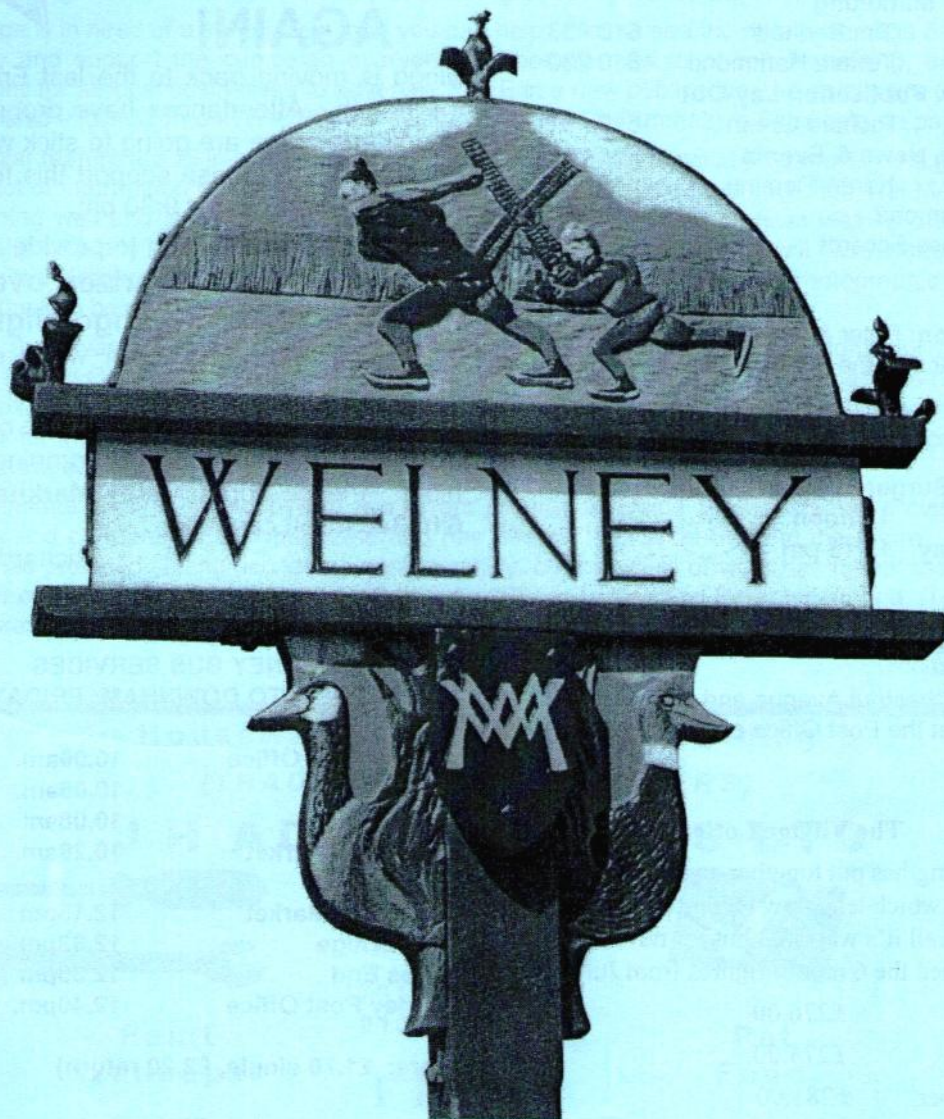


Issue N° 16
April 00 - June

25p



WELNEY NEWS

Editorial Team

Treasurer/Distribution Manager	Margaret Levesley	740435
Organiser Marketing	Tim Bennett	610 433
Secretary	Teresa Hammond	610 230
Organiser, Publication Lay-Out	Richard Green	610 401
Organiser, News & Events	Karen Fleming	610 523
	Peter Hammond	610 230
	Marlen Moss-Eccardt	610 344

Distribution: Peter & Charlotte Cox, Pat Rix, Tom Fisher and the Editorial Team.

SOME WELNEY SERVICES

Doctor's Surgery: Parish Hall
Monday 12 noon
Wednesday 12.15 pm

Wet Fishmonger calls at:

3.00 pm Chestnut Avenue and
3.15 pm at the Post Office every Friday

The Village Lottery

John Waring has put together an article for the next issue which tells how the lottery came to be and how well it's working, but for now I have just included the 6 month figures from July.

* July	£276.00
* August	£274.00.
* September	£281.00
* October	£ 319.00
* November	£325.00
* December	£309.00

Half of these amounts went back as prizes. So far you have all helped in raising £897.00 In six Months

RETURNS FOR WELNEY LOTTERY DRAW IN MARCH 2000

1st prize Ticket No 329	£66.00
2nd prize Ticket No 223	£49.00
3rd prize Ticket No 205	£33.00
4th prize Ticket No 178	£16.00

BINGO IS MOVING AGAIN!



Bingo is moving back to the last Friday of the month. Attendances have dropped for Thursdays so we are going to stick with our original dates. Please support this function from 7:30 pm to about 9:30 pm.

The Village Hall is going to provide a number of **extra special prizes over the next two or three Bingo Nights** so that it will be really worth while coming along.

We could also do with a couple of extra helpers to ensure the smooth running of the night. Please contact **Amy Markham** on **610 340** if you can help.

Richard Green

WELNEY BUS SERVICES WELNEY TO DOWNHAM: FRIDAYS

Welney Post Office	10.00am.
Lakes End	10.06am.
Lots Bridge	10.08am
Downham Market	10.26am.

Downham Market	12.15pm
Lots Bridge	12.33pm.
Lakes End	12.35pm.
Welney Post Office	12.40pm.

(Fare: £1.70 single, £2.20 return)

ELY
Every Thursday (Market Day)

Cavalier Coaches (01406 362518)

This service no longer starts in Welney Village. The nearest pick-up point is at Gold Hill.

COMPUTER ANORAKS!

Did you know that a group of villagers who all share an interest in computers meet every other Thursday in the Three Tunns. Contact Mark Farrow on 610324 for details



WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

As warm weather came to Welney, then went again, the issue of Wash Road flooding came rattling back to haunt us. I spoke to Mr Cowie of the Environment Agency and he has provided us with a potted history of the new Welmore Sluice, which you can see on page 10, as well as details of the recent flooding. Our thanks go to the EA for allowing us to reproduce the information.

The village is in need of a spring clean and you can help. Please see the details on page 6 and if you can help and support the campaign everyone will benefit. As to people benefiting, there is an opportunity for all local businesses to advertise FREE in a new publication, the details are on page 7. There is also information on WHOPS, the Welney Heating Oil Purchasing Syndicate on page 10.

