



The Swaffham Crier

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Editorial

Happy New Year, Royalists and Roundheads All! Yes, 2012 is not only going to be the year of the Olympic *Jamboree* but also the Diamond *Jubilee*, and it's a question of....

What to do! One good reason for doing nothing could be that last year's Royal Wedding Do was *so good* that no-one could possibly hope to compete. One the other hand, if it were even *half* as good....

So then, what might be needed is as usual a *Committee*, and anyone interested, please get in touch with the editors. The *Silver Jubilee* was held on the Meadow apparently (that's the bumpy field below the School) and had



Bad hair day? See the Panto Pics in this issue.

floats and a Street Party. And since the *Crier* is now 36 years old (ho yes!), should just have squeaked in to cover it. We'll look in our archives.

Actually, we have some 1899 archives this month, where you will read of Christmas 1898: *The hope that, Christmas and Sunday falling together, the Festival would be better kept than usual was not realised.* Oh dear! Don't miss our new Jolly Jingle feature (contributions welcome!) or the tribute to Tony Bowers, our late much lamented Hockey Reporter—who will step into his shoes this year?

Could we make a plea for someone to check our Village Clubs section (which has a mind of its own), as also our equally u p - t o - d a t e a n d *scrupulously accurate* inside cover info with any suggestions as to insertions/deletions very welcome.

Regulars

Letters	2
Our Reporter	4
Jolly Jingle	5
John Norris Remembers	12
CROSSWORD	18
Village Gardeners	20
Mothers Union	21
Bottisham Patients	21
Ophir	21
Allen Alderson	23
David Brown	24
Botanic Garden: Snowdrops	25
Simon Goddard	26
Freecycle	27
Church Services	27
Diary + Clubs	28
Mobile Library	28

News, Views & Reviews

Village Variety	6,9,10,11,13
Hockey 97, a Tribute to Tony Bowers	8
Swaffham Prior in 1899	14
Anonymous?	17
Bottisham Bowling Club	20

What's On

Coffee Morning	10
St Mary's Event 2011	10
St Mary's Concert	11

Situations Vacant

Sewing Club Preparation	10
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See you in gloomy January!

Caroline Matheson

Cover Picture: *Playing in the New Year* by Hugh Thomas



Letters to the Editors



Dear Editors

The Ivy Club

There has been a change of rules regarding membership of The Ivy Club. Applications are no longer allowed as membership is now by invitation only. All members of the Gardeners' Club have automatic membership so a quick backdoor into The Ivy Club is to join the Gardeners. Anyone with eyes to observe will see how trees continue to be overwhelmed and visually destroyed by Ivy. Not that Ivy is in short supply. Walk from Cage Hill to Coopers Green along the back path and you will see sufficient Ivy to keep all the little birds and creepy crawlies happy. Or walk as far as the bridge on the way to Reach and see an abundance of the Ivy. The Ivy Club exists only to save the beauty of our trees and not to eradicate Ivy.

Alastair Everitt Secretary

Dear Editors,

December's From Our Reporter

Your reporter refers in his report to Open Question time and comments that I made on the subject of the Village Shop.

I believe Alastair Everitt may have misheard or possibly misunderstood a little of what I said. I would like to make clear that it was not I who "headed a shop committee". A few in the parish may well recall that the late (greatly missed) Pat Cunningham was the prime mover. Trevor Jones (past PC chairman), Clair Brooks and myself made up the team.

We (the team) presented our findings to a meeting of the village in the Village Hall and offered our opinion that only a community shop would stand any chance of success.

Michael Limb

Dear Editors,

Two Churches Together – A history of Swaffham Prior

Just a note to let you know that, at the time of writing this, (mid November 2011) the first draft of the book is nearing completion. The research has been absolutely fascinating with the jig-saw puzzle analogy still the best I can find. Missing pieces pop up in the most unexpected places and can be inserted in the appropriate gap with a great sigh of satisfaction. It may be a date...a name...but, however small, the fragment is of value for adding to the whole emerging picture of Swaffham Prior.

I am especially grateful to those of you who have allowed me to visit with my little cassette-recorder, spent time with me answering questions and have even shown me around your houses. I had a particularly fruitful week at the beginning of October when I was able to conduct ten such interviews, and the information I obtained has been absolutely invaluable.

History is happening now, (I think Ron Prime said that in one of the Criers)

and I hope that what I am writing will be of interest to all of you and to future generations. I have, of course, included some of the ancient history obtainable from archives, books and the internet, but I'm particularly fascinated by the village as it was about fifty...a hundred, maybe two hundred years ago – the period that will shape the next hundred years. And the people – it's always the people who make history and add colour to any account of past events. Ancient history is too far away for total accuracy – if only we could see what really happened; the memory plays tricks – and is subjective, but I am learning that, used together, all these sources can add up to a plausible account.

Can I make two pleas:

1. If you have a property that you think is of interest for any reason at all and you would like it to be included, please get in touch and I will come and visit. I have researched the Airey houses in Fairview Grove as well as manors, churches and windmills – all are important.
2. If you have any information, documentation or especially **PHOTOGRAPHS**, that should be included, please get in touch before it is too late. I am coming round again in early spring on a photograph hunt and will be pleased to call. I have been given some absolute gems already, and you can be sure that any I get will be looked after like the gold dust they are.

Sylvie Short

01945 774443, sylvietoat@tiscali.co.uk

Coach House, 49, Town Street, Upwell, Nr. Wisbech, Cambs. PE14 9DA

Dear Editors,

Smoke, no mirrors

Hurrah yet again for Comrade Everitt! In a masterstroke of scientific discovery he has absolved mankind of the bulk of its responsibility for global warming, declaring in his PC report that he has found that bonfires are 'carbon neutral'. So I should have been celebrating when the bonfires from the middle of the village, including Mr Everitt's, have bathed the houses and gardens at my end of the village with their invigorating smoke. Indeed, I should have thrown my windows wide and inhaled as much as I could of their invigorating fumes, instead of stupidly closing up the house and if possible, finding a reason to go out for a good few hours until it cleared. We should in future be grateful for these pioneers for not wasting garden space on messy, smelly, pointless composting, liberating instead these life-giving carbon compounds to the fresh air for the good of all!

Mark Lewinski

BON MOT NUMBER EIGHTEEN

“What was once thought can never be unthought”

Friedrich Dürrenmatt

From our Reporter at the Parish Council Meeting

The 'Public Participation' slot before a PC meeting is invaluable for anyone who has a query, and especially for those who have a grudge. I asked at the last meeting whether they had any concern that ACRE had not responded to our Editor's letter asking why local communities were not consulted or even informed about Earthworks Way. There was a little initial misunderstanding but David Brown put this right by explaining that ACRE had been awarded a sum of money for the project, that ACRE had then passed it on to CCC to implement but in such a short time that CCC had no time to consult. It either had to spend the money or lose it. At a meeting CCC had apologised for this.



