



The Swaffham Crier

Volume XXXII Number 2

February 2008



Editorial

WHEN THE WEB IS ON THE BLINK and the email's in a stink,
who's to help? Aha!

De de de de de de de de

de de de de de de de de

RASP MAN!!!

Or *not*, as has lately been the case, but up until relatively recently, not a bad approximation of the case. Not for Village Broadband users the delights of the Delhi Help Desk and extortionate call-out fees, but a real RASP man on their doorstep, who we might also have persuaded to fix other bits of computer while he was at it. But then....well, *Letters* tells the story.

But is our Community broadband to fold? Not a bit of it, everyone has remembered why they wanted it in the first place. A revitalised band has sprung into action and among other things *fixed the Crier's email*. Long may it last!

Letters also contains what appears to be the start of a debate about the abolishment, by Higher More Knowledgeable Powers, of the Parish Council's Any Other Business Section. This will stop a lot of ills, say Hazel Williams and Mark Lewinski, but our Reporter's

20+years on the PC Desk make him more doubtful, and meanwhile, the *Crier* (which should also be publishing the Agenda *before* the meeting?) confidently anticipates news of the ills this new regulation will *start*.

Take note of our Cover Picture this month readers, and don't recycle it. Clive Riggs is now in the official Who's Who of British Artists—congratulations Clive; it was well-deserved: Swaffham Prior is a very artistic village.

Lots to catch up on in this issue (actually, the first since mid-December—that's when January's goes to press) and we hope you enjoy it.

Many thanks to the WI (and our loyal proposers) for this year's Gay Bulleid Award, we'll try to live up to it., apologies for incorrectly reporting the theft of Bottisham lead last month (it was a minor break-in) and see you Quizzing! We're not coming bottom again...

Caroline Matheson

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Cover Picture: *If Pigs Could Fly*, by Clive Riggs



Letters to the Editors



Dear Editors

That Windmill Photo

Your inclusion of the photograph of the mill taken around 1960 from Mill Hill aroused particular interest at the Windmill! I am pleased to say in response to your question that as the photo below demonstrates, the general view of the mill has changed little, apart from the fact that the mill sails now have shutters and are back earning their keep!

Our restoration work replacing the sails and stocks was completed in September 2007, just in time for the winter weather. On a stunning day in September, we hoisted the new sails into position and I am delighted to say welcomed many of the children from the village school and other locals who came and watched. One parent remarked that they hoped it would be their children's children who next witnessed the sight next time round—we certainly hope so...!

The mill began working again the following weekend once the sails had been regulated and the stone furniture cleaned down ready for flour production once more. Since then we have been busy; the sails are much more powerful than the sails they replace due to a greater angle of "weather" (a miller's term for the angle of tilt on the sails) —the profile now being typical of that found on local mills built by Hunts of Soham—the local millwrights (now long gone) who we think built the mill.

Keeping things local, I am pleased to say that we have secured organic grain from Fen End Farm in Cottenham, so we are also grinding locally grown wheat using, of course, wind power! Green, organic, low food miles - what more can I say?

Over the last year we have had visits from all three families who owned or rented the mill before ourselves—spanning over 150 years. Representatives of the Bulleid, Foster and Danby families have all come. Whilst we are not sure of the exact date the mill was built, we are going to celebrate 150 years of milling next year. There will be an event in the early summer when we look forward to welcoming all those who contributed financially to the restoration of the mill. Thank you to all those contributors reading this article—what you made possible can be seen from miles around. We are certainly proud of our achievement completing this ambitious project; we hope you are too.

The mill is open every 2nd Sunday of the month and flour is available at other times by arrangement. Please call 01638 74109 jon@fostersmill.co.uk

Jonathan Cook
Miller

See our centre spread, and on behalf of all our readers, we'd like to say that Swaffham Prior is very proud of its beautifully restored mill. Many congratulations to Miller Jonathan and all participants. We 'd also remind the bread-bakingly challenged that Prior-milled bread is on sale at Lanes Bakery in Burwell every Saturday. Eds.

Dear Editors,

Christmas Holly

Thank you once again to Elisabeth and Alastair Everitt for organising the picking, advertising and sale of the Christmas holly. I am sure you will remember that there was a lack of holly berries this year when the time came to pick the bunches. However, a few were available and these were supplemented by the generous donation of holly, with berries, from Clifton Fletcher's tree. In all a total of £52.50 was raised for the Church Flower Fund and the Church.

So, thank you to the Everitts for organising the event, Clifton Fletcher for his holly and all of you who went along to buy the holly.

Ruth Scovil

Dear Editors,

RASP Broadband—What is going on??

I remember when the very idea of Broadband internet in this village was a pipe dream - I had great difficulty just getting a second telephone line when I ran my business from my barn (sorry, sir, not enough circuits from the Burwell exchange - we would have to dig up the road....).

At that time, NTL's fibres ran past us along the main road to provide the Burwellians with all the cable services they might aspire to. But only in Burwell. At the same time, BT weren't interested, and seemed to want to make broadband access as difficult as possible, so much of Cambridge (including half the Science Park), and all of Newmarket, were Broadband deserts. Swaffham Prior was off the bottom of anyone's list of priorities.

Then along came RASP - a posse of enthusiasts who appeared at my door one day with an antenna on a stick, and proved they could get me a signal from their system in Reach (courtesy of some magical fibre connection that still exists - like an oasis in a desert - in a forgotten wardrobe in one of the remoter villages in the county), and I signed up on the spot.

Needing the link for business purposes, I was initially happy to pay over the odds for a reliable connection, then later on was pleased to be told that they now had enough subscribers for the rate to come down to a more domestic level. I encouraged friends and colleagues to sign up, and my company accounts soon depended on it. When properly on song, it beats the socks off your standard ADSL, providing the same speed in both directions (try that on your BT Openworld).

But now the posse of enthusiasts no longer appears at the door - and don't answer the phone. Friends and colleagues have cancelled their subscriptions and signed up with BT instead, simply because their systems stopped working for whatever reason, and their pleas for assistance were never even acknowledged, let alone responded to.

Without support, RASP is doomed. Subscribers will melt away - now that there is a valid alternative - and money will run out, because I don't suppose the magic fountain in the wardrobe runs for free. I assume that the original band of enthusiasts who kept it running have better things to do with their spare time than to keep being polite to a much larger number of technically-challenged users like me.

Having been unable to attend the recent AGM, I have no idea of the current corporate, administrative or financial status of the enterprise - and in particular whether there are either plans or funds to provide support on a professional basis.

So can someone please tell me if my preferred connection to the outside world will still be working next month, if anyone other than me will still be trying to use it, and if so, how much it will cost me, particularly if I want my hand holding when it stops working?

John Chalmers

Dear Editors,

RASP Broadband - from the Outgoing Chairman

I have been chairman now from the initial setup of RASP over 4 years ago, and of course was involved in the first concepts and setting up of the system. I still remember the day I first went on the internet from the bedroom window managing to connect to Drakken over the other side of the village, without wires.

From then we have come a long way, first connecting up some users in Reach. I was approached by a young man from Swaffham Prior and he was soon connected up as well. We then spent time wandering the streets of Swaffham Prior with my fishing pole seeing who we could connect. We now have around 60 people using the system, with a total of 8 masts and connections have been made out to Upware, Swaffham Bulbeck and even here in Soham I can sometimes see the system.

The "sometimes" is a problem and I can no longer help in the way I would have wanted to and I feel a new voice is needed to take RASP forward into the future. I therefore have decided to resign as chairman with effect from 1st January 2008, to let a new person take over at the committee meeting of Monday 7th January in Upware I will always be available as a consultant if any issues arise that require my knowledge or expertise.

I hope that RASP continues to thrive and I hope to catch up with you all at some time in the future.

Dave Summers

Dear Editors,

RASP Broadband - from the New Chairman

My name is Roger Gunkel, I am a resident of Upware and, as of 3 weeks ago following the AGM, the new RASP chairman. I have been a user of the service for about 18 months and, although I am very comfortable with computers and many types of applications, I am certainly not a "techie". My understanding of broadband and networking is very basic, but I am someone who believes in getting involved from the inside.

After signing up for the magical wireless system for similar reasons to yourself, I quickly realised that my only contact was the member who had signed me up. I also rapidly discovered that he also had a living to earn and could not be available whenever I encountered a problem. Fortunately my system was pretty reliable until a few months ago when I began to encounter a few more problems, with only my one

contact to turn to.

My conversations with my contact had made me realise that RASP was in fact initially a group of very enthusiastic and knowledgeable people who were able to set up the system for the benefit of themselves and their local community. Many others, including myself, with limited or no technical knowledge were delighted to join the group and reap the benefits. Unfortunately this has become somewhat of a poisoned chalice to many of the originals, who have found the burgeoning weight of non-techies requiring assistance, taking the enjoyment and excitement out of the original dream. This has also been exacerbated by members adding their own home networks to their connection, whilst sometimes not having the knowledge to differentiate between RASP network faults and problems with their own computers and systems.

As a result of all of this, I attended the AGM, made some suggestions and threw ideas around along with others attending. Somehow I became chairman, probably new blood and an innocent! The overwhelming feeling was that RASP offers a great service when working properly, surpassing the performance in most aspects of other systems such as BT, even where that is available. HOWEVER, reliability, and particularly access to help and general group communication is sometimes woefully inadequate.

THIS IS NOW GOING TO CHANGE!

