area and that the frog celebrations should end immediately so that they could set up for a toad party due to start next day.

Fortunately some of the larger males had already said hello to the ladies and were available to quickly toadmarch them out of the area with a minimum of fuss.

The village amphibian council met the following week and discussed the matter at some length with some frank airing of points of view (see notes from the Pond Council Committee March Meeting). Toads accused Frogs of hopping with undue speed along some of the village routes, endangering other wildlife with a clear disregard for others in their haste to get to the pond before the Toads. Frogs replied that this was nonsense, as everyone knows it is Toads who go faster: they had even conducted a survey and all the Frogs questioned agreed it was Toads who act with more speed and recklessness, especially on that stretch coming in from Reach. (Some suggested it might be Reach Toads who were mostly responsible). The chair of the Frog Social Committee stated that in any case they had set off early as they had heard that there would be Toadworks on the bypass. Toads rejected their findings as ‘the kind of tosh you hear from the sort of people who spend all their evenings down at the pond’.

It was agreed to set up a croaking party to discuss and report back on the matter, looking into the possibility of a booking system for pond events, and educational events for tadpoles. Someone mentioned something they had seen about a speed campaign, involving a rabbit-type creature which wouldn’t slow down, but this was dismissed as too obscure. The issue of regulating speed was clearly a controversial one and was put down as an item for the next PCC meeting.

‘This one is likely to hop and hop,’ a more senior amphibian was heard to observe as he left for the pond afterwards.

ML

Incident at the Red Lion — The Official Account

In the early hours of Thursday 3rd April the landlord and landlady of the Red Lion pub were awoken by their pet parrot from the bar area. They both were aware that somebody was trying to break into the pub. They called the police and were kept on the line as the burglary was still occurring downstairs. A short while later police cars started to arrive as did the Force helicopter. A search was carried out by the helicopter and also a police dog unit. PC Darlington and his dog "BUSTER" soon tracked one offender who was hiding nearby. The helicopter using some special devices then located the second offender hiding. Both offenders were arrested and charged with burglary. Special thanks to the landlord and landlady of the pub who kept the police updated, allowing for officers time to attend and apprehend the offenders.

Julie Gilbert

Community Liaison Officer, Histon Police

Red Lion Raiders Foiled by Parrot



1.30 am in Swaffham Prior and all quiet. Above the Red Lion pub, Landlady Lorraine Nichols, husband Dave and son Jamie and were sound asleep, when...

Alerted by Albert

... Suddenly, their slumbers were rudely interrupted by loud protestations from the *Lion's* five year old African Grey, *Albert*. In vain, Dave and Lorraine tried to pacify the parrot and get him back to sleep -- Albert was having none of it. It was only then that the awful realisation dawned: the parrot wasn't the only one kicking up a fuss; there was something-else, *downstairs*.

The police were summoned, if a little timorously -- well, it might just be a *cat* -- who promptly responded that it almost certainly was *not* a cat, the *Crown* at Burwell had been raided only two nights before. Sit tight, keep quiet and they were on their way.

This was all very well, but downstairs it sounded like the heavy mob had moved in. "These were the longest six minutes of my life" says Lorraine (yes, *SIX* minutes, burglars!), because of course, who was to know when the downstairs trashers would transfer their attentions *upstairs*? But then, from far out over the Fen -- imperceptible at first but growing louder by the second -- came the low, rhythmic thrum of high-powered *blades and rotor*. Too late, the raiders realised that who's-afraid-of-a-silly-old-parrot Albert had succeeded in summoning the assistance of a altogether bigger bird! Yes, the police helicopter was on its way, and it was only when it swept across the sports-field and pinioned the *Lion* with its nasty big search-lights did the light finally dawn.

Busted by Buster

Foiled! To stay or to flee, and if so, where? That was the question, and as the 'copter hovered menacingly above, thermal-imaging at the ready (THERMAL IMAGING, burglars!), with Dave and Lorraine instructing the pilot as to raider movements below, and sleepy Priorites tumbling out of bed to see what the fuss was about (although not all! No, next-door only wakes up with that *noisy chiming clock!*) it seemed like a stalemate might ensue.