Was the PC over concerned that our Editor had received no reply? Not really, but then the Clerk is always chasing up for information or a reply so this was nothing new to them. They did agree that a public body should at least acknowledge the letter unless it is going to use the "lost in the post" explanation. The questions ACRE, not CCC, needs to answer is why it gave CCC so little time, when did it receive the notice/money and how long was it before it passed it over. In other words is ACRE pulling its weight/worth its salt? Or maybe it's the fault of the EU people. It is now up to the tenacity of our Editor to sort this out.

Now to the meeting itself. David gave his usual excellent report. He highlighted that Burwell Community College, through a demographic blip, is going to have a significant capacity problem in the coming year. Allen in his report gave an update on the parking concerns of Ely which aims to provide car parking for 8 pence a day.

The results of the 'A & B Road Speed Limit Review' were circulated and for Mill Hill the average daily traffic flow is 7400, the mean speed 39.39mph, and injury/accident over three years 'Nil'. Therefore there will be no change in the speed limit. Yet, for the derestricted stretch from Quy to Anglesey Abbey which has a mean speed of 51.21mph with no injury/accident in the last three years, it is proposed to reduce the speed limit to 50mph. I reckon a job lot must have bought because they have gone a little mad with 50mph signs. Or is it a sign of too much money. A sign illustrating a pedestrian has even been put on the pavement near Burwell's Barclays Bank.

One highlight was the planning application from the National trust for a "Portrait Bench , which is also a piece of art work with tree life size 2-D cutouts of people standing around bench." This will be placed at the base of the new Reach Lode bridge. There are three figures – an Eel Catcher, an Ice Skater, and an Entomologist, representing fenland characters. These figures were chosen by the local community – six primary schools, Wicken Fen visitors, with voting boxes in Burwell and Soham Libraries. The PC said "They didn't ask us", but could find reason to object to the application. It will be an oak bench , and the figures will be cut out of steel and there will be areas cut out of the middle to show details of the figures. Great care has been taken to ensure the impact on the landscape is minimal, especially because "from the side the figures have no depth." Also, "The area will

be checked for nesting birds and strimmed prior to installation to ensure that if there are any water voles, newts and amphibians present they will leave the area.” If I was one of those creatures I’d certainly beat it quickly if a strimmer was coming at me.

This is being funded by Sustrans as part of its Connect2 scheme. Probably no-one knew before this that Sustrans “is the UK’s biggest commissioner of public art.” Our lady parish councillor noted that the figures were all men and one wag suggested there ought to have been a “farmer’s wife bending over picking up potatoes.”

The Chairman then made a dramatic statement which left all members speechless. He said that he had just had his wisdom tooth taken out and hoped it wasn’t noticeable. What could they say to that?

The decision not to have double yellow lines opposite No 73A produced a very irate, nay vituperative, letter from Dr Laura Davey on behalf of the other people living up the lane. The PC did not wish to offend, had indeed spent quite some time on the issue, and was not sure how to respond to all the charges levelled against it. Informally someone suggested cutting down the hedge or putting up a mirror. Allen would not have helped by saying he drives past almost every day and “can’t see it’s a problem.”

The next item was another mini bombshell. In September the School was visited by its Primary Adviser (School Inspector) and he (having read some manual or other) raised safe-guarding issues concerning fencing and boundaries. As a result of his comments our Headmistress Hannah Curtis “asked for a risk assessment to be carried out by Cambridgeshire County Council). O woe is me, this is like entering a lions den. And Barbara Noack appeared on the scene, and major changes will be needed all around the school boundaries at quite a cost. The Parish Council is responsible for the fence between the Village Hall and the School and the PC and VH will improve this. The School also wishes a taller lockable gate and the removal of “an overhanging branch from a large tree in the Village Hall grounds as it could be used to climb over a new taller gate.”

The Mill Hill saga continues as the potential costs continue to rise. Steve thought the matter should be dropped but Peter Hart thought the total costings were needed including those for the consultation, and that we should not give up. In spite of all the work Steve has put into this he acquiesced and asked David Brown for his advice. David thought an approach first to the police and emergency services would be best, and he will find out how to do this. It must be remembered that just one individual has to object to result in a £10,000 enquiry. Something seems

Jolly Jingle Number One

Mothers’ Meeting
Fathers invited
Children may come
If they don’t get excited.
Admission is free,
Pay at the door,
Bring your own chairs and
Sit on the floor.

lop-sided.

A query has come up regarding the letting of the allotment field and the PC spent almost twenty minutes deciding the best course of action. And a further hour will be needed to measure up the field.

It is rare that the PC can notch an almost immediate 100% success score. Karen said that the non-emptying of the rubbish bin by the bust stop was driving her “crazy” because all her pleas and phone calls were ignored. Allen happened to stay later at the meeting, he was asked as our ECDC representative to sort it out, and at 10.45 on the next morning there was a Veolea lorry at the bin emptying it. Always go to the man at the top!

In Parish Councillor reports Peter thought the other issues in the Village Vision should be discussed at the next meeting and this was agreed. I hope everyone kept a copy and that they remember to bring along a magnifying glass so they can see the details. Throughout the meeting a large white plastic box had sat in the middle of the table. Goody, some of us foolishly thought, it could be mince pies with a little port. When asked, Karen said it contained an anti-graffiti kit which had been presented by ECDC. Steve’s eyes lit up and he immediately grabbed it. With something like Happy Christmas all round the meeting ended.

Alastair Everitt



Ron and Betty Prime eagerly looking forward to another good Variety Show. But see next pages....

*ANNUAL
COFFEE
MORNING*

10.30 – 12.00 Noon

**Wednesday
1st February 2012**

GOODWIN MANOR
Station Road

*Cake & Produce Stall
Bring & Buy
Jewelry & Raffle*

*Orders may be placed for home-baked
SIMNEL CAKES*

All proceeds to St. Mary's Church

Our Hockey Reporter

Tony Bowers over many years reported our Boxing Day hockey matches with immense imagination and style. He adopted characters or wrote in the style of authors so we had Bertie Wooster, Jane Austen, John Prescott, Christopher Robin and Pooh Bear as well as Damien Thryce-Knightley from the sports pages of the *Sun*.

Tony died earlier this year so he is unable to report this year's match. As a tribute to his writing, below is reproduced the first part of his very first report, which was the 1996 Boxing Day match.

