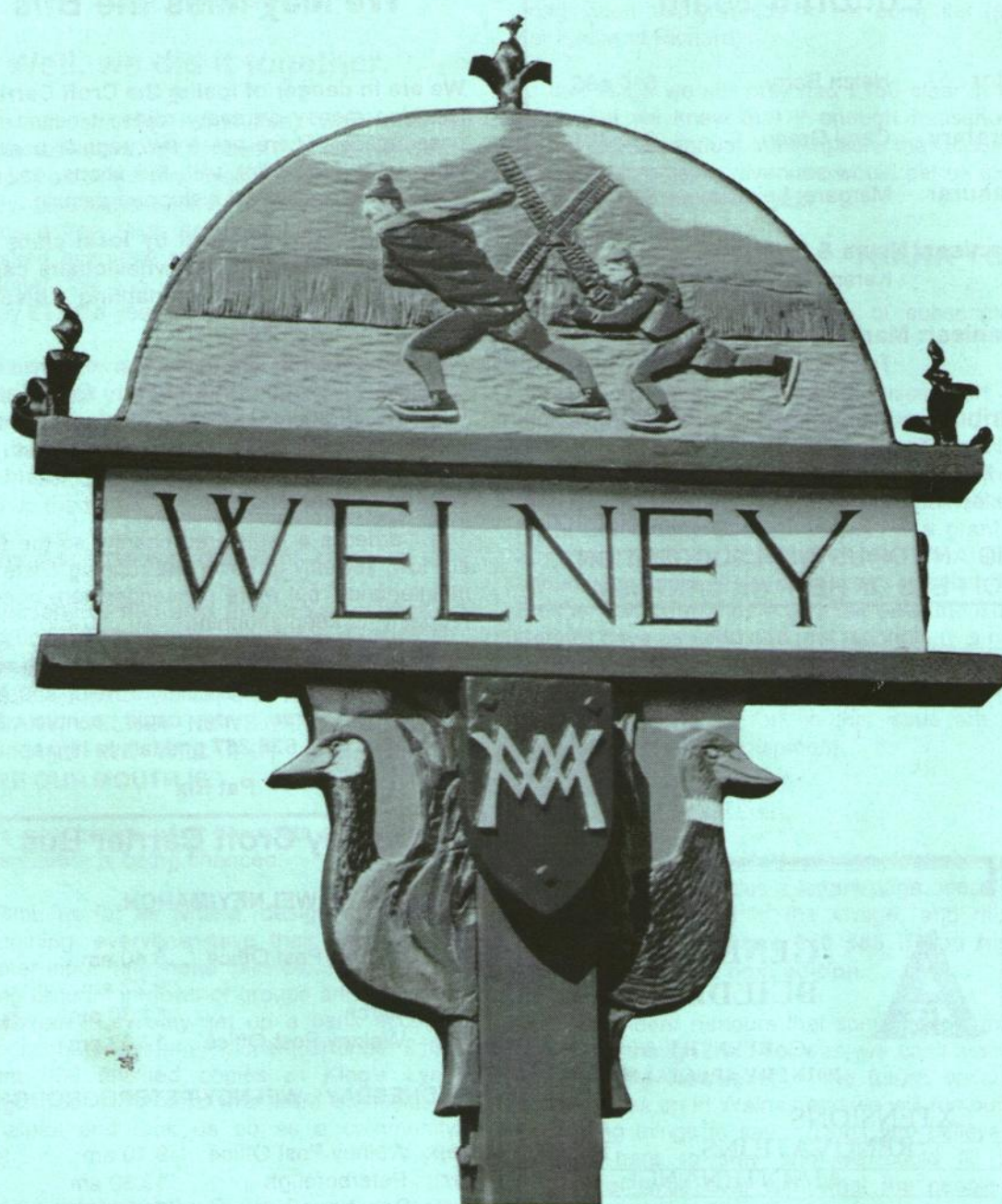




NEWS

Issue No 1 25p

October/December 1997

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Treasurer Margaret Levesley 610 272

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Karen Fleming 610 523

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**RING ANY OF US WITH SUGGESTIONS,
OFFERS OF HELP OR CRITICISM**

We May Miss the Bus

We are in danger of losing the Croft Carrier. It is losing money on every route; it needs more passengers. There are a few regular users for whom it is a vital link with the shops, and they would be left isolated if it stopped running.

The Carrier can be hired by local clubs and groups for outings. Two wheelchairs can be fitted in the back enabling disabled passengers to use it.

As the old bus is becoming expensive to maintain, it is hoped to replace it. But to attract funding from Councils and Charitable Organisations, it must be seen to be used. **So before you get out the car - think. Could you use the bus instead?**

The Carrier is a registered charity, so the fares are low, set only to cover the running costs and maintenance, but more passengers are needed, regularly, to keep it running.

The Carrier also needs more volunteer drivers, so if you would like to help, and have some spare time, you could contact **Sam Godfrey, 01354 638 257** and talk to him about it.

Pat Rix

Welney Croft Carrier Bus

SATURDAY: WELNEY/MARCH

Dep: Welney Post Office:	8.40 am
Arr: March	9.22 am
Dep: March	11.30 am
Arr: Welney Post Office	12.03 pm

WEDNESDAY: WELNEY/PETERBOROUGH

Dep: Welney Post Office	9.10 am
Arr: Peterborough	10.30 am
Dep: Peterborough	2.40 pm
Arr: Welney Post Office	4.00 pm

FRIDAY: WELNEY/DOWNHAM MARKET

Dep: Welney Post Office	10.00 am
Arr: Downham	10.25 am
Dep: Downham	12.15 pm
Arr: Welney Post Office	12.40 pm



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EDITORIAL

Well, we did it together.

This small editorial committee, which came together last June, responded to those villagers who had said in the Appraisal that they wanted a Welney Newsletter. So we worked hard to produce a free Pilot distributed to each home. We asked everyone to decide: 'Do you want a Newsletter, like this, on a regular basis and will you pay £1.50 a year for six issues?'