It is worth reminding all who subscribe to the group, that we are all equal members. There is no "them and us", only those with technical understanding and those without, so it is important for all of us to be kept in the loop and offer our help and support where possible. It is also important that those with the technical knowledge are given the space to work on the heart of the system both to improve performance and to be pro-active in the maintaining of system reliability.

To this end, a Technical Committee has been set up to identify core problems and centralise available equipment and expertise. This has already led to the identification of some major areas of improvement, some of which have already begun to be implemented. A monthly meeting of the TC will enable the general RASP committee to be kept up to date with progress and I will be making a regular report to all members via the website or email. It has further been decided that a basic technical and fault finding package will be prepared for all existing and new members. This will enable all of us to carry out simple checks on our system integrity in the event of possible problems, rather than assuming that all loss of connection is down to network failure. This will of course help the techies to concentrate on core reliability, whilst still having a life.

For those who find that faults are not in their own system, there will be a list of numbers of members willing and able to help at the next level. The TC are also looking at possible monitoring software to enable faults to be corrected remotely or even before they become detrimental to performance. The financial position is sound, which enables some investment in new equipment to help improve matters further.

Some of the new measures will take a few weeks to implement and I would ask all members to allow a little time for these improvements to show.

RASP is a superb local facility which needs your support to thrive and grow. It is being put on to a more professional footing and a great deal is owed to those founder members who have selflessly kept it going.

John! My apologies for diverting somewhat from your particular problem, however I understand from the technical committee meeting that it is being actively worked on and should be greatly improved by the time of writing. There will also be regular discussions regarding responding effectively to contact messages, I believe "improving customer services"

is the appropriate terminology.

Finally it is time to come from behind the blinds! RASP needs someone willing to act as treasurer ASAP, for the group to continue beyond April.

In addition, a few willing bodies to join a basic start up technical panel and offer occasional help to others less knowledgeable, to the benefit of all. Volunteers please!! Please feel free to email me directly if required.

The dream is very much still alive, so please keep the faith and it will remain so.

Roger Gunkel,

RASP Chairman

roger@mollyg.co.uk

RASP Website: www.raspnet.co.uk

Dear Editors,

Any Other Business

I presume that the reason the *Crier* wants me to explain why AOB (*Any Other Business*) can no longer be on the agenda of Parish Councils is because of my position as representative for the county at national level at NALC (National Association of Local Councils). This is nothing to do with my county council role.

It is in the interests of transparency. Swaffham Prior is fortunate in that there is usually a member of the 'press' there and everything would be reported upon. This would however be after the event as would the minutes of the meeting.

Therefore no decisions should be made that are not clearly identified on the agenda, so that anyone with an interest or opinion can attend and speak during the public session (or during the meeting if given permission by the chairman). This does not mean items cannot be presented for information and they can be placed on the agenda up to it going out or, as often happens, discussed during the meeting because items arise from a previous minute.

To give a personal example of something that happened over 20 years ago.

Under the heading AOB Burwell Parish Council decided to spend a considerable sum of money draining the recreation ground after a discussion about the condition of the pitch. This was not in the budget, came totally out of the blue and although it might have been necessary no research had been done and no member of the public knew it was likely to happen. There could have been other priorities.

This would not happen today because parish councils are much better run and planning is done in advance for budgeting setting precepts etc. They are public

meetings spending public money and must be transparent about activities. The best way to do this is to make sure everything is on the agenda.

Hope this helps.

Hazel Williams

Dear Eds

I am surprised that someone as intelligent and with as much experience of meetings as Mr Everitt does not understand why AOB (Any Other Business) should not be an element of a formal meeting of such an august and important body as the Parish Council. I noted his previous grumble about this but didn't respond - he and I live at peace with one another on paper as much as we always have in life, nowadays. So I hope he won't think I'm responding because it's him. I'm responding because I can see it still bothers him and I know the answer.

Out there in the big wide world there are people who play meetings for power, like a chess match with real people, or perhaps bridge is a closer analogy. I have only ever observed one Parish meeting in this village, and I was not looking out for whether that was happening, but such things are played subtly, of course. However, I am sure that all attendees in this village are honourable men, to borrow a phrase from that chap, (whoever he was) that wrote those plays of Shakespeare, and that they are not there for such purposes.

But for those who play for advantage, AOB can be used to drop bombshells on an unsuspecting meeting and push through things that an unprepared group of people may not realise was wrong because they had not had time to consider in advance the implications of the issue and may not have gathered all the facts to hand. Another device is to drop an item into AOB when certain a member or members are absent, allowing a vote to be pushed through to the advantage of the proposer and to the detriment of the whole.

I explain this entirely theoretically. No reference is intended to any meeting ever held in this village or any other village, but I don't think it's uncommon in the working world. Since a Parish council is for the general good of all in the locality, devices such as AOB are best avoided. Sometimes even the appearance or inferred interpretation that an advantage was being sought by playing the AOB card, when none was actually intended, might sour good relations between neighbours. I understand Mr Everitt's frustration, but the reason AOB is not there is for the general good.

Mark Lewinski

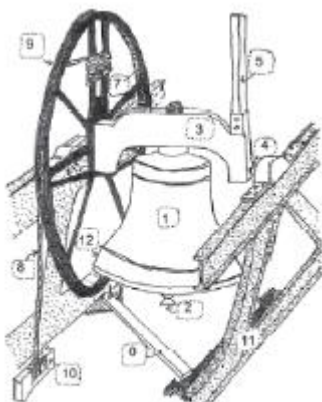
(Will Peter Arksey read this if he sees my name here, I wonder?)

Doubtful, Mark! But a quote from Oct 2006 Crier: "It was in Any Other Business that Geoffrey ... wanted the PC to condemn the National Trust's flooding programme ... but Andrew Camps pointed out you cannot vote on any items in AOB and also that not every councillor attended the National Trust Presentation." Not a lot wrong there then. Eds

Dr Margaret Stanier

On the 9th February a Meeting will
be held in Newnham College
to remember the life of
Margaret Stanier.

Please would anyone wishing to attend contact
Alastair Everitt (742974) who will pass on the full details



1 Bell
2 Clapper
3 Bellmouth
4 Gudgeon
5 Stay
6 Stile
7 Wheel
8 Rope
9 Quarter Rops
10 Ropes
11 Frame
12 Signal Ring

If you don't fancy singing, badminton, a
jazz work-out or a Nintendo DS.....

Why not get some light UPPER BODY
EXERCISE and BRAIN TRAINING
all in one with

CHURCH BELL RINGING?

We're a friendly group and on Wednesdays we practice at St Mary's Swaffham Bulbeck from 7.45pm to 9.15pm We train beginners under experienced guidance from 7.00pm. After all that we go and socialise!

The primary purpose of ringing is service to the church but many ringers are not churchgoers and there is no requirement to be involved with the church, other than for Sunday morning service ringing when you are available.

If you're interested or would like to know more please contact
John Somers on 01223 811016, or email him at

bsomers@globalnet.uk

SWAFFHAM BULBECK BELLRINGERS

QUIZ NIGHT

Swaffham Prior Village Hall

7.30 pm ♣ Saturday

23rd February 2008

Tickets: £5 each ♣ To book a table contact

Jenny Brand ☎ (01638) 742161

or

Lynne Rand ☎ (01638) 741960

Jacket Potato Supper ♣ Raffle

Bring your own drinks and glasses

Proceeds in aid of St Mary's Church, Swaffham Prior



RED2GREENHOUSE

At Bottisham Village College

Reg Charity No 1112429

We are a local charity working with adults with learning difficulties and pupils from Bottisham Village College.

We can offer you a range of locally grown fresh vegetables,
and a selection of plants for all seasons.

Also home made jams and pickles.

We are open Tuesday - Friday 9.30am - 3.30pm

Saturday - 10.00am - 12.00pm

We are behind the College, just follow the signs.

Telephone 01223 813650

We Look Forward To Seeing You

Donations!

Many thanks to Ludmilla Trapp and Ann Kiddy for their recent very kind donations to the **Crier**. Although largely funded by advertising, the **Crier** could not do without donations such as these.

FREECYCLE

Please continue to look through your house/garden for things that you haven't used in years. If you have any offers or wants, please contact me on jun.thompson@tesco.net, phone on 01223 813362, or drop a note through 23 Longmeadow. Everything is free and nothing is expected in return. As a quick reminder, the list of freecycle items goes out in the Lodestar, Bulbeck Beacon and Swaffham Crier and if you have no success in these – you can list your offers/wants on Yahoo's freecycle.

Offers	Wants	Details:
Technics Stereo Tuner 235L Technics Amplifier SUZ 35 Technics Stereo Cassette M216 in glass cabinet Exercise machine		Gilbert, 01223 811230
Exercise bicycle (hardly used) 'Lloyd Loom' style chair		Annabel, 01223 813509 (Longmeadow)
CTX computer monitor		Jun, 01223 813362 (I am posting this on behalf of someone)
Modern style computer desk (teak): length 1.2m, depth 400mm, Height 800mm 11" computer monitor		Mr. & Mrs. Milne, 01223 813813
Suffolk Punch self propelled 17" cylinder mower/roller with Briggs and Stratton engine. Gas barbecue two burner tea trolley type with butane Calor Gas cylinder empty. Reed organ, pedal, mahogany, Chicago Cottage Organ circa 1880. Lots of stops, bellows need mending.		Robin, 01223 811632

From our Reporter at the Parish Council Meeting

THE STRENGTH – OR WEAKNESS, depending on your point of view – of the Parish Council is the steadiness of its agenda and discussions. There are few sudden revelations and, anticipating little happening in the first meeting of the year, I amused myself by considering items on the agenda which may make everyone sit up. For example we were told just before Christmas that “women with short legs are at an increased risk of developing liver disease”, while another recent finding is that “sufferers of restless legs syndrome” are “more likely to have a stroke or heart attack”. It doesn’t look good for women with restless short legs.



