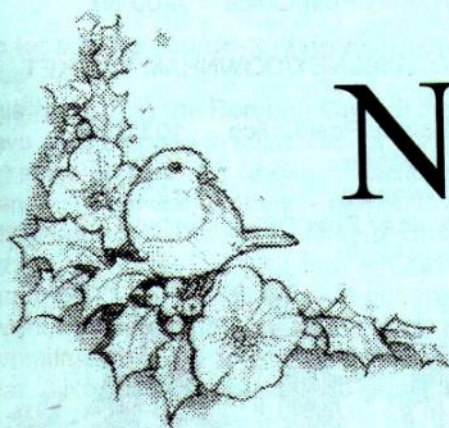
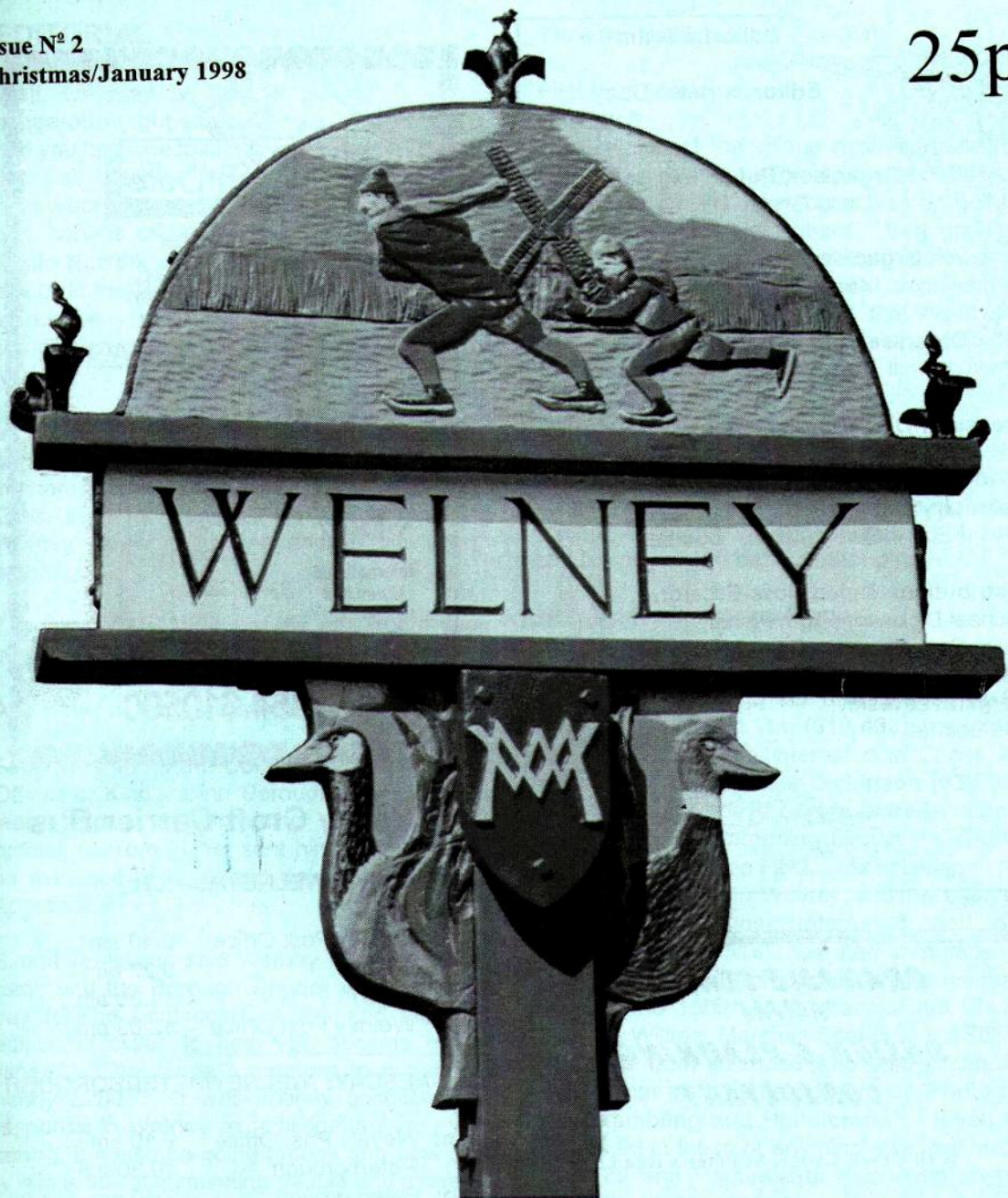
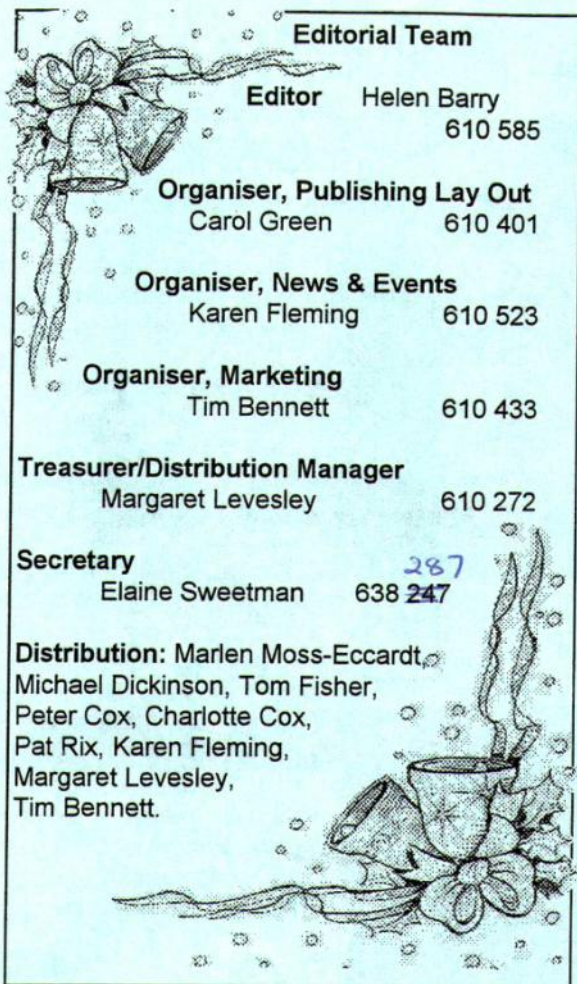


