



The Swaffham Crier

Volume 28 Number 12

December 2004



Editorial



'Tis the Season to be Miserable

(MERRY surely? Shome mixshup?! —Other Ed)

Tra-la-la-la-laa

Depressed and Blue!

But here's the **Crier** Quite Irrepressible,

Tra-la-la-la-laa

With News For You!

Bumper Crossword...

...but no gossip column.

Bumper Pictures...

We did hire a gossip columnist, only to find....

Reporters and...

...the gossip was all about the Editors!!

....Columnists....

Trumped up, of course, if not to say...

Old and New!

Who'll write for Next Year's Edition?

..entirely untrue, and anyway, we would **never**...

Tra-la-la-la-laa

Speak to each other like that, and anyway...

We hope it's **YOU!!!**

it's CENSORED!

**WISHING ALL OUR READERS A
VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS!!**

From all the Crier Team

*Caroline and James Matheson, Mike Philips and
Ruth Stinton*

PS. COPY DATE 10 December!

Cover Picture: Robin outside The Allix Arms, Clive Riggs



CONTENTS

Letters	2
Carols at the VH	2
Christmas Holly	3
Boxing Day Hockey	3
Christmas Holly	3
Our Reporter	4
Carol Practice!	5
Holly, Christmas Decorations and Tea	5
Travelling Nativity	6
St Mary's Concert	6
Crier Profile: Marcia Miller and the Manor Turkeys	7
Christmas Services	10
Lantern Walk	11
CROSSWORD	12
BUNNY MANIA	16
Pre-Christmas Drinks Party	18
Clive Riggs Exhibition	18
School News	18
WI	19
Village Gardeners	19
Reading Group	20
VH News	20
Staine Hundred	23
James Fitch	24
Christmas Cards Correction	25
CAMTAD Training	25
PC Notes	26
Jazz Work Out	27
Church News: Angels with Dusters, Free Passes to Ely Cathedral, St Mary's Gift Day	29
Church Services	30
David Lewis	30
Diary	32
SITUATIONS REQUIRED	
Child Minder	29
FOR SALE	
Canon Camera	29



Letters to the Editors



Dear Editors,

I have recently purchased a copy of the Swaffham Prior 2005 calendar from Swaffham Bulbeck shop, which I was very impressed with. The locations were very well thought out but I was sad to see no photograph of Zion Baptist Chapel. I know the Chapel is not in use now but it has been a feature of Swaffham Prior for many, many years and it would have been nice to see it included in the photographs.

Sandra Butcher

Dear Editors

Aren't you just great? You give the Village Hall a handsome cheque for collating in the Hall and yet you provide us with a superb free outlet for publicising our fund raising events. What a magazine! What fun the *Crier* offers! And what an invaluable service and local event promoter it is. Would the village be the same without it?

Alastair Everitt

Why **thank-you**, Alastair, Chieftain of Clan Village Hall Committee, and Clan Crier would like to take this opportunity to apologise for any previous misunderstandings — viz. our saying the new village hall would be a flop when it turned out to be a great success!—but will this new accord enable us to display our trophies on VH walls, we wonder? Eds

CAROLS AT THE VILLAGE HALL

Please come and join us for the traditional singing of carols at the Village Hall. This year we are doing something new and holding it within the Village Hall though if any traditionalists feel this may be a mistake then carol sheets and torches will be supplied so that they can sing outside.

The Cocky Fruit Tale and Bad, Bad Shepherds Band

provides the music

HILARY SAGE

*(Eat your heart out Joyce Grenfell as you
were never offered this opportunity)*

controls the evening

The Village Hall Management Committee

provides the mince pies and the punch

Kind Parents

provide the Scouts and Cubs



So please come, it's a nice event, and all are welcome
WEDNESDAY 15TH DECEMBER at 7.00pm



HOLLY HOLLY HOLLY

Do you know how local prices compare?

*Do you plan to pay good money
for two or three tired sprigs of holly
from Newmarket or Cambridge Markets?*

**Why not pay £2.50 for a fine bunch,
picked in the village,
sold in aid of local church and flower funds?**



**We shall be selling holly at Anglesey House
(white gates next to the churchyard) on:
Saturday December 11th
Sunday December 12th
from 12.00 – 1.00**



Please phone 742974 if you would like
to buy holly before then or
to order it to collect nearer to Christmas.

We shall do our best to help you.

Elisabeth Everitt



HOCKEY ON BOXING DAY MORNING

IT gets more exciting each year. At one time it was easy and we strode home with easy wins. Then Bulbeck began to put their backs into it and we now struggle. Not that we lose – it is just that

last year we did not win.

But we now have a whole new band of players who bring a new power and enthusiasm to the game. If they wish to play again just phone me. If they don't phone it won't matter as I will speak to their agent.

We will also need other hockey players so apart from the usual suspects please get in touch if you would like to play by phoning 742974.

As usual the match will take place on Boxing Day Sunday, on the Denny at Swaffham Bulbeck, at 11.30am. A very good mulled wine is available for a small charge and there will be a collection on behalf of Magpas.

Alastair Everitt

From our Reporter at the Parish Council Meeting

Travellers and Footballers

YES, T and F were among the subjects which came up for discussion, at November's parish council meeting. Travellers down the fen Road are causing problems: Part of the problem seems to be the large number of horses, grazing the road verges where they are tethered. The tethers are too long, and this causes difficulties for traffic, and for local field owners, and for horse riders. It seems that there are disproportionately large numbers of horses in relation to number of vehicles and people



As usual James Fitch of the County Council and Mr. Alderson of the ECDC told us about forthcoming changes in our environment. Marshall's airport is gradually moving-out. The facilities now at Marshall's will probably move elsewhere and one option is a move to airfields at Duxford and Wyton.

A footpath/pavement in Tothill Road which is now in a corrugated state will be dug up and replaced in the spring, at a time when the tree-roots causing the trouble can be severely root-pruned without permanent damage.

The second power-line across the fen will follow the route of the present one. It cannot be concealed or 'landscaped' out-of-sight.



Twinned Pylons

The CCC Social Services Department in general is concerned about the amount of unclaimed benefits to which people are entitled; Citizens Advice Bureaux all over the country are being urged to ask people to claim what is due to them, as this is of an advantage to the benefit-giving bodies also. The more benefits they give out, the more money they themselves get from central government.

It was noted that a new wooden seat is being actively considered to replace the one at the edge of the children's playground. Swaffham Prior Charities has undertaken to pay for it.

An outcome of last month's meeting was noted: Hereward Housing have accepted responsibility for the wall running alongside their property near the Beeches, and will mend it: they will in fact probably demolish the existing wall and start rebuilding from the ground.

Steve Kent-Phillips then reported on his dealings with the Burwell Tigers Football Club, who are hoping to use our playing-field down Station Road as their main base. He explained their plans: pavilion to be built and so on. Permanent goal posts, but the cross-bar removable, and stored away when the ground is not in use. They will provide a secure iron-bar entrance, lockable, and entrance wide enough for an ambulance: there will be an alternative footway entrance, so that Swfftham Prior youngsters can go in and kick a ball about. There will also be an alarm-bell and a householder living nearby has undertaken to phone the police if/when the alarm bell rings. Mr Kent-Phillips and the Tigers seem to have thought of everything. The Tigers visualise this as a long-term commitment. The figure of the rental for the first couple of years was agreed

Holly, Christmas Decorations and Tea Time

HOLLY has been sold from Anglesey House for a number of years and I have always been amazed by the variety of people who come for a bunch. Many who you think would come do not, and others surprisingly do.