The Agenda did not disappoint. It contained most of the old favourites. Geoffrey did liven it up at the beginning by saying it was his 68th birthday that very day and that he couldn’t think of a better way to celebrate it.

For once the Parish Vacancy was filled immediately. The new member is John Jordan, who moved to Commissioner’s Farm in May 2001 and is Managing Director of a joint venture company operated by EDF energy. He has also been a school governor for the last 8 years. This appointment should add strength to our Parish Council.



That sign—the posts were supposed to be dark brown. They turned out purplish-brown - maybe the angle iron rusted?! Photo courtesy Geoffrey Woollard

Hazel Williams was very brief but joyfully announced that Mark Lloyd had decided to become the new CCC Chief Executive and that this will save £40,000 in trying to find a new one. It seems the government is only increasing its support grant by 2% which will result in a 5% rate increase which is 90p per band D per week. Hazel revealed they were always advised to quote any increase by the week as this sounds less.

Alan Alderson also reported that the government's support grant has gone up just 1%. Fly tipping is still a major problem and it seems that Martin Stacey will not send out his men if the tracks are too muddy, or if there is a great body of travellers around. Also for Health and Safety reasons men are no longer allowed to go into ditches to collect rubbish any more, and they have to wait for a grab lorry. Is Health and Safety becoming a threat to our Civil Liberties? The future of the Post Offices in Burwell, Bulbeck, Bottisham, Lode and Quy will be decided about May/June. Alan also reported that Loder Bevington has resigned after 6 years as Chairman of Swaffham Bulbeck PC.

High Street Signing and Naming has yet to be resolved though Geoffrey is now proposing a new sign called "Swaffham Bulbeck Road" and he had erected a sign in what he thought was the best position. Eric Day thought the whole thing was "a waste of time" and wondered why Geoffrey wanted it "when we don't have Reach Road and Burwell Road". Some people in the contested area still wish to remain in the High Street.

Under Steve Kent-Phillips' guidance the play area improvements and the installation of the new Play House will soon be completed. When finished and the weather improves there will be a big celebratory party.

There is no news on the flooding of the fens but on Wednesday 5 March the National Trust is giving another presentation on the Wicken Vision. If you want to see Geoffrey at his best, or worst, then do attend. Apart from being amused a number of serious matters will be discussed which will affect people in Swaffham Prior. Meanwhile Geoffrey, quoting the *Crier* as evidence, has raised the alleged questionable sale of Hurdle Hall Farm with the then Acting Chief Executive of the CCC.

Following a request from the PC via the *Crier* for land available for affordable housing, there has been an offer from John Munda who lives up the lane containing the non-working windmill. It was suggested and agreed that Hastoe Housing should be put in touch with Mr Munda. That is an especially interesting lane with lots of separate plots of land which can now be investigated following the departure of the previous owner of the nonworking windmill. But that's a separate story.

John Jordan asked whether the PC had a "Vision" of how much affordable housing the PC would like to see provided in Swaffham Prior. David Almond thought this a great idea and our very own Quality Clerk's eyes lit up as she reminded the meeting that the possibility of a Parish Plan had been thrown out last year, and asked whether it should be revived. Alan immediately supported the idea and said that if every village had a plan and Prior didn't then we could be at a disadvantage. He said that Bulbeck had a very good plan which had taken two years

to prepare. It seems they also had 4 areas mapped out for possible low cost housing over the next 10-15 years. But then it does appear that Bulbeck does have more land available (more local farmers?). John Jordan was especially keen on the plan and offered to be involved. Many of the PC were dazzled at the thought of having 'Visions' and 'Targets' just like Tony Blair and Gordon Brown. As a first step forward the PC asked if they could see the Bulbeck Plan and whether someone would come and talk to the PC. Karen thought this possible and that she would ask as "Bulbeck were very keen to have a closer relationship" – **except of course on the Hockey Pitch!!**

Steve then interposed and said he thought the Parish Plan was a complete waste of time, that they were doing well as a PC, and that "VISION" smacked too much of "management speak". Geoffrey supported Steve while others remained silent after such a sincerely held outburst. Alan admitted that Reach had asked for volunteers and no-one came forward.

To find out more about the Parish Plan read pages 6-7 of the February 2007 *Crier* which gives a very full account of its workings and the PC's discussion and decision. If the report is correct the PC has until March 2008 to apply. Maybe pages 6-7 should be reproduced when copy is a bit short.

And to find out more about women's short legs and restless legs consult the *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health* and *Neurology*.

Alastair Everitt



MOVEABLE FEAST

THIS YEAR'S moveable feast is to be held on Saturday 15th March and is as you know, for those of you who have been before, an event not to be missed.... three courses in three different places - sounds like madness but you have to be there. I will try not to let you down with venues but last year will be a hard act to follow!

If you haven't participated before make this year your first—there will be excellent food and warm hospitality to be had at each and every course—nothing scary I promise. Numbers are of course restricted and so it is on a first come first served basis. It is NOT "cliquish" (did check this in the dictionary for spelling) —I participate for goodness sake!!!!

Profit is for the church, it is really good fun, where else do you get three courses, loads of wine, exceptional company and all for £17.50 a head??

Waiting by the 'phone for your call to book a place!

Janet Willmott
743472

St Mary's Concert

dedicated to the memory of Frances Morrill

Saturday 2nd February 2008

at 7.30 pm in St Mary's Church Swaffham Bulbeck

St Mary's Singers and Players

directed by Matthew Rudd

**Brandenburg Concerto No 3: JS Bach
Concerto for Flute & Harp: WA Mozart
Requiem: G Fauré**

Interval refreshments

Retiring collection

Proceeds for St Mary's Church Restoration Fund and a local charity



Spuds in Buckets

10 March – 13 September 2008

NO - NOT A VARIATION ON JACKET POTATOES - this is a new fund-raising venture for St Mary's Church. In order to raise money to build a much-needed toilet in church – The Maryloo Project – we have devised a community-wide venture which we hope will appeal to all ages.

For a payment of just £5 a family or individual or group (Cubs, Youth Club?) will receive a bucket and seed potatoes. Buckets will be available from 10 March and purchasers then have until the Village Harvest Show on Saturday 13 September to grow the heaviest yield possible. Here's a challenge for a farming parish! Can you grow more potatoes than your neighbours? Can children do better than their parents? Are your fingers greener than those of the allotment holders? Is your home-made compost the secret of success? Can the farmers beat the office workers? Will we be beaten by growers from Reach or Burwell?

Don't miss out on Swaffham Prior's great Spud growing challenge!

To order a bucket, please contact

Dee Noyes: telephone – 743864; email – noyeshome@swaffham-prior.co.uk

Crier Profile: Brenda Wilson

In this concluding instalment, Brenda tells us how things went wrong at Swaffham Prior School, how they got right again, and about her new life in retirement.

In 1998 Ros Aisbitt, an excellent teacher, and a Christian, left to work on one of those missionary liners, stopping off at different places – if you talk to anybody, they’ll say, ah she was wonderful. I think we were her first teaching post. She was with us two, three years. It’s always difficult when people leave at the end of the autumn term because most people who are wanting to change their jobs have done it in the summer. I knew she would be difficult to replace. We took on a man, who interviewed very well, a complete contrast to Ros and we had high hopes of him but it didn’t work out. He had to be supported in the classroom. Then we were notified of an OFSTED inspection later that term. So OFSTED came in. They were not used to small schools. Neither of them had been a head teacher; the leader must have been a deputy in a very big school to have gained the experience to become an inspector. Very cold, no warmth. Anyway – they put us in Special Measures – too high a proportion of unsatisfactory teaching - which was devastating: one of the worst times of my life. Their decision had to be verified by HMI (Her Majesty’s Inspector) so we had an HMI come to spend the day with us – who was as different again, she really was – a lovely woman. At the end of her inspection day she came in and she said ‘Do you understand what Special Measures is?’ – I said yes. She said, ‘Do you understand what Serious Weakness is?’ Well no, I hadn’t really thought that through, with the weight of Special Measures. We had had to make an action plan, get the governors and county involved, and all the rest of it. It’s a huge weight of work. So she talked me through what serious weakness was, then she went off, and I had the strong feeling that she was going to recommend that we should be in Serious Weakness rather than Special Measures –slightly less devastating...but Chris Woodhead, the Chief Inspector of Schools then, had apparently decided the decision should stand. The County stepped in to support us but the one Advisor, after one meeting with us, sent off a report to OFSTED, without giving us a copy until later, which contained a number of inaccuracies, presumptions about me and about the school which were just not right.