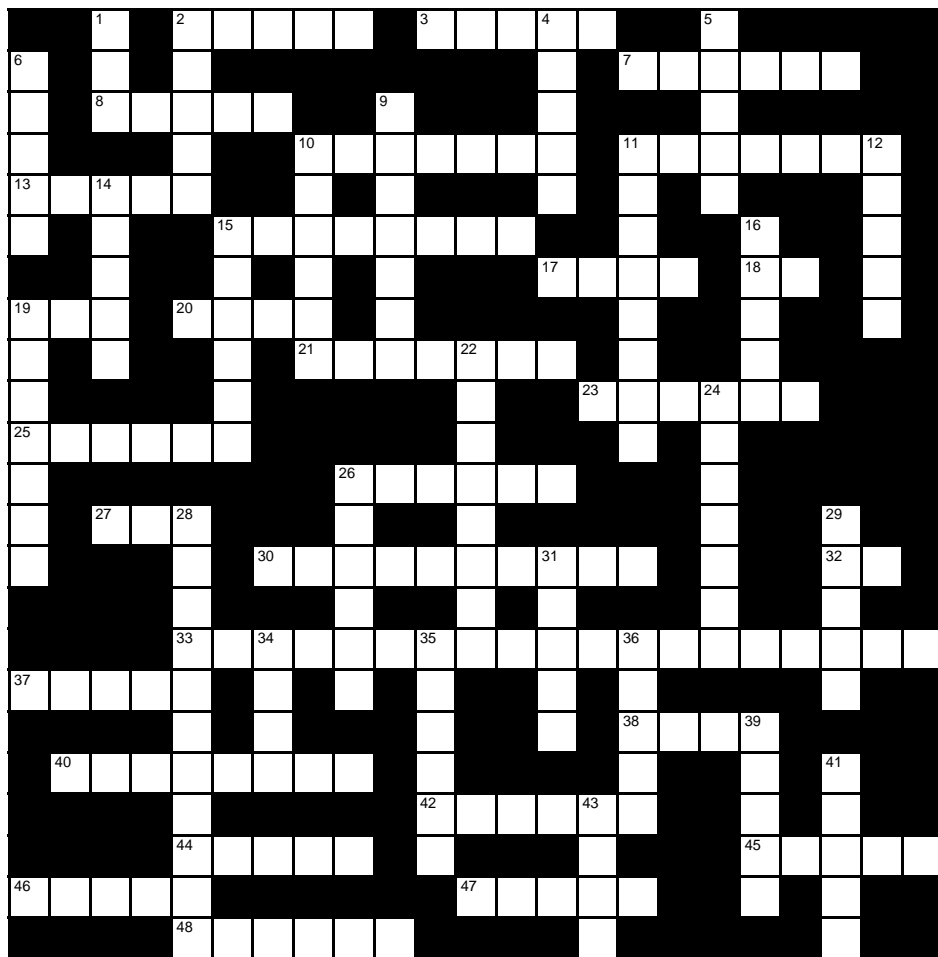
But not for long, because the next to arrive on the scene was *Buster*, a police-dog only slightly shorter than his 6' 8" (!!!) handler, PC Darlington, but with considerably bigger teeth. He's not a fan of thermal-imaging (can't see the point) but *is* quite partial to burglars -- breakfast, dinner, anytime really. What a mess! He soon sorted it out -- a quick lope round extracted the hapless raiders from nearby trees and the like, from whence they were formally apprehended -- somewhat to their relief, it would seem, having had quite enough of fur and feathers for one night.

So there we are, Rome had its geese, but the *Lion's* got a parrot. Many thanks to Histon police for an excellent job well done! **Caroline Matheson**

Crier Crossword No. 2

by Cornelia

Each tasteful rhyming couplet conceals a Swaffham Prior *blankety-blank* (eg: *Don't be an oaf, Use your loaf* (5) might be BEANO—if it were a *blankety-blank*!) and each ordinary clue, a similar *blankety-blank*, but scrambled up. Easy Peasy! If you read the *Crier*, that is! Oh, and we forgot to number the clues..... you must fit them where you can. Answers by the 20th to the Eds — bottle of wine to the winner.



A Where there's brass, you'll often find/Coal that's waiting to be mined (6)

B Gong due (7)

C If you want to be effective / You must be more selective (4)

D Contemporary kneeled (9,4,6)

E Got a duck? / You're not in luck! (5)

F You have to be quite in-the-know / To rope a podgy buffalo (6)

G My speed (7)

H My sugarplum, my honey-pie / You are my sweetest sweetie-pie (5)

I Us hens in (8)

J When I fall asleep / I play at counting sheep (3)

K Brass bed-knob by white linen / Bedrooms with not much in 'em (5)

L You should never take a photo / In Bangkok or Kyoto (5)

M Said the Widgeon to the Pollard / You'll fly into that bollard (5)

N Fellini films that start at eight / Are always half an hour late (2)

O Late from the pub and you've had a skinful / Don't you think you're rather sinful? (5)

P Tap toe (6)

Q Psychic kinesis / Moves more than a prosthesis (5)

R A pretty country fair / Near Ickworth and by Clare (4)

S Flotsam and jetsam / My Auntie thinks I've got some (5)

T Siren sylphs with almond eyes / Abound within nymph's paradise (5)

U Cooked plums are very handy / To dip in Cherry Brandy (7)

V Calico coat and tortoiseshell hat / He's the very smartest cat (5)

W Virgil One and Homer Three / With Socrates the referee (4)

X Introducing Guitar Lil / She's the wife of Banjo Bill (3)

Y You must be fed on finest hay / To be a champion dapplegray (7)

Z You're in a most terrific huff / You've definitely had enough (6)

AA I'm not much amused / When verbally abused (5)

AB Three mins to kick-off when we found / We couldn't get inside the ground (2)

AC Mental accuity / Brings capital annuity (3,3)

AD There goes Stan / A very happy man (3)

AE You might find us tying up our laces / Putting on the shoeshine, yanking up our braces (5)

AF Bottom-up hock and Oddbin champagne / Sainsbury claret and Tesco fine wayne (7)

AG Dirty rascal who climbs hill / Yells "Where are you, Jack and Jill?" (6)

AH Rev Rongo (8)

AI A birch role (7,3)

AJ Cash rent (8)

AK Here comes Bejum Bob / What a silly clod (5)

AL Henry married Ann and sent / For Catholic acknowledgement (4)

AM What a really horrid din / Kylie starting up to sing (5)

AN Strip off in the sun / If you're looking for some fun (5)

AO Knock, knock, who's there? Miss Piggy's quin! / Kermit says don't let her in (8)

AP Eskimos essential wear / You'll find upon a Polar Bear (5)

AQ Ten yin (6)

AR Depleted uranium / Caused a quadrupled geranium (7)

AS Oh, Mrs Vole and Mr Mole! / You're both as nearly black as coal (5)

AT Gardening gear for Bill and Ben / Nylon socks and boots, size 10 (5)

AU Crow will kip (11)

AV Cool, calm and collected / Hardly that affected (4)

AW Don't be an eye-glassed silly fop / Get contact lenses -- in they pop! (6)