On a crisp bright St Stephen's day morning, I travelled down the Southern Highlands to witness the annual alleged hockey match between the rival Fen tribes of the Swaffhams.

I realised after watching for some minutes that this was no ordinary game of hockey. These Swaffham folk, in many ways still primitive, were enacting the ancient ritual of the winter solstice so graphically described in Dr Wright-Toshers seminal, some say seedy, work *Beyond Reach: A Study of the Customs, Rituals and Quasi-Religious Beliefs of the Early Fen Peoples*.

The ball first gave the game away. It was red.

In former times, the fen settlements fought with one another for the possession of a round stone reddened with the blood of animals, and sometimes of enemies. The blood of the wild marsh bore, Hocus Porcus, was highly prized for this purpose. The stone represented the sun, which the early fen men worshipped. Like other primitive peoples they were distressed when the sun appeared to die in winter and thus turned every trick to conjure its return, which included loosely disciplined ceremonies and extended carousels. Sounds familiar? Hardly surprising then to hear expressions such as, "Hit the ruddy thing!", or "Get the bloody ball up the field!". These expressions take on a different meaning when placed in an historical context. They are not mere mindless expletives but may be the vestiges of unimaginable ancient incantations.

As the 'game' unfolded, evidence of the primordial sun ritual became more discernible, though whether the players were aware of their historical roles is uncertain. In the solstice ceremony, each tribal team was armed with stout sticks. These were used to capture the sun stone and propel it towards the 'godlie', or little god — a young chieftain specially chosen to be the recipient of the sun symbol. There is no doubt that the modern word 'goalie' is but a modern corruption of the old fen word.

The object of the ritual was to capture the sun stone, not to score goals. The early goal keepers were not the ultimate line of defence, but eminently desirable custodians of the precious totem. These favoured warriors were chosen from the foremost young men of the tribe—usually the sons of chieftains who had drawn the short reed, nowadays the short straw, of which more later.

It cannot have been an entire coincidence that the "godlies" of the morning in

question were both wearing a pair of old cricket pads, made from bamboo canes, and leggings. These must have been the remnants of the 'marsh capes' worn by the chosen ones. Made of reeds, these ceremonial capes covered a man's entire body and were decorated with the 'live boughs' such as holly. Who can doubt that the young fen chieftain was the original 'Green Man' of ancient British Legend?

The sticks carried by each competing side were essential since only chieftains and priests were allowed to touch the sun stone. A mere marsh warrior who handled the stone would lose ale rights, conjugal rights and, occasionally, his hand, very like as in the Boxing day game, where there was no doubt that the sticks were being used for a ritual purpose. They were frequently raised and flourished aloft in exhilaration or anger. But most significantly, they were employed by most players to beat the ankles and shins of their opponents.....

URGENTLY NEEDED!

We are a group of ladies who meet to sew in the Village Hall, Swaffham Prior each Thursday in the Autumn and Spring terms. We meet from 10am - 12.30pm and we urgently need someone who would be willing to open up the hall each week, put out tables and chairs for us, and then at 12.30pm come back, put them away and lock up the hall. It really doesn't take long, less than half an hour each time, and the payment is excellent! A good little earner for someone possibly in their 'Gap' year or needing a bit of extra cash. You would need to be physically strong and very reliable. If you are at all interested or for more information please ring Diana, 01223 811946.



**Ali
Baba**



....and his Mum

*Fleur Routley and Rod Clayton
(but not necessarily in that order)*

DATES FOR YOUR 2012 DIARY

Fund raising and Social Events organised on behalf of St.Mary's Church.

This calendar is purposely circulated in January to hopefully avoid clashes with other village events. Some Villagers like to make sure they are not on holiday or having away week-ends so that they are here to enjoy, support and participate in village events which are varied, in order to interest a wide age range and interests.

01.02.12.	ANNUAL COFFEE MORNING	Goodwin Manor.
17.03.12	QUIZ NIGHT	Village Hall
13.05.12	ROGATION SUNDAY	Baldwin Manor
01.07.12.	STRAWBERRY TEAS	Commissioner's Farm
15.09.12	DOG SHOW	Village Hall
29.09.12.	HARVEST SUPPER	St. Cyriac's.
20.10.12	QUIZ NIGHT	Village Hall

Kate Child

Not to be confused with Katie Child, Principal Forward Planning Officer [ECDE].

Eds

**The
audience
grow
restive...**



St Mary's Concert

Saturday 4th February 2012

at 7.30 pm in St Mary's Church Swaffham Bulbeck

St Mary's Singers and Players

directed by Matthew Rudd

Handel's Messiah Part II

Vivaldi's Concerto for Two Trumpets

J S Bach's Cantata No 159

Handel's Zadok the Priest

To celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of H M The Queen

Interval refreshments

Retiring collection

Proceeds for St Mary's Church Restoration Fund and East Anglian Air
Ambulance



**...and the
strong arm
of the Law
moves in.**

John Norris Remembers the Wet Years

When I first came to this part of the world in 1959, we were tolerating very wet seasons, not only in the winter but throughout the summer also. I was intending to get married in September 1951, on the 6th, after harvest had been gathered in. August was a terrible month, rain almost every day. Not vast amounts, but sufficient to dampen the wheat and barley so as to prevent the machinery working properly.

As the great day approached, the weather did not alter at all, and as we did not have a drying plant, the idea of combining the corn was abolished, and the binder brought out of early retirement. It was hinted that I could postpone my nuptials, and go on honeymoon later in the year!! My "wife to be" and I rejected that idea, and so off we went to Sark for a week, leaving the other farm staff to get on with the work in the old traditional way.

We flew in a Dakota from Northholt aerodrome, as Gatwick and Heathrow had not then been built. On our return we did use the new combine to thresh the grain from the stooks in the field, so that threshing expenses were reduced, and some money could be earned. We were all very excited to use this equipment, primitive as it was; besides we only handled the sheaves once. The straw was trickier to deal with, so we hired a bailer, and tied up the straw so that it was easy to handle.

Several years later in 1959 I moved here to Swaffham Prior, and started work on a very run down part of the Allix estate. The farming tradition hereabouts involved much livestock. There were four flocks of sheep, and many heads of cattle grazing the Fen Fields. These were the days before the effective fungicides, which later enabled better and more vigorous crops to be grown. The availability of water for these animals resulted in very little attention being given to the drainage system, as water was essential for the cattle, (sheep do not drink!).