**Special
Measures
... I was
devastated**

I was devastated. You feel a complete failure as it is without having things made worse. I didn’t want it to look like sour grapes, so with my Chair of Governor’s support I sent it off to my union general secretary and asked her what she thought – and she came back in total agreement with me, and more. It wasn’t right. I don’t mind taking the blame if I’m in the wrong, but this just wasn’t right. So Roz Chalmers (my Chair of Governors and a tower of strength) and I wrote to the County with our complaint. I had two senior officials from County come to see me. And as they walked into school, with stern faces, I thought, they think I’m going to sue. I told them, no, I didn’t want that, but she’s (the advisor) got to be told, and I want

them to put it right. I think she did have a very severe reprimand because we didn't see her again at school. We put our action plan forward and got on with it. As part of the process we had to be inspected every term, so come autumn we were inspected by an HMI – (who were the professionals before OFSTED, which was much more of a political appointment). She was great. She did her day, she went off. We carried on with our action plan. Then in January next year, she phoned to say she wanted to arrange an early visit, before half term, because she wanted to recommend that we came out of Special Measures in the summer term. So on the strength of one visit she had decided we were no longer special measures material. The HMI came for her second visit and made her recommendation, came back in the summer term – and (laughs) it could have been disastrous. One of the new teachers we'd appointed was on playground duty and was stung by a wasp or something. She came in and said she felt a bit woozy. She went on to teach her class with the HMI sitting in– and taught a good lesson! – came up to the office afterwards, saying she felt strange, and collapsed – anaphylactic shock. We got the ambulance out, she was whisked away and treated and had a full recovery I'm glad to say.

So we came out of Special Measures but we had to be inspected within a couple of years, as part of the terms of that. We were happily going along. David had been talking about going for a headship for some years but hadn't been getting anywhere. After the Special Measures and the amount of work involved in getting the school right, and the paperwork – he decided he wasn't going to go for a headship - that in fact, he'd had enough. He resigned in the October half term. Again, that time of the year... I tried to persuade him to stay, but he was adamant.

We advertised, had a limited choice of applicants and appointed the most experienced. Unfortunately we had the same sort of situation as when Ros Aisbitt left. The class was very unsettled by the change and found it difficult to relate to their new teacher. It took quite some effort to get them to accept that whatever happened David was not coming back. SATs were coming up, lots of practice work...a bit deadly dull for them. But they got on with it.

Three of us in plaster and one maternity leave ... but ... if the head were in post they wouldn't defer.

There were more changes, both from County and Government...Then, in 2002, we were told we were going to have another OFSTED, in the second week of September. This was the one that should show that things were going according to plan. However, one of my teachers was on maternity leave; we had a jobshare that was working very well, just over half the week each so that they had time to work together, we had Sue & I in the infants, a full-timer in class 2 and in class 4. One of the jobshare people tripped in Tesco and broke a toe, so her leg was in plaster; then deputy head was on a training course to do with dance, and she snapped her Achilles tendon. She was

confined to bed; then in the middle of June I slipped and broke my leg. Three of us in plaster and one maternity leave. That was the Monday. We had a governors' meeting on Wednesday night. One of the governors said 'you shouldn't be here Brenda, you should be on sick leave.' We were planning for the OFSTED in

September. The Chair asked if we could defer it. We got the answer by Friday: no: if the head were in post they wouldn't defer. So I thought, that's it – I'm not going to put the school at risk and go through all that with half my staff out for the preparation period so I put in my resignation. And then they deferred it. The inspection was in the Spring of 2003 and I'm glad to say the school did well, but I hadn't planned to leave then – I'd intended going on another four years, up to about now really.

The first year after that, because I hadn't prepared for retirement I didn't know what I was going to do, I'd worked virtually all my life – trying to find something that suited...But gradually I began to realise there is life outside school. A neighbour whose children I had helped advise with some problems her children had had and whose children subsequently transferred to SP school, worked for the WEA - the Workers' Education Association. Started in 1904 as a means of educating workers who hadn't had a formal education, it does some accredited courses but it also does some classes to respond to local demand, non-vocational classes, and a lot of work with the handicapped. And she said they needed somebody to run a course for volunteers in schools, to give them background information and training. I met the woman responsible for the classes and it was just tailor made for me. The students do a course of 10 weeks – one day of study plus a minimum two hours a week in school, plus the associated work putting their file together for accreditation – it gives them background knowledge so that they can better help the children that they're working with as volunteers. The ultimate aim, for most of them is to get a paid position as teaching assistants. It is an accreditation but you have to be realistic – the average number of people in a class is 15 but I've had 30, and there are more people there than there might be jobs available. But it gives them insight into helping children learn. It's a very good course. and it's great for me. It's like going home, after all the work I've done with adults, and teaching a subject I've got a vast experience in. So: that first one was in Burwell – since then we've taken it all over the county, even Romsey St Mary, which is up on the farthest north-western reaches of the county. I'm doing my eleventh one now.

And I draw, I go to painting classes – art was one of my main subjects at training college. And I haven't broken my links with SP. I love being an 'honorary villager'. When I came I wanted to make the school part of the community and we always did lots of things to encourage the children and to bring the community into school – we always made sure that everybody knew what was going on and I wanted to feel a part of that village. And when I stopped –

**I love being
an 'honorary
villager'**

people were really very kind, and I got asked to lots of things – Kate Child asked me to get involved in functions, then I was asked if I would be treasurer to the church, which I did – with much trepidation – we were in the black the year I did it! we'd been in the red the year before, and money's been pretty tight since then too...then I was asked if I would be churchwarden and I said I would do that on condition that I gave up the treasurer. And I get involved in other activities, I read my stories at the variety show, I'm good at selling raffle tickets - My step-granddaughter accused me of being cheeky when she accompanied me selling raffle tickets at the Jazz on a

Summer evening one year! But it's all in good fun

I'm still involved with the church; I've got a lot of good friends there. I still hope to do some voluntary work abroad. I always planned that when I retired I would do some work for VSO. I've got one or two things like that I wanted to do – I was going to go to Palestine in summer, to do some language work, taking the place of a friend who had broken her wrist but then my son and his family came over from Kenya and I broke my leg so I didn't go. But perhaps next year. Who knows? Life is very full and you don't know what's going to turn up do you?

FURRY DOG-MOTHER!



AS APPROPRIATE for the pantomime season, Kit-kat the kitten has found a real “furry dog-mother” in the shape of our 5 year-old golden retriever cross, Lucky.

The grey and white kitten, now four months old, arrived at our house in late November and soon struck up a friendship with our just-about-to-be-neutered bitch. Lucky has never had puppies, but when, after about two weeks, Kit-kat started suckling, Lucky started producing milk – and the arrangement seems to suit them both!

Dee Noyes

RETURN OF MINNIE

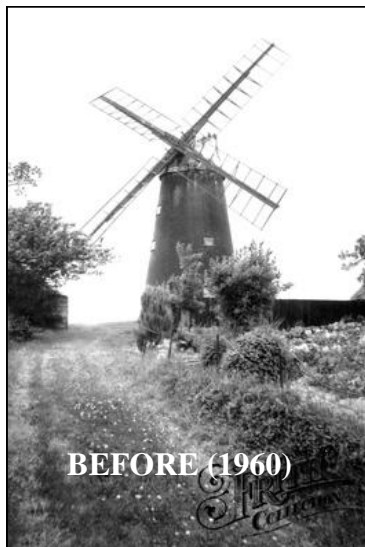
MINNIE “THE CAT”, whose furry features have adorned several **WANTED** posters around Swaffham Prior is now back in custody. Currently serving life in Swaffham Bulbeck, Minnie escaped after a visit to Swaffham Prior Vet, Alan Gould. In a spectacular break-out from a closely guarded high-security cat-carrier, she disappeared up Stocks Farm drive and was not seen for a week.

Specialist cat profiler Maggie Cotner was called in to pinpoint the likely location of Minnie's hideout, and after a short stakeout, she gave herself up without a fight, calmly walking out from the Stocks Farm hedge where she had been holed up all along. But a later incident resulted in some injury to the arresting officer, and a Prior dog, a close relative of Lucky, was placed under caution for incitement and behaviour likely to cause a breach of the peace.

A Staff Reporter

SWAFFHAM PRIOR MILL

2008



Restoration completed in September 2007, this much-loved local landmark now sports sails far more powerful than before, and grinds locally grown wheat to produce organic flour supplied to our local bakery (Lanes of Burwell) and on sale at the Mill. See the Miller's letter on Page 2.



One of the new sails
being hoisted into place
last September.



THAT PANTO: VILLAGE VARIETY 2007



A SMASH HIT at December 1st's Village Variety Show, Snow White was directed by Kaye Lewinski. The principals (from top left, and interspersed with a number of Village Elves)— Prince: Amanda Parton, Snow White: Fleur Routley, Mirror: Peter Jost, Henchman: Andrew Noyes, Wicked Queen: Brenda Wilson, Narrator April Cook.

TV adverts during the 'Christmas Period Sales' seemed to be exclusively for enormous settees, intended for castles or furniture showrooms, so—

Let's buy a ten-seater settee at Christmas;
Your parents are coming, and mine,
There'll be the two boys, and their partners
So we could all sit together, in line.

We can choose between leather or fabric
From designs, either complex or drear,
And we won't have to pay for it next week,
In fact not 'till the end of next year.

And it looks like we'll make a huge saving,
Though it won't leave much space in the
room

As it'll be full with the new one;
For the old one I'm afraid that spells
DOOM.....

But that's not a problem, when it's in the
van,
We'll go to a field that I've seen,
And leave it just there, it won't be alone,
There's some old chairs and a washing
machine..

Ophir

CAROLS AT THE VILLAGE HALL

It was another night of fun and lusty singing in the Village Hall under the guidance of Hilary Sage as the Compère without compare. Hilary set everyone alight, made Ron and Betty Prime a perfect pair of Turtle Doves, and Peter Hart the best Partridge in a Pear Tree that's ever been heard. She also contributed to the "Add another verse to *I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas*" competition by adding and singing six new verses containing some biting and brilliant commentary on various parts of the village. All six are reproduced on page xxx.