Our regular feature are all in again and one of them, Welney Homewatch on page 17, is a must read. It has a lot of information on fire hazards round the home and could save your life. The MAP project is still going well and is producing more and more works of art and craft as well as providing an opportunity for many of us to try our hands at different skills. Some of you will have photographs of events in the village over the last century and I would like to copy these for a Photographic History of Welney book to be produced as part of the project.

I'm sure that everyone in the village appreciated the fine display of flowers along our roads and verges. Harold Carter has again done us proud. We hope to include some photographs of his work in the next issue. We must apologise to Brian Lovell of the Save Our Swans campaign who sent us an article for inclusion, but sadly, we ran out of space in this issue. If you would like a copy of the article please contact me and I will send you one.

The committee sadly say goodbye to two of our members. Elaine Sweetman has provided many sketches and cartoons for our magazine and has offered to provide more in the future. Elizabeth Dekker has provided sterling service as our Secretary, but pressure of work has meant that she can no longer continue. We also welcome two new members, Teresa and Peter Hammond. Teresa has kindly taken over as Secretary and Peter has made his first contribution on page 17.

Richard Green

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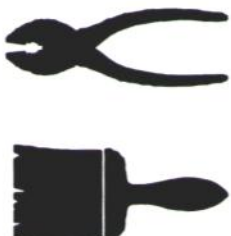


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WELNEY PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Council Meeting - 14th March. 2000

Members considered the revised quotation for the cutting of the grass on the playing field and this was approved, subject to a safety inspection of the children's play equipment.

A Planning Application for Change of Use of the School House at Welney from Residential to School Use was received from the Norfolk County Council and after consideration it was unanimously agreed that this should be recommended for Approval.

Several matters relating to Highways were discussed and it was agreed to ask the Planning and Transportation Department of the Norfolk County Council to attend to:

- drain covers opposite The Hives
- a manhole cover opposite The Lamb and Flag, the state of the road around Sandgate Corner
- the 30 mph restriction signs approaching the village from Littleport had been covered in spray paint.

The question of speeding traffic was also raised once again, and although the Parish Council had been in touch with the N.C.C. regarding speed monitoring equipment, further information was requested, as details which they had supplied were far too costly.

The signs relating to the Flooding of the Wash Road were also discussed and it is still very apparent that the Highways Department are not bothering to raise and lower these at the correct time. It was noted that the signs in the village together with several others in the area were still showing the Wash Road flooded although it had in fact been clear for almost a week.

Mr. Blackwell gave a report to the meeting on the West Norfolk and Breckland rural Transport Partnership. The wheels of this organisation appear to be grinding very slowly as nothing has been heard relating to anything in this area, and a meeting which was originally to be held in March has now been postponed until June. A letter was to be sent asking for up-to-date information.

Wash Road and Wash Banks - Various letters had been received relating to these problems and particularly with regard to the slackers

which had been left open on the Wash. Confirmation was sent as to which ones were open and when, and requesting that these should be locked shut at the appropriate time.

With regard to the footpath/ Bridleway along the Barrier Banks, it was confirmed that the ruts are not minor but between 8-10" deep and they need immediate attention. It was also confirmed that these are Bridleways and should not be used by any vehicles. Cllr. Booth confirmed that he had put a petition in the Post Office some months earlier and had approximately 70 signatures on this relating to these walks, and it was agreed to send a copy of the petition with our letter to the Environment Agency.

Cllr. Green also presented a Proposal to Alleviate the flooding of the Wash Road which he explained to the meeting. Councillors were very impressed with the proposals and it was agreed to send a copy of this to the Norfolk County Council for their consideration.

Cllr. Rix presented a report on behalf of the Playing Field and advised that they were possibly planning some alterations to the Pavilion.

Cllr. Rix (Chairman) also went on to confirm that her two years as Chairman would be completed at the AGM in May and nominations would be needed for a new Chairman to take over at that meeting.

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be the Annual General Meeting on the 9th May, 2000 at 7.30 p.m. in the Parish Hall, Welney.

This meeting will be preceded by the Annual Parish Meeting at 7 p.m.

Pat Copeman



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PARISH HALL COMMITTEE

Annual General Meeting

This was held on 8th March and it was disappointing in that only one member of the village attended.

The Chairman, Marlen Moss Eccardt, reported on a **highly successful year** and thanked all members of the Committee for the tremendous effort they had put in to create this success. **The fund-raising had been exceptional.** The new lottery suggested by John Waring and organised by him and the Treasurer had provided a new, regular income: they and the collectors worked hard month in and month out to generate this money.

The Water Gala had been an exceptional success. In addition, the use of the Hall had increased. The Treasurer would give exact figures for all these activities in his report.

Mrs. Moss-Eccardt reported with great sadness the death of **Madge Singleterry**. She had been one of the most staunch members of the Committee for more years than anyone could remember. Flowers and a letter of condolence had been sent on behalf of the Committee to express our personal loss and our appreciation of her work.

Looking ahead, the Chairman felt the main priorities would be to repair the Hall floor and then to look towards an improved or a new Hall.

The Treasurer, Martin Kyne-Lilley, reported a slow decline in income from Bingo, Whist (which had now ceased) and the Mini Mart. However a special Christmas Mini Mart had raised £75, and the **Ladies Knit-In a very worthwhile £274.**

Income from Hall bookings were rising due mainly to the Cygnets playgroup and the Millennium Arts Group. Takings for November, for example, had been £130.

The new lottery had paid out nearly £900 in prizes so far, and provided £876 in income for the Hall. The Treasurer believed that as numbers were rising monthly, we might look to **an annual income of £1,800.**

The Water Gala had given a surplus of **£1,250**, the highest income for several years.

The Electricity meter had been adjusted to reduce the cost to users: the previous rate had resulted in a profit, whereas all that was needed was to cover costs.

Martin produced balance sheets showing income, expenditure and present bank balance.

The Secretary, Helen Barry, said all licences and correspondence were up to date. **She made a point that two**

local businessmen, Howard Kent and Roger Giles, had been extremely generous in their **sponsorship of the Water Gala**, as well as Elgods Brewery. The Parish Council had been thanked for their annual grant of £200 to the Hall.

The Committee then stood down.

There being only one non-committee person present - Mrs. Sandi Short - she said that from what she had heard, she thought the present Committee competent and proposed their re-election. There being no-one to second this proposal, it was accepted and the following Committee was elected:

Chairman	Mrs. Marlen Moss-Eccardt
Vice Chairman	Mrs. Pauline Pullum
Treasurer	Mr. Martin Kyne-Lilley
Secretary	Mrs. Helen Barry
Ast. Sec.	Mrs. Sylvia Kent.

Committee Members:

Mrs. Rosina Beckford, Mr. David Bonner, Miss Amy Markham, Mr. John Waring.