As you may suspect, my first year of farming here was difficult due to the soggy land, as the weather system had not changed much. I lost four acres of potatoes on Adventurers Farm, as they were under water, and many more spoiled from blight. So, we set about draining the area as best we could, as the main drains too had been neglected. I was lucky that Mr Ted Brand, another farmer from the better fenland, had an interest in Lords Ground Farm, and was also very aware of the poor drains. Together we persuaded the Swaffham IDB to pay more attention to our area, especially as most of the cattle, and all of the sheep had gone, and to lower the water table so that under-drains could be put in. At first we encountered trouble, as there were still some cattle and sheep grazing, and dams were put in our new drains to hold up the water. As soon as we realised the water table was rising these dam-boards were pulled out at night ! but were often reinstated the following day.

This state of affairs did not last long as the farmer, and his agents were old and gave up their interest in this parish. They were still using horses to work the land, and these went also.

As soon as the surface of the land had dried out, we started putting in these under-drains. These pipes were made of porous clay, but later were replaced by special plastic pipes in a long continuous roll. These clay pipes were put in by

hand, as in the very wet places, the machinery was very liable to get stuck on this black land. Indeed during the work behind the school the machine was stuck for a week. The rain kept falling, and the poor dykes could not cope with the flow of water. The problem was increased by lack of powerful pumps at Upware to remove this water quickly. Later, and especially today, the pumps can remove water at a great rate, down the improved main drain. But we do not have much rain now!

The past thirty years have been very dry, and the irrigation systems have been used as “top up”, and for very drought sensitive crops. A raised water table in the summer, and levelled land can cope with dry seasons. I do not see many machines deepening dykes, or cleaning out the old ones today. Perhaps someone will regret not paying attention to these matters if the weather pattern changes, which it surely will.

As a finale, we were putting in, or rather digging in the pipes at Wisbech, when we came across a large bone buried in the silt. On further examination we also found other bones. It was not uncommon to find treasures lost many years ago; Flint axes, bronze tools, pottery, and rubbish of this century. Bones were a different matter.

As these bones were quite deep in was not easy to get them out without widening the trench. Too much time was spent in tracing this skeleton, but we could not leave the rest of him or her buried, for that is what it was. We eventually spent a whole day doing this, but were rewarded with a complete set of bones, which were dated as Romano British by the Museum. I eventually gave them to my school museum.

Nothing to do with wet weather, but interesting I feel.



Interval Refreshments? That'll be 6 choc-o-mints and...

Swaffham Prior in 1899

Ruth Stinton has recently obtained a bound copy of an 1899 *The Church Monthly: An Illustrated Magazine for Home Reading*. It was a devotional serious magazine with the aim of instructing, diverting and amusing the churchgoing folk. There is nothing significant in this for Swaffham Prior. What is significant though is that at the back had been bound in all the 1899 issues of the *Swaffham Prior Parish Magazine*. These give a snapshot of life during one year in an entirely different age. Or was it?

In 1899 the scene at the churchyard was entirely different. St Mary's Church was a wreck apart from the chancel. St Cyriac's was the church being used for services and was in reasonable repair. Though St Cyriac's was the main church, matins at 9.10am and evensong at 6.00pm was held in the chancel of St Mary's every day of the week except Sunday.

The year 1899 is of particular significance being in the middle of a proposed quite serious change in Swaffham Prior. Squire C.P.Allix had always wanted St. Mary's to be renovated but he had had to wait twenty years for the elderly "old-fashioned" vicar Thomas Preston to die at the age of 81. The Rev. Lawrence Fisher arrived in 1897, held the view that St. Cyriac's was "an almost grotesque travesty of a church", and the Squire at last had found a kindred spirit. Immediately plans were put on foot for a great restoration and fund-raising began. The restoration was completed between October 1901 and July 1902.

January Issue

In a comment about Christmas 1898 it records "The hope that, Christmas and Sunday falling together, the Festival would be better kept than usual was not realised."

Also listed out were the regular weekly activities of the village: Bell-ringing practice, Mondays at 7. Bible Class for Women and Girls at the Vicarage, Tuesdays at 6. Evening School at the School-room, Tues and Fridays 7 to 8.40. Dress-making Classes at the Reading Room, Mondays 4.30 to 6.30 and 7.30 to 9.30. Mothers' Meeting at the Vicarage, Thursdays at 2.30. Junior Boys' Choir Singing Class at the Vicarage, Thursdays at 4.30. Senior Boys' Bible Class at the Vicarage, Thursdays at 8. Choir Practice, Fridays at 7.45

February Issue

There was a lengthy report on the prize giving for the Sunday Schools of Reach and Swaffham Prior. This had taken place on December 29th 1898. Prizes were awarded for Conduct, Attendance and Lessons. Burt Day in Class II was awarded the Conduct Prize, as was Fred Day in Class III. One wonders where these fitted into the great Day Dynasty.

March Issue

This was a busy month. There were 47 services, all at Swaffham Prior apart from 8 at Reach.

The Swaffham Prior National School was without teachers in the first part of the year as Mr and Mrs French had left on January 21st to become Master and Mistress of Gazeley School. New teachers were starting on March 6.

There were also improvements to the Vicarage grounds with two new pieces of land being added “for the sake of getting a better and more convenient approach and more open front to the Vicarage House.”

April Issue

This saw great changes in the Churchyard. “On March 8th a visit of Inspection of the Churchyard was paid by Dr Hoffman, Medical Officer from the Home Office.” In an order dated March 18th the Vicar was told that “burials are to be entirely discontinued in the two Churches; also in the Churchyard, with certain exceptions.”

May Issue

On April 14th the Ely Diocesan Inspector had visited the Swaffham Prior School and the results were disappointing. “The answering being poor, and the written work of Standard III was very imperfect.” The overall result was “Very fair”. Reach School on the other hand was “Very good”. For the Infants “The written work (on slates) was very good, it should be done on paper.” [Were not the slates then the equal of white boards today? – you just wipe clean and reuse.]

June Issue

Much this month dealt with collections and fundraising including the St. Mary’s Restoration fund, the Sick and Needy, a Concert for new school desks, Society for the Propagation of the Gospel and the Diocesan Missionary Box.

Swaffham Prior cricket Club made a good start to the season by beating Swaffham Bulbeck by 52 runs.

July Issue

This was a quiet month with just a few activities. “Since the closing of the Churchyard the fee for placing a Head and Foot Stone therein to any grave has been reduced from £1.1s. to 10s.6d.

The Cricket Club continued it winning ways by beating Lode by 44 runs. [No other results were ever recorded, so I suspect the result was only announced when they won.]

August Issue

On July 20th the Choir and Boys’ Night school went by the excursion train to spend the day at Yarmouth.