At this point we must thank the distributors whose names you will find listed on the page opposite. They did that rotten job of plodding to every home and going back when people weren't in, they took the money and gave receipts and added up the totals.

And the response was really amazing.

159 households had said they would support a Newsletter. **218 households have paid £1.50 up front for the next six issues of WELNEY NEWS.** In other words, they have said: **'YES WE WANT WELNEY NEWS FOR THE NEXT YEAR, AND WE WILL PUT OUR MONEY WHERE OUR MOUTH IS.'**

Let me now outline what the costs are and how our Newsletter is being financed.

The Pilot, as far as writing, design and layout cost nothing, everyone gave their time, ideas, computer input, telephone calls etc. free. Karen Fleming brought in news of groups and activities and Margaret Levesley set up a bank account and a distributor system. It cost just under £100 to print 300 finished copies at King's Lynn Borough Council printers who were enthusiastic and helpful and took us on as a community project.

We had a grant from the Parish Council of £150, enough to print the Pilot but not to go anywhere from there. Then Tim Bennett went out to get advertising and had a tremendous response. We asked for a year long commitment. Overall we had a promise of £400 - £450 for the year ahead. Then local businessman, Howard Kent, said he would cover the entire cost of printing the Pilot as payment for a year's advertising. An act of generosity which left our Parish Council Grant intact towards future editions. Carol Green created lively, exciting adverts and

illustrated articles, with the help of her imagination, the graphics on her computer (and her husband Richard)

At that stage we still only had £150 clear in the bank, but we knew that if enough households would pay an annual subscription, that together with the advertising revenues would set us clear to take off for the whole year.

And you turned up trumps. THANK YOU

Even when we were not sure of subscription numbers, we looked to the future.

The Rural Community Council gives start up grants for projects such as ours. The professional 'look' of our pilot edition relied on 'borrowing' a laser printer and a scanner from friends. To keep up this standard, we asked the Rural Community Council to give us a grant to buy this type of equipment, so that future committees could achieve the same results. Bob Frusher had offered us a very fair deal, the Rural Council gave us £660 and that technology is now available to any group or activity in the village which wishes to use it. Call 610 585. The photographs and artwork in this issue are all products of the new equipment.

FOR THE FUTURE

Well, we have included all the features you enjoyed in the pilot plus a letters page, ideas for new group activities in the village, and much more. **Please phone 610 585 if you have more ideas for the next edition.**

We have heard rumours that some people think that great though the Pilot was, we can't sustain a stimulating Newsletter in the future because nothing goes on in Welney and we will run out of interesting things to say. Don't you believe it: we are here to stay and we could fill the Newsletter twice over with what the people of Welney do, what they think and what they are interested in - well, look in this edition, researching fungi to racing Huskies is quite a range for one village.

Helen Barry (Editor)

PARISH HALL

The Parish Hall Committee has been concentrating on ways in which the Hall can be open and used for all kinds of village activity. We have had to concentrate so much on fund raising that at times it has seemed that the Hall is there only to make money to keep the Hall going. And that, of course, is a nonsense. We do have to raise the money but the be all and end all of its existence is that it is a centre for everyone to use. Elsewhere in the Newsletter (pages 16 & 17) there is information about villagers who want to set up new special interest groups in Welney. If you want to use the Hall, please contact me on **610385** - there is a small charge, but we can be flexible.

The mini market on the first Saturday of each month from 10.a.m. has been a great success. Next one on 1st November. Stalls are free, bring what you like, jam, cakes, bric-a-brac etc.

Rosi Beckford
Chairman, Village Hall Committee

W.I.

At our September meeting we had members and visitors from Christchurch, Littleport and March St. Mary, all of whom were warmly welcomed by our President, Amy Markham. The evening's guest speaker, Miss R. Wheeler presented a history of hats from the 15th century to the present day. She spoke about the shapes and sizes of lavishly trimmed hats and the popular Victorian bonnets, and the fact that women always wore a hat when visiting family and friends. Miss Wheeler modelled a collection of her own summer and winter hats that she had brought.

After refreshments, a short business session was held, raffle tickets were sold - the visitors winning all the prizes! The bring-and-buy stall made a good profit and Bettine Watson organised a quiz called "Proverbially Speaking". Miss Wheeler judged the monthly competition for a Quiche Lorraine, which attracted 8 entries. Our President hoped members had enjoyed the evening and wished everyone a safe journey home.

Jennifer James

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SOME DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