Andrew Noyse's band has expanded with Helena Pumfrey on violin and in the middle of the evening the Gay Bulleid Prize was presented to Caroline and James Matheson for their work on the *Crier*. There appears to be a change as "community contribution" as well as "good works" becomes a possible reason for the award.

Thanks to all who helped to make it a success and the whole village owes a thank you to Dave and Sue Jackson who provided the lighting for the tree outside the Hall and also to the Tea Club which decorated with impeccable taste the tree inside the Hall, the erection of which was aided by Bob Matheson.

Alastair Everitt

Six New Verses of *I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas* Which were Written and Sung By Hilary Sage

I'm dreaming of a WHITE Christmas
With High Street houses painted
cream,
Or a tasteful tint
Or just a hint -
Of grey - or is this just a dream?

I'm dreaming of a WET Christmas
With muddy droves all flooded o'er,
And the water lapping
And ducks a-quacking,
As Fenland washes 'neath our doors.

I'm dreaming of a BRIGHT Christmas
With Fairview Grove and their bonfire,
And with Lower End lighting
And neighbours fighting
To pen their anguish to The Crier.

I'm dreaming of a NEW Christmas
With classy building on the hill,
And the poo-free edges
Of well-cut hedges
Leading tourists to a well-kept mill.

I'm dreaming of a QUIET Christmas
With tel'phone boxes unvandalised
And the general welter
Near our bus shelter
No longer always scandalized.

I'm dreaming of a GOOD Christmas
When neighbours gather in the Hall,
Just to stop a while
And share a smile
To say 'Happy Christmas to you all'.

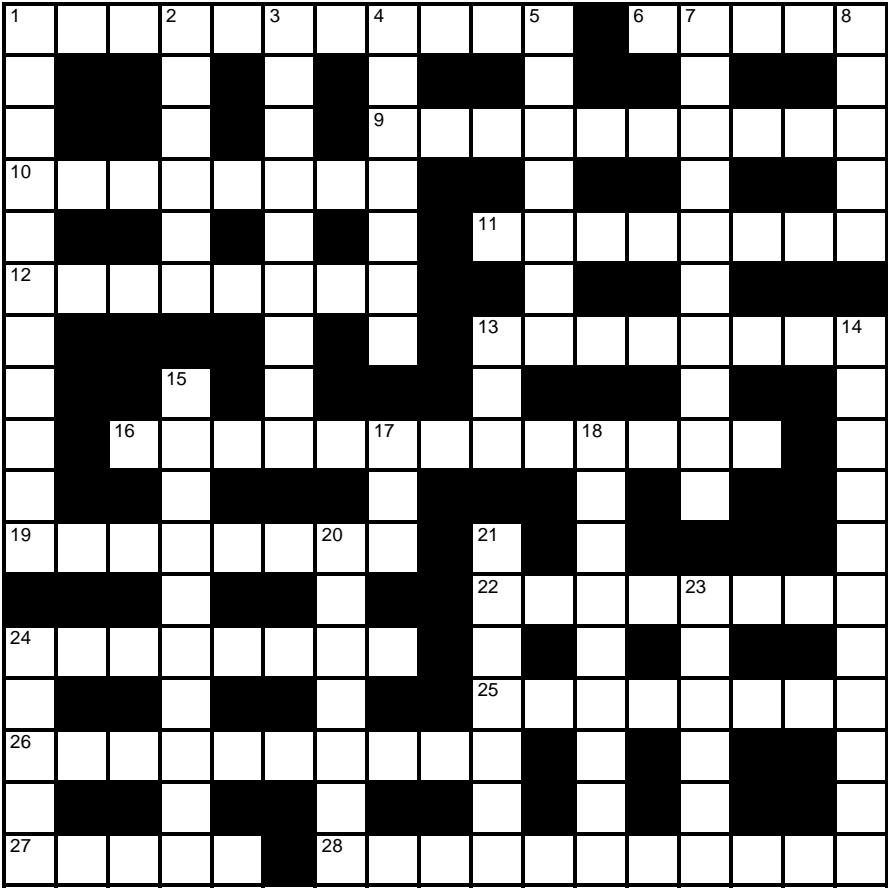
Crossword Number 49

Compiled by

Sponsored by **The Red Lion**

OUNCE

A DIY crossword for you this month. Send your answers to the editors by 18 February 2008. The first correct solution out of the hat will win a free meal at the Red Lion—See the manager at the pub for full details.



Name:.....	
Address.....	
.....	Tel:.....

Across

- 1 Kitchen surface submerged by DIYer? (11)
- 6 One direction the French take. Western for example (5)
- 9/4 Flexible bridge for use by DIYer (10,7)
- 10 Small catcall from Cromwellian confused by set of bells (8)
- 11 Sailing ships used by DIYers (8)
- 12 DIYers, beware of this hyperactive person (4,4)
- 13 Edna Mudd muddled postscript (8)
- 16 Interpretations made by DIYer. (13)
- 19 Draw back from king bringing honour for theatrical collection (8)
- 22 DIYer doesn't need 28A for this (8)
- 24 Large coelacanth, I'll strongly wager, hides formicaries (3-5)
- 25 "Tax!" I rage wildly, "as a favour?" (2,6)
- 26 Tumbler: Daily for DIYer's use? (10)
- 27 Rejoice! Former last month (5)
- 28 Record musical bar for DIYer's use (4,7)
- 3 Big cats chewed and swallowed by big birds; while DIYer ____ the walls (9)
- 4 See 9 Across
- 5 Left king under mangled wood DIYer would not like? (7)
- 7 DIYer caring for his tools with grannies' sauce mix? (10)
- 8 Where DIYer gets rid of his tools or stores them? (5)
- 13 Bow of Noah's vessel, we hear (3)
- 14 Ancient name misconstrued by DIYer's care for tools (11)
- 15 Chilly cheat used by DIYer (4-6)
- 17 Herb, you'll be sorry! (3)
- 18 Inspire cocktail, tangiest I add (9)
- 20 Dance on a street that DIYer uses for bed (7)
- 21 Back up English right against old tongue (7)
- 23 Animal calls misleadingly "I'm a sow" (6)
- 24 DIYer wants to get this right at the corner (5)

Down

- 1 Flyer proverb used by DIYer. (8,3)
- 2 DIYer without tool, new to DIY? (6)

We congratulate Bob & Julie Nunn, the winners of last month's competition, who should collect their prize certificate from the editors. Honourable mentions go to Margaret Beckley, Elly Catling and Shirley Wilkins.

Solution to crossword no. 48

R	E	A	L	I	S	T	I	C		S	C	R	U	B
I		D		A		A		A		S	U		A	Y
G	R	O	M	M	E	T		R	A	N	K	I	N	G
H		R		B		A		R		B		N		U
T	R	I	V	I	A		T	I	T	A	N	I	U	M
E		N		C		T		E		T		E		
O	R	G	Y		S	H	I	R	E	H	O	R	S	E
U			B		E		B		E				G	
S	E	R	B	O	C	R	O	A	T		S	I	L	O
		O		U		M		G		S		N		M
C	A	S	H	F	L	O	W		S	T	I	G	M	A
O		E		F		S		R		R		R		N
P	L	A	Y	A	C	T		O	R	I	G	A	M	I
S		T		N		A		L		N		I		A
E	J	E	C	T		T	E	L	E	G	E	N	I	C

The Annual Boxing Day Hockey Match

Only **Arial Black** can truly reflect the doom and gloom which descended on Swaffham Prior when told ten days before Boxing Day that the Bulbeck pitch was in such poor condition that only football games were allowed to be played because the hockey match could seriously damage the pitch. The Bulbeck organizer also told me that he was quite pleased because he had become tired of organizing it and that no-one else in Bulbeck would take it on.

I knew exactly what he felt and had intended to make this my own last year. For the occasion I had put together a very special and interesting team, with many reserves, and more importantly I had two very good umpires in the hope that the rougher elements could be kept under control. Also we were going to widen the goal to give the spectators more goals to cheer. A shame. I will now have to arrange a team next year.

On the other hand it may not have been a bad thing to give it a rest though the actual Boxing Day morning was glorious and many would have shared the comment of Dr Mark Towriss from Bulbeck:- **“I can’t believe it. We absolutely rely on a little ritualized tribal violence to redress the balance of Christmas from all this ‘love and goodwill’ stuff! Seriously I’m really sorry that the tradition isn’t to be upheld this year. It’s a great event.”**

Some of the younger members of our team said that Bulbeck were “running scared”. This is certainly not the case and if consulted Bulbeck would certainly have played. For those who have recently arrived in the village I give below a little bit of sporting history.

The very first hockey match was on Boxing Day 1988. Bulbeck fielded an excellent team while we turned out the usual miscellaneous rabble you associate with mixed hockey. We did very well to lose 2-4. The same make up of teams met in 1989 and it became very war-like. We managed to draw 0-0 but it was not good news. The longest anyone was off work was two months and there was such bitterness the match was abandoned until 1993. In the meantime Prior had regrouped, adopted a new approach and signed on new players. Below is a complete list of the results with the Prior score appearing first.

1988 (2-4)	1989 (0-0)	1993 (2-0)	1994 (3-0)
1995 (3-0)	1996 (4-2)	1997 (0-2)	1998 (0-2)
1999 (3-0)	2000 (3-0)	2001 (5-1)	2002 (2-1)
2003 (0-0)	2004 (3-0)	2005 (1-0)	2006 (0-0)

So, Prior Won 10, Lost 3 and Drew 3. This is quite a reasonable record.