There is no pattern to the people who decorate their homes with holly or ivy at Christmas. Age, wealth, literary pretensions, sex, drinking habits, colour of hair, make of car, sporting activity, religious beliefs, etc.— none of these appear to have any influence on the decision to buy a bunch of holly. There are people who are surprised that anyone clutters up the home with the stuff, and others who have always put up the odd sprig or two.

It is the same with tea making. Some people use tea bags and put the teapot in the dishwasher everyday. Others build up a fine tannin within the teapot, only use leaf tea, and reluctantly scour out the pot every nine months or so. Who is right? Probably just a question of taste.



And so it is with newspapers—or so we thought until very recently—that is until *The Times insisted on becoming a tabloid*. To a large extent a choice of newspaper represents not only a sharing of views but also how the readers see themselves. ***The Times has always had a loyal following which is now faced with a dilemma.*** Most of the readers to whom I have spoken don't like the tabloid format yet *The Times* management disregarded their views because the new tabloid format has attracted new readers from a different source. From whence have these new readers come? It won't be from the broadsheets.

Thomas Stuttaford medical journalist of *The Times* is also into circulation and in a November article “**Look after your circulation**” he ends by reminding us that “**Once jeans become waterlogged**, or even damp, they chill rather than warm the body. The fashion for short as opposed to knee-length coats doesn't only result in chilling but also increases the layer of subcutaneous fat so that women develop thick thighs.” Well, who would have thought that!

Alastair Everitt

☆☆

Carol Practice!!

☆☆ COME to St Mary's on Saturday 11 Dec, 5.30pm for an hour's ☆☆
☆☆ *Carol Practice* Christingle on Sunday and the carol season gets going. ☆☆

☆☆ Jo Pumfrey will be teaching you to sing parts (that's soprano — not many ☆☆
☆☆ of those! — contralto, tenor and bass) and if you can already sing this clever ☆☆
☆☆ stuff, then especially come—*pour encourager les autres!!* ☆☆

Caroline Matheson & Jo Pumfrey



☆☆



Travelling Nativity (Posada)

DURING ADVENT, an old Mexican custom uses the idea of people dressed as Mary and Joseph travelling around the villages, knocking at doors to see who will give them hospitality.

In our version of the Mexican celebration, knitted Mary and Joseph figures travel through the villages of Swaffham Prior, Swaffham Bulbeck and Reach. They will stay with a different family each night throughout December until they reach their destination on December 24th. They will then be added to the crib at Swaffham Prior church during the crib service on Christmas Eve.

If you would like Mary and Joseph to stay with your family in December, please contact Mandy Kingsmill (01638 742482).



Don't miss the next

St Mary's Concert

Saturday 5 February 2005

at 7.30 pm in St Mary's Church Swaffham Bulbeck

St Mary's Singers and Players

directed by Martin Gent

programme includes:

Double violin concerto in D minor: J S Bach

Gloria: A Vivaldi

Oh my nation's grieving: Z Kodály

Wine, soft drinks and refreshments

Retiring collection. Proceeds for St Mary's Church Restoration

Crier Profile

Marcia Miller and the Manor Turkeys

Recently retired, for 24 years *Marcia Miller* reared turkeys at Baldwin Manor.

I STUDIED zoology with parasitology at university and in the vacations I worked at the Central Veterinary laboratory in Byfleet. I actually handled turkeys for the first time in those days! So I was used to turkeys and being with them.

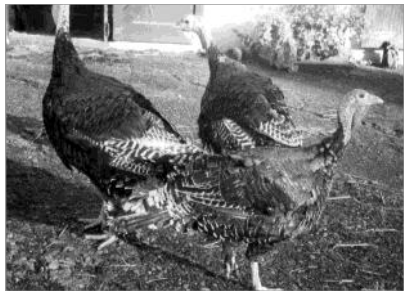
When we bought the house in '78 we had all these empty outbuildings – Mrs Menzies-Kitchen who lived here before had kept horses everywhere! The big turkey barn was divided up into stables. She even kept a Shetland pony, I'm told, where we keep our deep freezes at the moment. It seemed so quiet because I used to work in veterinary research. I had hens, and cats of course, but I just wanted to have something else. A friend of ours said, well, why don't you keep turkeys? With these deep litter systems you only have to muck them out once a year...well, you know...after they've gone! You just put fresh straw down every day. My husband was President of the Churchill College Boat Club and most of the First Boat would come, with a *very* good lunch promised to them - once, they demolished a 17lb fore-rib roast - and barrow this stuff out, it was better than any circuit training! – it all got done in a morning with five hefty lads, and we carted them all back to college after lunch in the Landrover.



Baldwin Manor in the snow

We started off by delivering the birds house to house but as the numbers increased it became impossible – John was spending two whole days running around in the rain and the snow sometimes. Then, customers living near Cambridge used to pick them up from Churchill College. 11 o'clock, on the 22nd in the Fellow's car park – everybody, all the dons or their wives, even the Vice-Chancellor would be there to pick up their turkeys. People near the village would collect them from me here.

Then my husband retired and we didn't really feel we could call on these chaps to muck out the turkeys. So that was one thing. The others reasons.. it became more and more difficult to get the pluckers. That was a good bit, that I miss – having the pluckers round at Christmas time. I used to learn quite a lot about the village from the banter that was going on! Lots of people have come over the years. Even Bob Sheldrick came donkey's years ago...Reg Webb – he was the mainstay. I felt without Reg things would come apart, because Reg and Peter Taylor used to do the killing,



and they were really skilled, and it was all very quick and beautifully done. We used to do it in two – well, it could be done in one if it fell on the right day and didn't clash with somebody's bowls... Paul Murfitt, the milkman – I don't know when he slept. He'd leave here at ten-thirty and be doing the milk again at four. Bryn Fitchet – he worked with wood veneers but had done some



butchering, came did it for me in more recent years. Peter Sergeant would be doing the lifting and the legging...his younger brother Dan came too. Kim Sheldrick used to help me out a lot as well. One day I picked one up - to dust it, dose it, do something to it, and it did a flap - and I lost one of my earrings - you couldn't see it in the colour of the straw. We could not find it - then we got Graham Jackson - one of Kim's friends to come and eventually he did, with his metal detector.

Bob Sheldrick was fantastic over the years - he worked for us and helped us in the garden and did everything that needed to be done... he used to get rid of all the cobwebs in the roof of the barn...the sun used to come streaming in here and so they used to all sit and gently change places until they'd all had a good sit in the sun...you could watch them changing spaces! These are their toys ... (indicates CD's hanging on strings) - got to have their toys - they love the glint, peck them, and jump up to them. And there's the boxes... big cardboard boxes from Tesco that had had tomatoes in, they'd compete to stand on the box and they'd peck at the pictures of the tomatoes until they'd demolished the box. They loved that.

They aren't noisy - no, they'd be as quiet as mice, at least, they'd talk to each other the whole time, little warps and things, but if somebody drove into the yard they'd get excited... Somebody drove into the yard and dumped a skip - Clanggg! - and they'd all (she does unwritedownable excited turkey impressions here) you can tell when they're getting a little bit older because they're making that noise - when they're small they're just beep, beep, beep. We used to go and collect them from Attleborough poultry farms in the back of the Landrover, and we carted them in cardboard boxes with holes in till we realised it was much easier to get them to deliver them to us. It was always hot days in August, and harvest was on...nice fresh straw, straight off the fields...barley straw was always best. We only had them four months of the year - and you couldn't go on holiday then - you know, between August and Christmas we were *here* - and my back didn't like it, towards the end. You try lifting a turkey sack! They had four swinging hoppers and the feed had to be tipped in.