There being four vacancies on the Committee it was proposed and seconded that Mrs. Short be elected to the Committee.

NOW THE PARISH HALL NEWS

Mrs. Leslie Gardiner came to the next Meeting and was co-opted onto the Committee

The first two meetings of the new Committee dwelt extensively on early plans for the **Water Gala on Sunday 27th August and the Gala Dance in the evening 7.0.-10.30 pm with SAM'S SOUNDS.** A sub-committee, led by Pauline Pullum, was elected to organise this.

The Committee also discussed a **New Hall**, and looked at several available grants, details of which the Secretary had acquired. The new Committee is determined to see if a more modern Hall can be built, answering the needs of the 21st century. We want to do it, can you help? There are still vacancies for Committee members who can work with us. **Could you be one of them? Next Meeting: 7.45 pm 10th May. You will be welcome.**

Helen Barry (Secretary)

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WELNEY AND DISTRICT SKATING CLUB

held their Annual General Meeting followed by dinner at the Lamb and Flag on Monday, 17th April. It was a hugely enjoyable evening at the end of what has been a very good year for the Club. Although the weather has not exactly been kind for their outdoor activities, they are still very enthusiastic and welcomed a number of new members. The next meeting will be on Monday 8th May at 7.30pm.

Helen Barry



LET'S CLEAN UP THE VILLAGE!

We would like as many volunteers as possible to help spring-clean the village.

Many of our verges and pathways have got more than their fair share of litter which has built up over the winter months, mainly from motorists passing through and using our village as a dumping ground for crisp packets, empty tins and cigarette packets. We have a hundred bin bags to use to collect the rubbish and we have the means to store it until it can be taken away to the tip. What we don't have yet is you.

The big clean-up will take place on Easter Saturday, 29th April starting from the Village Hall at 10:00 am.

Please join us and bring your children for an opportunity to improve our environment. Choose your own bit of path or verge to clean and we can do it together.

Safety notes:

- Make sure you wear something bright and highly visible.
- Children must be accompanied and supervised at all times.
- Wear gloves, as there might be broken glass hidden under some rubbish.
- Wear stout footwear for the same reason.

Richard Green

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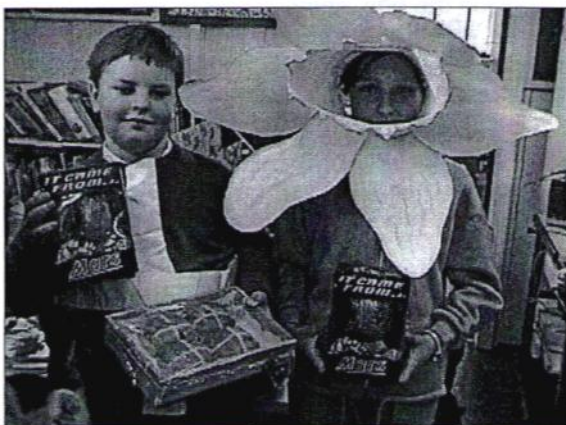
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EASTER FANCY DRESS FAYRE AT WILLIAM MARSHALL SCHOOL

Tuesday 11th April was a cool drizzly day, not Easter weather at all, but inside William Marshall School there was a riot of sunshine and spring colours in the fancy dress costumes which twenty of the children and the pre-school toddlers (and their Mums one suspects!) had designed for the Easter Fayre. There was a daffodil and an Easter chick covered in long, yellow feathery slips of material, lots of Easter bunnies among the younger pre-school children, and a cockerel with a fearsome mask and a hot cross bun and many others. I was one of the judges and the choice was very difficult among the various age groups, but helped by the fact that every one who entered received a small prize.



Michael Padget and Sonia Harvey who jointly won Year 5 and 6 as daffodil and hot cross bun, they are displaying their prizes.

The Fayre was organised by the Friends of Welney School which consists mainly of the Mums of the children at the school and the Mums of the pre-school Cygnets group. They had organised a great afternoon with stalls and competitions and a raffle. You could buy Easter cakes and garden plants and toys and pens and mugs or have a go on the really attractive raffle - nineteen prizes (all donated) including a bottle of whisky, three bottles of wine and a filofax. That made a profit of £47 (including the tickets sold at Wendy's) and the grand total for the afternoon was £135.

And where does the money go? Well, this was one of a number of functions the 'Friends' organise during the year and the money goes on such things as the coach for the school summer outing, the tickets or the coach for the Christ-

mas pantomime, the presents for the Christmas disco and the dictionaries given to the sixth year pupils when they leave, and book tokens for the school prize giving. Neither the school nor the pre-school group are large, so there aren't that many Mums and I think they should be congratulated on organising these events, which are enjoyed by children and adults alike, and for making money for those little extras - those 'icing on the cake' presents and prizes and outings which are such an enjoyable part of school life. Well done the Friends of Welney School.

Helen Barry

CALLING ALL CANDLESTICK MAKERS

The Littleport Retailers Group, working with the Littleport Partnership, and East Cambridgeshire District Council, are preparing to issue a guide book to all the businesses in this area. This will be delivered free of charge to over 2000 homes in the area, courtesy of funding from the EC.

Entry under a heading of your choice is free of charge. If you are a Butcher, Baker, or Candlestick maker, please send your letter heading or business card to;

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CHURCH NEWS

Rural isolation and loneliness - rural deprivation, these words have been bandied about over the past couple of decades. Much time, money and effort have been spent on surveys, polls and conferences, each on trying to find probable causes and possible solutions. I am sure that each one is to be commended in what it seeks to achieve - for isolation, loneliness and deprivation are very real issues.

These three words are, quite possibly, the most desolate words in the human language. They cross all social, cultural and religious barriers. They have no respect for age. They are at their worst in the large crowd and they dig themselves in the busier the individual attempts to be. They demand acknowledgement and know not when to leave. They arrived, uninvited, and seem to want to stay forever. They devour the will to do, and cause unimaginable anguish.

Someone once placed an advertisement in an American newspaper which read:

'I will listen to you talk for 30 minutes without comment for \$5.00.'

No, it was not a joke and the 'phone rang 10 to 20 times a day! Such is the plight of some who would give almost anything for half an hour of companionship.

It is into these very real issues that Easter has a very real part to play in our lives. God knows *and God cares and God understands. How?* One Thursday - since called Maundy Thursday - in the garden of Gethsemane.

One Friday - since named Good Friday - at a place named Golgotha; the man, Jesus of Nazareth, experienced the maximum impact of isolation, loneliness and deprivation.

His friends had either betrayed him or left him and even denied knowing him.

His Father, whom he loved and obeyed even to this cruel day, appeared to have forsaken

him. During the Friday afternoon the Father turned away. In that moment our Lord screamed his agony of despair and desertion.