“The weather was perfect...bathing, paddling, rowing, sailing, donkeys, the tower, the switchback railway, the bicycle railway... found favour in turn during the day. Unfortunately one of the little boys of the choir got lost in the crowd while watching a procession of bicycles, and when it was time for the train to start home it was discovered that he was missing. His father, who was happily one of the party, stayed behind, and after a little trouble the lost one was found, both returning the next day.”

September Issue

“During the Vicar’s absence the Daily Services will be suspended.”

“WANTED. A Brass Pulpit Desk for S. Cyriac’s... When S. Mary’s is restored, the Brass Desk would of course be transferred to it.”

“WANTED. Would it not be a great advantage, and economical into the bargain, to get three or four really good, large lamps to light the body of S. Cyriac’s Church, in place of the feeble and ancient lamps now in use? They also could be removed to S. Mary’s when the time comes.”

October Issue

The Gift List this month featured:-

Mrs Powell, 10s. towards the Pulpit Desk (16s.5d still required).

E.L.C., £1.1s. for the Church Restoration fund.

R. Stephenson, Esq., £1 or Church Expenses.

Miss E. Thomas, 5s. towards New Church Lamps.

Miss E. Lewis, 5s towards New Church Lamps.

November Issue

“We welcome as Assistant-Curate, the Rev. William Augustus St. John Dearsley, who will labour chiefly at Reach, giving occasional help at the Parish Church.”

“It has been arranged to give an entertainment in the last week of the months of October, November, January, and February. It is not proposed to give a grand performance each time, but just something to make a change from the monotony of winter evenings in the country. Nevertheless, we are bold to think that these entertainments will be worth the money, which is only 6d. for front seats, and 2d. for second seats.”

December Issue

“The Annual Prize Giving and Winter Treat of the Sunday School will be held in the Schoolroom as soon as possible after Christmas Day”.

“Thanks are due to Mr. MacMichael for cleaning the Church Clock and putting it again into going order. Apparently it had not been thoroughly cleaned for 88 years.”

Her Majesty’s Inspector’s report on the Swaffham Prior National School showed a great improvement. Against the Infants’ Class it was reported that “The room is still too full. Children under three years of age (three of this age were present at inspection) should certainly not be admitted at present.”

There was a full page review of a “performance of the Operetta Rumpelstiltskin by Scott Gatty which took place in the Reading Room on Monday, November 27th.”

Alastair Everitt

These extracts have been selected to show a range of the activities in 1899 but those wishing to see the original for more details should ask Ruth Stinton who will be happy to lend the volume. A picture of the condition of the two churches in 1898 is to be found on page 21 of the church guide *Swaffham-Two-Churches* which can be seen and purchased in St. Mary’s Church.

Anonymous?

I'm always entertained to read imaginative attempts to convince the world that someone who was not Shakespeare wrote his plays. I enjoyed the silliness of the debate we had in the *Crier* a decade ago, but I'm not going back there. Why do people get worked up over this as if they own Shakespeare, like the supporters of the gourd vs those of the shoe in Monty Python's *The Life of Brian*, sects creating icons from tiny scraps of evidence, who then despise each other. I'm told that 'Stratfordians' play the same daft game and seek similar scraps as 'Oxfordians' to cudgel one another with, and I had to explain to one of our illustrious Eds that I'm not a 'Stratfordian', I just know that the recent theories based on these scraps are a fad.

It would be fun, yes, if it were true that the writer of those plays DID hang out in Swaffham Bulbeck 400 years ago. BUT (recycling the hysterical argument used by the odd folk who believe the Wicken Fen nature reserve threatens our very existence) it would swamp us with tourists, cars, etc - does anyone really want Swaffham Bulbeck to be overrun with busloads of Japanese visitors, a mock-Globe on the Green, the primary school turned into the Earl of Oxforde Tea Shoppe. and no-one could afford to live here any more, let alone try to drive to Cambridge? Think on that, Oxfordians!!

Ben Jonson, whose playwriting mission was to expose cheating and deceit in those times, and who knew Shakespeare as well as anyone in his lifetime, wrote a dedication to the First Folio edition after Shakespeare's death. He is indisputably, incontrovertibly clear the dedication is to Shakespeare, no-one else. And he was no sycophant, having been famously rude about his fellow playwright's less extensive knowledge of Latin and Greek against his own. Who-wrote-Shakespeare is interesting to debate; daft to take seriously.

This from *Simon Hoggart's Week* in the Guardian. 26 November:

The admirable Skeptical Enquirer magazine arrives from America, containing a splendid article by Joe Nickell demolishing the many bonkers theories about who actually wrote the works of Shakespeare. Nickell disposes of (the Earl of Oxford theory) neatly. For one thing the Earl died before *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, and *Antony and Cleopatra* were performed. As with all screwball theories, the facts are easily explained by true believers. So the Oxfordians hold that *Lear* and *Macbeth* were misdated and that other Shakespeare plays, inconveniently appearing after Oxford's death, were by other people altogether.

I hadn't realised two things: first, the Oxford theory was launched by in 1920 by an English schoolteacher called J Thomas Looney. Second, there was a moot court in 1987 in which three US Supreme Court judges debated the issue and came down firmly on the side of Shakespeare as the author of Shakespeare. As Justice Paul Stevens said:

"The Oxfordian case suffers from not having a single, coherent theory of the case."

Will that stop the believers? Don't be silly.

Happy New year!