When we got them from the poultry farm in Attleborough they'd be about the size of a grapefruit with legs. They breed birds of different sizes, there were the Attleborough Small Whites, the Wolds, the Wold Golds and then the Supers. You have to have a bit of a scatter - one year I had about fifteen or twenty birds that were heading for thirty pounds, - dressed! - I knew I'd never sell them. I had to take them down to Fabish's butcher's in Mill Road - at a rock bottom price, but I had to get rid of them!

During the war this place was used, I'm told, as a place for difficult children. Ones that couldn't be placed as evacuees. Certainly just before the end, towards D-Day, this was a special ops unit. Quite a lot of old boys have come knocking on my



door - we had a stream of people, years ago, saying, 'I used to live here!' One said there were armoured cars out on the orchard at the back of Christopher's house...very difficult to try to imagine it; but we have found bits of communications equipment in the woods - sort of big ceramic

blocks and wire...

The house..it's about 1490, 1500 at that end the far corner is about a hundred years younger. The farm buildings...about 1700. There was a lot of work done down here then. There used to be an old farmyard in the garden - we've got pen drawings of it. Frank Riggs was always interested in researching the history of the churches - whenever he came across a bit about Baldwin Manor, he'd put that down



for our interest. So we've gathered a few little bits about it here and there over the years. There's always been a lot of activity down here because geologically, we're just about on the 'spring line'. The 'hard' rock - (clunch) outcrops halfway up our field. We've got a well just outside the back door. I remember old Mr Sheldrick he had a well in his back garden up there, he showed it to me - listen, he says, lobbing a brick down it: it took a long time to hit the bottom! It's because it's up on a hill - it's a lot further down to get to the water. Here it's only fifteen feet - a lot of rain and the cellar floods. It just comes up about a foot - only because the whole water table rises. Three years after we came here it flooded for the first time, and it was as clear as a bell, clean sweet water - so clear I stepped off the bottom step into the water - I did get a shock.

I've had a variety of butchers over the years - I had one chap for years and years, tattoos and goodness knows what, he was quite a character, but one year he didn't come, and didn't say anything about it; he said don't worry, I'll never let you down - but I couldn't raise him on the telephone - he was quite clearly avoiding me. Turned out his son had won the lottery to the tune of three million - last thing he needed was a job butchering turkeys!

They were nice turkeys. Hand plucking makes such a difference. Machine plucking bruises the breast...The little ones might look at you a bit and peck at your wellie, though not much else. The last year they sent me three big Bronze turkeys I hadn't asked for. They were nice people. They were real characters. I had to go and make the coffee when they were killing those.

We had an RSPCA man down here once. That was entertaining! I came home and there was a van in the yard. I thought, RSPCA, what's going on? I said hello - Nice young man. He said, we've had a call, that you keep turkeys. I said (laughs) yes, you can see I do! Well, he said, I thought I'd better make sure she's keeping her turkeys properly. I said: they are the most *spoiled* turkeys in the whole of East Anglia - come and have a look! Anyway, he was perfectly happy.

I miss the camaraderie of the plucking shed. They'd have permanent tea or coffee on tap - I used to make rock buns and cakes...Mince pies on the last day, when we used to settle up our accounts.. It was quite fun. Reg - one year he came - he always wore a hat of some sort, and this time he came with it adorned with tinsel, and baubles, and bits of holly - it was his Christmas hat, he said.

Mark Lewinski

From an interview with Marcia Miller



Christmas Services



THE LIGHT OF LOVE CHRISTINGLE

Join us as we celebrate Jesus Christ, the light of the world, whose love shines in the darkest depths. Each child is given a traditional Christingle.

Sunday 5th December

St. Mary's Church, Swaffham Bulbeck	9.30am
Holy Trinity Church, Bottisham:	4.00pm

Sunday 12th December

St. Mary's Church, Quay	9.30am
St. Mary's Church, Swaffham Prior	11.00am
St. James Church, Lode	4.00pm

CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT

A celebration of the Christmas story in words and carols
on

Sunday 19th December

St. James Church, Lode	3.00pm
St. Mary's Church, Quay	3.00pm
Holy Trinity Church, Bottisham:	6.30pm
St. Mary's Church, Swaffham Bulbeck	6.30pm
St. Mary's Church, Swaffham Prior:	6.30pm



CAROLS AROUND THE CRIB

A celebration of Christmas in words and Carols
for all the Family

4.00pm on Christmas Eve in

St. James', Lode
St. Mary's, Quay
Holy Trinity, Bottisham
St. Mary's, Swaffham Bulbeck
St. Mary's, Swaffham Prior



“Lantern walk” (Lanternelauf) in Swaffham Prior

FIRST of all a big THANK YOU to all who came along and joined us. So what was it all about?

A German tradition brought to Swaffham Prior. In Germany on the evening of the 11th November the children walk with their lanterns through the streets singing. And why are they doing this? It is to remember a Roman Knight called Saint Martin who was travelling through Hungary. He cut his coat into half with a sword and gave one half to a poor man to stop him from being cold, and also shared his bread with this man. Where do the lanterns come in? Martin liked helping other people and continued to be very good man and helped the people. They liked him and wanted him to become their bishop. Being unsure, he was scared and ran away and hid in a stable where lots of geese lived. The people searched for Martin with their lanterns in the dark night, and because the geese made so much noise they found him and he became their bishop

after all. That is briefly the story behind it.

I remember it as a very exciting event when I was little. So being German with two little children, with one just starting at school, I was wondering if there is any interest in following up on this tradition. The class teacher Mrs Jackson was very interested and we had a whole

morning of making lanterns, painting geese and making pretzles, which I think the children enjoyed very much.

The children and parents were invited to come along in the evening to do a “Lantern walk”. About 10 children and their Mums and Dads turned up . Much more than we were hoping for. The lanterns looked beautiful in the dark. We were walking up and down the High Street singing, or better trying to sing (a bit of a language problem there) That’s where you might have spotted us, wondering what’s going on. Our little son managed to set light to his lantern and it was gone in no time (That all belongs to a real Martin’s day!). Some came back to our house to warm up with a bit of mulled wine and “Kinderpunch”.

So all in all I think it was quite a success. Most of all I think the children enjoyed the whole thing. We might do it again next year.