OCTOBER OCTOBER OCTOBER OCTOBER OCTOBER OCTOBER OCTOBER

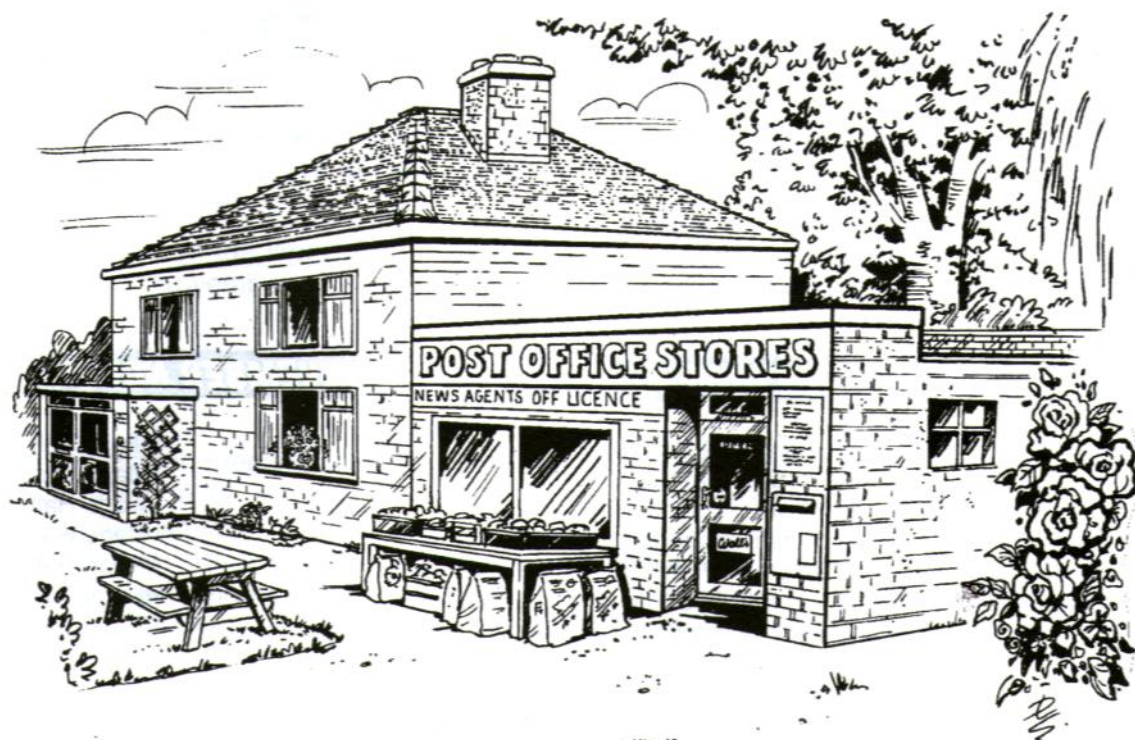
Monday	20 th	6 - 8 pm	Youth Group	Village Hall
Tuesday	21 st	2.00 pm	Friendship Club Annual Birthday Celebration	Village Hall
Wednesday	22 nd	7.30 pm	Whist	Village Hall
Friday	24 th	7.30 pm	Bingo	Village Hall
		6 - 8 pm	Youth Group	Village Hall
Wednesday	29 th	7.30 pm	Whist	Village Hall
Friday	31 st	9.30 am →	Mobile Library	

NOVEMBER NOVEMBER NOVEMBER NOVEMBER NOVEMBER NOVEMBER

Saturday	1 st	10 - 12 noon	Mini Market	Village Hall
Monday	3 rd	10 - 12 noon	Playbus	Village Car Park
		6 - 8 pm	Youth Group	Village Hall
Tuesday	4 th	2.00 pm	Friendship Club	Village Hall
Wednesday	5 th	7.00 pm	Women's Institute Monthly Meeting	Village Hall
Thursday	6 th	7.30 pm	Whist	Village Hall
Monday	10 th	10-12 noon	Playbus	Village Car Park
		6 - 8 pm	Youth Group	Village Hall
Tuesday	11 th	7.30 pm	Parish Council Meeting	Village Hall
Wednesday	12 th	7.00 pm	Mothers' Union	Church
		7.30 pm	Whist	Village Hall
Thursday	13 th	8.00 pm	First Quiz Night	Three Tuns
Monday	17 th	10 - 12 noon	Playbus	Village Car Park
		6 - 8 pm	Youth Group	Village Hall
Tuesday	18 th	9.00 am	Friendship Club - Christmas shopping trip to Bedford - leaves Village Hall at 9.00 am	
Wednesday	19 th	7.30 pm	Whist	Village Hall
Saturday	22 nd	10.30 - 12	Christmas Coffee Morning	Church
Monday	24 th	10 - 12 noon	Playbus	Village Car Park
		6 - 8 pm	Youth Group	Village Hall
Wednesday	26 th	7.30 pm	Whist	Village Hall
Friday	28 th	9.30 am →	Mobile Library	
		7.30 pm	Bingo	Village Hall

DECEMBER DECEMBER DECEMBER DECEMBER DECEMBER DECEMBER

Monday	1 st	10 - 12 noon	Playbus	Village Car Park
		6 - 8 pm	Youth Group	Village Hall
Tuesday	2 nd	2.00 pm	Friendship Club	Village Hall
Wednesday	3 rd	7.00 pm	Women's Institute Monthly Meeting	Village Hall
Thursday	4 th	7.30 pm	Whist	Village Hall
Saturday	6 th	10:00 am	Mini Market	Village Hall
Monday	8 th	10 - 12 noon	Playbus	Village Car Park
		6 - 8 pm	Youth Group	Village Hall
Wednesday	10 th		Mother's Union Christmas Party	Christchurch
		7.30 pm	Whist	Village Hall
Monday	15 th	10 - 12 noon	Playbus	Village Car Park



Elaine Sweetman

WELNEY VILLAGE SHOP

Years ago you needed to go no further than Welney to buy petrol, meat, hardware and groceries, or to have your shoes or cycle repaired. Today the car and the superstores have put the local tradesman out of business. But we still have our general store and post office. Many villages have lost theirs.

What does our village store offer? Well, in practical terms a shop that caters for most of our basic needs. Fresh milk, bread, butter, ham sausages, bacon and eggs, salad and vegetables, tinned and frozen food, sweets and biscuits and food for the cat and dog, greetings cards, sauces and tissues, washing lines and needle and cotton, and an off licence, bottled gas and newspapers and magazines (delivered if you wish) and headache pills and bananas and lemons and garlic: mobile fish and meat salesmen visit outside once a week, and most of the needs of fishermen are met from providing licences to selling rods, wellies, nets and bait. All that and a post office for stamps and pensions, parcels and licences and almost all your needs in paying bills. But there is a good deal more.

There is Peter travelling to stock the shop and buy fresh vegetables and fruit, as well as driving miles in the morning to deliver newspapers. And there is Wendy, there behind the counter from six-thirty in the morning until six in the evening six days a week (well, she does take an hour off and close at five on Saturday) but is back nine to twelve on Sundays. Wendy knows everyone, helps everyone and is one of the social centres for the entire village.