Issue N° 2
Christmas/January 1998

25p



NEWS



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SATURDAY: WELNEY/MARCH

Dep: Welney Post Office: 8.40 am
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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



EDITORIAL

Well, we may be living dangerously, but scarcely had you had time to digest the last **Welney News**, than your Editorial crew had sent it off to **BBC Radio Norfolk** as a competitor in the **Best Parish Magazine in Norfolk** competition, run by Louise Priest on **Today in Norfolk**.



Mr. Giles heard about the competition, he phoned Wendy, she phoned me and we were in there, quick as a flash. Thank you, Mr. Giles, both for picking it up and for thinking **Welney News** in its first edition, was worth entering.

The competition closes at the end of the year, so keep your fingers crossed.

And news of more support.

Simon Phelan is the Community Development Officer at King's Lynn Borough Council. His team helped with financing our Village Appraisal, so Tom Fisher sent him **Welney News** as evidence of what had developed from the Appraisal.

Simon wrote and said **Welney News** was 'first rate', and the Borough Council would offer to pay for the print costs of this and the next edition in order 'to help you become established'. That virtually amounts to a grant of nearly £200. It was entirely unsolicited: a response to **Welney** as a village, not only with strong, but also on-going groups and activities. A village full of stimulating people and interests - that is what Simon saw in the newsletter.

So let's bring you up-to-date on finances

This grant from the Borough Council means we have a little money to splash out on extra pages or even colour, for those occasions when something special happens - perhaps a special edition for our 150th Anniversary of Church and School next June. Up to now we have made sure that your subscriptions and our advertising revenue put just enough in the bank to fulfil our commitment to you for six issues over the next year. Now we may be able to give a surprise or two!

Time for feedback

First from you to us.

One section of the village received their **Welney News** a couple of days after everyone else, because their distributor was on holiday. Some complaints were heard. Very gratifying for those who work to make the newsletter happen, to know that you felt deprived and missed it, but do remember that distributors have their own busy, working lives and do their rounds voluntarily, in their own time, covering overall 200 letterboxes.

They can't stand outside the Post Office on a given evening and, at the blow of a whistle, dash to all ends of the village. So please be patient, especially on winter nights, if you seem to be a day or two behind other people.

Now feedback from us to you.

There has been some response from people interested in setting up new groups in the village. **Nigel and Tim (610 433)** have heard from several people interested in Chess and other games. **Michael Dickinson (638 309)** has said he will be a central point for all who want to start a Gardening Group. **Yvonne Day**, who runs Keep Fit classes in Littleport has offered to run one in Welney, and has been put in touch with those interested, and **Ken Sorensen (610 516)** has had a number of 'phone calls about photographs and memorabilia for the 150th Anniversary of the Church and the William Marshall School. Still no response from all those who said in the Appraisal that they wanted groups on **Photography, Rambling and Handicrafts**. If you are interested in these or anything else, call me on **610 585** and I put you in touch with anyone else with similar interests.

Many thanks to all those who have said they liked and appreciated **WELNEY NEWS** - we hope you read on and enjoy this edition.

HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND BEST WISHES FOR THE NEW YEAR,

**FROM ALL WHO WRITE, EDIT AND
DISTRIBUTE WELNEY NEWS.**

Helen Barry

WELNEY PARISH COUNCIL

The Parish Council meets on the second Tuesday of the month at 7.30. in the Parish Hall. The Council comprises the Chairman: John Frost the Vice Chairman, Mrs. Pat Rix, and Councillors David Bonner, Dennis Booth, Alison Borrows, Douglas Carter, Charlotte Cox, Tom Fisher, and Tim Bennett.

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

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING TUESDAY 11TH NOVEMBER 1997

The Cancer Collection in October raised £146. A copy of the Constitution of Marshall's Charity had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. The Charity Commission had drafted a scheme to extend the area of residency for applicants for an Almshouse to include those poor widows currently living within the combined areas of East Cambridgeshire DC, Fenland DC, and King's Lynn and W. Norfolk Borough Council. Preference would still be given to poor widows resident in the Parish of Welney. It was also noted that if there is no applicant who qualifies as a poor widow, then the Trustees may appoint a poor woman (single or married) living in the area of residence, and if she is married her husband could, with the approval of the Trustees, live with her in an almshouse. The distribution of one third of the yearly income will still be within the Parish of Welney only, to poor widows, not single or married women.

Mr. Bob Frusher had written tendering his resignation as Chairman of the Welney Playing Field Association with effect from the end of October. It was agreed to consult remaining members of the Association and, with their approval, the Parish Council would call an Open Meeting early in the New Year. (see this page for details of this meeting).