Sabine



Crossword Number 17

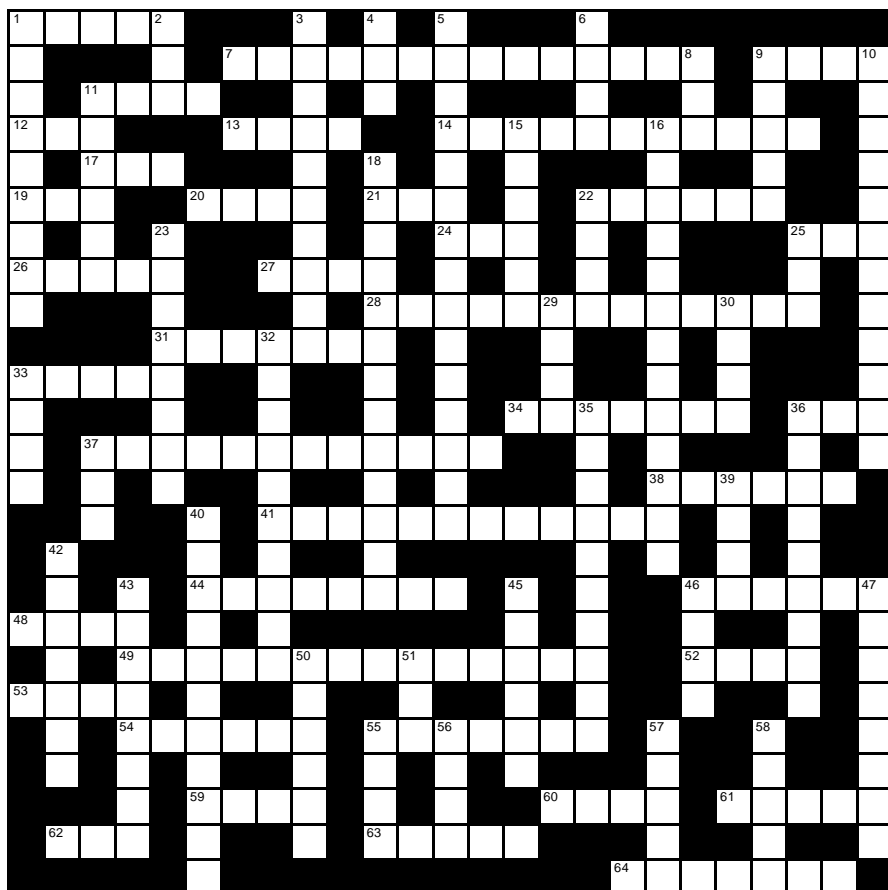
Compiled by

Sponsored by **The Red Lion**

NIBOR



The festive season just wouldn't be the same without our bumper Christmas crossword. Send your answers to the editors by 10th December 2004. 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.



Name.....

Address.....

.....Tel:.....

Across

- 1 Short one down and social worker's in the river (5)
7 Mattress which I made up at this seasonal time (5,9)
9 Foot soldier is first to get present (4)
11 Mother goes by railway to labour in the stable (4)
12 Drink and eat out (3)
13 You will hear about Christmas (4)
14 Embodiment of fashionable people surrounding vehicle (11)
17 Teachers might eat one at Christmas (3)
19 Violently rob a simpleton (3)
20 Seems nowhere takes in what's needed for seven (4)
21 Porkpie perhaps may be found in 44 (3)
22 No change where 11 spent Christmas (6)
24 Silly mother comes to bad end (3)
25 Where one might sit during 41 (3)
26 Was one of 27 incensed by it? (5)
27 I'm after small paperback for 10 (4)
28 Hans tested spy conversion on Boxing Day (2,8,3)
31 9 across is here (7)
33 Festive drink may knock you out (5)
34 Lisa was upset by 33 across (7)
36 Rod speaks promptly (3)
37 Habits Mrs Cox changed to get a present (9,3)
38 Type of music written in a book (6)
41 Joyful singing when a woman joins

the Navy (5,7)

- 44 Biscuits that explode around the festive table (8)
46 Type of drink preferable to brand x? (6)
48 heartthrob, say, is out of work (4)
49 Seasonal lady heard in 41 (9,5)
52 Dry shrub Ruth takes in (4)
53 Take a drink and gain sweetheart (4)
54 A parent initially made offer to hire extra room (6)
55 Cedric and Leslie hold tree decorations (7)
59 At one time Christmas started in unity (4)
60 11 across had a little balm prepared (4)
61 Horde distressed by a biblical king (5)
62 Type of Christmas tree found in the Cardiff ironworks area (3)
63 Tolls exist; money needed before Sunday! (5)
64 White chap is cold hearted (7)

Down

- 1 Breath heavily, synchronise lips but put nothing in for show (9)
2 Paddle or a suitable alternative (3)
3 Large Christmas stocking for depressed accountants in a heap (10)
4 Colour of river before journalist arrives (3)
5 Crams this distorted flower in the winter garden (9,4)
6 Top thespian sees vermin return... (4)
8 ...and it's hard to see where the

Truly Fabulous Cookies & Cakes

The Way the
Cookie Crumbles



Home and
Business
Deliveries

Special and
Birthday
Occasions

0773 475 1087

www.cookiecrumbles.co.uk



NORDIC-WALKING HOLIDAYS

Come **NORDIC-WALKING** and discover a unique, unspoiled landscape of green pastures and volcanic-formed mountains of **MONTS DU CANTAL**. Accommodation at a local hotel in the heart of the Auvergne Volcanic Park.

Phone 01638 742003 or visit www.nordic-walkingholidays.co.uk

TURNER AND SONS

Professional Installers

of

Quality Kitchens and Bedrooms


The complete service - design, quotation, installation, tiling and re-decoration.

Telephone: 01638 609015

www.turnerandsons.com

email: kitchens@turnerandsons.com

- scenery is (3)
- 9 Directions to put slime on Christmas dinner (5)
- 10 Oddly, I'm newest here and getting 27 across (5,4,3)
- 11 Unusual German trough once found in a 22 across (6)
- 15 The French are after credit these days to get a cot (6)
- 16 A 49 across not at home in a 11 down (4,2,1,6)
- 18 One of five got up after 47 down (9,4)
- 22 Band of pointed trees (4)
- 23 she quietly leads the animals and so does he (8)
- 25 Get strands of rope in and take up lynching (3)
- 29 Mushy food a parent gets (4)
- 30 A couple of beginners act first for a toy (4)
- 32 Assault can damage a jolly fat man (5,5)
- 33 Strong wine from Dover maybe (4)
- 35 32 chains lost in confusion (2,8)
- 36 Adjust shunts etc for some tasty
- fireside morsels (9)
- 37 Shout "exotic rye whiskey contains it" (3)
- 39 Commotion in prison (4)
- 40 Medals awarded for adjusting coordinates (11)
- 42 Sweet, quiet, posh theologian gets gin cocktail (7)
- 43 Last month for strange creed about honour (8)
- 45 There is no money in motors or songs (6)
- 46 Infant sees a follower in the water (4)
- 47 Eruditely rewritten but nor right for Christmas (8)
- 50 What to eat at Christmas and where to eat it (6)
- 51 First Christmas we hear was offshore (3)
- 55 Cold bone for 15 down (4)
- 56 Young Leonard's back embracing love for 47 (4)
- 57 Reportedly pinchin' the seasonal bird (5)
- 58 The best river round about (5)

 We congratulate **Jenny Brand**, the winner of last month's competition, who should collect her prize certificate from the editors. Honorable mentions go to Martin and Debbie Clark, Julian Luttrell, Dee Noyes, Robert and Julie Nunn and Shirley Wilkins.

Solution to crossword no. 16



Pink Rabbit takes Variety Show by storm

BUNNY MANIA

TOP Hollywood star, the Pink Rabbit, stunned a Swaffham Prior audience when he burst in as star guest at the Variety Show.

The towering 6ft-high bunny, who has taken America by storm, jetted in from LA to wow crowds packing the village hall for the annual feast of talent.

It was on the makeshift stage in the dimly-lit hall just a year ago that the garrulous giant, dubbed "super bugs bunny" by his adoring fans, was spotted by talent scouts and catapulted to international stardom.

With the ink barely dry on his first multi-million-pound record deal and film rights to his amazing rags-to-riches life-story about to be sold, the floppy-eared performer went back to his roots.

Tireless variety show guru, Hilary Sage, claimed she was "lost for words" when the sunglasses-clad cony sprang his surprise at the end of a long night.