Think about it. Wendy is really the only daily point of information for us all. The Newsletter can give you information in advance but it isn't there on a day to day basis. Wendy will pass on messages, tell you the date of any event in the village and whether the Friendship bus is full for its next outing. Wendy will tell delivering tradesmen where to find you and will take local adverts free on her counter. She will tell you how deep the wash road is flooded and who has been birthed, married or died, or indeed taken to hospital and may welcome a visit. In a discreet way she is a central point of all village information.

This article is not an advert for Wendy and Peter running our village shop, it is a reminder of what we gain from having a village shop, and it is asking you what the village would be like without it. Perhaps you treat it as a place for fresh milk and veg, or somewhere for that odd thing you want which isn't worth the bother or expense of driving to a supermarket.

But the point is that when you want it, it is there. The shop is part of the village - you expect it to be that way and Wendy treats it that way. She makes up orders for those who can't get to the shop and she and Peter deliver them. She advertises village events, activities and things for sale, she makes up fruit baskets for local raffles and for special celebrations; she chats without gossiping and she does far more than open a shop and serve from the counter.

All customers from children to pensioners - and everyone in between - are given courtesy and time. Some people think too much time, as they wait in a queue, but they usually change their minds when their turn comes and they are able to shop in a relaxed way with no pressures and a good deal of help.

Think what Welney would be without a shop and post office and a centre like this. If you have a car you would have to remember every last thing every time you shop in Ely, Downham or Wisbech. And those day-to-day needs - a stamp, sweets for the children, or bottled gas, or milk, or fresh veg and fruit, or bread or cheese or a bottle of wine to go with it. - Each of those would require a car journey of, at the very least, ten miles return. If you have no transport - well, how would you cope?

All over Norfolk, month by month, villages are seeing their shop close. Unless we support our village shop it may disappear. Some villages have been reduced to running a shop themselves with part time volunteers: they manage to keep a shop open a couple of days a week for few hours in the morning or afternoon. No doubt we could do that but is it what we want? I have no hot line to Wendy and Peter and they haven't asked to write all this, it just strikes me as common sense that if we don't use the village shop, it will disappear.

Helen Barry



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WELNEY PARISH COUNCIL

The Parish Council meets bi-monthly in the Village Hall. The meetings are held on the second Tuesday of the month and start at 7.30pm. At the time of writing the Council comprises the Chairman: Cllr John Frost of Pates Farm, Tipps End, the Vice Chairman, Mrs. Pat Rix of New Road, and Councillors David Bonner of Main Street, Dennis Booth of Bedford Bank West, Alison Burrows of Taymor Place, Douglas Carter of New Road, Charlotte Cox of Tipps End, Tom Fisher of Hundred Foot Bank and Tim Bennett of Wisbech Road.

The Parish Council Clerk is Mrs. Pat Copeman of 1 Chestnut Avenue (Tel: 610 226)

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING: **TUESDAY, 9TH SEPTEMBER**

Mr. Tim Bennett, who was the only candidate to have responded to the public notice for a vacancy on the Council, was duly co-opted as a Councillor.

Following up the problem of dogs being exercised on the Middle Level Barrier Bank, the Environment Agency had written at length. They stressed that the only way to overcome the problem of the worrying of grazing sheep was for dogs to be kept on leads at all times. This will be clearly spelled out on a new notice board at the entrance to the bank. It was noted that sheep are allowed to graze the banks and washes all the year round, whereas cattle can only be grazed during the summer months.

The village sign has been taken down and is being repaired. The timber surrounding the sign is also in poor condition and it was agreed to request a quotation to rebuild the sign using long lasting materials. The attention of the Highways Department will be drawn to the need for immediate works to be carried out to repair the depression in the Hundred Foot Bank Road, just beyond the Wildfowl Trust. Car exhausts had been damaged and there was a danger of vehicles grounding. A request from residents of Wisbech Road, Tipps End, for 30 miles an hour speed restriction signs to be erected had to be turned down as there was no street lighting in the area. However, it was suggested that a weight restriction might be imposed, and the Highway Authority would be asked to consider this. The Council's attention had been drawn to the diminishing width of droves and bridle-ways within the parish through encroachment by farmers. In many cases ploughing had reduced the widths of the

droves, and a case was sited of a drove that used to be fifty feet across was now reduced to a narrow concrete track. This encroachment was leading to the stability of the tracks being compromised making use by residents and legitimate users difficult. In one case where land bordering a drove had been sold the drove itself had been ploughed over. Again parishioners' views would be welcome. Further research would be carried out by the Council and a report presented at the next meeting. Back Drove, in particular, was in need of urgent attention in order that the residents would be able to use it without hindrance during the coming winter months. Following the response in the Village Appraisal, consideration will be given to the siting of notice boards in the centre and outlying parts of the village at the next meeting. In the meantime parishioners who would be willing to have a notice board sited on their property should contact the Clerk.

Charlotte Cox

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CHURCH NEWS

UNITED BENEFICE

INDIVIDUAL PARISHES

When, some few years ago, it was decided that the parishes of Welney St. Mary and Upwell Christ-Church become a Benefice under the leadership of one incumbent, the partnership worked extremely well. The two fellowships joined together for some services but each maintained its own individual services, church councils and church building.

In the early 1990's the Deanery of March, was asked to draw up a new pastoral plan, with the view of cutting the number of paid priests by one. This process took some considerable time, thought and much prayer. Finally, it was agreed that Manea and Wimblington would no longer be a separate Benefice but would join together with Doddington and Benwick as one Benefice, whilst Manea joined Christchurch and Welney to become a United Benefice.

One of the first assurances to each parish was that whilst they were united as a Benefice, they should and would maintain their own individuality, and this each has done and will, I trust, continue to do. There is always a sadness and a concern when a community loses its resident priest, but with transport and communications being what they are today this should present no problems. With careful, thoughtful consideration and the good will of each parish, it is entirely possible for parishes and the persons who live in them to receive a full measure of pastoral care and maintain a regular week by week pattern of services.