The Council were pleased to note that the new 30 mph speed limit signs which they had requested, had now been erected on the Wisbech and March Roads. It was hoped that the extension of the 30 mile limit would help to reduce the speed of traffic entering the village.

The Highways Authority had turned down the Council's application for a weight restriction along the Tipp's End to Lakesend Road, on the grounds that there were no signs of structural weakness either to the road or a bridge on the route. The road surface had been repaired

satisfactorily on the C37 near the Wildfowl Trust. Two Councillors had attended a meeting at Denver to discuss a Consultation Report prepared by Norfolk County Council concerning HGV route hierarchy in the Welney, Nordelph and Upwell area. Welney Parish Council will be recommending improvements to the B1094 (Lott's Bridge to Nordelph) and B1100 (Welney to Christchurch) currently being treated as C category roads, and requesting that they be brought up to B standard. The draft Report had made no mention of the possibility of winter flooding of the A1101 Wash Road, and the importance of ensuring these alternative routes into the village via the B1094 and B1100 are kept maintained and gritted. Access routes to Howard Kent's depot continue to be the B1100 from either direction. The Tourist Route to the Wildfowl Trust will be along the C37 (Hundred Foot Bank) from the A1101

Charlotte Cox

PUBLIC MEETING FUTURE OF WELNEY PLAYING FIELD

**THURSDAY 15TH JANUARY
7.30 PM
PARISH HALL**

The Playing Field Committee have handed back responsibility for running Welney Playing Field to the Parish Council (Trustees of the Playing Field Association), so that future plans for the use and organisation of the Playing Field can be widely discussed and resolved.

AT THE ABOVE PUBLIC MEETING, CALLED BY THE PARISH COUNCIL, YOU CAN VOICE YOUR VIEWS ON HOW THE PLAYING FIELD SHOULD BE USED FOR THE VILLAGE IN THE FUTURE.

IF YOU DON'T COME AND STATE YOUR OPINION, THEN DECISIONS MAY BE TAKEN WITH WHICH YOU DISAGREE. IF YOU CARE, COME AND GIVE YOUR VIEW.

SOME MORE DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

DECEMBER DECEMBER DECEMBER DECEMBER DECEMBER DECEMBER

Monday 15 th	10 - 12 noon Playbus	Village car park
	6 - 8 pm Youth Group	Village Hall
Wednesday 17 th	1.30 pm Friendship Club	Village Hall
	6.30 pm Community Carol Service with children acting their own <i>special Christmas Story</i> .	Church
	7.30 pm Whist	Village Hall
Friday 19 th	Mobile Library; Christmas Visit	Village
	7.30 pm Grand Christmas Bingo	Village Hall

JANUARY JANUARY JANUARY JANUARY JANUARY JANUARY JANUARY

Saturday 3 rd	10 - 12 noon Mini-Mart	Village Hall
Monday 5 th	10 - 12 noon Playbus	Village Car Park
	6 - 8 pm Youth Group	Village Hall
Wednesday 7 th	7.00 pm W.I. New Year Social	Village Hall
Thursday 8 th	7.30 pm Whist	Village Hall
Monday 12 th	10 - 12 noon Playbus	Village Car Park
	6 - 8 pm Youth Group	Village Hall
Tuesday 13 th	1.30 pm Friendship Club; New Year Party	Village Hall
	7.30 pm Parish Council Meeting	Village Hall
Wednesday 14 th	7.30 pm Whist	Village Hall
	NB - No Mothers' Union this month	
Thursday 15 th	7.30 pm PLAYING FIELD PUBLIC MEETING	Village Hall
Monday 19 th	10 - 12 noon Playbus	Village Car Park
	6 - 8 pm Youth Group	Village Hall
Wednesday 21 st	7.30 pm Whist	Village Hall
Monday 26 th	10 - 12 noon Playbus	Village Car Park
	6 - 8 pm Youth Group	Village Car Park
Wednesday 28 th	7.30 pm Whist	Village Hall
Friday 30 th	7.30 pm Bingo	Village Hall

FEBRUARY FEBRUARY FEBRUARY FEBRUARY FEBRUARY FEBRUARY

Monday 2 nd	10 - 12 noon Playbus	Village Car Park
	6 - 8 pm Youth Group	Village Hall
Wednesday 4 th	7.00 pm Women's' Institute	Village Hall
	7.30 pm Whist	Village Hall
Saturday 7 th	10 - 12 noon Mini Mart	Village Hall
Monday 9 th	10 - 12 noon Playbus	Village Car Park
	6 - 8 pm Youth Group	Village Hall
Wednesday 11 th	7.30 pm Whist	Village Hall
	NB - No Mother's Union this month	

VICTORIAN LIFE CAPTIVATES WELNEY SCHOOLCHILDREN

Last month 12 children, from Years 5 & 6 at the Village School, spent three days living as Victorian workhouse waifs rescued and taken to live at Holt Hall. Dressed in Victorian clothes, they ate Victorian food and had lessons with slate and chalk under a strict Headmaster, who demanded Victorian discipline. Throughout their stay they were involved in a day to day drama to bring the bad Headmaster to the notice of their kind benefactor and so have him removed.

The residential visit was part of the history project at the School which this year is concentrating on the Victorian period in order to give the children a background to the 150th anniversary in 1998 of William Marshall School and St. Mary's Church.

Holt Hall was transformed into the 19th century. All the people there, down to chambermaids and gardeners, were in costume and acted their parts. Cars were carefully hidden and the library had been turned into a Victorian dining room.