Exclusive

by Our Showbiz
Correspondent
Ann Hubbard

Even
s h e
c o u l d
n o t

pass up the chance to star alongside the bobtailed beast.

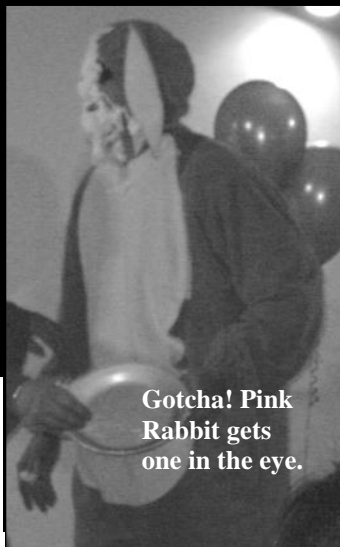
"Anything you can do, I can do better. I can do anything better than you!" she declared, determined to prove there was musical life in the old girl yet.

Those who had paid extortionate sums to secure a seat in the sell-out show declared her "awesome".

"Playing God was her finest hour," said one front-row fan after the final curtain call.

"It's such a pity she never made it big, like the Rabbit."

Had Simon Cowell's scouts returned this year they could have signed up a bevy of new wannabes for the Pink Rabbit's new



**Gotcha! Pink
Rabbit gets
one in the eye.**

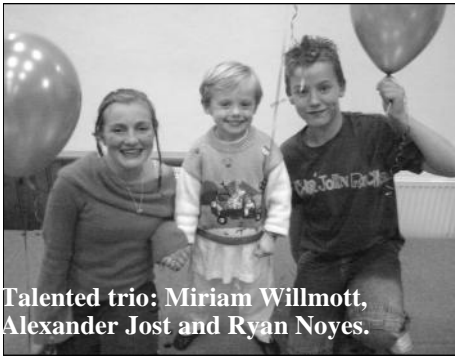
TV series, *Hop Idol*.

Bowers beauties, Jemima and Hannah, wooed the crowd on piano and clarinet, Miriam Willmott left the audience gasping for more with her dulcet tones and Ryan Noyes' youthful voice inspired an appreciative crowd.

Making his acting debut, Martin Meade, was type-cast in the role of hard-hatted construction mogul, Noah, who consistently failed to deliver.

And Hilary? Well, as they say, hell hath no fury . . . and although Hollywood may have overlooked her Joyce Grenfell-like charms she was not about to let some jack-rabbit steal her show.

With the dexterity of an old pro – and the assistance of a handily-placed custard pie – she wiped the smile off his whiskered



Talented trio: Miriam Willmott, Alexander Jost and Ryan Noyes.

‘Anything you can do I can do better’



Partners in crime: The Leprechaun, alis TimDoe, with Hilary Sage

face.

Devoted fans queuing at the stage door for an autograph were later disappointed to discover that their pink idol had already been whisked away in a stretch limo, en route to his private jet which was sitting on the tarmac at Marshalls’ airport.

That left the stage

clear for a wealth of other homegrown talent, including guitarists Andrew Noyes and Mark Lewinski, vocalist Kay Lewinski and “Three Little Maids” – Hilary Almond, Jan Pattinson and Tim Doe.

Talented four-year-old Alexander Jost, a tinselled star dangling from the end of his fishing

line, revelled in the spotlight with a delightful performance of *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star*.

Kieren Raja and Matthew Hill caught the mood with their guitar ensemble, Brenda Wilson, Hilary Almond and young Chloe Northrop added humour with their superb recitals, and Bobby Matheson, a natural on stage, kept reminding the audience about that rabbit.

Finally, the vicar, Rev David Lewis, skilfully managed to avoid the attentions of an errant leprechaun and thanked everyone for turning out to make the night a success, raising funds for St Mary’s Church.

Same again next year?



EVERYONE WELCOME!

South East Cambridgeshire Conservative Association
Swaffham Prior Branch

PRE-CHRISTMAS DRINKS PARTY

At

The Allix Arms

Station Road, Swaffham Prior.

By kind permission of Mrs Rosemary Riggs

Sunday 12th December 2004, 12.30 pm.

There will be an

Exhibition of Recent Works by Clive Riggs

Commission on sales will go to the Conservative Party

£10 per person to include wine and canapés

If you are unable to come to the party and would like to see the exhibition, Rosemary would be pleased to see you on Saturday 11th December between 11am and 1pm.



School News

ON the last day of half term, the entrance to the school was decorated with 62 pumpkins, many heavily disguised! This carving competition was started by a parent, Mrs Wade, four years ago and has become increasingly popular.

I have no doubt that it will become as traditional as the Easter Egg Bingo. Thanks to all for their creative contributions. Prizes went to Anya Tabecka for the ugliest, Ryan Griggs for the prettiest, Helena Pumfrey for the least like a pumpkin, David Cane for the scariest and Chloe Northrop for the most lovable.

The school disco was well attended by families; congratulations go to Kasia Tabecka and Ben Jeacock for

Most Loveable



their disco dancing abilities.

Two teams of year six children entered the Youth Speaks competition held at Newmarket Upper School on 10th November. The teams of three had put together their talks on Jacqueline Wilson characters and whether fox hunting should be banned, presenting their debate for 5 minutes. They were allowed to use prompt cards but relied heavily on memory to deliver their pieces. Although they weren't



placed, Leigh Rolfe, Maddy Pearson, Chantal Grimshaw, Parris White, Hannah Giles and Chrystal Atkin agreed that once stage fright was out of the way, it was an enjoyable and worth while experience.

The children brought back a certificate of participation and will lead an assembly to encourage more participants in next year's competition.

There has been a lot of work on the school grounds, so it is sad and frustrating that the school constantly suffers from low level vandalism and

on occasions more serious damage. This often occurs on a Thursday night and at weekends. Members of the community are encouraged to call the police directly on 01223 358966 if they see any untoward activities, including motor bikes using the school grounds.



Our Christmas service is on Wednesday 15th December, 2pm at St Mary's. Children are working hard on preparing for this traditional service. This is followed by the end of term assembly on Friday 17th December at 1.45pm in the school hall. Join us for one or both occasions. **Joanna Lakey**

New entrants for September 2005: please telephone to arrange to look around the school and receive a prospectus. The final date for applications for reception places is 24th March 2005.





WI Notes

SARAH Harmer runs two gift shops, one in Ely, and one in Chatteris. And on the 15th November, she came to the WI to demonstrate how to wrap gifts.

Her first article was a box she covered in bright red paper with all the corners beautifully neat and no sellotape showing! The next was a round tin — much more difficult — but she pleated the paper round the sides and on the top so that the bottom was perfectly flat, and a circle of paper stuck to the top covered up all the ends. She then decorated it with ribbon bows.

The third gift was a bottle and she showed us how to make ferns for the decoration on this awkward object. The finished articles looked so very attractive that I wondered if when all the lovely wrapping was taken off the gifts inside might be a disappointment!

Our next meeting, on 6th December, will be our annual Christmas Party.

Betty Prime



VILLAGE GARDENERS

MR Paul Heavens, who in another life is a national Fuschia judge, gave us a beautifully illustrated talk, on the history and hybridization from the wild Primula, of Auriculas.

He had chosen to grow them for pure pleasure because “you don’t have to do anything to them”! No winter protection is needed: you can go away on holiday and leave them: they don’t get white fly and only need feeding twice yearly.