BURWELL SURGERY NEWSLETTER

We hope you all had a Merry Christmas and we wish you a very happy and healthy New Year. We would like to thank all the patients who have so generously given us boxes of biscuits, sweets and Christmas goodies. They are very much appreciated by us all.

We would also like to thank everyone who has completed a patient questionnaire for us. They are used to analyse ways in which we can improve our service to patients. We will let you know the results of the survey when we get them later on this year.

Unfortunately, we are experiencing a much higher level than usual of missed appointments at the surgery. In November there were **104** appointments that were not kept by patients and in December there were **115** appointments that were not kept. Please could we remind patients with an appointment which they subsequently find that they do not need, to contact the surgery as soon as possible to cancel the appointment so that it is available for other patients to book.



WI Notes

Our speaker this month was Rosie Wenham who is a Magistrate on the Cambridge Bench. We found out about the work of a magistrate and what is involved in hearing cases and the rules that have to be applied when deciding on an appropriate sentence. We had the opportunity to look at two case studies and think about all the aspects we would need to consider and then say what we thought should be the sentence. It was a very interesting exercise.

Next month our speaker is Betty Prime who is going to tell us about a holiday in New Zealand under the title 'Tales of the Unexpected' - not your usual holiday talk.

Our congratulations go to Caroline and James Matheson who were the winners of the Gay Bullied Award this year in recognition of their hard work for all the village as Editors of the Swaffham Crier for many years - Well Done!

If you are still looking for that new interest in 2008 then come and give us a try on Monday 18th February at 7:30 in the Village Hall - see you there



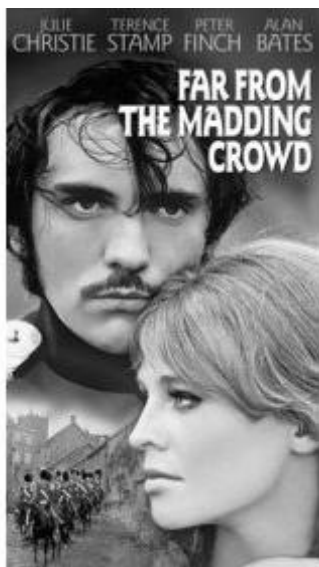
Gob-smacked Editor receiving Gay Bulleld Award.

Pat Cook

The Reading Group Reads.....

Far from the Madding Crowd

By Thomas Hardy



“When Farmer Oak smiled, the corners of his mouth spread till they were an unimportant distance of his ears, his eyes were reduced to chinks, and diverging wrinkles appeared round them, extending upon his countenance like the rays in a rudimentary sketch of the rising sun.”

So opens one of Thomas Hardy’s wonderful tales. Some of us confessed we fondly remembered Alan Bates as Gabriel Oak in the film made decades ago, along with Julie Christie, the swash buckling Terence Stamp and the brooding Peter Finch!

The novel was written in 1874, the year he was married to his first wife, although he never saw his manuscript in print for many years, as it was originally altered and serialised in the London Cornhill Magazine.

It’s the story of three very different men and their love for the beautiful, vivacious and firey Bathsheba Everdene, set in rural, mid-19th century Wessex

(Dorset) against the backdrop of the farming year and the most endearing group of agricultural characters—their unrelenting tough lives interspersed with rural celebrations—shearing suppers, Lady Days and Harvest Suppers—and of course the gossip at their local hostelry: the Warren’s Malthouse.

Gabriel Oak’s love is amazingly loyal, patient and constant; Sergeant Troy is outrageously gallant, an exhibitionist and not to be trusted; Boldwood’s is obsessional, frantic and unrequited (Does this sound like Mills and Boon? I do hope not, because it certainly isn’t!)

There is too, of course, the lovely Fanny Robin, who when we meet her is a fallen woman, but who’s loved by Troy. She goes to the wrong church for her wedding and her beloved, unable to stand the humiliation, leaves and never marries her.

Farmer (when we first meet him, although soon to become a hired shepherd because of a tragic accident) Oak, is rejected by the very young Bathsheba,



The 1968 film we all remember so well

who said she'd love a wedding, but not a husband. She is then swept off her feet, and secretly marries Francis Troy. He soon regrets this, grows bored and meets again his lovely Fanny, who dies in the Workhouse before he can rescue her. Meanwhile, Boldwood harasses Bathsheba in his growing obsession, particularly when all think Troy has been drowned at sea.

Alas, Troy, cruelly and calculatingly reappears at Boldwood's Christmas Party he is having for Bathsheba, and is shot dead by the broken-hearted man.

The grief-stricken and heart-broken Bathsheba buries her husband in the local churchyard alongside his true love Fanny, whose burial some months before she had also personally arranged (Hardy's own maternal grandmother had buried her unfaithful, violent husband alongside his lover when he had died).

Many months later, when her self-esteem is at its lowest and Gabriel tells her that he's going to emigrate, she visits him and makes it very clear she'd like to marry him. "They'll think I've come courting you—how dreadful!". "And quite right too", said Oak "I've danced at your skittish heels, my beautiful Bathsheba, for many a long mile, and many a long day, and is it hard to begrudge me one visit?".

So they are married, and everyone is happy that they are finally man and wife.

To come:

The Nine Tailors, by Dorothea L Sayers, Wed, Feb 6 at Kent House

Cold Comfort Farm, by Stella Gibbons, March 5 at the Hollingsworths, Lower End.

New members always welcome!

Margaret Joyce



VILLAGE GARDENERS

I predicted that Twigg-Way would get us off to a good start in the Year, and she certainly did, with her highly entertaining talk "An incitement to Early Marriage—A History of the Allotment".

The 1922 Allotment Act's definition "An area of land not exceeding 40 poles, cultivated by the occupier, for growing fruit and vegetables for consumption by him and his family." From time to time hens, ducks and bees were also allowed!

The early history of allotment started in the 18th Century around the time of the first enclosures, when rural labourers suddenly had a lot less land to grow food for their family and to feed their livestock. This meant potentially a lot more people in extreme poverty who would have to go "on the parish"—and extra expense nobody wanted.

In 1819, a Public Act empowered the Parish Wardens to let up land for the "promotion of industry amongst the poor". They could grow their own food and not rely on parish relief. Between 1831 and 1845, as part of the general Enclosures Act, 1/4 of an acre was allotted to poor families to rent.

Farmers were generally not in favour of this, as they imagined their workforce

“ If you had an allotment, you had to attend church on Sunday (your only day off) and you couldn’t dig it after 9am! ”

would be too tired to work for them properly! That with a very small piece of land, they would be slightly better off and get married early and of course have far too many children. So it was decided it would be a much better idea to rent allotments to the ill and elderly! (Difficult to believe?)

Landlords had no statutory duty to provide land for rental, and if they did it had strings attached—mostly moral ones. If you had an allotment, you had to attend church on Sunday (your only day off) and you couldn’t dig it after 9am! If you got drunk, or transgressed, then you had your rental agreement

terminated. Social control at its best.

Urban-suburban allotment was much less contentious and political. The huge growth of suburbia at the end of the 19th century gave rise to “guinea plots” (their cost) which the new middle-class home-owner could rent. They were more upmarket, they could be fenced, and *flowers* could be grown. Yes, flowers — a privilege denied the rural labourers. An allotment was fashionable.

By 1915 and the Great War, the conception of an allotment had changed. They were now a weapon against the blockading German army and their sinking of precious cargoes of fruit and vegetables. The number of plots grew from 405,00 to 1/2 million by the end of the war, a result of the huge propaganda campaign to encourage people to grow their own food: we would not be starved into submission.

In the inter-war years, the Government lost interest, as they now wanted land for building, but changed their minds again in 1940. Parks and public places were dug up, and even the moat of the Tower of London was a huge allotment!

“Dig for Victory” and “Enlist in the Allotment Army” were common war cries. The propaganda and availability of land meant that one in five families had a plot.

Since the 1950’s allotments have gone in and out of favour. In the mid-sixties, the Torpe report advised that allotments should be “designer” in concept and for the leisured middle-classes, with a built in social scene. This did not take off, but by the seventies, the “Good Life” movement was developing, and to the good, old plots survived.

Currently, they are again “trendy”, encouraging wildlife, bio-diversity, organic food, and they keep developers off brown sites.

Recently, the RHS (Royal Horticultural Society) awarded a gold medal to “an allotment” at Chelsea! They’ve come a long way.

Next month’s meeting: Tuesday 19th February—Mr Cotton talking about Climbers and Wall Plants. Everyone welcome.

Margaret Joyce

Notes from the Parish Council

December 2007 & January 2008 Meetings

Chairman Mr John Covill chaired the December meeting with 7 Parish Councillors & 1 member of the Public in attendance and the January 2008 meeting with 8 Parish Councillors (following co-option) and 2 members of the Public in attendance.

Minutes of Meetings: These were agreed.

Parish Council Vacancy due to Resignation: ECDC had confirmed that the vacancy could be filled by co-option. At the January meeting a letter was received from Mr John Jordan of Commissioners Farm Swaffham Prior Fen requesting to be considered for this vacancy. It was unanimously agreed to invite Mr Jordan to fill the vacancy. Mr Jordan completed the “Declaration of Acceptance of Office” and joined the meeting.

Reports: CCC – Cllr Hazel Williams
ECDC – Cllr Allen Alderson

Correspondence Received: This was reported.