As we arrived a gunshot is heard and a man runs across the drive, then we stop for a young woman cowering in the bushes, she begs the children not to give her away.

Then the children meet the main characters: Sir George, who is their benefactor and wants a better life for the children than a workhouse provides, and the devious new Headmaster, Mr. Sharpe, who secretly wants to use his job to make the children work and profit from their labour. Sharpe tells them they should be seen and not heard and must earn their keep. Girls are not worth educating, so they are sent off to work with the maids. Some help is at hand in the kindly Deputy Headmaster, Mr. Fanthorpe, who takes the boys for a nature



All the children and Characters at Holt Hall

Headteacher Jasmine Golson relates how the project was organised and how the children responded:

"Each child had to choose their own name and identity in which to live in Victorian times, and so we went into the churchyard and found authentic Welney names for them. Then they had to think up a life history for themselves - a story which would have placed them in a workhouse at their age. While we were at Holt Hall they became this character and could be asked questions about their life. They had to make (with help) Victorian costumes and live in them.

walk where they encounter the young woman who had hidden in the bushes. She is an escapee from a local workhouse and much of the resulting drama is in hiding her in a potato shed and looking after her and keeping her from the eyes and ears of Mr. Sharpe.

It was incredible how the children lived in this fantasy world and how the realities of Victorian life came home to them. In the evening we had a magic lantern show - it was spell-binding, I'm not sure the grown ups weren't more impressed than the children. A man asleep, who opened and closed his mouth as he snored and



Mr Sharpe demands the children be put to work

a mouse running round that popped into his mouth when it opened. A man whose wig jiggled up and down. The children were astounded that such things were invented and entertaining people in Victorian times.

In the early part of the evening, the children were shown the food which would be served to Sir George at dinner - roast chicken and all its trimmings, whilst they would get what the poor were used to: suet roll, potatoes and cabbage and cold plum cream - although it must be said they got them in far larger quantities than they would have a hundred years ago. The children saved some of their food for their escapee hidden in the potato shed.

The children really did become involved in this Victorian drama. They slept in 20th century dormitories, warm and with showers, but some wanted to take blankets to the escapee they still envisaged in the cold shed.

After dinner Sir George sent for some of them and they had to tell him their life history and why they had landed up in a workhouse and they had the chance to see the magnificent dining room with fine silver and candles.

The drama continued with the children being encouraged to write letters to Sir George telling of the evils of Mr. Sharpe, and all ends happily with Mr. Sharpe's dismissal and the kindly Mr. Fanthorpe taking over our workhouse waifs.

My overall impressions are firstly how professionally the whole project was organised at Holt Hall. Every last detail convinced the children that we had moved back a century. Secondly the Holt Hall organisers gave excellent support

and advice. When Mr. Sharpe tried to force a boy to climb and sweep a chimney, they had asked teachers in advance to pick out a child who had the support of his mother there and who was robust enough to take the experience. He answered back and never had to climb. They carefully advised us on debriefing the children as we came away from Holt Hall. 20th century lunch packs were provided and we talked to bring the children back to their own time - they gave us good guidance here.

When we came back the children couldn't stop talking about where they had been and what had happened and all the other children want to go next year. Like most 'hands on' experiences, it had made sharp impressions which last in the memory. Although they weren't made that uncomfortable, they were made to understand how children had lived in the last century, they became emotionally involved with the escapee and a poacher hunted by Mr. Sharpe, and wanted to help. They saw the limitations of life, that to them is past history, but they also saw what made it sparkle in the magic lantern and the concert they organised for the last night in front of Sir George. They learned many things which I think will stay in their minds."

We hope that the school can carry on with these residential projects in future years.

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friends or relations?**



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LETTER PAGE

Dear Editor,

Firstly, may I begin with wholehearted praise for your two Newsletters -

(Yes! you can always begin like that :Ed)

not the dry stuff I'm used to reading as neighbourhood publications, keep it up everyone.

My face may be becoming familiar around the village - or more likely my range of pushchairs to ferry my two boys around. I'd like to say "thank you" to everyone we have met so far, all have made us feel welcome and helped to settle us into what I hope will be our home for many years to come.

Stimulated by your plea in the last magazine, the boys and I joined the friendly group on the Downham Market Croft Carrier run - and so kind we found our fellow passengers - will Ron ever live down his baby-sitting skills with my baby David ?!

Now, to business - we arrived in Welney too late to give our anonymous views in the Appraisal questionnaire but, having read this impressive document and your follow-up requests for people to step forward to match-up with the statistics, can I add my name to those interested in any Keep-Fit, Dance or Crafts Clubs that can be rallied into being. Also if support would aid the efforts to bring traffic-calming measures such as chicane islands, textured grids etc. then please call upon my husband, Steve, and myself.

Finally, if you feel anyone else would be interested, could your 'View from a Tractor' slot educate any of us (my 'townie' self included) on the bits and pieces that the numerous tractors that service the land use, and how they contribute to the work of farming. I'm familiar with the plough, but what were the two other gismos being used on the field behind us at the same time?

I know the crops around this area are largely wheat, but I understand experimental crops are also grown - this is also of interest to me.

Good luck with the future of Welney News

Holly Goodwin
(and James & David)
White Roses, Main Street.

Dear Editor,

I should like to take advantage of the Newsletter to find out if any of the 143 households that indicated in the Appraisal a wish to have village information/notice boards, still want them?