Mark Lewinski

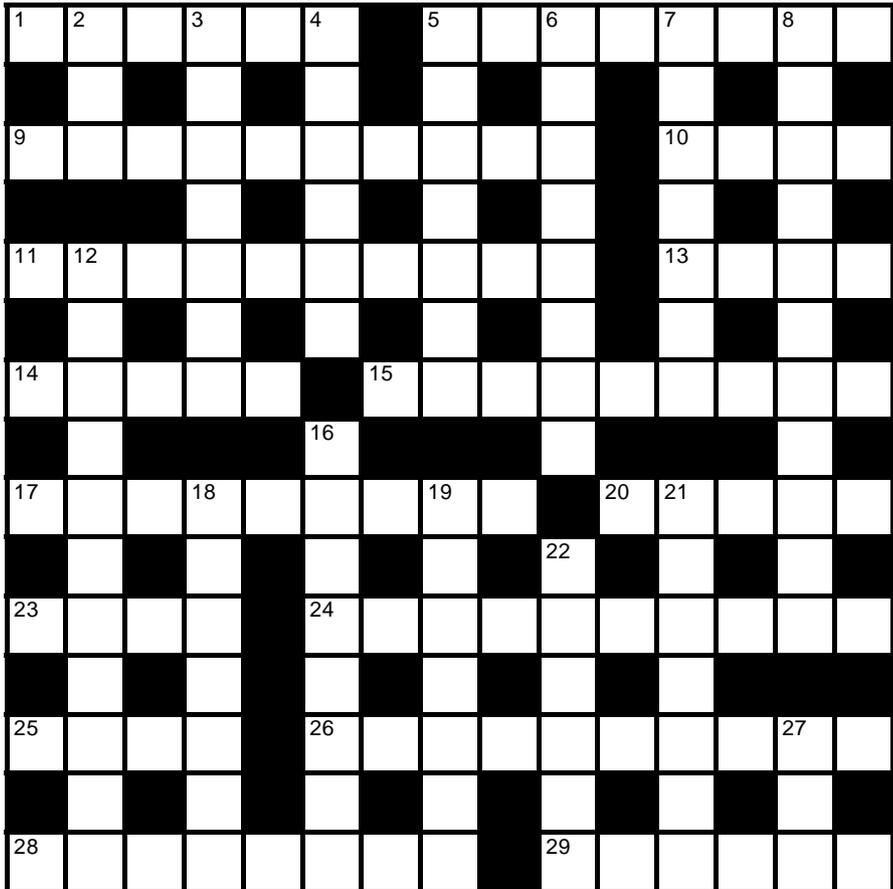
Crossword Number 85

Compiled by

Sponsored by **The Red Lion**

OUNCE

This month's puzzle is a simple cryptic crossword. Send your answers to the editors by 18 January 2012. The first correct solution out of the hat will win a free meal for two at the Red Lion—See the Manager at the pub for full details.



Name:.....

Address:.....

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

Across

- 1 Deer ducking out of bread sauce mix? Count on it! (6)
- 5 Originally Alec Baldwin, local star, joined native American people, though not relative (8)
- 9 Vera, I bet sailor can twist and shorten it (10)
- 10 Criminally assist in hiding astrolabe tables (4)
- 11 Organised band not wet when secure for storms (6,4)
- 13 Superior male abandons parade (4)
- 14 Capon escapes prison camp coming to grief with optical element (5)
- 15 Exeter Ham garbled line of verse (9)
- 17 Small Swiss armful flustered player (5,4)
- 20 Wild bobcat not caught by Prior (5)
- 23 Pop effigy discovered in intrepid Olympian's retinue (4)
- 24 Parent's bus crashes with this precipitance (10)
- 25 Adjoin backing instrument (4)
- 26 Loathing Bishop Frost and Northern Cree wrongly (10)
- 28 That Cree dances around tube (8)
- 29 Returning graduate lies back to descend on line (6)

Down

- 2 Shilling curtsey (3)
- 3 Ministers wrap rodent in hints (7)
- 4 Rescuing wine in rising gas (6)
- 5 Shellfish gangster found in scapula for example (7)

- 6 Wayne sit and play USA piano (8)
- 7 Unwanted efflux from the French alias with keys (7)
- 8 Perfidious Cree authors were ruined (11)
- 12 Software in design of two articles of ladies' underwear? Magic! (11)
- 16 Catastrophe as Anthony hides game (8)
- 18 Open door of disordered clan hut (7)
- 19 Crossbred dog chews up Swiss ruler (7)
- 21 Broken self-starter goes crazy (7)
- 22 Persian governor transformed Greek city (6)
- 27 Greek character has Chinese energy (3)

Solution to crossword no. 84

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

We congratulate Tricia Whitehead, the winner of last month's competition, who should collect her prize certificate from the editors. An honourable mention goes to Robert Nunn.



VILLAGE GARDENERS

Our first meeting of the New Year will be on Tuesday 17 January when Richard Gant, Head Gardener at Madingley Hall will be talking to us on the West Coast Gardens of Scotland. This will be in the village Hall at 8pm and everyone is welcome – we would be delighted to see new faces.

Mary Hart

BOTTISHAM BOWLING CLUB

JUMBLE SALE

at

THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

on

SATURDAY 14TH JANUARY 2012

DOORS OPEN 2:00pm

**START THE YEAR RIGHT COME AND FIND A
BARGAIN**

CLEAR OUT THOSE CUPBOARDS

**CONTACT TED SKETCHLEY ON
01223-811582 IF YOU WISH TO HAVE ITEMS
COLLECTED**

**OTHERWISE BRING *any saleable items*
TO THE LEGION ON MORNING OF THE SALE
PLEASE NO SHOES**



Mothers' Union

At our last meeting Ralph Frearson talked to us about his involvement in Age UK. This charity has been formed by the amalgamation of Help the Aged and Age Concern. This larger organisation provides a stronger voice in government and, of course, in the community.

Ralph's speciality is in the Personal Alarm Service whereby users can get help anytime just at the press of a button.

Originally Sebastian Fenwick - an engineer with a burglar alarm company in Devon came up with the idea of personal alarms about thirty years ago. Subsequently, Age Concern bought Sebastian's business and now 45,000 people in the UK have a personal alarm which enables them to get help at any time day or night - either in the house or in the garden - just at the press of a button. This action contacts the call centre immediately - without the need to actually dial a number and the operator will take the call in seconds and help will be on its way. If the user is unable to speak, the call centre would either call the number by 'phone or contact the nominated key holders, i.e. family or neighbours.

The Personal Alarms can be worn either as a pendant or a wristband so they are always with you whenever the need may arise. They give independence and peace of mind for both you and your family.

We begin our New Year programme with a service of Holy Communion conducted by Roger Bowen on Thursday, 20th January, 2012 in Lode Chapel at 2.30 p.m. to be followed by tea and cakes. If you would like to join us, you would be more than welcome.

Anne Phoenix

News from Bottisham Patient Participation Group

This is a busy time for all the staff at the Bottisham Practice, holidays notwithstanding. Apart from colds, flu and all the usual ailments of winter, the staff have been collecting and collating returns to the annual questionnaire seeking your views as patients about the Practice's performance. The Practice will discuss the results with the Bottisham PPG Committee at a meeting in January. This will consider the findings and possible changes in patient provision and the delivery of services. These conclusions will provide the basis for an agreed action plan to be implemented through 2012.

The Practice staff have also been busy preparing to upgrade their clinical IT system. It would help the staff enormously if in January all patients let them have their mobile numbers so that the Practice can text confirmation of appointments, reminders and blood test results. You will be able to do this either on the Practice website or by filling in a form at Reception. The new system will go live on Monday 23 January. As this will be new for everyone, it may take a little longer to process requests. So please be patient. In particular in the week before the system goes live

the Dispensary will be unable to handle repeat prescriptions, so please order them before Friday 13 January or after Friday 20 January. Nor will the Practice be able to offer pre-bookable appointments between 13 and 27 January. All appointments in that period will have to be booked on the day.