It should not be surprising then that God, in Jesus, understands and is able to empathise with each of us who stand in that deserted spot which can come to anyone. Those who bear the scars of that silent warfare need no explanation of the pain - only an invitation to share in the wound and, if possible, help in the healing.

God is a specialist when the anguish is deep and has the ability to healbut only those who rely on his wounded Son will experience relief - come through it all and experience the glorious joy and wonder of Easter morning.

Sheila Tooke

CHURCH SERVICES

April

30th 11:00 AM United Service

May

7th 9:30 AM Holy Communion

14th 11:00 AM All Age Worship

21st 9:30 AM Morning Prayer

28th 9:30 AM Morning Prayer

June

4th 9:30 AM Morning Prayer

11th 11:00 AM All Age Worship

18th 9:30 AM Holy Communion

25th 9:30 AM Morning Prayer



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WELNEY PLAYING FIELD

The Playing Field Committee have decided on the weekend of June 23-25th for their Summer Fete.

There will be a dance on the Friday evening, and the Fête and Car Boot on the Saturday. A cricket match has been organised for the Sunday to round the weekend off.

By the time you read this the Annual General Meeting will have been held, and we shall be looking forward to another year of fund raising.

We are now 1 committee member less, Denis Booth has now retired from the Committee. If anyone would like to join the Committee, and didn't do so at the AGM, you are still welcome to come along to the meetings, or get in touch with Adrian Rust (610525) or myself (610292) any help would be most welcome.

The carpet bowls group are now preparing for their Summer League games, and are hoping to do better this year. We had a number of games at Downham Market Sports Hall in the Winter League, and won several of them, so we are hopeful.

The Line Dancing on a Friday would welcome newcomers. There is always a session at the beginning of the period, where the dances are carefully broken down to be taught, and it's fun. Even if you don't go dancing much (I don't now) it is an enjoyable form of exercise. There is no Line dancing on May 5th or June 16th

A number of cricket matches have been arranged, so far the dates are: June 11th and 25th; July 2nd and 16th; August 13th and September 3rd and 10th. A full notice will be displayed in the Village Notice Board and on the pavilion.

CARPET BOWLS is every Wednesday. Juniors 6-7 pm. Seniors 7-9 pm.

Pat Rix

WHOPS

In the absence of piped gas, many homes in Welney rely on LPG or oil to supply their central heating. The tankers which bring these fuels to our Village are large and their fuel consumption is high. They have to travel from their depots in Kings Lynn, Chatteris or Cambridge and until recently 10 households requiring oil have meant 10 journeys with the tanker. These could be all in the same week.

The result of all these journeys is increased pollution, both environmental and noise, and additional degradation of our roads. Yet there is an alternative. A fuel syndicate has recently been formed, where deliveries are co-ordinated to arrive on the same day. One journey, many deliveries.

This results in a saving to the fuel company because they only have to make one journey, saving fuel, wear and tear on the vehicle and driver hours. It also brings a saving to the individual because bulk order prices are cheaper than small orders. And, of course, it brings the environmental saving.

The current minimum order is for 500 litres of oil. The next order may not be for some time, as there has been a recent delivery, but full details can be obtained by contacting me on 610 401.

Ordering winter supplies could be a lot cheaper and more environmentally friendly all round if as many people as possible used WHOPS.

We should also be looking at what else we can do as a community to reduce pollution, such as car sharing. Many of the villagers work outside the village as I do, and whenever possible I share cars with my husband, even though we don't always work in the same office.

We normally share at least once a week and this saves us over 3000 miles a year and about £250 so it's well worth doing for yourself as well as the environment.

Carol Green



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Jane Carter

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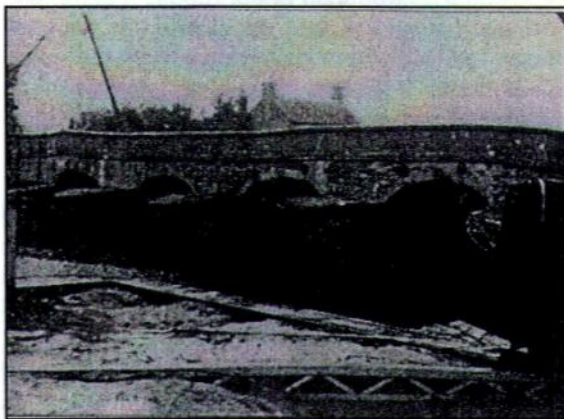
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WELMORE LAKE SLUICE RECONSTRUCTION

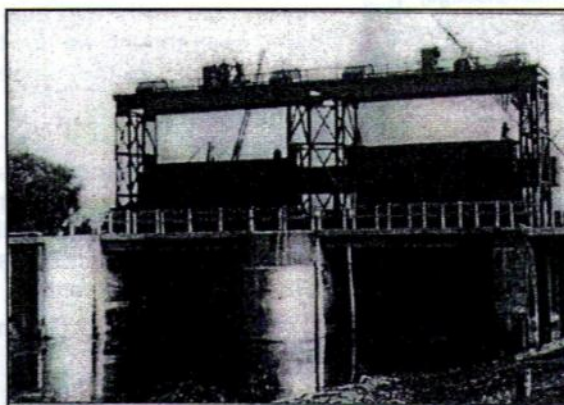
Welmor Lake Sluice is the only means of evacuating flood water from the Ouse Washes into the tidal Hundred Foot River. The first sluice known to have been built on the site was constructed in 1825 and consisted of four sluice-ways spanned by masonry arches. Discharge through the sluice was controlled by timber pointing doors, which closed automatically on high tides to prevent the ingress of saline water into the Washes.



Old masonry sluice of 1825

The original sluice was replaced in 1933 by a larger structure constructed from reinforced concrete and with steel sheet piling for the side walls. There were only two waterway openings through this sluice, but these were bigger and more efficient than the four openings of the original sluice. The sluice gates themselves were made of steel, with vertical lift gates controlling the water level in the River Delph on the Washes side, and large counter-balanced flap gates on the tidal side.

To avoid the threat from tidal flooding during the



The "new" sluice of 1933

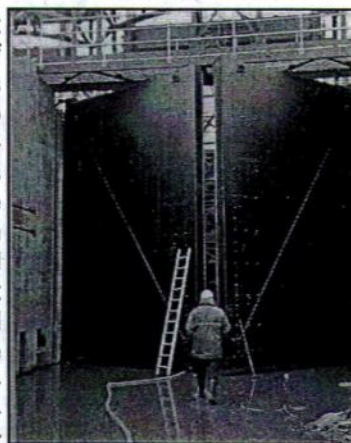
building of the 1933 sluice, the structure was positioned on the Washes side (i.e. upstream) of the original sluice. Although this helped the construction work, it had the adverse affect of moving the sluice further away from its outfall into the tidal river. The 1933 sluice has served the Environment Agency and its predecessors very well, but a continuing major problem has been the build up of silt immediately in front of the tidal flap gates. This occurred whenever the Washes were dry with no flood water being discharged through the sluice.