If the majority of your readership would like a notice board in the village centre, could householders living in properties bounded by a pavement, please contact me if they would be willing to have a notice board erected on the boundary of their garden. What I have in mind is a board large enough to display posters advertising village events. I have already spoken to the Highways Department and there does not appear to be any problems with erecting notice boards close to verges in the Tipps end and Suspension Bridge areas.

However, now that we have **Welney News**, do we still need notice boards to remind us what is going on in Welney?

Comments would be appreciated either by phone or letter.

Charlotte Cox (Parish Councillor)
White Hall Farmhouse. 638610

(Many thanks for your letters and all the kind comments that the Editorial team and all the hard working distributors have received.

LETTERS PAGE
continues on page
17 with a plea for
the whereabouts of
a Teddy bear hospital. Ed)



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Three Holes, Wisbech, Cambridge PE14 9JG

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CHURCH NEWS

For some weeks (months even!) now the shops have been displaying their Christmas wares and eager shoppers have been scurrying around stocking up their cupboards and scouring many a counter for those special presents.

At this special time Christians remember and celebrate the good news of the birth of Jesus so many years ago in a cattle-shed in the village of Bethlehem. We shall hear once again the messages of Christmas through the Bible stories and we shall sing along with numerous Christmas Carols, as we joyfully thank God for that most precious gift of all time - Jesus Christ.

'For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called "Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace"'

The churches of the Benefice - Christchurch and Manea and Welney - well be celebrating as will Christians throughout the world and you are warmly invited to join with us at any or all of our services - everyone is most welcome. Transport is available to Manea on Christmas Eve for 11.30 pm Communion. If you would like a lift please contact Marjorie Frost (638 305) or me, Sheila Tooke (638 379)

Amid the mince-pies, tinsel and various trimmings do please find a little time and space to thank God for the true reason we celebrate on 25th December each year!

In closing, a quote from an anonymous source: 'The first Christmas that little Linda learned to read, she was allowed to distribute the family gifts on Christmas Eve.

According to the family custom, the one who distributed the gifts could open the first package. After all the gifts were distributed with loving care, Linda kept looking and looking around the tree and among the branches. Finally father asked, "What are you looking for, dear?" To which Linda replied, "I thought Christmas was Jesus' birthday and I was just wondering where his present is. I guess everyone forgot him."

Please don't forget the true reason for the forthcoming celebration.

Sheila Tooke, Rector.



CHURCH SERVICES

December

21st 9.30 Holy Communion

Christmas Eve

2.30 pm Christingle MANEA

11.30 pm Holy Communion MANEA

Christmas Day

10.00 am United

All Age Holy Communion

WELNEY

28th 9.30 Morning Prayer

January

4th 9.30 Morning Prayer

11th 11.00 All Age Worship

18th 9.30 Holy Communion

25th 9.30 Morning Prayer

February

1st 3.00 Christingle

8th 11.00 All Age Worship

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to say I Love You - and many more!
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VICTORIAN SKATING CHAMPIONS OF WELNEY

The names of the famous Skating Champion of Welney in Victorian times are once again resounding around the village. The exploits of those heroes of speed skating enthuse the members of the re-born **Welney & District Skating Club**, and their photographs hang around the room at the Lamb and Flag where the Club hold their meetings.

Of course, the Victorian Champions are not the whole story - there are many famous Welney skaters our own lifetime - Ernie James, still living amongst us, is one and has many memories. But

if we are to do justice to the exciting and extraordinary story of Welney speed skating, then we need to take the highlights one at a time and spread them over future editions of **Welney News**. And the famous names of the late nineteenth century are our beginning.

And what names they were. 'Turkey' Smart, 'Gutta Percha' See, George 'Fish' Smart, James Smart, 'Young Turkey' Smart, 'Young Gutty' See. The Smarts and the Sees were related by marriage, but other families in the last century bred champions. If you add, in the early 1880's, the names of 'Knocker' Carter, A Hawer, and T. Watkinson, then there were **6 Welney men out of the top 10 speed skaters in the whole country** - a fairly astounding record for a small village.

It is possible that the Fens were the birthplace of skating in England - animal bones shaped for skates have been found at Flag Fen, a Bronze Age site near Peterborough. Certainly down the centuries skating was a common and efficient method of transport when the Fens flooded and froze. Until the coming of modern transport, the frozen dykes provided winter 'roads' between villages and it is said that Fenman for business or pleasure could cover 60-70 miles a day, and that the doctor and midwife often came on skates in the winter.

Fenman, working on the land or as wildfowlers or fishermen, had time on their hands in frozen weather so, it seems they spent time and energy on skating competitions. Local races were organised, local winners competed in district competitions and finally raced for the title, **Champion of the Fens**.

These early races were carnival-like affairs with hastily prepared courses, prizes from squire and local tradesmen and spectators in cart-loads coming through word of mouth. But the interest was intense, the skaters had a professional pride in their training and every village cheered and supported their own men. By the middle of the nineteenth century, when trains and telegraph made communications easier, a certain William 'Turkey' Smart of Welney was making his name over more accurately timed courses becoming **Champion of the Fens** in 1854.