In the 16th and 17th centuries they grew wild in the Alpine regions of Europe and were used for food and medicinal purposes. Herbalists supplied them to the Aristocracy for dizziness, vertigo and the vapours! In the 18th century they were grown by the Austrian Emperor and finally imported from Belgium in the 19th century. There are now two main types—the Show or Edged Auriculas, with their leaves covered in the white powdery Farina and the Alpine variety. The Show Auriculas are best in a frame but the Alpine variety are quite happy in tubs or the ground in the sort of places that snowdrops grow.



It’s hard to resist these charming plants, especially when they are called Royal Mail, John Wayne, Limelight, Gay Crusader, Taffeta bow, Red Admiral and the little striped Oh Yes!

Our next meeting will be on January 18th when Mr Twiggs Way, a garden historian will give a talk on the history of women in the garden, entitled “**Virgins, Weeders and Queens**” (*Can’t miss that! Eds*) Every one is very welcome.

Reading Group – The Launch

WHAT a successful first meeting we had! Ten of us turned up, male and female, not all having completed Jennifer Donnelly's "The Gathering Light" but that didn't affect the quality of the discussion, which ranged far and wide. All those who read the book had found it an easy read, had enjoyed reading it, and had quite a lot to say about it.

It stimulated comments and parallels from different times and afforded some surprises. All in all, a good couple of hours of interesting, focused conversation, encouraging one and all to do it again.

We agreed that the first Wednesday in the month is as good a day as any and have planned the next three meetings.

1st December: The Da Vinci Code by Dan Brown

5th January: Brick Lane by Monica Ali

2nd February: He Knew He Was Right by Anthony Trollope

If you would like to join us feel free to do so. The next meeting will be at the same venue, the Matheson's home, Kent House on the High St, at 8 o'clock.

Brenda Wilson

PS. The mobile library will order books for us if we wish. Ring Tricia Harrison on 742850 or use their enquiry number 08450 455225. Next visit is on 7th December.



VILLAGE HALL NEWS

THE following dates have been selected in the 2005 calendar for the usual Village Hall arranged events

5th March — The Village Jumble Sale

14th May — The Village Feast

10th September — The Harvest Show

14th December — Carol Singing at the Village Hall

As previously announced the payphone has been removed from the Village Hall. This is now up for sale. If anyone would like to make a reasonable, or even an unreasonable, offer please phone Janet Cooper (01638 741326) or Alastair Everitt (01638 742974)



Terry Chalmers FMAAT
Book-keeping & Accountancy Service

70 North Street
Burwell
Cambridge
CB5 0BB

*A professional & flexible service to meet
all your accountancy needs*

Tel: 01638 742006

Fax: 01638 743475 mail@terrychalmers.demon.co.uk

Interior Design & Decoration by Cheryl

Transforming everything from a simple window to an entire home

Delightful hand made curtains, blinds & accessories
Furniture and lighting supplied at very competitive prices
Hand crafted built in cupboards/wardrobes designed and fitted
False chimneys created and cast iron fireplaces supplied & much more...

SPECIAL OFFER UNTIL SEPT 2004 £75 to design 1 room or £125 for 2

House Doctor - I will advise on how to revamp your home, using as much or as little of your own furniture and fabrics. Investing in this service could significantly increase the value of your home. Prices from £150

Packages to suit all price ranges. Phone now for free advice.

Cheryl Hickman 01638 610132 or mobile 07711 509826
North Street, Burwell, CAMBS, CB5 0BB



STAINED HUNDRED

“WWI In Cambridge” was an appropriate subject for the November Meeting. Chris Jakes of the Cambridgeshire Collection had slides of many old photographs to show us and included information about his own family. His grandfather who was a regular soldier said “The only good thing about the War was it got him out of Ireland”!

There was a County Militia wearing red uniforms up to 1908, and this became the Territorials in the more familiar khaki by 1912, with a force of under 1,000 and a waiting list to join. Cambridge schools, such as the Perse and Leys, and colleges had their OTC units. In 1910, a book called “The invasion of England” caused an uproar, in 1912 large manoeuvres were held, attended by George V, but even so the outbreak of WWI came as a surprise.

Announcements were given over megaphones at the Mammoth Show in Cambridge ordering Territorials to make their way to their Depot. Because of its good rail links, Cambridge was a Mobilization centre. Photos of ambulances in Hills Road and guns on Grantchester Meadows showed how reliant the army was on horsepower to pull them. The Cambs Regiment went immediately to the East Coast but when there was no invasion, they came back and then went to Bury until sent to France in 1915. Lines of volunteers outside the Corn Exchange were often turned down for the more popular regiments and many went into the Suffolk Regiment, while older ones guarded railways and other vulnerable sites (equivalent of the Home Guard). Territorials only had to serve in this country and had to sign to say they were willing to be sent abroad. When the university city of Louvain was attacked in Belgium and their library burned down and other atrocities carried out, it struck an immediate chord with Cambridge which had an influx of Belgian refugees. In 1914, the General Eastern Military Hospital was set up in Cambridge in Trinity College with the hospital beds under the cloisters — fresh air was considered important as part of the treatment! Wooden huts were put up where the University Library now stands. Many local doctors helped out at the hospitals, nurses were billeted in College premises, some 6,000 passed through the wards including Commonwealth soldiers, and a number are buried in a special section of the Newmarket Road Cemetery. Fragile aeroplanes arrived in Ely by barge; being able to land in grass fields, it was not unknown for a pilot to land to ask where he was! A motorised Unit from a Naval Battalion toured East Anglia; people formed long queues when potatoes were in short supply; war shrines were set up giving the names of those serving in the war; canteens sprung up in church halls and reading rooms; business with German sounding names had to say how long they had lived in this country; 600 naked soldiers dived into the Cam; details in the background of these photos were of great interest.





FIRE AND RESCUE matters dominated my last month's activity.

Since I was first elected to the old Public Protection Committee back in 1985, I have taken a great interest in the whole service, as well as the two fire stations of **Burwell and Swaffham Bulbeck** within my Division.

Over the years I have helped to fend off possible dosure(s) that might have arisen in connection with a proposed move of Cambridge Fire Station to the city outskirts. Fortunately, the more recent possibility of strikes by the Fire Brigade Union did not seem to affect us locally as our two stations are manned by Retained part-timers, who have their own union which was not in dispute with the employers.

Then again there were domestic structural problems at both stations and the status of Burwell Fire Station after the closure of the factory on which the station stands. It now appears that Burwell's future is reasonably secure in the medium term after the negotiation of a suitable lease. I called in the other day after a report of a leaking roof and found that remedial action was already in hand.

On the broader front, at the recent full Council the Lib Dem Group put up a proposal calling on the Cabinet to **install sprinklers in all newly built schools** including Cambourne and the fire damaged rebuild of Mayfield School. We also wanted the Cabinet to review fire risk in existing schools, installing sprinklers where particular fire risk exists.

The Conservative administration were not prepared to accept this proposal on cost grounds. Instead they carried an amendment calling on the Cabinet to *consider* installation of sprinklers in new and rebuilt schools against a background of cost benefit, consequential cost, technology and Fire Service advice. They did accept the request to look at fire risk but LEA schools only. Also a further call should be made to lobby the Government to fund sprinklers in future and include sprinklers in the design criteria for the future. I hope this last request does not fall on deaf ears, although I fear it may,

However, we do succeed in obtaining Government funding sometimes. We have just been told that 1 ¼ million households, **mainly in deprived areas** will be offered free smoke alarms and fire safety advice. The whole package of £25 million will be put up to finance these moves. Some extra resources should come to Cambridgeshire. Although I'm afraid we are unlikely to qualify as a "deprived area" round here (!), in fact Cambs. Fire & Rescue Service *already* carries out home **fire safety checks, FREE**. Requests to Huntingdon HQ (phone 01480 444558) or via me for anyone in need of such advice.