One of the great benefits of a multi-parish Benefice, where the fellowships get along well together (and we do) is that there is occasion for the church councils to meet together to discuss matters of relevance to small rural communities and fellowships. We also share some of our services and this gives encouragement as we meet, worship and fellowship together. On 30th November the Benefice comes together in Welney on a Sunday evening for an Advent Songs of Praise.

We know and fully understand that families are made up of individual persons, each one playing their own valued and unique role. A fellowship, parish or group of parishes should be no different. Each member, whether an individual person or an entire parish, each has a unique and valued role within the community and is to be encouraged to seek out its own special place

and to exercise its own particular ministry. It is then that we shall stand together and form the body of Christ as exhorted by St. Paul.

Reverend Sheila Tooke

CHURCH SERVICES

October

26th 9.30 Holy Communion

November

2nd 9.30 Morning Prayer

9th 11.00 All Age Worship

16th 9.30 Holy Communion

23rd 9.30 Morning Prayer

30th 6.30pm United

Advent Songs of Praise
WELNEY

December

7th 9.30 Holy Communion

14th 11.00 All Age Worship

21st 9.30 Holy Communion

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WELNEY HUSKY CHAMPIONS

Hello, fellow villagers pleased to meet you. We are **JOHN CARTER** and **ANN LUNN** and we live in Wisbech Road. We race and show Siberian Huskies. This time of year, you'll see us jogging through the village trying to get fit for this winter's racing season, trying to look as if we've done many more miles than we actually have. John plays for a local football team and also gets into all our photographs as you can see! (John is wearing the hat)



John Carter with Moon

We both came into the sport of Sled Dog Racing about seven years ago. Although we are competitive both in showing and racing - John's teams have been British Champions in the 'C' Class for three years running, and Anne was 4th overall in both the 'C' and 'D' Classes - yet for us the joy of the dogs is as pets. They have such a loving nature, yet remain so natural in their pack environment. It needs to be experienced to be believed.

But first let us explain about Sled Dog Racing, which you can watch locally in Thetford Forest over miles of forest tracks.

Due to the lack of snow in Britain, sleds are not often practical so the dogs are usually raced pulling a metal framed, three wheeled 'Rig' which has a low footplate and bike handlebars for the driver. Classes are based on the number of dogs in a pulling team, 2 dogs (D Class), 3-4 dog (C Class) or 4-6 dogs (B Class). The dogs are attached to a line by their

harnesses and collars, and usually run side by side in pairs. There are no reins or whips involved, as is the popular belief. The dogs work to their trained commands: **Haw** is called for left, **Gee** is called for right, and a straightforward **Leave It** when a rabbit comes in view!

The dogs pull from their harness, not their collars, so all the weight is distributed over their bodies. Huskies love to race. I think you can see this in the photo opposite with John racing. When the dogs are hitched into a line, and know a race is about to begin, they scream with excitement, and at this point sometimes you wish that they didn't have this natural, overwhelming urge to run.

Obviously teams can't start off side by side down a forest track, so they set off at three-minute intervals and then each team is timed. It is amazing how quickly a young dog team learns to count backwards. 10 seconds is called for the next team and their frenzied screaming increases. Then 5,4,3,2,1 and at that, all is quiet and then they're off for the sheer enjoyment of the race. The distance for a race for each Class depends on the temperature on the day. 6 dog teams run up to 8 miles, 4 dogs up to 6 miles and 2 dogs only 4 miles. The British Championship series runs from November to March; the races are at weekends.

Racing tests the physical fitness of the human driver as much, if not more than the huskies. Huskies can be trained, but they work out their own priorities, they can slow down up a hill and then go in full thrust down the other side, the drivers need skill to control. Huskies are strong hunters, independent dogs - if they get loose, they will not come to your call. If you ever see a loose Husky, please attempt to catch it or call the council dog warden. No responsible owner lets them run free because they are so independent.

The huskies love racing and we love to rear, train and race them. Working to achieve any goal will give one different levels of highs and lows. However, the elation felt when you see a dog you helped into the world, cared for, trained and conditioned and then finish it's first race is the ultimate high for us and the lows are forgotten.



Racing Sled going strong

There are no prize monies involved in Husky Sled Dog Racing, and if an event offered prize money, we would not participate. In Britain Sled Dog Racing is for fun - for humans and Huskies - and that is the way we want to keep it.

After the rally season, we de-condition the dogs by keeping runs going as long as the temperature allows. In the summer we take part in Championship Shows around Britain, and at home we repair and prepare equipment for the next racing season.

If anyone would like to come and meet the dogs, please give us a ring. They love having

visitors and we love them to meet people. If you want to come and see the racing, spectators are welcome at Thetford and Brandon. For details of the coming season, ring us on **610420**

John Carter Ann Lunn

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

Next year Welney celebrates the 150th Anniversary of the building of Welney Church and of the William Marshall School. As part of those celebrations we are hoping to mount an exhibition which will tell the story, down the years, of village and Church and School - particularly concentrating on those years within living memory which can be illustrated in pictures and print.

If anyone has anything that can help us demonstrate that history - photographs, newspaper cuttings, letters, diary notes, posters - anything that gives a visual memory of life, people and events in either the Church or the School - I would be very grateful if they would 'phone me and let me know. I promise that whatever treasures you have will be safely copied and returned. Please look out all your old albums and desk drawers so that we can have a really interesting exhibition next year - group photos of children at the school, photos of past clergy, old views of the buildings - anything that brings the history to life. It is a unique anniversary and I'm sure there are many personal mementoes that will recreate these two centres of village life. If you can help ring me on **610 516**

Ken Sorenson, Taymor Place

Dear Editor,

Can we ask through your columns if anyone would like the opportunity to join a large choir and perform major choral works in such venues as Ely Cathedral? **Ely Choral Society** welcomes new members; sopranos, altos, tenors or basses. The choir rehearses on Monday evenings in Needhams Hall, Ely at 7.30. We both go regularly and would welcome the company of fellow enthusiasts in the village.