Your PPG Committee will be represented at a meeting in early January between NHS Cambridgeshire and all the Cambridgeshire PPGs. This will discuss the proposed changes to Cambridgeshire Mental Health Services described in the last edition of this magazine. This is an important issue likely to be of concern to ever more of us. There is evidence that mental health problems increase during periods of economic difficulty; and over the next 20 years dementia cases in Cambridgeshire are expected to double.

The PPG Committee is also planning a meeting at which Dr Jonathan Higham and some of his colleagues will talk about the Practice, how it works and the many services it provides, the skills and interests of its members, and how those skills can best be applied to look after you and your families. This meeting will be with the Committee, with the intention that there will be a similar meeting open to all interested patients later in the year.

The PPG Committee wishes you all the very best for 2012.

Bottisham PPG Committee

The Cry of the Reindeer

The cry of the Reindeer may be heard in the lands**	the night.
If you stand quietly outside and cup your ears in your hands	Then also they think that chimneys are small, And some houses don't have a chimney at all.
Some reindeer are critics and with good reason too, So they grumble a bit, but still see their job through.	Modern toys, (batteries included) may be bulky, Though a Clause in their contract, forbids them being sulky.
Post codes are puzzling and completely illogical As a reference to locations, they are diabolical.	But no qualified house is ever excluded, Whether on an estate or very secluded.
Routes nowadays have to be carefully selected So as not to cause panic, should they be RADAR detected.	**This is of course only at Christmas Eve, And all of it's true, so I'm led to believe.
And street lights in general are so glaringly bright, It's not easy to see where to land in	

Ophir



On November the 14th I attended the Swaffham Internal Drainage Board. As it is partly funded by ECDC we have four district councillors, including myself, on its board.

On November the 8th the Development and Transport Committee, of which I am a member, agreed a twelve week public consultation on the councils proposed charging scheme for Ely's car parks. The proposals are:

Off-Street

Introduction of a pre-pay permit scheme to all members of the public (one per vehicle) at a cost of £20 for one year or £50 for three years.

Introduction of a £1 one day permit on a 'pay an display' basis (applicable to those who have not purchased a pre-paid annual permit), available at each Council owned car park (length of stay dependant of current car park restrictions).

Introduction of a six month pre-pay permit available at a cost of £12.

Introduction of a £5 charge to register a change of vehicle.

On-Street

Free on street parking to be retained.

Proposals, in partnership with the police and CCC. To enhance on-street enforcement.

Investigate options to increase on-street parking in the city (excluding market-place).

Also in November I attended a budget briefing by a senior council financial officer in order for us to have a better understanding of its finances in preparation of us settling next years budget.

Last year the housing team at the Council received over 1700 requests for help, re-housed over 200 families, supported 26 families threatened by domestic violence, and delivered 147 new affordable housing units.

147 is nowhere near enough to meet the current demand, and we must find ways to increase this number. The councils conservative group is presently exploring the possibility of setting up housing trusts as a way of increasing the supply of affordable housing, by working with interested Parish Councils or landowners.

As we move into 2012 East Cambs District Council must aim to work harder with housing associations to increase the supply of affordable housing and social housing to rent.

In 2010 the average medium income in the district was £21,800, the average house price was £215,500 and the average lower house price was £147,500. Which was 6.75 times that income.

With so many social issues surrounding housing, I believe we must make this one of our priorities.



November was another busy month at the County Council.

I have been discussing various works with highways on Reach Road, Burwell and Station Road, Swaffham Prior – more news soon.

Discussions continue between the County Council and Governors at Burwell Village College about the number of children who will need places in the coming school year. Hopefully, working together we will come to a solution meeting most needs.

In the role of Corporate Parent the County Council has over 470 Looked after Children at present. November saw a number of events relating to duties involving that service. I presented a number of awards to foster carers and adoptive parents, presented outstanding achievement awards at an evening for Looked after Children, and attended an event for 6 of our Looked after Children who had successfully completed work experience at the Marriott Hotel, Huntingdon. These events were a real joy to be part of. I also hosted a visit to look at our fostering and adoption service from the Minister for Children and Families, Tim Loughton MP and the Government's Adoption Adviser, Martin Narey. Both were clearly impressed with the service in Cambridgeshire and congratulated us on the innovative approach we are taking to this work in conjunction with the national charity Coram. They said it was particularly impressive that we are moving forward from a position of strength, rather than being told to adopt new practices.

Cabinet met to consider a number of issues including a response to a planning application for a major development at North West Cambridge, developing an engineering centre at the College of West Anglia, and the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for public health. Cabinet and Senior Management Team met 3 times during the month to consider evolving ideas for the forthcoming Integrated Plan/Budget.

As Lead Member for Children's Services across the East Anglian Local Authorities I attended a meeting in Stevenage to discuss how LAs across the region can support each other to deliver better results, including through mutual support and peer challenge.

I had a number of meetings with senior officers to consider the way forward on a number of issues including: the launch of a consultation on a strategy for Special Educational Needs and Disability; preparations for our forthcoming OFSTED inspection; the future direction of the Children's Trust; and the developing Child Poverty Strategy.

We held the official opening of a new distribution centre for Cambridgeshire Catering Service – our school meals service.

I had the honour of being presented to the Duke of Edinburgh in recognition of the role the County Council plays as licence holder for the Duke of Edinburgh Awards Scheme.



CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY BOTANIC GARDENS

Snowdrops at the Botanic Garden

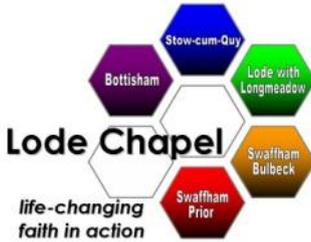
As the great plantsman, E A Bowles, wrote in 1914, 'One can hardly picture an English garden without the snowdrop'. Today, snowdrop fever continues to possess Britain through the colder months, with bulbs traded amongst snowdrop lovers, known as galanthophiles, for vast sums. Tiny variations in the shape or shade of the delicate markings or differences in how the pristine petals are held make them highly desirable.