AX Tony say's he'll back US / Tying ribbons to his chest (5)

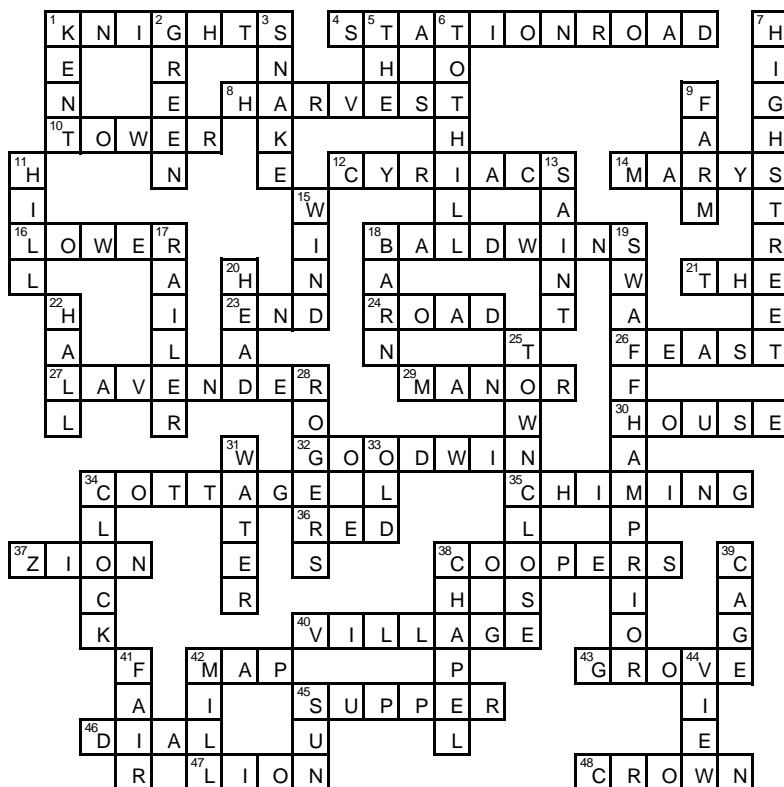
AY Missus Doe / Says now you know (5)

AZ Hey no (5)

BA Tinman, Lion and Scarecrow ilk / I expect they'll sour the milk (6)

BB Rub a do (6)

Answers to Crier Crossword No 1



Yes, of course, this crossword was all about Swaffham Prior! Points (SW — point of the compass) to a (A) very loud (FF) pig (HAM) before (PRIOR). We told you they were dastardly clues! Congratulations to runners-up Robin “That crossword was a **!” Scovil and Chris Charrington, who writes:

Great fun, though as a non-native, I have to admit to some guesses I hope we have another one soon!

But the only people to get things entirely right were.....

Bob and Julie Nunn

Congratulations, Bob and Julie, a bottle of plonk is winging your way!

OF BELLS AND EXTENTS

My hands were idly flicking through a book the other day when my eyes lit upon a chapter entitled “E’en Eternity”. The chapter began with a question posed by a ten-year-old ringer from Wiltshire called Peter. He wanted to know how to

get his tower captain to organise the ringing so that he could hear a ‘change’ that had never been rung before.

Now, for those who are wondering what this means, a ‘change’, when applied to the ringing of bells, means a full sequence of all the bells rung once in turn. For our eight bells we might start in the order one, two, three, four, five, six, seven and eight. The first ‘change’ might comprise two, one, four, three, six, five, eight, and seven. Then the next change might be two, four, one, six, eight, five, seven and so on. Each different sequence of the eight bells is called a change: hence the description ‘change ringing’.

For those of us with a mathematical bent, it might be interesting to speculate upon the number of different changes on eight bells there might be. Let’s look at two bells to start with. Clearly there are only two different changes possible one followed by two (1,2) and then two followed by one (2,1). For three bells there are six unique changes (different sequences of three) because for each 1,2 and 2,1 you can take the third bell and put it before between or behind, thus: 312, 132, 123, 321, 231, 213. What about four bells? The answer is 24 changes. The number being derived from multiplying 4 by 3 by 2 by 1. For five bell changes the number is gained by multiplying 5 by 4 by 3 by 2 by 1. This makes 120.

This total number of possible unique sequences on a given number of bells is known as the extent. So the extent on six bells is derived by multiplying 6 by 5 by 4 by 3 by 2 by 1 to get 720. For seven bells the extent is 5,040 and for eight 40,320. It takes us around three and a half seconds to ring all our eight bells. So to ring all the possible unique changes on Swaffham Bulbeck bells would require 40,320 multiplied by three and a half seconds. This adds up to nearly forty hours to ring an ‘extent’ on our bells.

Now there are around 100 towers that have twelve bells so how long do you think it would take to ring an extent on these? The answer is around 34 years! There are towers with sixteen bells (Birmingham) where an extent would take over one million years to ring. So it is highly likely that some of the changes on ten or more bells have never been rung.

Handbell peals are sometimes rung on even higher numbers. An eighteen-handbell extent rung quickly would probably take around 450 million years and a reasonable estimate for a 20- bell extent would be two hundred thousand million years!

To have a chance of ringing this latter extent, the band would need to have started at the time of the ‘Big Bang’ when the Universe came into being. It is however unlikely ever to be completed before the Universe implodes and time comes to an end (if that hypothesis is proven). Another ‘lost peal’.