Or does our other regular leisure pursuit interest you. **Yoga is a way to improve your standard of fitness through gentle,**

non-competitive exercise. We go to classes at Downham Market on Wednesday evenings: 7.00-9.00pm. We would be happy to hear from anyone who would like to join us, perhaps with a view to sharing transport.

Karen Fleming (610 523)

Cindy Bennett (610 433)

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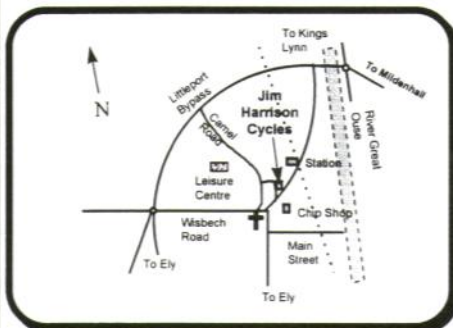
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WHAT A WATER GALA

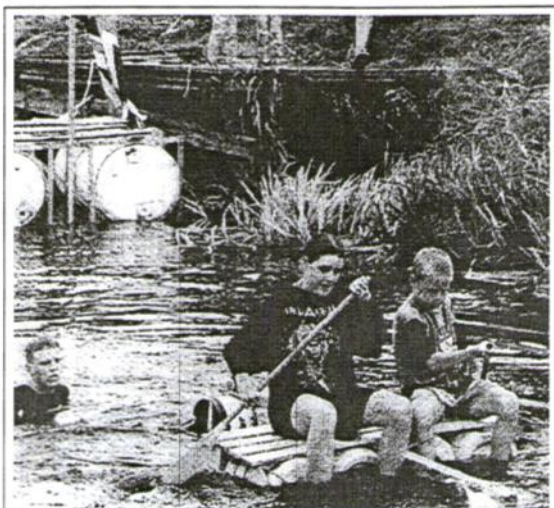


Photo courtesy of Wisbech Standard

Well, that photo says it all, it was a great day; everyone took part and everyone helped. Above is the winning team for the young people's section of the Raft Races - Diane Ingram and Craig Williams, one of three teams from Aidan's new Youth Group. Diane and Craig are seen swimmingly supported by Kevin Scarfe. Kevin worked like a Trojan all day, he was there in the morning putting out chairs and helping stallholders. When the Youth Group van arrived, Kevin helped unload three rafts and swam around, fully clothed, in the river, making sure they were seaworthy! He gave help and obviously enjoyed himself.

Gala Day didn't start very promising following weeks of sunshine. But after one heavy shower before we got going, the day was dry, cloudy but warm. And the crowds came and it was a tremendous success. For the first time for a couple of years there were rafts aplenty from young and old. An A and B team launched the AJP raft resplendent with dragons and shining green paint and a huge Union Jack large enough to represent the whole of Norfolk. Their A team made it to the final but were beaten by the Cricket Club team in a close finish. The Dumb and Dumber raft was less ornate but relied upon comic relief from Richard Johnson and his crew to provide entertainment.

Matthew Waring doing the bankside

commentary for the first time provided a splendid chorus to the antics of rafts and rafters throughout a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon.

And the crowd swarmed around the stalls and games as well, as you can see from the photo below, taken by Richard Green whilst tending his 'smash the bottles' stall.

Sorry we can't mention everyone by name but we must leave space for the really splendid Gala Dance in the evening.

It was organised by Alison and Aidan and was a sell-out. Old and young had a really smashing and entertaining evening together to the music of Sam's Sounds.

It was a great end to what was voted one of the best Gala days we've had for some years. All thanks to everyone who helped, who took part, who visited and who danced. **Overall it raised £633 - the money divided between the Parish Hall and the Playing Field**



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WELNEY & DISTRICT SKATING CLUB

During the last month the Club has been setting our field ready for winter skating. This is the field on the washes which has been made available by Cliff Carson in conjunction with his Head Office at the RSBP. We are grateful to the RSPB who understand that when the frosts come and we can skate, we will not be interfering with bird life on the washes. We have been cleaning the dykes and trimming the field so that when the water comes and freezes, we will have good skating conditions. Now, in the autumn the birds are there in abundance, but in the winter they move on to deeper waters, so we will not disturb them when the frost and ice comes and we hold our skating races. This is why the RSPB are happy to give us use of the field. For spectators, there is good parking along the wash road and off it.

In the Club we have many enthusiasts - some with skating experience and some without. Welney is a village of skaters - look at our village sign - we had the world champions. If any of you youngsters - or not-quite youngsters - would like to learn or train regularly in Peterborough, we have organised sessions and Committee members will take you there and see you on your way.

DO YOU WANT TO LEARN TO SKATE?

Don't just say Yes, phone **Alvar Smart** on **638 498** or **Roger Giles** on **610 483**

Sessions at Peterborough are. Wednesdays 7.00 - 8.00.pm

Skates are available but the Club would like parents to accompany very young children. But all are welcome - let us see the Welney tradition of championship skating go on into the next millennium.

And if you aren't quite ready for ice skating yet, how about **roller skating** - well we hope to get you going next year on the pavements in Welney and with some racing. Welney means skating on whatever surface.

Alvar Smart, Secretary

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WELNEY PLAYBUS

The Playbus has returned to the village again after a two-week absence, and should be here every Monday morning during the Autumn term. The two playleaders have been busy preparing the **replacement Playbus** for use. It had been fitted out with equipment and furnishings, but needed a coat of paint and some finishing touches before being inspected by the Playbus Committee, plus it had to pass essential health and safety standards. But the good news is that has been done, so it now only needs an MOT. The old Playbus had an inadequate heating system, so it was vital that the replacement be ready by Half Term; it seems that all is going according to plan and Welney's Mums and Toddlers can look forward to a new gleaming and warm Bus appearing soon. Look for dates and times on the Diary page.