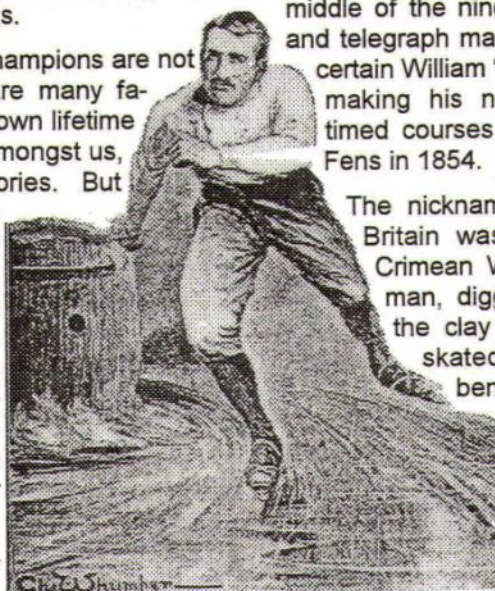
The nickname came from the fact that Britain was supporting Turkey in the Crimean War. 'Turkey' was a clayman, digging out trenches to spread the clay over the black Fens. He skated straight with endurance, bent low over his knees with his stroke, reportedly, up to 12 or 16 yards. He relied not on grace but on power.

His great rival was his brother-in-law from Welney, William 'Gutta Percha' See - his nickname came from gutta percha being one of the

toughest materials known. It is said that when the ice came he would get up at 4.am, light a fire, put on the kettle then skate off up and down the Old Bedford in the dark before coming home to breakfast and a day's work. But for 'Turkey' Smart, he could well have been Champion for many years, but although the two Welney men beat everyone in sight, 'Gutta Percha' seems to have been the pace setter who gave that extra edge to 'Turkey's' wins.

And, amazingly, the talent carried on in the next generation. And so we come to a new list of names: Turkey's son 'Young Turkey', his nephews George 'Fish', Jarman and James Smart competing against 'Gutta Percha's' two sons, George 'Young Gutty' and Isaac See.

But by now we are also into a new era for speed skating with the setting up of the National Skating Association in 1879. One must look back before then to hugely popular local



James Smart: World Champion 1888

and district events, hastily put together when the ice came. Courses set up almost overnight, side-shows and food stalls making for the area and officials being summoned. But now rules and standards for skating races were established.

The beginnings of the NSA is a story by itself, and perhaps we'll come back to it, but our story is that Welney skaters thrived under it. That next generation after 'Turkey' and 'Gutta Percha' achieved as much, if not more fame.

All were formidable competitors on the ice, but it was George 'Fish' Smart who was outstanding in winning Championships. He was an all-round sportsman (his nickname came from his prowess at swimming) and he trained relentlessly to perfect performance and style. In 1879 he became the first Professional Skating Champion of England at a competition run under NSA rules at Thorney. He was the man of his time and competed in international competitions. But his skating career was not a long one. He became a construction work foreman, and moved all over the country - no more flat, icy conditions for practice so in 1888 his brother, James, (younger by ten years) took the Championship from him.

That same year James Smart went to Holland where he and his cousin, 'Young Gutty' See competed in the 2 mile International Race. 'Young Gutty' was no mean contender with a host of triumphs behind him, but James beat him to become in his day "World Champion". He was an undisputed Champion in Britain for many years and instrumental in forcing the NSA to subsidise English skaters for competitions abroad; he made friends with his Norwegian competitors and introduced both their long narrow flat-bladed skates and their technique of crossing over the feet for quick turns in races. He built 'Norway House' on Bedford Bank, which still stands, and was still game enough at the age of 37 to enter the Championships in 1902 and come third.

Helen Barry

(I am much indebted to Hilary Winter and her book: **The Welney Division** for the facts for this account of Welney Victorian skaters)

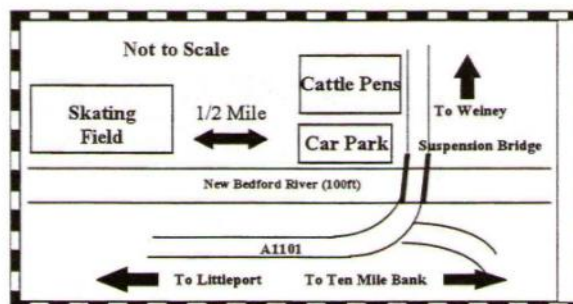
And for current news of
WELNEY & DISTRICT SKATING CLUB
over to 'Turkey' Smart's great grandson:
ALVAR SMART, seen below at the racing last
January on Welney Wash



Photo courtesy Ian McCarney

Last year the RSPB saw that there is real interest in skating in Welney and they have helped us to get our old field read for this year cutting down high weeds and letting in some water ready for the birds to wade in. But when this freezes, the birds move to deeper water and that's when we can get our skates on.

The new Club is ready to hold races as soon as we have safe ice to skate on, but please note **we only have permission from the RSPB to skate on this one field.** There are races for men, women and children and local supermarkets, Sainsburys and Tesco have donated prizes. We'll let you know through local press and radio when conditions are right and **the map below shows you where to come - see you there!**



If you think conditions are right but are not sure, phone me: **Alvar Smart 638 498**

CHRISTMAS PRIZE BINGO



19TH DECEMBER
WELNEY PARISH HALL
7.30 PM

A BOTTLE OF WHISKY,
6 BOTTLES OF WINE AND A
CHRISTMAS WREATH ARE THREE OF
THE STAR PRIZES

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FRIENDSHIP CLUB

In November the Club AGM reported a successful and enjoyable year and the celebrations of a Golden and a Ruby wedding of club members. On sadder note there was the loss of founder member, Alice Giles. All Committee members were re-elected.

The visiting speaker Mr. Parfitt, from Age Concern, gave a talk on home security, and advice on the best locks to use. He is available to help senior citizens who wish to fit better locks and you can contact him through Cissie Bedford

The New Year Party on 13th January offers a special afternoon tea, a major raffle and, as guest, a group of hand-bell ringers to swing the celebrations along.