Bill Blake

Swaffham Bulbeck Tower Captain

(Reproduced with the kind permission of the **Bulbeck Beacon**. We have just six

Cambridge Samaritans urgently needs to increase its number of volunteers offering confidential support by telephone, email or face to face due to demand for the service continually rising. The huge growth in electronic communication has meant that the charity is particularly keen to recruit volunteers who would like to learn how to offer written help on line. The local branch covers Cambridge, Newmarket, Ely, Royston, Haverhill, Saffron Walden, St Ives and St Neots.

The charity is changing the popular image as an emergency service for the suicidal to a lifeline for all kinds of emotional support. Phone lines at Cambridge are open round the clock, 365 days a year. On average, the branch has offered help to 140 people a day over the past 12 months.

For more information about becoming a volunteer at the Cambridge branch call the Freephone recruitment line on 080 298 6004 or you can attend an informal meeting on the first Monday or third Wednesday of the month at 8pm at The Samaritans premises 4 Emmanuel Road, Cambridge.

John

Director of Recruitment



Cambridgeshire
County Council

A Celebration of Childcare!

This June, the country will be celebrating National Sure Start Month, formerly known as National Childcare Month, a celebration of the high quality childcare offered to children across the country. In Cambridgeshire, the Care & Education Partnership, which is responsible for developing high quality childcare & early years education, is coordinating events around the County. These events are organised by local childminders and childminding groups, pre-schools, day nurseries & out-of-school clubs. The month is divided into themed weeks:

1-8 June: National Day Nurseries Week

7-13 June: Pre-school Playweek

9-15 June: National Childcare Week

14-21 June: National Childminding Week

23-30 June: Kids' Clubs Week

To find out more about events in your local area, call the Care & Education Partnership on 01954 273361 or log on to the national website: www.nationalsurestartmonth.com. For information about childcare & childcare jobs & training in your local area, call Opportunity Links, the Childcare Information Service for Cambridgeshire & Peterborough on 0800 29 89 121.

News from Swaffham Prior Church of England Primary School



During the week of the 24th February the school was successfully inspected. The outcomes reflected what we already know about our school and are due to the commitment and hard work of all staff, the good attitudes and behaviour of the children and the strong parental partnership. Staff know all the children very well and this increases the close-knit nature of our school.

What the school does well:

- ☺ The school provides children with a very good start to their full time education in the reception class.
- ☺ The overall quality of teaching is high; teaching assistants provide very good support and children learn well and make good progress.
- ☺ The provision for pupils' personal development is very good and pupils behave well, develop good attitudes to learning and form very good relationships.
- ☺ Attainment in English in Year 6, in art throughout the school and in information and communication technology in Year 2, is above national expectations.
- ☺ The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and the school is very successful at including all children in its work.
- ☺ The headteacher and the governing body provide very good leadership directed towards improving children's achievements.
- ☺ The school maintains a very close working partnership with parents, who make an important contribution to its work

The areas for development fit into our school development plan and focus on assessment, increasing attainment in science and providing a secure outdoor play area for reception class. I am delighted to share that teaching in all stages of the school was judged as very good.

Easter Egg Bingo

I was told that this event goes back many years to the days when Easter Eggs were a real treat. This year it certainly attended by a very wide age range, all who enjoyed the noisy and fun evening, leaving with far too much chocolate... especially the Jeacocks!!

Community Events

The Dykes End Pub Quiz – 8pm on the last Sunday of each month – is very kindly supporting fundraising for a multimedia projector. Over £80 was raised last month.

Monday 5th May Maypole dancing at Reach Fair

Joanna Lakey

Bottisham, Burwell, Linton Village Colleges

Adult Education

New Courses for the Summer Term

**First Aid at Work 4-Day HSE Approved
RYA Day Skipper 4-Day Intensive
Introducing Childminding Practice
ILEX Level III Professional Diploma in Law
Introduction to Garden Design
Succeed at Gardening
Oriental Cookery
Computing classes at all levels
We also offer a variety of general interest courses**

*Starting week beginning **Tuesday 7th May***

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



BOTTISHAM LIBRARY NEWS

Following the decision by Cambs. Library Service to close Bottisham Library it was agreed at an open meeting on 15th March to take over management of the community library in its present location. Both the Library Service and the Village College are very supportive of this plan. Those involved believe that the excellent premises and local control provide the potential for a service superior to that offered by the Mobile Library; but this can only come about with your support.

Bottisham Community Library Association has been set up to manage the new system and will be constituted as a charity. A business plan is being prepared and was scheduled to be presented to the County Library by the end of April. It is intended that volunteers will be trained in the early summer and the new system will be in place by September at the latest.

As a community we will need to provide volunteers to work in the library, books to extend the stock and some funds. All offers of help, as soon as possible please, to:

Gerry Lockett

Tel: 811236, email: g.lockett@ntlworld.com

We will need books in good condition and in particular paperbacks in the following categories:

- picture books and early readers for young children
- fiction for primary school age children
- general adult fiction
 - biography
- crafts
 - health and fitness
- cookery
 - DIY
- gardening
 - travel

We would like to extend the range of loans available to include: large print books audio books; spoken word cassettes for children and adults; and videos for both children and adults.

If we receive multiple copies of a book, or cannot use donated copies for other reasons, we propose to sell them to raise funds for the library. Any remaining would be given to charity. Please make it very clear at the time of donation if you would prefer your books to be returned.



LADIES CIRCLE

The Ladies Circle met once again at the Baptist Chapel on Monday 24th March for their monthly meeting. Our speaker this month was Jim Neale and Paul Hawes from Burwell who took us back in time to the days of the Burwell & District Buses. We saw a short video about the buses and followed the last journey taken by all the drivers before the buses were 'put to rest'. It was a very sad occasion for everyone as many of us remember travelling to and from work, to the coast, shopping etc on these wonderful buses. We all got to know the drivers and conductors personally and received such a friendly service from them all - it has never been the same since, and I am sure we feel that way when we travel on other bus services.