DOWNHAM PLAYGROUP

There is a new Playgroup for mums and toddlers and the Sixth Form Centre, Ryston End, Downham Market. It is run by 6th Formers on the two year GNVQ course in Health and Social Care, including two Welney students, **Lisa Markham** and **Jo Pegg**.

Sessions every Thursday during term time:
9.30-11.00am.

An entry charge of 50p includes refreshments

The group caters for children up to school age; there is a wide range of toys and each week there is a music and singing session with many different musical instruments. Mums have a comfortable seating area where they can spend some of the time relaxing. All children must be accompanied by a parent or carer for insurance purposes. Children from anywhere in the Downham Market district can attend and are welcome to come along on a trial basis any time during the term.

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HAVE YOU SOMETHING TO DECLARE?

In the Village Appraisal were you one of the many people who said they wanted new, special interest clubs in Welney? One, perhaps, of the 47 who said they wanted a Keep Fit group. Well, hooray for you - but who are you? The Appraisal, you will remember, was anonymous and confidential, so nobody knows who wants to keep fit - or do anything else for that matter. So how do we find each other?

Tim Bennett and Nigel Fleming have decided to use the Newsletter to try and ferret out their fellow enthusiasts. They ask:

CAN YOU JUST CHESS AND GO?

Returns from the Appraisal suggest that someone in 11 households in Welney would be interested in playing chess and a similar number in playing computer games. Whether or not these include ourselves we can't remember, but in any case there are clearly a few more of you who like to exercise your brains from time to time.

We started playing chess against one another last winter and continue to do so about once a week. We've little idea how good or bad we are since we almost invariably play each other, although we do know that we are evenly matched. We gave up counting at a game score of 25 all!

*Keen to explore other possible means of challenging one another's grey matter, we eventually managed to track down the even older game of **GO** after seeing a feature about it in a newspaper article. We are currently attempting to get beyond the total novice stage of a game that is actually far easier to understand than **Chess***

*Occasionally, after a particularly stimulating game of chess, we unwind with a quick game of **Othello**, which is again very simple to learn, but of recent origin. It can, though, be taken far more seriously, as we discovered when we visited the 'Mind Sports Olympiad' at the Royal Festival Hall in August. Here contestants from all over the world were taking part in a wide range of games both ancient and modern for prestigious titles and a total prize fund of £100,000*

Our next challenge is to find out who else in Welney claimed to be interested in some occasional mental stimulation and fun of this

sort and would like to play, or learn to play such so called "mind sports". Your age or skill level doesn't matter. As long as you are interested in having a go, we'd like to hear from you. We're completely open to suggestions about whether everything remains totally informal, or, if a club or league system is formed, where and how often we might meet up - we just want to play with someone else!

For further information contact:

Tim Bennett (Tel: 610 433)

Nigel Fleming (Tel: 610 523)

PS Nigel is into computer games too.

AND IF NOT CHESS, HOW ABOUT?

GARDENING - 45 households said they wanted a Gardening Club, were you one of them?

RAMBLING - 29 households wanted this

HANDYCRAFTS - 26 households interested

PHOTOGRAPHY - 18 interested parties

MUSIC - 17 enthusiasts

And, as we said at the beginning 47 wanted

KEEP FIT

The Newsletter is a way of putting all these anonymous enthusiasts in touch with each other. If you are interested in being involved in any of the above groups, call the Editor on 610 585 and we can publish names in the next issue. Then a start will be made and contacts can begin.

BABY SITTING While we're on the subject of new groups, **Jane Frusher (610 480)** and **Karen Fleming (610 523)** would like to know if any other parents would like to join in a small baby sitting group.

Christmas Coffee Morning

The Christmas coffee morning is in aid of church funds and will be held in the church on Saturday 22nd November from 10.30-12noon. There will be a bric-a-brac stall, a Home-Made Cake stall, refreshments including hot drinks and a Christmas Raffle will be drawn (look out for the raffle tickets going on sale late October)

OR, ARE YOU INTO A PUFFBALL GROUP?

Jonathan Revett has been identifying and recording mushrooms and toadstools for nigh on 20 years, he's hoping to find other people interested in fungi, people ready to forage and help with research in Thetford Forest next year and he wants to set up a group which will record fungi growing in and around our village. **Fungi can be weird and wonderful so Jonathan whets your appetite, in more ways than one with:**

DEVIL'S BREAD

*Dry conditions during September produced an excellent crop of **Giant Puffballs**, a large football shaped fungus. They could be found on the stubble fields around the village and along the riverbanks, although some locations are a closely guarded secret by the finders. The reason?*

Well, the Giant Puffball is very good to eat and with its large size offers a lot of meals. Giant Puffballs should only be collected for the table when the flesh is thick, firm and white throughout. Young specimens are best as the puffball quickly degenerates into a yellow, then brown spore mass when it is no longer edible. There are many traditional recipes but a favourite method is to slice the puffball like a loaf of bread and then fry or grill the slices.

Giant Puffballs have always held a place in folklore - there are many folk names such as 'bulfists', 'puckefistes', 'puffefistes', names said to be identified with the supernatural, referring to Puck, the mischievous fairy Robin Goodfellow. Other folk names reflect the powdery spore mass and include 'devil's snuff-box' and 'blindman's ball' the latter a reference to the spores which were believed to be damaging to the eyes.

Puffballs have been used in medicine: the Chinese using them in treatments for fever and coughs and as a painkiller.

It is not uncommon for the fruit bodies to weigh over 8lbs: some have been recorded at over 40lbs. A rather bizarre fact is that a single Giant Puffball produces enough spores, which if they all germinated would produce enough puffballs to circle the Earth three times!