With snowdrops pushing up all over the Botanic Garden from late winter, their pendulous, ice white and emerald bells trembling in the faintest breeze are an uplifting sight. We have planted thousands of the simple, single snowdrop, *Galanthus nivalis*, and the much larger varieties 'Magnet' and 'Atkinsii' as part of the new bulb belt that encircles the original 1846 western Garden. A highlight also is the Winter Garden, where snowdrops are used in inspired combinations with leathery leaved *Bergenia*, black and russet coloured grasses, and with scarlet and emerald dogwood and willow stems. And if the weather proves too wintry, then several gem snowdrops are grown for display in the Mountains display in the Alpine House.

The Cambridge University Botanic Garden is open from 3 January 2012 from 10am until 4pm and during February 10am – 5pm. The Glasshouses and Café close 30 minutes before the Garden and the Botanic Garden Shop at Brookside closes 15 minutes before the Garden. Please check the website at www.botanic.cam.ac.uk or telephone 01223 336265 for admission charges, tours and special events.

Jackie Murray will be running a morning Snowdrop Workshop at the Botanic Garden on 9 February, costing £30 per place. For more details and to book please visit the Garden's website at www.botanic.cam.ac.uk or telephone 01223 331875.





New Year, New You?

"I am about to do something new. It is beginning to happen even now. Don't you see it coming?" Isaiah 43:19

First of all, I want to wish all of you a Happy New Year. Many of us welcome the beginning of January as an opportunity to make a new start. Some of us might still make resolutions, but there are those of us who have given up doing that because they never last more than a week or two anyway! Nonetheless, the New Year is an opportunity to reflect upon our lives, and to think about the parts of it that we would like to change.

Perhaps we desire to lose a bit of weight, or to give up an expensive or annoying bad habit. Maybe we want to do our bit to repair a broken relationship, or to spend more time with the kids. All of us, as we look at our lives in the metaphorical mirror, will see areas for development and improvement – it's part of the human condition. The popularity of self-help books reveals the truth that none of us have yet achieved perfection.

Indeed, the self-help category is consistently second in the list of top selling non-fiction books – only outsold, year in year out, by the Bible. This book, inspired by God, but written by a variety of very real people over thousands of years, also has much to say on this theme. At RE:NEW, in the first few weeks of 2012, we'll be exploring a variety of passages which include the word 'new' – and you are more than welcome to join us for this New Year sermon series.

One thing that is new for us in 2012 is our partnership with Great Wilbraham Chapel. From 1st January we will be taking responsibility for the chapel there and exploring ways of including the Wilbraham villages in mission and ministry of RE:NEW. As always you can find out more by contacting me using the details below, or by visiting our website.

Simon Goddard

Services in January

Sun 1st Jan, 10.30am – RE:NEW The Bigger Picture (School)

Sun 8th Jan, 10.30am – RE:NEW Kids Club and Café (School)

Sun 8th Jan, 6.20pm – Traditional Service (Lode Chapel)

Sun 15th Jan, 10.30am – RE:NEW The Bigger Picture (School)

Sun 22nd Jan, 10.00am – A unity service with the Benefice (St. James, Lode)

Sun 22nd Jan, 6.20pm – Traditional Service (Great Wilbraham Chapel)

Sun 29th Jan, 10.30am – RE:NEW The Bigger Picture (School)

For more information please contact: Rev. Simon Goddard.

Tel: (01223) 812881

Email: simon.goddard@re-new.me.uk

Web: www.lodechapel.org.uk and www.re-new.me.uk

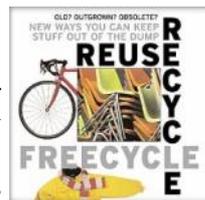
	ST MARY'S Swaffham Prior January 2012
Sun 1	10:00am Benefice Service at Bottisham
Sun 8	11:00am Matins
Sun 15	11:00am Family Service and Holy Communion
Sun 22	10:00am Benefice Service for Christian Unity at Lode
Sun 29	8:00am Book of Common Prayer Holy Communion 6:00pm Evensong Communion



**Peter Jost
closes
proceedings
with
virtuoso
Highland
Fling. Bye
for another
year!**

FREECYCLE

If you have any offers or wants, please contact me by the 14th of each month: jun.thompson@tiscali.co.uk, or 01223 813362, or drop a



note through 23 Longmeadow. Everything is free

and nothing is expected in return. Should you be unsuccessful, please try your offers/wants on <http://freebiefreakz.org> or <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/cambridgefreecycle/>. Please can you contact the offers after the 1st of the month to make it a little fairer.

Offers

Large luxury easy chair with hand-operated foot rest (well used but in very good condition, for collection). Malcolm c812104

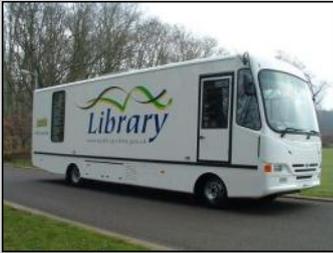
Office swivel armchair, on castors, upholstered in blue cloth, too comfortable; Electric fire (2KW bars plus convection 1KW, modern appearance); One dozen 12inch videodisks, like very big CDs (you can't play them but you might be able to make them into something). Robin c811632

Wanted

Your old light fittings, brown bakelite switches, iron conduit and switches, bulb holders and holders. Sheets and bits of bakelite. Postcard rack (carousel if possible). George 07895064727.

Dates for Your Diary: January 2012

Sun	1	New Year's Day
Wed	4	Book Club, 8pm, Kient House
Sat	14	Jumble Sale, 2pm, Bottisham Royal British Legion
Mon	16	WI, 7.30pm, VH
Tue	17	Mobile Library, Cage Hill 2.45-3.15pm Chapel 3.20pm-4.00pm Village Gardeners, 8pm VH
Wed	18	Crier Copy Deadline
Wed	1	Coffee Morning, Goodwin Manor,, 10.30-12 noon
Sat	4	St Mary's Concert, 7.30pm Swaffham Bulbeck St Mary's



Mobile Library 2012

Cage Hill: 2:45 - 3:15,
Chapel: 3.20 - 4:00

January 17, February 21, March 20,
April 17, May 15 June 19

Club	Contact	Tel.	Date	Time	Place
FOSPS	Clare Freeman	741316	2 nd Mon of Term	8pm	Village School
Baby & Toddlers	Jessica Shakeshaft	744266	Fri	9:30-11:30am	Village Hall
Cubs	Tim Doe	743656	Weds (term)	6:00-7:30pm	Village School
Reading Group	Brenda Wilson	743937	1 st Weds of month	8:00pm	(See Crier)
Scouts	Tim Doe	743656	Weds (term)	6:15-7:45pm	Village School
Village Gardeners	Margaret Joyce	744390	3 rd Tues of month	8:00pm	Village Hall
WI	Pat Cook	742224	3 rd 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**