After the video we looked through some of the archive books about the War Memorial and weddings at Burwell Church and the Baptist Church, but I think the most fascinating book of all was the school book when many of us saw photographs of our school days and how we looked all those years ago and of course all our friends as well. We had quite a laugh reminiscing back and found we just could not put the books away as they were so interesting.

Jim and Paul also told us how they had travelled far and wide to obtain information regarding the war memorial and were now managing to get photographs of the men whose names appear on the memorial so that they now have pictures instead of just names. It was amazing how, when visiting war graves in France and other countries that by just leaving messages on the grave stones requesting information about that person they would receive information/

photographs etc in return. It was very fascinating and I am sure very rewarding for both Jim and Paul.

I am sure that along with other members this evening was one of the most interesting we have had. However, we still have many more interesting speakers arranged for the rest of the year so why not come along and join us and see for yourself.

Sandra Butcher



WI Notes

Pots and Pans was the title of the talk given to the W.I. in April by Mr.Keith Goodwin.

Keith has been in catering all his working life and for the last six years has been Head Chef at Wimpole Hall. He brought along a large selection of old fashioned kitchen gadgets, some of them most unusual - Victorian dishcloth holders, a knife for opening oysters, sugar crushers etc. etc. Occasionally a voice in the audience said “my mother had one of those”. When it came to “I’ve got one of those” that’s when we really felt old!

Before the National Trust took over Wimpole Hall in the 1970s it was owned by a relative of Rudyard Kipling, so Keith felt it appropriate to end his talk by reading the following:

If you can bake a cake when all about you
Are watching while theirs hesitate then sink
If you can add some brandy to the mixture
And not take just one surreptitious drink
If you can break an egg with just your left hand
And drop it in the bowl, not on the floor
And then remember was it one or two eggs
When you come back from answering the door
If you can pipe your child in birthday icing
And not miss out one letter of its name
If you can meet with fondant and fudge topping
And treat these two impastos just the same
If you can do these things then in cake baking
You’re probably no tenderfoot or stripling
You’re probably a bloody great big factory
Which goes beneath the name of Mr.Kipling.

(With acknowledgement to Mr.Richard Stilgoe)

Our next meeting will be on Monday 19th May when our President, Pat Airey, will tell us about one of her exotic holidays.

Betty Prime



GARDEN CLUB

A Brief Look at Wicken Fen.

This was a fascinating lecture on one of the most important surviving areas of Wetland in Western Europe. This special reserve, in an intensive agricultural region, once known as the Great Fen of East Anglia.

The life blood of the reserve, running through the centre, is Wicken Lode (canal), one of the ancient man-made waterways. These lodes run from Fen edge villages on the chalk upland, to the river Cam, providing waterborne access to major markets like Cambridge. Ditches and drains dissect Sedge Fen, providing varying habitats for particular species. Dragonflies prefer open water, whilst Reed Warblers favour reed-fringed districts. Chemicals are banned. Success stories include the increase of the Bearded Tit and Marsh Harriers. Cautious optimism on the future of the Bittern. (only 25 pairs in the UK) - two are at Wicken. The expansion of the reed beds will hopefully encourage their numbers. The fragile ecosystem is sadly illustrated by the Swallowtail Butterfly. It has become extinct here. This caterpillars' sole plant food, the Milk Parsley, needs moisture in May and June, but past drying-out of the Fens has cut this food source.

I have not dwelt at all on the harvesting of the Sedge, past or present. Visitors to the William Thorpe building will absorb the history. It was named in honour of a Cambridge academic who prevented the draining of Sedge Fen and its proposed use as a bombing range. There is a close relationship between the Fen staff and the University, who also contribute to the upkeep.

The future is exciting. The local density of housing development requires a "green lung". The latest acquisition of land in Burwell will contribute to the spread of the Fen with the chalk ridge on one side and the River Cam on the other.

Read Eric Ennion's charmingly illustrated account of Adventurer's Fen written in 1942. Hopefully, the expanded Wicken Fen will resemble the wet lands of then. Visitors to the Fen will be most welcome. See the real character of the Fens.

Garden Club will be visiting the Pen on Tuesday, June 17th. Please ring Roger Cannon, 742182, if you would like to join the group.

A Plant Stall will be held on May 10th. Please let Betty Prime have your plants. Thank you.

The next meeting will be our visit to the Cambridge Botanic Gardens on May 20th. Names to Roger (742182) by May 1st.

Tricia Harrison



STAINE HUNDRED

The speaker at the April meeting, Mrs S. Pearl, was dressed in a long skirt, calico apron, shawl and straw hat like the photograph she had of one of her ancestors (1837-1921) who had been a straw plaiter. Straw plaiting began in Tuscany in Italy in the 14th century, spread into Switzerland, then into Austria and the Black Forest area but did not reach Great Britain until the 17th century. The main centre began at Dunstable but transferred to Luton in 1820. This covered much of Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, and Buckinghamshire (including Caxton and the Gransdens in Cambridgeshire) which together provided 80% of the straw plaiting. A secondary centre sprung up around Gosfield Hall in Essex in 1790 started by the 1st Marquis of Buckingham, and spread to parts of Suffolk and Linton, following the collapse of the spinning industry. This accounted for the remaining 20% of the industry, which in those areas was second only to agriculture in importance.