If you are interested in knowing more about Puffballs and all other fungi contact Jonathan on 610 274

If you ring him, remember to congratulate him and his wife, Mandy, on the arrival of Miss Holly Revett earlier this month!

Need accommodation for visiting friends or relations?



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YOUNG? BORED?

Get out your diary!

25th Oct. The Big BBC Bash

Day out to NEC; meet stars from pop and tv.
£12,50 per person

28th Oct. Sega World in London

Day out £18 per person includes entrance
fee and Rides

29th Nov. Paintballing

Northwold Paintball Games
£13.00 includes equipment and protective
clothing

4th Dec. Evening Christmas shopping

Peterborough 4.30 - 10.00pm. £1.50

6th Dec. Dry Slope Skiing

Costs £6,00, including supper at Macdonalds

11th Dec. Evening Christmas shopping

King's Lynn: 6.00-9.00pm Cost £1

**For more details and to book: phone:
DOWNHAM MARKET YOUTH CENTRE
01366382010**

**For further day and evening outings
including:**

**2nd Nov. Motorcross with Geoff Mayes of
Mildenhall** riding the latest machines: £28

23rd Nov. Smash Hits

Fun day seeing latest groups £20

and lots more: contact (mornings only)

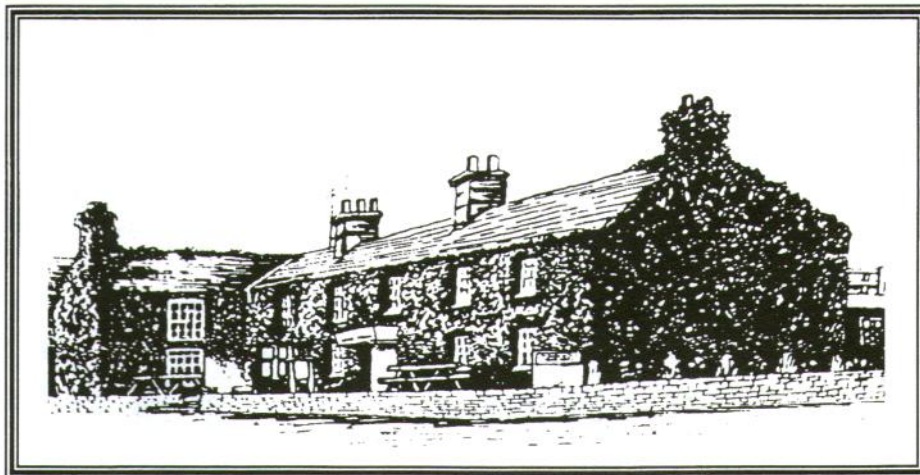
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01945 461299

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WELNEY HOMEWATCH

On the subject of annual subscriptions - wait! - don't turn the page! - it seems that some changes might be necessary. Some Committee members have recently attended Homewatch meetings in Wisbech and Downham Market and it transpires that most local groups favour the system of having a one-off joining fee, rather than an annual renewal fee. Most Homewatch groups do not need large amounts of cash anyway, and who wants the unenviable task of knocking on doors asking for yet more money from those who are already giving in many ways for the local or national community - we all want to support our village, or buy those raffle tickets to raise funds for various good causes. Hopefully, a one-off fee to join Homewatch would be acceptable to most people, and if extra funds were needed at any time then Welney Homewatch could

raise money as other groups do, holding coffee mornings or organising raffles. The joining fee would be set at, say, £4 or £5 which means that those who have paid two years' worth of subs would not need to pay any more to have permanent membership. It seems best to bring Welney Homewatch in line with other local groups in this respect.

We are awaiting developments on the subject of Welney being patrolled (not controlled!) by a parish constable; the Parish Council are in communication with the police at Kings Lynn at present. If this can go ahead and if the Parish Council feels the village needs and wants a Parish Constable (i.e. a special Constable) to patrol on a regular basis, it may be that some costs may be incurred. This seems the logical way to put to use some of the funds already held by Homewatch, watch this space.

Karen Fleming 610 52

SCHOOL NEWS - Report from the 5/6 year class:

"From 3rd to 5th November, eleven of years 5 and 6 are going to stay at Holt Hall. They are going to try and turn it back as far as they can to the year 1870. We've had to change our names into Victorian names. Here are some of our names, Lizzie Gale, Annie Gale Emily Gale. (They are all sisters) James Stokes, George Wilson. We've got to dress as Victorians. We think it's going to be GREAT fun"

And we all hope for a report with photographs in our next newsletter.

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VIEW FROM A TRACTOR

For the last three weeks or so, Welney residents have endured a pungent, sickly sweet smell hanging in the air. What is it?

In essence it is another example of the country dweller having to accept that farming practices, at times, will interfere with their standard of living, the smell is predominantly that resulting from the application of sulphuric acid to potato crops. Due to the exceptionally dry weather, farmers have not been able to desiccate their potato crops with the more pleasant-smelling chemical product "Roundup" - manufacturers do not recommend its use in these conditions.

Why spray at all?

Desiccation ensures that the crop ripens all at the same time, evening-up harvesting and making the exercise altogether less time consuming - and time is money! However, to be fair, it is not solely time/efficiency related. Desiccation sets the skins of the potatoes, ensuring safer and longer-lasting storage. Desiccation also arrests the onset of a particularly nasty disease called 'Blackleg' which can turn the potato black inside. Finally, desiccation prevents potatoes from becoming too big, or cracking and splitting, which would result in a product no-one would want to buy, so the buying behaviour of the consumers, you and me, is indirectly responsible for the need to desiccate.

So unless we are prepared to buy only organic spuds, or put up with tatties poorly stored, or pay higher prices in spring because half the stored potatoes have rotted, I guess we are going to have to accept desiccation as a necessary evil, and walk around with pegs on our noses each September.

Stuart Cree

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