Recently I had a complaint from Lode about thorns left on the cyclepath between **Lode** and **Bottisham**. I walked, looking carefully the length of that path and found four small thorny twigs and four wild rose cuttings. The former would

cause puncture but not the latter, I suspect.

The problem is that the hedges are owned by landowners or farmers and they are supposed to clear up after seasonal trimming. It is not a cost the County should bear; nevertheless if the paths are littered with cuttings, get in touch with the Rural Group at Shire Hall or me and we'll insist that the farmer or contractor makes another clearance sweep.

We need to catch them just after cutting, not weeks later.

The above remarks also apply to any cycle paths elsewhere, e.g. **Bottisham** to **Swaffham Bulbeck**, between the **Swaffhams** and the road into **Burwell** or **Reach**.

James Fitch



Correction — Those Christmas Cards!

YOU will have discovered in last month's Crier that my maths wasn't up to scratch and that the Editor's was (she's *r e a l l y v e r y s h a r p w i t h i t H o y e s ! E d s*) . To save any confusion, the Christmas Cards (village sign or two churches) are £1.50 each and the notelets (sketches of churches) are 60p or a BARGAIN price of 6 for £3.

Available from Barbara Dennis (66 High St, 743939) or Kate Child (73 High St, 743983).



FREE VOLUNTEER TRAINING COURSE

A six-week training course for Volunteers to help the hearing impaired starts on Monday 7th February 2005. It will run one morning a week on various mornings.

CAMTAD Cambridge Campaign for tackling acquired deafness, runs hearing help sessions where Volunteers clean, check and re-tube NHS hearing aids and advise on regular maintenance and best listening conditions They also loan out equipment. They can help with hearing doorbells, telephone, television and household alarms. Training courses cover such subjects as the ear, types and causes of deafness, NHS hearing aids, procedures for assessment, communication methods and so on. If you are interested in the training course or would like to discuss it further please phone or fax Sue Hempstead on 01223 416141 or write to her at 8A Romsey Terrace Cambridge CB1 3NH. We welcome hearing impaired Volunteers on the course and a loop system is provided

Training is compulsory for our Volunteers but there is no obligation to Volunteer at the end of the course Most of our Volunteers help at monthly sessions but many help in other ways.

Sue Hempstead



Notes from the Parish Council November Meeting

Mr John Covill chaired the meeting with 6 members and 2 members of the public.

CCC Report: Councillor Fitch reported to the meeting.

ECDC Report: Councillor Alderson reported to the meeting.

Parish Council Vacancies & Confirmation of Parish Council Representative for The Charities: Two vacancies still remain. *Anyone wishing to become a Parish Councillor, please contact the Clerk for further details.*

It was agreed that John Covill would act as one of the Parish Council representatives for The Charities.

Matters Arising – for information only

a) **Wall at The Beeches:** Hereward Housing has accepted responsibility for this wall and has confirmed that their Maintenance Manager will be inspecting the wall to assess the problem. The Maintenance Manager may wish to take the wall down to ground level.

b) **Barrier – Coopers Lane:** John Cooper confirmed to the Clerk that a local contractor has been instructed to install a new Green Oak barrier. This barrier will allow for wheelchair access and access for a small mower. It was reported to the Clerk that access from the High Street was limited for higher vehicles due to a low BT cable. This will be looked into.

Confirmation of Precept/Budget for 2005/06: A meeting was held on 4th November to discuss the budget for next year. It was agreed that the Precept figure would be £11,000 with no increase on 2004/05.

Grasscutting Services – 2005/06: Estimates for grasscutting services on a 1 year & 3 year contract are to be invited.

Data Protection Act: It was confirmed that the Parish Council should be registered for this and the cost of £35/annum was agreed.

Village Award: It was suggested that, subject to the agreement of the Village Hall Committee, a plaque be mounted in the Village Hall to which the name/s of anyone nominated could be added. The Clerk is to obtain prices for such a plaque.

Recreation Ground – use by Burwell Tigers Football Club: Steve Kent-Phillips attended a meeting with Richard Freeman & Simon Foreman of BTFC to discuss scheme proposals. The proposal put forward by BTFC is for 2 x Colts (¾ size) pitches and 2 x mini (¼ size) pitches. Portacabins will be erected on the site to provide changing and catering facilities. Outline plans are to be drawn up and submitted to the P.C. for consideration and agreement. Security of the site was again confirmed as a top priority. BTFC also confirmed that all the facilities would be available for village use.

Future of Land at Lower End (“Dencora” field): It was confirmed to Drift Road Ltd that the P.C. would not agree to any development of this site other than that proposed by Flagship Housing earlier in the year and then withdrawn. Drift Road were also asked if they would be willing to sell the land to the village and at what cost. A reply was received noting a purchase price of £1m over a suggested

period of 3 or 4 years by instalments. It was agreed that this was not a realistic option for the village and that the cost was far too high.

Correspondence Received: This was reported to the meeting.

Planning Applications Received:

67 High Street – *erection of two storey rear extension*

32 Fairview Grove – *two storey side extension*

There were no objections to the above applications.

Burwell to Horningsea, proposed 132Kv dual circuit overhead line running through Burwell, The Swaffhams, Reach & Lode Parishes – “*Landscaping*”. This was discussed at length. Comments sent to ECDC.

It was confirmed that the application for The Forge, High Street had been withdrawn.

Accounts for Payment: These were agreed.

Any Other Business:

The ongoing problem of vandalism in the village was discussed.

Open Question Time:

Concerns with reference to the security of the Recreation Ground were discussed.

The next Parish Council meeting will take place on Thursday, 9th December 2004 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

Karen King

Clerk of the Parish Council

Tel: 742358. Email: karen.king5@bopenworld.com





East Cambridgeshire Ltd
An Independent, non-profit
making organisation

HANDY PERSON SERVICE
CARRYING OUT MINOR
REPAIRS TO YOUR PROPERTY
HELPING LESS ABLED PEOPLE
TO REMAIN
AT HOME IN SAFETY AND
SECURITY

Tel: 01353 722192

Fax: 01353 723778

11b Churchgate Street, Soham, Ely CB7 5DS
www.careandrepair-ecambs.co.uk

- *Do you wonder who to turn to, to get those small repair jobs done in your home?*
- *Do you worry about who you can trust to carry out the work reliably*
- *Do you put off those necessary jobs because you are afraid of the costs?*

IF SO

perhaps...

WE CAN HELP

- If you are disabled and/or over 60 you are eligible
- The Handy Person Service is NOT run for profit.
- We will charge £5.00 per hour for labour
- You can supply the materials or we can order them from our suppliers on your behalf and charge them to you.