In the early 19th century, straw plaiting was high fashion and was used for waistcoats, belts, handbags, as well as hats, and demand grew as there was an embargo on importing Italian straw and hats during the Napoleonic Wars. An unknown French prisoner of war invented a device which could split a straw into 5, 7 or 11 strips and this enabled much finer straw plaits. At first the plaits had to be sewn together manually but in 1860 a machine was invented to stitch the plaits together. Straw plaiting was carried out by the mother and children, who together could make as much money as the husband, but the work was seasonal from February to April. It was said that the best age to teach a child to plait was 4 years old, and Mrs Pearl said she taught her daughter to plait at that age! By working long hours, a family would still only be able to plait enough for about two hats in one week. Sometimes they would take the straw plaits to the local market where they could sell their work and buy suitable straw but there were also plaitmen who came and called on the housewives while their husbands were at work, leading to the occasional scandal!

However around 1870, the industry collapsed, partly because more children were going to school, partly because the high fashion for straw had passed, but mainly because straw plaits started to pour in from China, and from 1891 also from Japan. Although straw hats are still made in this country, most of the plaits come from China or the Far East today. it was the last industry in this country to employ child labour.

Mrs Pearl encouraged everyone to try their hand at the Dunstable plait using 7 straws. "Under one and over two, pull it tight and that's that" was the chant of the children as they learnt to plait.

The next meeting on May 14th will be at the County Record Office.

Peggy Day



East Cambs, along with our partners at the County Council and Huntingdonshire District Council, have secured Beacon Council status for the ground-breaking 'East Cambs On-Line' Initiative. Cllr Hazel Williams and Ray Harding attended the awards ceremony and were presented with the Certificate from Nick Rainsford MP, the Minister with responsibility for Local Government. The Minister said: "In promoting greater social inclusion in the tiny isolated communities across its rural district through its East Cambs On-Line internet training access points set up in pubs, church rooms and village halls, East Cambs has provided a shining beacon for other local authorities on how enthusiasm, teamwork and dedication can achieve great success."

The ECDC district-wide bid to introduce a wireless broadband service across virtually the whole of East Cambridgeshire passed the first hurdle after EEDA endorsed the Council's first stage application and invited us to submit a detailed second stage bid. If successful this bid will allow us to subsidise the cost of setting up broadband provision across the district. It will also fund a Broadband Activator to stimulate demand and raise awareness amongst residents and small businesses. It will allow us to provide a special low cost connection and monthly charge for targeted socially excluded groups. There will also be a Community Web site and the development of an East Cambs Network and local networks to make full use of broadband.

The Housing Service held an event recently to look at the needs of homeless people in the district. Over 30 delegates attended from a wide range of organisations including probation, Wintercomfort, social services, housing associations, local solicitors, drug and alcohol and mental health services. The current and future levels of homelessness were discussed and a range of workshops considered the housing and support needs of five groups of people including those fleeing domestic violence, young people and substance mis-users. Conclusions from the day will feed into the Council's Review of Homelessness and emerging Strategy.

Last month 7 refuse trucks at the Council's Depot had their fuel tanks stolen. This caused delays in collection of rubbish early in the first week of April. But thanks to the quick reactions of the Waste Team, and the help from Camden Council, who lent vehicles to Cleanaway, the refuse service continued without too much disruption.

Charlotte Cane



A new financial year has just started so, as usual, there are changes including left-overs from last year and beginnings of this one.

On the **Transport** side there is a draft new Local Transport Plan (LTP) to be completed by July. On the way everyone will be entitled to contribute their views and a leaflet to help them will be delivered to every door within the next month or so. A “corridor” approach will be followed and I take this to mean that Cambridge to Newmarket via our fen fringe villages will be one of them. Subjects covered will include bus services, walking, cycling and road maintenance schemes.

Meanwhile, I am “badgering” officers to complete or initiate work as follows:

- Interactive speed limit signs along **Mill Hill, Swaffham Prior**.
- Changes to the bend between **Swaffham Bulbeck and Longmeadow** to make it safer for all, including drivers, walkers, cyclists and horse riders.
- A pedestrian crossing on **Ness Road, Burwell**.
- A lit bollard on the Quay end of the red stripe crossing the **Bell Road** junction on the A1303, Bottisham. (Maybe that will discourage impatient drivers from overtaking vehicles turning left into Bell Road?!)

Slightly further afield there are two relief measures that will take a few years to affect us.

The first is that the Government has agreed to spend £490 million on **upgrading the A14**. The greatest change will be dual 3 lane carriageways between Girton and Conington and then branching off to avoid Huntingdon by a new road, also 3 lane each way as far as the A1 south of Brampton. There will also be a “local” parallel road to the A14 Girton — Conington to serve local traffic not wanting to use the main near-motorway-standard A14 road adjacent. There will also be A14 road widening from Girton to the Fen Ditton / Waterbeach turn. All several years off, I am afraid.

The second even more local improvement is the **Fordham By-Pass** which has been long in its controversial journey through the County, East Cambs District and Parish Councils to reach the point of now going ahead at the cost of about £12 million. It will run from the Soham southern roundabout crossing the B1102 and ending just north of Turners on the Newmarket road A142. I guess that will need 2-3 years to build and open.

Overarching everything else I have mentioned so far is the good news that the Cambs **road casualty record** for fatal or serious injuries continues to reduce. There were 71 fatal and 491 serious accidents in 2000, compared with 52 fatal and 460 serious in 2002, the lowest ever. All this has happened inspite of continuous traffic growth on the county’s roads.

One other change of importance is that the County has just appointed from June a **new Chief Executive** to take the place of Alan Barnish. Ian Stewart is the existing chief of Bradford Metropolitan District and has a colourful past as a professional footballer, including Secretary of the Scottish Professional Football Managers and Coaches Association. Ian Stewart says his first goal is to “deliver the best quality of life and prosperity for the citizens and businesses of Cambridgeshire”.