The Club committee meets in late Feb. to decide on the outings for 1998, which will begin in April or May. Bi-monthly meetings in the Hall as usual - see Diary page.

Please note: Help the Aged also run a Home Security campaign and have a free national information line, called Seniorline, for senior citizens and their friends and family. **TEL: 0800 2289 404**

WELCOME TO WELNEY

This is a new, regular feature. The aim is to help new residents to settle in and help us all to get to know each other. By providing some basic information it might make it easier for us to begin to talk - things like having a dog, kids of the same age, hobbies in common, places you've both known, - things which draw you into conversation and possibly leads to new friendships.

This is my first attempt to put this feature together, so I apologise in advance if anyone has been missed out. Please ring me if you are a new resident or have a new neighbour.

Two recent changes bring new names to their houses. Firstly, Serena Allen and Ronnie Garner moved into 'Jason Cottage' in New Road. It is renamed 'Labs Lodge' They have a black labrador and a labrador cross puppy and two cats, which could explain this. Ronnie, who comes from Outwell, works in Chatteris, while Serena, who's moved from Narborough, is working part time at Tesco's in Ely.

Crosby House' on Main Street becomes 'White Roses', now that Steve and Holly Goodwin have moved in along with James (nearly 3) and David (6 months). They come from Frimley Green in Surrey, because of a change of venue for Steve's work as an electronic engineer. He now commutes to Cambridge and their choice of Welney came from a photograph and a verbal description of the village.

(There's a letter from Holly on page 8)



Returning back to Welney is Rita Gamble, who used to live in New Road, but for the last couple of years has been in Upwell. She now lives in a nicely spruced up 4, Church Cottages, with her Jack Russell.

Across the Wash Road, Barry and Pam Roberts have settled at 'The Carpenters', Suspension Bridge, after being overseas and making a number of rapid moves - Shropshire,



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Leeds, Wakefield - in the past two years. Pam is an Information Manager in Cambridge, and Barry is a Civil Engineer. They share their house with 'Bobby', a rescued Golden Retriever of mature years.

Along Hundred Foot Bank, Carl Mitchell, the new Centre Manager at The Wildfowl Trust, has come with wife, Philippa, Toby (4) and Huw (6 months) from Gloucestershire where Carl worked at Slimbridge. Philippa is a freelance artist.

In Taymor Place are Len and Nell Reid. They have an un-named tom-cat that adopted them during their 30 year stay in Felixstowe. Of particular interest to the genealogists among you is that Nell is a direct descendant of John Ridd of 'Lorna Doone' fame. The family history is still being researched by Linda Briggs of Phoenix House, she is Len and Nell's Great Niece. If this suggests that they cannot exactly be youngsters, let me assure you that they most certainly are in both mind and body even though they are 96 and 86 respectively.

A sincere welcome to everyone and I hope that you enjoy living in Welney as much as I do.

Tim Bennett 610 433

AU REVOIR AND THANKS TO MARY PINFOLD

Mary Pinfold and her late husband, Bill, first came to Welney for the fishing. They liked it so much they bought 'Waterside' in Back Drove, used first at weekends and for holidays and then 16 years ago as their permanent home.

Mary soon joined the Parish Hall Committee, and later became Chairman. Her 10 year Chairmanship saw through a considerable number of improvements to the Hall, including the complete refurbishment of the outside, the addition of indoor facilities (toilets!), double glazed windows and front door, and a new storeroom.

A keen whist player, Mary ran the weekly Whist Drives, and when Bert Coo left the village, added his role of Bingo caller to her list of duties. Both activities involved a great deal of behind the scenes work, which generally went unnoticed.

Sadly, Mary's husband, Bill, died 7 years ago. Bill's memory is kept alive with The Bill Pinfold Memorial Cup, presented by Mary for the winner of the annual fishing match held in Bill's name.

About 5 years ago Mary joined Ely Bowling Club. This interest has grown with regular matches and, yes, she is now an active committee member.

Mary found that the demands on her time meant that her large garden - previously a pleasure - increasingly became a burden. So, she reluctantly decided that a home with a small garden, nearer Ely and the Bowls Club, would better suit her needs.

From finding that place in Little Downham to actually moving in took almost a year, with the 'it's on, it's off, it's on again' that seems to be par for the course when moving house nowadays. However, this at least gave Mary time to gradually hand over her many duties - and what a list it turned out to be - they are now shared between about six gallant volunteers!

So, on behalf of all of us,
THANK YOU, MARY,

for all your work for the village, for the Hall and all the people who use it and will use it in the future.

Everyone sincerely wishes you good health and happiness in your new home.

David Bonner.

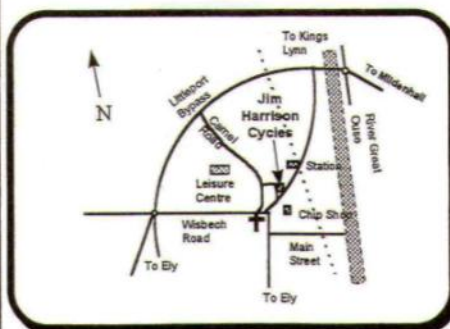
MOTHERS' UNION

The Mothers' Union celebrated its 50th anniversary this year with a Christmas party held at Connie Symons' home in Christchurch on 10th December. This was also an evening meeting, with festive food including mince pies and a Christmas cake. There will be no meetings January or February, the next meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday 11th March**.

CHURCH COFFEE MORNING

This raised a grand total of £384.60 for church funds. There were stalls for cakes, bring and buy and books, a grand draw and refreshments. Many thanks to all who came and the many generous souls who bought raffle tickets.