- The jobs should be small, as a guide, no more than half a day's work
- We may prioritise more urgent jobs if demand is high
- If in doubt please ring and enquire



TYPE OF JOBS WE CAN DO

Joinery

- ✓ Shelves
- ✓ Repairing wooden windows/doors
- ✓ Repairs to wooden fences & gates
- ✓ Lock fitting/replacement
- ✓ Fit loose/dangerous/squeaky floor boards
- ✓ Fitting grab rails and stair rails

Plumbing

- ✓ Replace tap washers
- ✓ Seal baths and sinks
- ✓ Adjust/replace ball cock
- ✓ Add lever taps to modern taps

Building

- ✓ Minor repointing/plastering
- ✓ Gutter repairs (stepladder height only)
- ✓ Repairs to steps
- ✓ Replace window pane/door glass

Minor Electrical

- ✓ Fitting/refitting plugs
- ✓ Replacing fuses
- ✓ Changing light bulbs

**COMMUNITY
FUND**
LOTTERY FUNDED



Church News

Angels with Dusters!

WE would like to pay tribute to Mrs Mary Edge and Mrs June Wolfenden who initiated church cleaning nineteen years ago. Week after week they generously gave their time to look after the interior of our village church. Today there is a small rota of dedicated helpers. It would be lovely if some more people would like to join them. All it takes is a couple of hours in congenial company every six weeks or so.

John Harrison

ST MARY'S GIFT DAY

For a small village Swaffham Prior has some very generous residents. It's good to know that the church's place in our community is as valued as it is. The Parochial Church Council would like to extend thanks to all who contributed in the recent Gift Day. It is very grateful. £2177 was raised with a couple of envelopes still promised.

The church costs approximately £60 per day to run which is a considerable expense, even without the periodic wear-and-tear repairs that every household dreads from time to time. A bill for repairs to the boiler is due shortly. Your gifts mean that it can be paid without too heavy a heart. Thank you.

Brenda Wilson (Treasurer)

Free Passes to Ely Cathedral

THE Dean and Chapter of Ely Cathedral have decided to offer passes for free entry to the Cathedral to anyone on the Electoral Role of Churches in our Diocese who would like to apply. Applicants should contact Barbara Dennis (66 High St, 743939) who will be able to provide an application form.



FOR SALE

NEW CANON SURESHOT 105U CAMERA, BOXED
WITH CASE, BATTERY, FILM AND STRAP

£50 only

Betty Fox 01638 742000



CHILDMINDER VACANCIES

Swaffham Prior based childminder has vacancies for all ages
from July. OFSTED inspected and qualified.

Please contact Sandra on 742091 for more details.



Church of England Services

December 2004

	ST MARY'S Swaffham Prior	ST MARY'S Swaffham Bulbeck	Bottisham
Sun 5	11:00am Holy Communion	9:30am Holy Communion 11:00am Christingle Service	11:00am Holy Communion 4:00pm Christingle Service
Sun 12	8:00am Holy Communion 11:00am Christingle Service	9:30am Holy Communion	11:00am Holy Communion
Sun 19	11:00am Holy Communion 6.30pm Carols by Candlelight	9:30am Village Communion 6.30pm Carols by Candlelight	11:00am Holy Communion 6.30pm Carols by Candlelight
<small>CHRIST- MAS EVE</small> Fri 24	4:00pm Carols around the Crib 11:30pm Midnight Communion	4:00pm Carols around the Crib 11:30pm Midnight Communion	4:00pm Carols around the Crib 11:30pm Midnight Communion
<small>CHRIST- MAS DAY</small> Sat 25	11:00am Holy Communion		11:00am Holy Communion

PASTORAL LETTER, December 2004

Bottisham Vicarage

Dear Friends,

I expect many of you have been spending a lot of time and money thinking about and searching for the right Christmas presents to give to your friends and family this Christmas.

Each year the Christmas shopping frenzy seems to start earlier and earlier, and the true meaning of Christmas seems to be drowned by the clamour and noise of commercialism, as our materialistic society gears itself up for its annual bonanza. Many retail and commercial organisations actually make the bulk of their profits at Christmas time, and there is an air of intense determination in the commercial world at this time of the year, as our eyes, ears and senses are assaulted with the encouragement to spend, spend, spend.

In all this intense clamour, where is the true meaning of Christmas? Just a few days before Christmas one year two ladies stood looking into a department store window at a large display of the manger scene with clay figures of the baby Jesus, Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, the wise men, and the animals. Disgustedly, one lady said, "Look at that, the church is even trying to horn in on Christmas!"

That seems to be the prevailing attitude. And yet the giving of presents to each other at this time of the year reflects the giving of a very special gift to our world on the very first Christmas.

Shortly after World War II came to a close, early one chilly December morning an American soldier was making his way back to the barracks in London. As he turned the corner in his jeep, he spotted a little lad with his nose pressed to the window of a pastry shop. Inside the cook was kneading dough for a fresh batch of doughnuts. The hungry boy stared in silence, watching every move. The soldier pulled his jeep to the curb, stopped, got out, and walked quietly over to where the little fellow was standing. Through the steamed-up window he could see the mouth-watering morsels as they were being pulled from the oven, piping hot. The boy salivated and released a slight groan as he watched the cook place them onto the glass-enclosed counter ever so carefully. The soldier's heart went out to the nameless orphan as he stood beside him. "Son, would you like some of those?" The boy was startled. "Oh, yeah—I would!" The American stepped inside and bought a dozen, put them in a bag, and walked back to where the lad was standing in the foggy cold of the London morning. He smiled, held out the bag, and said simply: "Here you are." As he turned to walk away, he felt a tug on his coat. He looked back and heard the child ask quietly: "Mister, are you God?"

2000 years ago God gave the world the greatest gift of all. As Vance Havner puts it: 'Christmas is based on an exchange of gifts: the gift of God to man - his Son; and the gift of man to God—when we first give ourselves to God.'

So in all the hustle and bustle of Christmas let us put time aside to stop and reflect just why we are going to so much trouble to give presents at Christmas, and to take time to reflect on that first Christmas, when the Christ-child came into the world. Let us reflect that, in that child, the God who fashioned the universe came down to live amongst us to demonstrate the depth of his love for us, and to work out our salvation. And let us take time to say 'Thank you' to God by responding to the very special gift that God gave us all those years ago, and let us give him the most special gift we can ever give—all our love. As Lois Lebar so eloquently puts it:

*Thanks be to God for his unspeakable Gift-
indescribable
inestimable
incomparable
inexpressible
precious beyond words.*

I wish you a very happy, blessed and thankful Christmas.

David

Dates for Your Diary - December 2004

Wed	1	Reading Group, 8pm, Kent House
Mon	6	WI Christmas Party, 7pm, VH
Tue	7	Mobile Library, Cage Hill 2:40-3:30, Chapel 3:35-4:00pm
Thu	9	PC Meeting, VH, 7.30pm
Fri	10	Crier Copy Deadline
Sat	11	Holly Sale, Anglesey House, 12 noon — 1pm Clive Riggs Exhibition, 11am—1pm, Allix Arms Carol Practice 5.30pm, St Mary's
Sun	12	Holly Sale, Anglesey House, 12 noon — 1pm Christingle, 11am, St Mary's Pre-Christmas Drinks Party, 12.30pm, Allix Arms
Wed	15	Carols at the Village Hall, 7pm, VH
Sun	19	Carols by Candlelight, 6.30pm, St Mary's
Tue	21	Mobile Library, Cage Hill 2:40-3:30, Chapel 3:35-4:00pm
Thu	23	Crier Collating, Village Hall, 2:30pm
Fri	24	Carols round the Crib, 4pm, St Mary's
Sat	25	CHRISTMAS DAY
Sun	26	Boxing Day Hockey, The Denny, 11.30 am
Fri	31	New Year's Eve

Closing curtain call of Village Variety Show, 2004.



And That's All, Folks!

Down on the Farm will be back next month, and so too will DC Allen Alderson (we hope!) Eds