James Fitch

Notes from the Parish Council October Meeting

Mr Trevor Jones chaired the meeting with 6 members and 3 members of the Public.

Reports:

Councillor Fitch reported to the meeting.

Councillor Cane reported to the meeting.

Matters Arising.

Quality Status for Parish Councils. Information sheets had been circulated to all members for their consideration. Following discussion, it was agreed to carry this forward to the next Parish Council meeting.

Suggestions for Agenda – Annual Village Assembly.

The Speed Watch Project will be included on the Agenda. A notice will be put in the Crier, inviting people to put forward any subject they would like to be included.

Village Maintenance - update:

a) *Bus Shelter. Re-painting, etc., will be carried out by the end of April.*

b) *Play Area Fencing. The fencing has been repaired.*

c) *Cemetery Noticeboard. Steve Maynard is to be asked to re-varnish and tidy this noticeboard.*

d) *Seat by Village Sign on Cage Hill. It was reported by the Clerk that this seat had been broken from its concrete base. In order to make the seat secure and safe, Andy Martin will be asked to carry out repair works ASAP.*

Barston Drove – update: *ECDC cleared away a lot of the rubbish that had been dumped. A Community Services team will be clearing vegetation, etc., shortly. The problem of rabbit infestation can then be dealt with.*

2002/2003 Accounts for Review: A summary was circulated to all for consideration and discussions. It was noted that the budget for 2002/2003 had been exceeded by approximately £3,000 due to the costs incurred moving the travellers from the Recreation Ground and the cleaning up work that followed.

Speed Watch Campaign – update: A further meeting of interested parties was held on the 27th March 2003. A survey was carried out under the guidance of CCC. Responses will be considered by CCC and further action agreed at the next meeting on the 16th April 2003.

Repair of Wall at The Beeches: CCC Rights of Way Department had investigated the ownership of this further and informed the P.C. that CCC are definitely not responsible for the upkeep of this wall. This matter has been ongoing for many months and it was agreed that Hereward Housing would now be asked to repair the wall as a matter of urgency and negotiate any payment for the work with CCC & ECDC.

New Play Equipment for Play Area. The purchase of new play equipment had been put on hold due to the unforeseen costs incurred with clearing the Recreation Ground, as noted above. It was agreed that estimates previously obtained should be updated and the possibility of new equipment once again looked into. The Clerk will contact suppliers, etc., for updated costs.

Correspondence Received:

CCC:

Full copy of “Proof of Evidence” for Appeal re “The Deposit & Storage of Waste Materials” at Whiteway Drove.

ECDC:

Further info re District Bid for Broadband.

Urban Capacity Study.

Election Notices for display for both Parish & District

General:

School newsletters.

Histon Sector Police Newsletter & Crime Figures.

Hereward Housing – details of “Homebuy Scheme”.

Cambridgeshire ACRE – Village of The Year 2003.

Accounts for Payment: These were agreed.

Planning

Application: Land adjacent Gant Farm, Swaffham Prior Fen – *erection of stables for private use.* There were no objections to this application.

Approval: 28 Green Head Road – *Two storey extension.*

Any Other Business:

Traffic Calming Measures – Mill Hill. *It was reported* that the interactive signs are on order and will be installed in due course.

Fencing between School Playground & Village Hall. The Clerk had been asked to clarify with the P.C. the ownership of this fence. The meeting confirmed that this fencing is the responsibility of the School. The trees on the Village Hall side of this fence are the responsibility of the P.C.

The next Parish Council meeting will be on Thursday, 8th May, 2003 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

Karen King, Clerk of the Parish Council

**Précis of Report from Swaffham Prior with Reach
Easter Vestry Meeting and
Annual Parochial Church Council Meeting
held on Monday, March 24 at 7.30.p.m.**

Thank you to all those who kindly attended. John Norris chaired the meeting. Anyone who wishes to read the full report is most welcome, and can telephone me on 742850 or collect it from church.

This was the final collective meeting of our two parishes. We wish Reach every success in their grouping with Burwell. It all sounds very positive, exciting and rewarding. Deservedly so.

The Church Wardens for 2003/2004 are Carolyn Cazenove and Francis Reeks (who has taken over from John Norris). John was warmly thanked for his tireless and unstinting work. An interregnum is a very busy time in that a good deal of planning is required for the weekly life of the church; added to that are baptisms, funerals, weddings etc.

Jenny Moseley, after 8 years as Church secretary, is standing down: brilliant and very hard working on all the complexities of faculties, letters, and so on.

Can I just say thank you here to all those people who help the Church in so different ways. I dare not mention names for fear of leaving some out, but you all know who you are; including David Almond who kindly supplies the daffodils for Mothering Sunday every year.

It would be nice for us as a Church to be able to look outwards more. But we are always having to worry about our bills. The daily housekeeping bills, e.g. heating, electricity, etc. are £60 a day. If you do not wish to attend, but are delighted by the building in your village and/or are glad that it is there for baptisms, etc would you consider either committing to a regular envelope giving, no matter how small, or even a bequest in your will, for future generations? The treasurer Michael Cazenove, or the Church Wardens would be delighted to hear from you. Two big projects will be tackled this year, namely a lavatory and, using Jan Petersen's £200 towards a sound system for our wonderful children's service. Perhaps you would care to help in these specific matters?

Our new Vicar, David Lewis, will be inducted on June 10th at 7:30pm in the Parish Church of The Holy Trinity, Bottisham. All are welcome.

Finally, can I just thank all those who come and support our fund raising events; over a £1000 in the first three months of 2003 alone.