In 1996 the then National Rivers Authority made the decision to replace the 1933 sluice with a larger, modern structure, which was to be located as close as possible to the Hundred Foot River in order to minimise the problem of silt build up in front of the tidal doors. At the same time, the sluice's discharge capacity was increased by 50% to reduce the length of time that flood water remained on the Washes. This was achieved by providing three waterway openings instead of the two previously provided. Construction work started on site in July 1997.

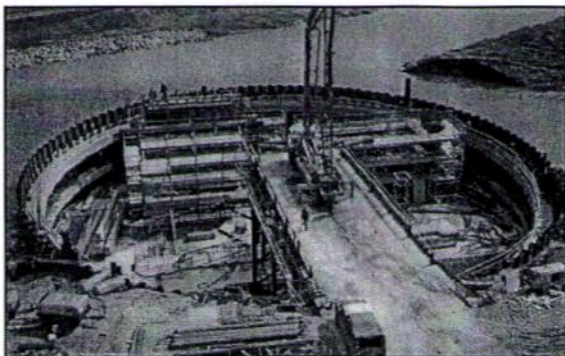
Like its 1933 predecessor, the new sluice uses steel vertical lift gates to control the water level in the River Delph. However, this time tidal ingress of saline water will be prevented by the action of large timber pointing doors, similar in principle to those used in the original 1825 sluice.

It is realised that siltation in front of the tidal doors will continue to be a problem, despite the benefits of positioning the new sluice much closer to the tidal river. To combat this problem and to ensure that the tidal doors can always open whenever flood water inside the Washes has to

be evacuated, a purpose built system of high-pressure silt jetting nozzles has been incorporated onto each of the tidal pointing doors. This silt jetting equipment will be operated on a regular basis throughout periods when the sluice is not discharging, so avoiding the build up of silt in front of the pointing doors which has been such a problem with the earlier structures.

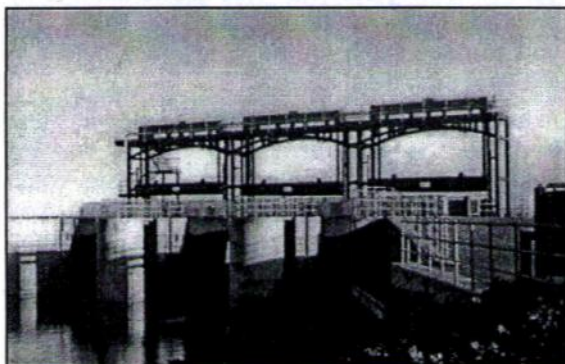


The new timber doors



The cofferdam used in constructing the new sluice

In addition to the silt jetting, the new sluice incorporates two separate land drainage pumps, to be used for evacuating the last remaining volume of flood water which cannot be discharged by gravity into the tidal Hundred Foot River. This will enable environmentally beneficial target water levels in the River Delph to be achieved and maintained over the spring and



The new sluice with its three gates

summer seasons, providing there are no high flood flows in the Great Ouse during this period that would cause the flood control sluices at Earith to operate.

The 1933 sluice was demolished during August 1999 and the public footpath over it was officially re-routed across the access bridge over the new sluice. This bridge will be strong enough to carry any size of any heavy duty plant or equipment which may be needed to undertake future maintenance work either in the Ouse Washes or to the structure itself.

The reconstruction of Welmore Lake Sluice was substantially completed in early September 1999 and an official opening ceremony is to take place in April 2000.

P Cowie
Project Manager

The recent flooding

So what happened this time?

We all know that the washes are vital in storing floodwater from the Bedford area and this is an opportune moment to explain what happens. The very heavy rain we have had over the last two weeks or so has to go somewhere. In fact on the 3rd of April there was over 25 mm of rain in the Bedford catchment area and this resulted in localised flooding around Huntingdon. The flow of water at Newport Pagnell (yes! we get the water from that far away) reached 77 m³ per second and by the time all that gets to Huntingdon the flow had reached 120 m³ per second.

This water resulted in a sharp rise in level at Earith and the gates there opened automatically when the level reached a fixed point. This happened just before midnight on the 3rd. Water then flowed onto the washes at Earith and then down the washes towards Welney and finally through the Welmore Lake sluices and back into the river.

It actually takes about two days for the water to reach Welney from Earith which explains why the road didn't flood until around the 6th.

Normally, the sluice at Welmore would open as soon as the river level in the New Bedford is lower than the Welmore Lake level, which happens at low tide. But this time we were unfortunate in that strong north winds raised the tide levels in the Wash by nearly a metre, so the level in the river stayed higher than normal and made the flooding worse.

Once the river level did drop the water was released and we all saw how quickly the water level dropped in the washes.

Despite the problems with higher tides than normal, the road has remained passable for almost the whole time.

We do still seem to have problems with the signing though. The "Road Closed" signs stayed in place too long and the early warning signs were still saying the road was flooded when it was completely clear.

The second rise in level on Monday was very brief and the level dropped quickly again to almost clear the road by 4 o'clock in the afternoon.

So it seems like the new sluice has done its job and improved level management. If it has then we are likely to see much less flooding in the years to come, and when it does flood it will be for shorter periods.

Richard Green

~WATERWAYS~

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NATURE NOTES

In the last edition of Welney News I wrote about how our wildlife copes with winter, which at the time of writing should just about be over; although it's not much warmer it is at least brighter and the wind has eased. It's just as well that it has, because on my way through the village this morning I spotted a swallow. It wasn't the first that I've seen this year either, since I saw one flying away from the river just north of Kings Lynn on Sunday 2nd April.

These early returnees are gambling on establishing a superior territory before the rest of their relatives get back from Africa. It is a gamble too because swallows feed on the wing, catching insects as they swoop to and fro. The problem is that, unless it's sunny and sheltered from the wind the temperature has to be above 13°C before the majority of insects are capable of flight.

The one exception to this are the bumblebees, which, as well as being furry, have their own central heating system. This allows them to fly once the temperature reaches 9°C. That's why you can see them on the wing much earlier in the year than most insects.

In cold, windy and wet weather like we have just had there is little point in swallows wasting valuable energy flying around trying to catch insects that aren't there. However, there may be little choice if you're hungry after a long flight, and besides, just sitting around means that you use up valuable energy just keeping warm.

It's a bit easier if you're a Chiffchaff because you can poke about in bushes, trees or even shorter vegetation to seek out all the insects that are hiding from the inclement weather. This explains why the Chiffchaff is usually the first migrant to return.