Matters Arising (for information only)

(December meeting) - John Covill confirmed that overgrown hedgerows on Station Road were to be cut back.

Members Allowances – Report of Parish Remuneration Panel: (December meeting)

ECDC Democratic Services confirmed that the Independent Parish Remuneration Panel had concluded its work and issued a report recommending levels for the payment of Parish Basic Allowance and Travel & subsistence allowances for Parish Councillors. The Parish Council was required to consider whether such allowances should be paid to its members and at what level, although payment of such allowances was not compulsory.

It was agreed that no payment would be made to Councillors for their time but that, as currently, out-of-pocket expenses for travel, subsistence, training, etc., would be paid

Neighbourhood Panels: (December meeting)

Andrew Camps attended as PC representative the Neighbourhood Panels Induction Evening at ECDC’s offices. Andrew gave a summary noting that 5 Neighbourhood Panels were to be established covering the District. These panels were to be made up of Parish, Town & City Councils together with District and County Councillors with Parish Councils having majority representation on all panels. Other local organisations were also to have representatives on the Panels. Notices were displayed on noticeboards detailing date, time and venues for the meetings. (January meeting) – Andrew Camps reported on the first official Neighbourhood Panel meeting. Items discussed at the meeting included flytipping and travellers.

Review of Grasscutting Services following end of 3-year Contract Period:

(December/January meetings) Three contractors were asked to provide tenders for the above. Following lack of tenders returned, it was agreed to defer this item to the February meeting.

Road Safety Measures/Traffic Calming, Mill Hill: (January meeting)

Confirmation of successful bid for the above was received from CCC Highways.

High Street – Signs & Naming: (December meeting)

A letter was received from ECDC attaching a location map of current road signs and the properties that would be affected by the proposed changes/renaming. Geoffrey Woollard agreed to contact the owners of properties affected to ask their views and report to the next meeting.

(January meeting) – Geoffrey reported on his discussions with property owners. This was to be further discussed with ECDC.

Work needed to Horse Chestnut Tree in Play Area: (December meeting)

A letter received from the Parochial Charities brought to the PC's attention the need for some cutting back and pruning of the above tree. They requested that the PC obtained estimates and paid for the work to be done. Following discussion it was agreed that as the owners of the Play Area the cost of the works should be the responsibility of the Trustees.

Refurbishment of Play Area: (January meeting)

The above work by Anglian Playground Services was almost complete. The meeting congratulated Steve Kent-Phillips for his hard work in putting the scheme together. Steve confirmed that the final piece of play area furniture would be purchased at the start of the new financial year as part of the agreement with ECDC for grant funding.

The Lodes & The Fens: No further report.

Final Confirmation of Precept for 2008/09: (January meeting)

This was confirmed at £14,500.

Accounts for payment: These were agreed.

Planning Approvals:

a) Approval of Reserved Matters – Land Adjacent to Water Tower, Mill Hill.

Reminder:

It is that time of year again when the Parish Council would ask that you check on your boundary hedges, etc., to ensure that they are cut back to your boundary line and not encroaching over the public footpaths, so as not to cause any difficulties for the users of the footpaths. Thank you for your help.

Items for the Next Agenda will include:

Grasscutting Contract

The Lodes & The Fens

Mill Hill - Road Safety/Traffic Calming

High Street Signs & Naming

Neighbourhood Panels

Parish Plan.

Open Question Time:

General discussion.

Should anyone require any further information on any of the reported items above, please contact me.

The next Parish Council meeting will take place on Thursday, 7th February 2008 (note the change of date from the 14th so as not to interfere with Valentines Night!) at 7.30pm in the Village Hall. All are welcome to attend.

Karen King – Clerk to the Parish Council

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



**EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL**

From our District
Councillor
Allen Alderson

The Government Revenue Support Grant

The Council has been told how much Revenue Support Grant it might receive over the next three years. We had been expecting a 2.5% increase in grant in each of the next three years (reflecting an uplift for inflation and population growth and a deduction for efficiency). In the event, the Council looks set to receive increases of just 1% this year with slightly smaller increases in each of the following two years. Clearly, these are very disappointing figures representing a budget shortfall this year of just over £100,000 with the gap increasing to over £300,000 in two years time.



In order to keep Council Tax increases to a minimum, we had already formulated efficiency saving of £283,000 in this years budget.

Ely Masterplan

The Council is in the process of producing an Ely Masterplan. This will help formulate a clear vision for the future growth and development of the City. Significant issues being discussed include the future levels of population and employment growth that are appropriate, desirable, and achievable for Ely, and the transport linkages which need to be developed.

It has sometimes been suggested to me by local residents that as the Councillor for the Swaffham Ward, I should be looking more towards Newmarket as our centre (*and also, by the two-fingered typing Editors, that Allen should get a typewriter. Eds*) . Whilst several of us councillors (*I bet they have typewriters. Eds*) from the south of the district recognise the advantages of using Newmarket's facilities, particularly with their new swimming pool nearing fruition, we are none-the-less the East Cambs and not Forest Heath Councillors.

Neighbourhood Panels

I recently attended the first meeting of the South Area Neighbourhood Panel. This was held in Swaffham Prior Village Hall. The South Area covers fifteen parishes in the district from Burwell to the North, to Kirtling in the South. It is mainly comprised of County, District and Parish Councillors, together with representatives from the police.

It is not intended to be just another talking shop, but as a local forum to highlight parish concerns that can then be acted upon.

Recycling

The Environment and Transport Committee recently recommended the adoption of the countryside Waste Prevention Plan. This will investigate effective ways to encourage residents to minimise waste being put out for collection. It was also agreed that from the start of April the Council will reduce the number of replacement green sacks from 10 to 4. The Council do not intend to limit the number of sacks collected, additional sacks will continue to be available for residents to purchase at local stores.

Fly Tipping

Fly tipping appears to be on the increase. I would say to all those involved that it becomes costly for them Council to clear up, therefore a drain on the ratepayer. It is environmentally unfriendly, spoiling the look of our countryside, and can be a very real danger to wildlife.

It mainly appears to be household items that with a little care and consideration could be disposed of in the correct manner.



From our Local County Councillor
Hazel Williams

The new **Chief Executive** of the County Council will be Mark Lloyd who is presently at Durham CC. He will start his job in April. This is the candidate who withdrew after the appointments fiasco that forced Shona Johnston to resign.

The **government financial settlement** for the county council is just 2% this year so it is likely that the Cabinet will propose 5% increase in Council Tax (90p per Band D property per week) and some services will still have to be cut. Decisions on which services, will be made in the next two months. Cambridge County Council has the third lowest council tax in the country.



I will be holding surgeries on County Council matters at Centre Peace on The Causeway in Burwell on the second Saturday each month from 10.30am – 12.30pm. The next two dates are Feb 9th and March 8th. Please come along if you would rather discuss an issue in person or ring me on the number below.

...and from January:

Cambridgeshire County Council Cabinet

Following the resignation of Cllr Shona Johnston, leader of the council and the conservative group, there have been two other resignations. Cllr Alan Melton has resigned for family reasons and Cllr Victor Lucas to devote time to the chairmanship of the Primary Care Trust provider board. Cllr Keith Walters (past leader) will take over in the interim until next May. Cllr Mike Bradney has now been appointed to the cabinet and there has been a reshuffle of roles.

The search for a new Chief Executive will begin again in the New Year. Gordon Jeyes, currently Deputy Chief Executive for Children and Young People's Services, will be acting Chief Executive until an appointment is made.

Doorstep Library Volunteers

The organisers would like to hear from anyone who would like to become a volunteer. The service is designed to ensure that people who can't get to a Library – perhaps because of ill health or mobility problems – can still access the thousands of print and talking books, CDs and other items available for loan in County Council Libraries. There are 300 volunteers across the county.

Transport Roadshow

Cambridgeshire County Council wants people's views on a package of transport improvements designed to tackle congestion. Until February 13, a series of 23 roadshows will tour Cambridgeshire so people can learn more and make their views known. There was considerable debate at the full council meeting about this, as cabinet members are not attending, only officers.

The Liberal Democrat opposition put forward a number of concerns that they felt had not been addressed, such as the focus being on congestion reduction with nothing about carbon reduction, the need for greatly improved public transport both within Cambridge and between Cambridge and the rest of the county and the arrangements for special needs groups.

People are also able to log online to www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/congestion to read the proposals and take part in the survey.

Ely's Transport

Consultation is taking place on a new Ely Market Town Transport Strategy. The County Council has been working with East Cambridgeshire District Council to put together initial proposals aimed at improving travel choice and experience as well as the quality of life for residents and visitors.

Merham Development

The County Council continues to work with East Cambs in opposing this development near Haddenham. The A10 would become totally gridlocked and one suggestion by the developers requires 5 sets of traffic lights between Milton and the A14.

Comprehensive Performance Assessment

The Council has scored a 4 for Use of Resources. This is a good score and measures the way the staff runs financial management, internal control etc.

Speed Review

The Department of Transport has asked all counties to carry out a review of

speed limits on A and B roads by 2011. The Cabinet will carry out a trial to determine the levels of funding and staff resources required.

This means that any requests for speed limits on lower class roads will be held over until the A and B roads review is finished (4 years). It seems that Swaffham Prior got in just in time with measures that should help reduce speeding.