Tricia Harrison



St Mary's Church, Swaffham Prior

Services May 2003

<i>EASTER 2</i> Sun 4th	11:00am Parish Communion
<i>EASTER 3</i> Sun 11th	8:00am Holy Communion 11:00am Family Service
<i>EASTER 4</i> Sun 18th	11:00am Parish Communion
<i>EASTER 5</i> Sun 25th	11:00am Mattins

Please note that sadly Cambridge Voices are unable to sing here this year on Good Friday, May 5 or May 25 bank holidays.

Roman Catholic Church, Newmarket Parish

Masses: Newmarket: Sat 1830; Sun 0900, 1030, 1830;

Kirtling: Sun 0930;

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

From John Morrill, Deacon to the Roman Catholic Community

I did not want to write about Easter after the event, but I write this in Holy Week and my head is just so full of thoughts of the wonders of Easter, that, as Martin Luther once said, 'Here I stand. I can do no other'. It is the only thing I can think about! And since Easter Season extends for the 40 days after Easter Sunday up to the Feast of the Ascension, I can just about justify a real good old-fashioned Easter Homily! My head is full of thoughts of the sufferings of the world and of the death of Jesus 2000 years ago, an outcast from his own community, themselves the victims of military occupation and brutal subjugation by a remote Empire. He was abandoned by most of his friends, betrayed by one of them: how can this be the cause of so much hope. I am in the midst of praying through the roller-coaster of Holy Week. It began on Palm Sunday, when we recalled the deliriously happy crowds welcoming Jesus to Jerusalem riding not on a great arab stallion but a humble donkey, a beast of burden. It continues today, Maundy Thursday, as we recall Jesus's last meal with his disciples in which he promised

to be there with them and for them whenever they broke bread in his name, and Fr Paul, Fr John and I will be washing the feet of 12 members of the congregation (as Jesus washed his disciples' feet) to demonstrate that we are all called to serve and not be served. Those called to ministry need above all to show that they are servants not Lords. Tomorrow, we will journey in mind and ritual through the Passion and Death and Jesus – with those themes of betrayal, desertion, callousness, torture, humiliation, shameful death. And then, after nightfall on Saturday, in a Church completely silent and dark, a candle into which five 'wounds' have been inscribed in memory of the wounds of Christ, will be solemnly carried and we will explore the mystery of the Resurrection and six young people will be anointed and incorporated as full members of our church. It will be a wonderful climax, for Jesus's last words after his resurrection were a call on all who believed in him to go forth and make believers in and from all nations. In Jesus we believe that God became Man, experienced all that is to be a man, including all the hatred, envy and anger of the world: he took it on himself and by conquering death he invites us to share that death to death that life beyond life. God shared our human existence so that we could share in his divine presence. I say all this because of the importance of seeing the week as a whole. To celebrate the joy Easter without entering into the agony of Good Friday seems very odd to me. A Resurrection that does not connect to the evidence of God's experiencing the human condition, identifying himself with the oppressed, the vulnerable, the powerless, the abandoned, the prisoner, the tortured, the hurting is a fairly meaningless triumph. So that is why I am treating the week as a whole and encourage all those to whom these words have meaning to think of doing likewise in years to come. The events of those three days in the life of Jesus, the Son of God, are the foundation of everything that brings any sense of meaning or purpose to my life. So like Martin Luther, I repeat. 'here I stand, I can do no other'. A few months ago I have promised a second column on pubs and beer (the first having aroused curiosity and controversy). It is still brewing in my mind, so to speak. It will be written eventually. Meanwhile Happy Eastertide!

Personal Assistant required to help run disabled household and garden. 12 1/2 hours per week in total, ideally divided between 2-3 people. Work may be tailored to particular skills.

Hours of work 10.30am—12.30pm weekdays and occasionally Wednesday afternoons. Pay **£7.50** net per hour.

Occasional Helpers also welcome, as are people with DIY skills.

For more information phone: 01223 812363

Dates for Your Diary - May 2003

Thu	1	District Council Elections, 8am-9pm, VH
Mon	5	Reach Fair, 12 noon —5 pm.
Wed	7	VHMC AGM, 8pm, VH
Thu	8	PC Meeting, VH, 7.30pm
Sat	10	Village Feast, 2pm, VH
Sun	11	Family Service, 11am, St Mary's
Tue	13	Mobile Library, Cage Hill 2:40-3:30, Chapel 3:35-4:00pm
Wed	14	Crier Copy Deadline Staine Hundred at the County Record Office
Thu	15	Bottisham Players, Beyond a Joke, 7.45, BVC
Fri	16	Bottisham Players
Sat	17	Bottisham Players
Sun	18	
Mon	19	WI, Exotic Holiday!, VH
Tue	20	VG, Visit to Cambridge Botanic Gardens
Wed	21	
Thu	22	Crier Collating, Village Hall, 2:30pm
Mon	26	Ladies Circle, Baptist Chapel
Tues	27	Mobile Library, Cage Hill 2:40-3:30, Chapel 3:35-4:00pm
Wed	28	
Weekly Events		
Sun		11am, Boules, VH Car park
Tue		Jamsing, 10-10.45 (0-18mnths), 11-11.45 (18-38mnths), VH Water Colour For Beginners, 1- 4pm VH 7-8.30pm, Youth Club, Youth Club Hut
Wed		Messy Play, 2.30-3.15, VH Cubs, Village School, 6.30-8:00pm.
Thu		2.30-3.30, Baby & Toddler Group, VH 2.30-4.30pm VH Teas. 7-8.30pm Karate, VH. 7-10pm, Youth Club, Youth Club Hut