Significant numbers do manage to over-winter in Britain already, but are easily overlooked as they do not sing at that time of the year.

Once the weather warms up a bit more migrants will start to appear, much to the delight of those birdwatchers who like to keep lists of the species that they've seen each year. It seems a little strange to me that although birds are easily found because they're much more vocal whilst setting up and guarding their territories, so little effort is put in by us humans to listen to and learn their distinctive songs and calls. Take it from me, especially in scrub and woodland, it's far better to be a bird listener than a bird watcher.

Tim Bennett

WELCOME TO WELNEY

Although both the new couples that we welcome to Welney in this edition have moved here specifically because of the rural location and their interest in birds and gardening, they have chosen to live on opposite sides of the Washes.

First in were Rob Cathcart and Lucie Hyndley who moved into The Carpenters, Suspension Bridge in Mid-February. Although originally from Soham, Rob has been based in London for the last 12 years and is in the process of undergoing a radical career change, from being a trades union official to becoming an environmental scientist, once his 4 years of studying for a degree end in a few weeks time.

The couple met through their respective jobs in journalism. Lucie, who had always lived in London prior to migrating to the Fens, still commutes there by train to her job as a communications manager. Both she and their cat, Nutkins, are appreciating the open space and garden.

From mid-March there have been new occupants at Axholme, Main Street. Michael and Jan Robinson have moved to Welney from Teversham near Cambridge, where they ran the General Store/Post Office for 14 years before deciding to take early retirement. They are thoroughly enjoying all the extra spare time they now have, which, once the house is sorted out, should provide plenty of opportunity for them to pursue their hobbies; gardening, walking and bird-watching.

Finally, although not new to the village I felt I could not finish without mentioning that Bill and Christine Thompson have moved into their lovely new bungalow, Tofino Lodge, on March Road. We also welcome a real newcomer to the village, Nathan John Waring, who was born on 5th April - congratulations all round!

Tim Bennett



J.D.L.

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TEDDY CHURCH

The Teddies and their children learned of the story of the Prodigal Son in March, and how when he returned from his wanderings (and squanderings!) his family welcomed him back with love and with relief at his return. The theme was extended to the love of all parents for their children, and the love of God for all His children. In April there was the story of John the Baptist and his meeting with Jesus – the most famous baptism of all. The Rev Sheila Tooke then demonstrated baptism by blessing all the teddies while the children watched in deep fascination; some were very keen to try the holy water themselves! Coming up in May we have an exploration of Easter and in June the story of Jonah and the Whale.

Teddy churchgoers still meet on the first Wednesday of the month, with a 10.30 am start. The service includes our now very well-known candle lighting song, greeting song, and farewell song which define the structure of the session and help give it that special atmosphere. We always have room for more teddies and their friends so – if you are feeling tempted to give us a try – how about giving in to the temptation next time!

Holly Goodwin and Karen Fleming

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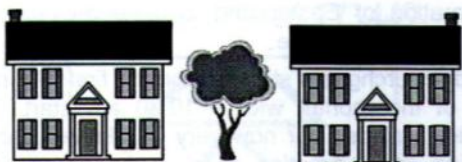
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Planning and building control approval obtained from Local Authorities.



WELNEY HOMEWATCH

The police gave the following information on reported crimes in the Welney area: a theft of a motor vehicle from Bell's Drove on 5th Feb, burglary of an outbuilding on March Road on the night of 11th/12th Feb, criminal damage to a vehicle on Main Street on 6th March, and a theft of a motor vehicle from Main Street on the night of 24th/25th March.

In recent issues of Welney News I have looked at some aspects of safety at home – safety from falls, and safety from unwanted visitors. This time it's the turn of fire safety.

National statistics give the following figures; every year the fire brigade is called out to more than 60 000 fires in the home. Over 500 people die in these fires and over 10 000 are injured. Most of these fires could be prevented if certain simple procedures were followed.

First, it is useful to look at the most common causes of fire in the home:

Top of the list is **kitchen fires caused by chip pans and deep fat fryers**. Here are some safety do's and don'ts;

- Remember that fats and oils can catch fire spontaneously when overheated
- Never put food into a pan or fryer if the oil begins to give off smoke, turn off the heat and allow the oil to cool

- Never leave a chip pan unattended; e.g. if the phone rings – turn off the heat first
- Never fill a chip pan more than one-third full of oil

• Never throw water onto burning fat or oil. If you have a chip pan fire, throw a damp cloth over it and do not touch for at least half an hour. Turn off the heat if you can do so safely

• If you have any doubts about dealing with a chip pan fire, then don't try it. Leave the room, close the door, and call the fire brigade

Next most common as a cause of fire is electrical appliances and their cables, causing over **10,000 fires a year**.

• Remove all plugs which are not needed at night

• Replace any frayed or worn cables and old or cracked plugs

• Watch out for danger signs that suggest your wiring needs checking; fuses blowing frequently, lights flickering, brown scorch marks on plugs and sockets

Electric blankets on their own cause nearly 2,000 fires a year.

• Have your electric blanket serviced once a year

• Never use a blanket which has scorch marks or exposed elements

• Make sure your blanket has British Standard number BS3456 on it and the initials BEAB

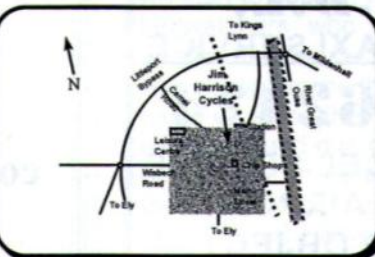
• If you buy a new blanket, make sure it has 'overheat protection' on it – this causes the blanket to switch off if it gets too hot



Watch this space for more in the next issue!

Karen Fleming

Jim Harrison (Cycles)



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News from the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust at Welney

A noticeable change in conditions during March with gradually falling water levels and disappearing swans. By 27th March, Whooper Swan numbers were down to 554 and Bewick's Swans down to 198. Numbers of some duck species increased including Shoveller (315) and Shel-duck (133). These were joined by a female Long-tailed Duck and the first of the summer wading birds.

By the end of March the first 40 Avocets were back and the first 30 or so pairs of Lapwings were nesting. It looked like being a very good breeding season.

Little could we imagine how dramatic the weather in the first few days of April could change the situation. The 3 inches of rain that

fell on Luton on Monday 3rd April washed out all the ground nesting birds, as the rainwater entered Earith. Since that time there has been very little bird activity on the reserve at all, with feeding opportunities lost under the deep water.

Despite the desperate situation, we still have 53 Whooper Swans on the reserve (on 10th April), 1705 Wigeon grazing the banks, 692 Teal, 4 Garganey and 872 Coot. The immediate future looks grim as the floodwater once again puts all breeding attempts on hold and certainly delaying the looming grazing season as well as curtailing all management work and projects on the site for the time being.