Hazel Williams

01638 743897

CHRISTMAS DINNER DRAMA

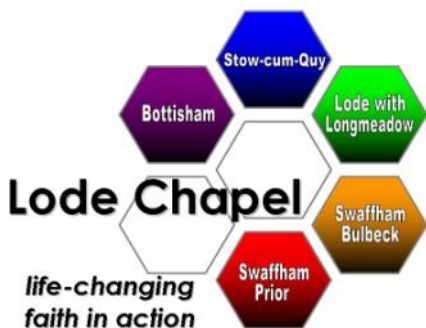
My wife has built quite a reputation over the past few years as the kids favourite school dinner 'aunt' at Swaffham Bulbeck Primary School. The mums, dads and teachers are amazed at how she can get the little ones to eat sprouts (baby cabbage) and broccoli (trees) with the same enthusiasm as pizza and chips.

It was the week before Christmas and in Margaret's usual way she was encouraging the toddlers to enjoy their dinner by describing the day's menu as Shepherds Pie made with 'real shepherds'. As the queue reduced, one little tot with a quivering lip and a heart breaking tear in her eye said to Margaret that she was going to be a shepherd at the nativity play, thinking on her feet Margaret managed to find some Three Kings Hot Pot from the other side of the tin. Problem solved.

Pierre

LODE BAPTIST CHAPEL

All You Need is Love



MY BROTHER got married last year, and as the happy couple were leaving the ceremony this old Beatles hit was playing in the background. "All you need is love" – but is this really true? My wife has just completed a PhD thesis which looks at the writings of sociobiologists like Richard Dawkins, some of whom deny that love even exists. They say that everything we do is ultimately selfish – even if it has the appearance of being loving.

But history is strewn with people who have showed us what love is – for most of us we don't have to look much further than our parents. They may not have been perfect, but while we were growing up there were probably countless selfless and sacrificial acts made for our benefit. I doubt we always recognised them at the time though – love isn't always the soft and fluffy thing that we often make it out to be.

One of the best definitions of love that I've found was in the book 'The Road Less Travelled' by the psychiatrist M. Scott Peck (it's a book I'd highly

recommend). He described love as “the willingness to extend oneself for the purpose of the spiritual growth of another”. This man wasn’t a Christian at the time, but he recognised that at our core we are spiritual beings. He also realised that love isn’t about giving people everything that they want – sometimes love involves the word ‘no’.

Children will often say to their parents (about all of the things they want you to buy for them) “if you loved me, you’d get it for me”; or with regards to the rules that you set them “if you loved me, you’d let me do whatever I wanted”. But as parents, however, you know that in the long run you have the best interests of your children at heart, and the knowledge that such actions will help children to develop characteristics like patience and self-discipline. You know, also, that rules are generally put in place in order to protect the child – indeed, as a parent, you are likely to do whatever you can to save them from harm – even to the extent of sacrificing your own life, if it were necessary.

Whilst this sort of love makes sense in the relationship between parent and child, some people struggle to see God’s love for us in the same way. A God who doesn’t always give us what we want (no matter how hard we pray), a God who shows us a way to live which, in the long run, will help us grow and keep us from harm. A God who sacrificially gave his life to save us and to show us the full extent of his love, and a God who longs, like a mother, to pick us up and embrace us when we fall. Just as parents don’t ask us to pay for the love that they give us, God’s love is also free and unconditional – open to all who ask to be adopted as a child of God.

Simon Goddard

We welcome you to any of our services or other midweek activities.

Morning Worship every Sunday at 10.30am with Sunday School,
(except for the 4th Sunday of each month).

**Next Sunday Club, 24th February,
with activities for all of the family,
10.30am at Bottisham Primary School.**

For more information please contact:

Simon Goddard on 812881 or Peter Wells on 812388

Lode Chapel, High Street, Lode, CB25 9EW.

Email: simon.goddard@lodechapel.org.uk

Web: www.lodechapel.org.uk

Roman Catholic Church, Newmarket Parish

Masses: Newmarket: Sat 1830; Sun 1030;

Kirtling: Sun 0900;

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



Church of England Services

February 2008

	ST MARY'S Swaffham Prior	ST MARY'S Swaffham Bulbeck	Bottisham
Sun 3	11:00am Matins	8:00am Holy Communion 9:30am Family Service	11:00am Family Service
Wed 6	Ash Wednesday Communion, Quy 10am, Lode 7.30pm		
Sun 10	8:00am Holy Communion 11:00am Family Service	9:30am Holy Communion	11:00am Holy Communion
Sun 17	11:00am Holy Communion	9:30am Village Communion	8:00am Holy Communion 11:00am Morning Prayer
Sun 24	11:00am Family Communion	9:30am Holy Communion	11:00am Family Communion

PASTORAL LETTER, February 2008

Bottisham Vicarage

Dear Friends,

I've often found that at the beginning of a new year I receive more than the usual number of enquiries from couples thinking about getting married in Church, and this year is no exception. I very much enjoy the whole process of advising and helping a couple prepare for their wedding day and presiding over the ceremony itself. Our five parishes very much value and appreciate couples asking to be married in their Church buildings. Marriage in Church says so much about the importance of the parish Church as a central focal point of village life. It says a great deal about continuity, about history and the importance of belonging in a fast changing world. Above all, it says a great deal about the role of God in marriage. God invented love, and, in the love that couples share in their relationship, they get a glimpse of His love for them. As someone once wrote '*A perfect marriage is a marriage of three persons: a man, a woman and God.*'

I find that Couples are often very unclear in their minds about the legal position

of getting married in a parish Church. As a Church of England Vicar I am in the very privileged and responsible position of being appointed both the Minister presiding over a marriage ceremony and the Registrar making a legal record of the marriage. This is because the Church of England is still legally recognised as the established Church of our country.

One of the happy implications of being the established Church is that couples needn't be baptised members to be married in their parish Church they simply have to meet the residential qualifications. Normally the legality of the marriage is established by the reading of banns for three consecutive Sundays, but it can also be established by the issuing of a licence or a special licence (although in the case of a special licence at least one of the parties needs to be baptised). Couples wishing to get married in a parish Church, other than the one in the place where they live, can do so by applying for a special licence, or if they are members of the Church electoral roll (but for this they will need to have been baptised). They can apply for a special licence if they have had some meaningful past connection with the Church in which they wish to get married.

In recent years the Church of England has softened its approach to the remarriage of divorced persons in Church. It is still regarded as the exception rather than the norm, but, if a couple can demonstrate that their relationship is free from the burdens of past mistakes and not the cause of the divorce, then we are happy to welcome the remarriage of divorced persons in Church. We recognise that God is about forgiveness as well as love, that He understands our failures and weaknesses and wants to help us to come to terms with the burdens of the past. He wants to help us to rebuild our lives and to find new happiness and the loving companionship of a new relationship.

My task in helping a couple prepare for their wedding day is to guide them through the proposed ceremony, and to help them make it a truly memorable and special occasion. This means making the service personal for them by helping them choose readings, music and hymns that are special to them, advising them on the role of friends and family in the ceremony and helping them to prepare the order of the service. I also help them to understand the full implications of what they are entering into, and we often have lively discussions on the issues of communication in marriage, sharing decision making, dealing with money and coping with conflict and disagreements.

The liturgy of the Church of England provides for a standard form of vows to be said by the couple. This is the focal point of the service, and represents a public declaration of the love that the bride and groom have for each other. These days the majority of couples exchange rings, reminding them of the equality that exists in the marriage relationship today, and this is also emphasised by the bride no longer being required to 'obey' her husband.

Getting married in Church is surprisingly inexpensive by comparison with all the other costs often associated with weddings, and with the setting of a wonderful mediaeval building, the bells, the music and the flowers there cannot be a more perfect setting for a marriage ceremony. So, if you are considering getting married, talk to me about the possibility of getting married in your local parish Church.

May God bless you all,

David

Dates for Your Diary - February 2008

Sat	2	France Morrill Memorial Concert, St Mary's Bulbeck, 7.30pm
Wed	6	Reading Group, Kent House, High Street
Thu	7	PC Meeting, 7.30pm
Sat	9	Margaret Stanier Memorial Meeting, Newnham College
Tue	12	Mobile Library, Cage Hill 3:15-3:50, Chapel 3:55-4:15pm
Thu	14	Crier Copy Deadline
Mon	18	WI, 7.30pm, VH
Tue	19	Village Gardeners, 8pm, VH
Sat	23	Quiz Night, 7.30pm VH
Tues	26	Mobile Library, Cage Hill 3:15-3:50, Chapel 3:55-4:15pm
March 15		Moveable Feast

Club	Contact	Tel.	Date	Time	Place
FOSPS	Clare Freeman	741316	2nd Mon of Term	8pm	Village School
Baby & Toddlers	Fleur Routley	743992	Tues	2:30-4:00pm	Village Hall
Messy Play	Julia Turner	742688	Thurs	2.00-2.45	Village Hall
Jamsing	Jo Pumfrey	741376	Tues (term)	9.20-12	Village Hall
Cubs	Andrew Noyes	743864	Weds (term)	6:00-7:30pm	Village School
Reading Group	Brenda Wilson	743937	1st Weds of month	8:00pm	(See Crier)
Scouts	Andrew Noyes	743864	Weds (term)	7:45-9:15pm	Village School
Village Gardeners	Margaret Joyce	744390	3rd Tues of month	8:00pm	Village Hall
WI	Margaret Phillips	741495	3rd Mon of month	7.30 pm	Village Hall
Youth Club	Alan Badcock	742228	Tues	7-8:30pm	Youth Club Hut
			Thurs	7-10:00pm	

***Village
Clubs
&
Societies***