Anyone interested in receiving occasional bird news from WWT Welney in the form of an e-mail, please contact the centre at

Welney@wwt.org.uk

Carl Mitchell



THE RED HART INN Three Holes

The Carvery

Friday and Saturday

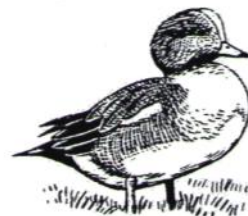
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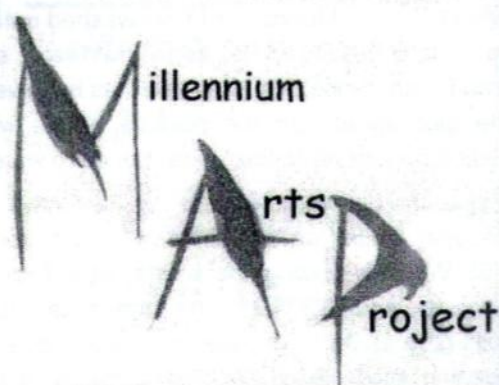
(all profits go towards our conservation work)

Enjoy a variety of hot & cold
light lunches/snacks
(served from 12 - 3 pm)

Call in for afternoon tea and try
our delicious home-made cakes!

(Booked groups catered for)

Visitor Centre & Reserve 10 am - 5 pm
Disabled Access/Baby changing facility



MAP MAKING

By the time this is published we will have finished our Ceramic course with visiting artist/crafts person from Snettisham, Philippa Lee. The results after the first session look very effective. We are then planning to concentrate on the sewing up of the four panels of the map which will involve appliqué and embroidery - putting on the roads (ribbon) and rivers (French knitted) and fields (felt and recycled field coloured fabrics). All volunteers who enjoy sewing would be very welcome to help! Our next event for the Project will be on the 21st May and:



You Are Invited to Welney Millennium Arts Project Open Day - Sunday 21st May 2000

come and see how far we have progressed
with the Map, the Photography, the Book and
the Web site.

Make your house at the open day -

if you haven't already made it, and if you have, make a friend's. We will have several crafts set up including Pyrography, fabric printing, and fimo modelling - all ages welcome. Bring a photo.

Refreshments
Welney Village Hall 2 pm - 6 pm.

The Group Photograph

We have a plan to try to make a group photograph of as many Welney villagers as possible on the day of the Water Gala.

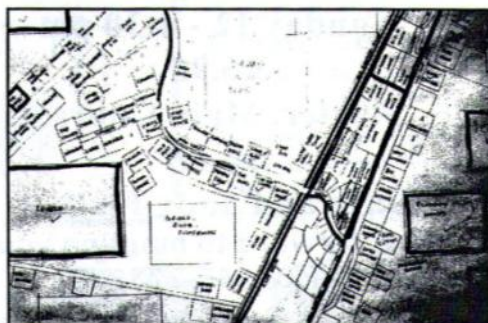
Funding

We have had donations from the Parish Council; the Borough Council; Fenland Arts Association; Arts in Rural Norfolk; The Welney News; Welney Calendar and several Business sponsors including Giles Landscapes; Bob's Business Partners and Wayside and Wildlife. A big thank you to all. We do still have two thirds of the way to go to raise enough money to pay for the remaining materials; the teachers; the film; printing and displaying the work, some of this is, we hope, to come from European and lottery funds, but a few more business sponsors would be much appreciated, each will be featured on the map. Everyone who donates their very valuable time and energy will also be remembered by having their name embroidered on the border of the map.

The Exhibition

We have booked the Exhibition date for 15th, 16th and 17th December 2000, at the village Hall, when we hope to have completed the Map, the Portrait photographs, and the Historical Welney Book.

please contact me for more information:
P.Mitchell 01353 862481



WELNEY SCHOOL

AT the time of preparing this article the school is preparing for the 'Easter Fancy Dress Fayre' which is to include a grand Easter Parade. Look out for a report on the Fancy Dress competition in this issue of Welney News.

On the 12th May there will be a photographer at the school.

During the summer term there will be a school outing to Easton College; the whole school will go for a special day looking at animals and plants. This trip is to tie in with themes followed in science classes during the term.

From June 30th to July 2nd all the Key Stage Two children have the opportunity to go to Kingswood Educational Activity Centre in West Runton, for an ICT Action Adventure Weekend. The children and their parents have already seen a video giving them information about the Activity Centre; the weekend will be a hands-on experience introducing the children to many fascinating applications of computer technology.

The last day of the half term will be on the 25th May, with a staff training day on the 26th. School Sports Day will be on 28th June; there will be more information about this in the next issue.

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"SETTLING DOWN IN WELNEY"

It was no small coincidence that we finally moved to Welney in October 1999, following a strange sequence of events which kept drawing us back to the village. Properties we liked elsewhere were under offer, or withdrawn from the market. Everything seemed against us.

Finally we were diverted through the village, having chosen an alternative route, when travelling home after visiting relatives in the area. We saw an estate agents board advertising the bungalow we eventually purchased. "It was meant to be" some would say.

Our first impression of Welney was the friendliness of the people - both natural born Fenmen and others who had made Welney their home from elsewhere. We attended the Water Gala and were immediately made welcome by everyone who we came into contact with. "You have to survive the winters to appreciate the summers" we were told.

Having survived our first winter, (a mild one in comparison), we are now beginning to understand what was meant. The winds seem to blow straight from Siberia with little in the way to slow them down. Fashion takes a distant back seat when you need to keep warm.

The amount of birdlife is another feature which adds to the tranquillity of the village, providing you keep away from Main Road with its constant stream of lorries rumbling through. Some disincentive to travel this route would surely benefit the village and increase safety around the school.

The flight of the swans to and from the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust Centre have provided many moments of pleasure in the early mornings and early evenings as have the wonderful sunrises and sunsets.

If it is true that you get a feeling that all is right, then Welney will be our home for many years to come. We are looking forward to the summer when, during its long days, we can enjoy the special quality of life that this area can provide.

Peter & Teresa Hammond

FRIENDSHIP CLUB

Club meetings are, as always, on every other Tuesday in the village hall. Sessions are now starting at the summer time of 2 pm. In recent meetings there have been slide shows by members; Ken Sorenson showed slides of where he was working before coming to Welney. Amy Markham showed slides of the Spalding Tulip Parade along with some local scenes. There have also been dominoes, whist, and card bingo. On April 18th there is to be an Easter Raffle and entertainment by the Accordion Players. The first of the Club outings this year are a trip to Bluewater on Tuesday 9th May; Bluewater is a major new shopping complex and leisure park combined. Set in a large landscaped park, there are outdoor sports facilities including an ice rink as well as the shopping centre itself, and a variety of cafes and snack bars. Then there is a trip to Taverham and Sheringham on **Thursday 8th June**. At Taverham is a big garden centre with a tea room serving hot and cold food; this will be the lunch stop, followed by a visit to Sheringham for a walk around and afternoon tea.

New members are always welcome to the Friendship Club. For information on any of the outings or on the club itself, please ring Cissie Bedford on Welney 610206.



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UPWELL CUBS AND SCOUTS

The Cubs and Scouts are holding an AGM with a difference this year; it will be on Saturday May 13th at Beaupre School in Outwell, and will also provide an opportunity for 10 scouts and 20 cubs from Upwell and Outwell to demonstrate their cookery skills - and to earn their Cook's Badge. The AGM begins at 5 pm, but the scouts and cubs will begin their preparations at 2 pm as they are serving a three-course meal to all ticket holders. The event is open to all; tickets are £2.50 per person but need to be booked by May 1st. If you would like a great value dinner, with the opportunity to find out more about the cub and scout groups at the same time, then ring Amanda King on 01945 772716.

Later in the month a number of the scouts and cubs will be earning their camping badge on an action-packed weekend trip to Mepal Outdoor Centre. They will camp for two nights, and during the day will be able to take part in a range of activities including archery, air rifle shooting, canoeing, and trampolining. On the second night there will be a campfire and singing.

Earlier in the year there was a celebration of Shrove Tuesday - Scout and Cub style. Here's how they cooked their pancakes!

Take a clean, empty baked bean tin. Punch some holes in the sides. Place the tin upside down over a candle, and pour some oil carefully onto the upended base of the tin. When the oil is hot, pour the pancake batter onto the base so that it stays within the raised lip of the tin; and let it cook!

During school terms, Scouts meet on a Wednesday in Upwell Methodist Chapel from 6.30 pm to 8.30 pm. Cubs meet in Upwell School hall on a Monday from 6 pm to 8.30 pm. Outwell now has its own 'Beaver Colony' for 6-8 year olds (cubs are for 8 yrs upwards) which meets once a month to introduce younger children to the cub and scout movement. For information on the new Beaver Colony or on any of the above, please ring Amanda King on the number given above.

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WELNEY CYGNETS

As springtime finally emerges around us, our most recent themes have been spring flowers and growth. We wrote our own daffodil song, made some 3-D daffodil pictures, planted seeds to take home and watch them grow, and created a tulip collage. For the celebration of Mothers' Day, we made floral cards and ceramic flower brooches. Earlier in the term we tried a more 'educational' theme of shapes, which gave us endless possibilities with shape recognition games, potato printing, junk modelling, and a house picture composed of - shapes! Next, we will be looking at Easter and those associated edible delights. In the summer term we are looking forward to meeting Tommy Tadpole and learning about life cycles, with the assistance of Debbie at WWT.

Holly and Vanessa have just completed their course, 'Introduction to Early Years Care and Education.' They have found the course to be excellent and well worth the time and money spent - full marks to them both for the weekly trudge to Norwich, which made for a very long day every Monday! They are now looking forward to starting the longer course, the Advanced Certificate in Early Years Care and Education, which will hopefully start in the autumn term. We are grateful to the Marshall Charity for the funding for the Advanced course.

We are looking forward to the arrival of some water and sand play equipment ordered recently - again thanks to the Parish Council for their grant which will pay for this.

Fundraising activities recently have included an Usborne Book Party, and a Soup Kitchen lunch at the home of one of the Mums, Helen Chapel, - tinned cream of tomato will never taste as good again! This was so popular that there is to be another Soup Kitchen just before Easter, courtesy of Philippa Mitchell. Our big fundraising event in the summer term is to be a sponsored toddle. This will be run as part of Barnardo's national Big Toddle event which is held between 1st and 21st June. Children under 5 will toddle half a mile to raise funds for Barnardo's, and pre-school groups get to keep 25% of the money they raise. We have already registered for this event and will decide on

a date for our own Toddle soon; watch out for some publicity during May, and an army of determined parents out to find sponsors! And finally - time to announce a birthday! Welney Cygnets are **one year old** this month! And it has been a wonderful year, watching the group grow and mature into what it now is. The children have responded so much to what we have offered them, and the parents have grown in confidence as a team over the year too. We are looking forward with anticipation to the next year of our development.

EASTER EVENTS FOR CHILDREN

Dunham's Wood will be open to visitors on Easter Sunday and Monday from 2-5 pm. For the uninitiated, Dunham's Wood is a delightful place to take young children with miniature train rides, gentle woodland walks, quizzes and treasure trails, a picnic area and refreshments for sale. From Welney take the road to March; after the 16-foot take the B1099 and look out for a right hand turn, just before the railway crossing, which will be signposted for the wood. Take a further right turn into Rodham Road and look out for a grass car park on the right. There is a small admission fee. Dunham's Wood is well worth a visit, and is a safe and pleasant place for young families. For more information, telephone Margaret and Arthur Dunham on 01354 652134.

Christchurch Playgroup are having a 'messy play' day on April 26th. It will be held on Townley School playing field from 11 am to 2 pm; admission is £2.50 per child. There will also be an Easter Egg Hunt, a bouncy castle, a sandpit, face painting, foot(!) painting, and a cake stall. All are welcome to this event; please bring your own picnic. For more information please contact Claire on 01354 638693.

Karen Fleming



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<i>S</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>S</i>
April 2000	24	25 	26 WI 	27	28  	29 
May 2000 →	1	2 	3  	4 	5 	6 
7	8	9  	10 	11	12  	13
14	15	16 	17 	18 	19  	20
21 	22	23  	24 	25	26  	27
28	29	30 	31 WI  	1 June 2000 	2  	3
4	5	6  	7 	8 	9  	10
11	12	13	14 	15 	16	17
18	19	20 	21 	22	23 	24



Carpet Bowls
Youth 6-7 pm
Adult 7-9 pm Pavilion



Line Dancing 7.30 pm
Pavilion



Computer Club 7.30 pm
Three Tuns



Mobile Library
9.30 Hale Drove End,
10.30 Village Car Park



Bingo & Lottery Draw
7.30 pm

WI

Womens' Institute -
7.00 pm, Village Hall



Parish Council
Meeting
7.30 pm Village Hall



Teddy Church
10.30 am Church



Village Spring Clean
10:00 am Village Hall



Friendship Club
2.00 pm Village Hall



Quiz Night -8.00 pm,
Three Tuns



MAP Open Day
2:00 pm Village Hall



Welney Cygnets 9.30 to
11.30 am, Village Hall



Mini Mart & Boot sale
10 - 12 noon Village Hall