Jim Harrison (Cycles)



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WELNEY HOMEWATCH

It is important to remember as the winter holiday time approaches that opportunists will be on the look out for those valuable Christmas presents or for houses standing empty for a few days. It is also worth noting that there is a prevalence of vehicle-related crimes in the area around Wisbech at the moment with a significant number of thefts of cars and cars being broken into - so please remember to secure your vehicle and park in sensible places when you go Christmas shopping.

Winter security check list:

If going away for a few days or more, remember to cancel deliveries. Don't leave curtains closed - this is a real give-away, leave a timer switch on one or more lights in the house and, if possible get a neighbour to open/close curtains. Lock all doors and windows too, if they have locks. Don't leave any door or window keys in obvious places - a burglar is as interested in getting out quickly and quietly as in getting in: why give them any easy exit? Thefts from sheds and outbuildings are more of a problem in this area than house break-ins, so remember to secure those too. The same checks apply if you are just going out for a pre-Christmas drink at the local - as pubs get full on December evenings, opportunists get busier!

Did you know that Eastward Insurance Services of King's Lynn offer a special home insurance scheme with substantial premium discounts to members of Homewatch organisations. I have leaflets giving details.

Karen Fleming (610 523)

DOWNHAM MARKET YOUTH CLUB

is holding its Christmas disco on Friday, 19th December at 7.30 pm. Tickets are £2 to members and £3 to non-members.

A minibus is available for transport from outlying areas for groups of six or more. If anyone in the Welney is interested they can ring the Youth Centre on 01366 382010.

Someone will be available between 9.15 and 12.15 on Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri mornings, or between 6.30 and 9.30 on Monday and Thursday evenings.

In the New Year there are outings to paintballing, riding and dry ski-ing - all being arranged in January and February. Just ring 01366 382010

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PARISH HALL NEWS THE NEW 50P COIN COSTS MONEY

When the Government, whichever one it was, decided to change the size of the 50p piece, then the Parish Hall electricity meters became obsolete. These meters give each group and activity, whether it be the Doctors' Surgeries or the Friendship Club, the opportunity to pay for electricity according to how they use it.

The new 50p coins will not operate the meters we have. So, the Committee had to make arrangements to install new meters - in this technological age there is no way, apparently of changing the size of the slot - you have to throw out the old and bring in the new.

This is a considerable expense, and the advice of the experts was to go for a £1 meter for the future - on the basis that that coin was unlikely to change for many years. Soundings were taken around the main groups who use the Hall and after some discussion, they all agreed this was the sensible course.

Bearing in mind the changeover will probably

cost around £300, we felt we must work for the future and not look to having such an outlay again in the next five or six years when the 50p coin may change again.

Remember the electricity in the Hall isn't any more expensive, You pay for heating and if, with the £1 coin you have a little left over, you may gain from the £1 someone put in before you.

CONSIDER Lighting and emergency lighting always comes free. Each group pays for the heating they want and expert opinion says that the fan heaters we have at the moment are the most efficient way to heat our Hall; THE ALTERNATIVE WOULD HAVE BEEN TO RAISE, BY AT LEAST 50% THE HIRING FEES FOR THE HALL.

Rosi Beckford
Chairman, Parish Hall Committee

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR (contd. from page 8)

Dear Editor,
My husband, Nigel, has two extremely well-loved and well-worn Teddy bears which have been with him since early childhood. We would very much like them to join our son James' toy menagerie, but they are in too fragile a state to survive this. We would like to know if any of your readers can tell us of a Teddy bear hospital within a reasonable distance of Welney, where we could take them and give them a new lease of life.

Karen Fleming (610 523)

WELNEY YOUTH GROUP Monday evenings: 6.00-8.00

Weekly meetings start up again after Christmas on Monday 5th January.

The Group has had an encouraging start in 1997, with an average of 12 children coming to each session. Most are 10-12 year-olds, though the group is open to ages 8-14. Some sessions have a number of games available - table tennis, snooker and darts, and at others matches of indoor football or rounders are organised. Soft drinks and crisps are provided at each session. Entry is 50p per person, with a charge of 10p for drinks and 10p for crisps. The admission helps to cover hire of the Hall and heating. There are always 3 adults present to supervise, including me (Adrian Rust) and two other parents, who are committed to helping out on a regular basis.

The Group ran a raffle at the Water Gala and raised £35 to go towards new and replacement games equipment. We hope to raise money in similar ways in the New Year to purchase new indoor games to make the Monday nights even more enjoyable.

Adrian Rust (610525)

W.I.

**New Year Social: Wed. 7th January
7.0pm Parish Hall
games and refreshments and
(we hope) a slide show.**

February Meeting: Wed. 4th: 7.30 pm

CHILDREN'S PRIZE COLOURING COMPETITION



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WELNEY PLAYBUS

In recent weeks a different version of the Playbus has been seen in the village car park; in place of the old multi-coloured bus is the newer, bright red one. The old one had been in service for seven years and was suffering from fairly terminal mechanical deterioration as well as a failing heating system. The 'new' bus has a similar range of facilities and will hopefully continue to provide much-needed recreation, relaxation and social contact for the mums and toddlers of Welney and neighbouring villages for many more years.

The Playbus Christmas Party will be held at the Youth Centre in Downham Market on **Wed 17th December: 11.00-1.00pm**. Tickets £2.00. per child which includes a hot lunch, music and games, and a visit from Santa with a small present for each child. No charge for adults, but each accompanying adult is asked to bring items of food to contribute to a buffet.

Karen Fleming



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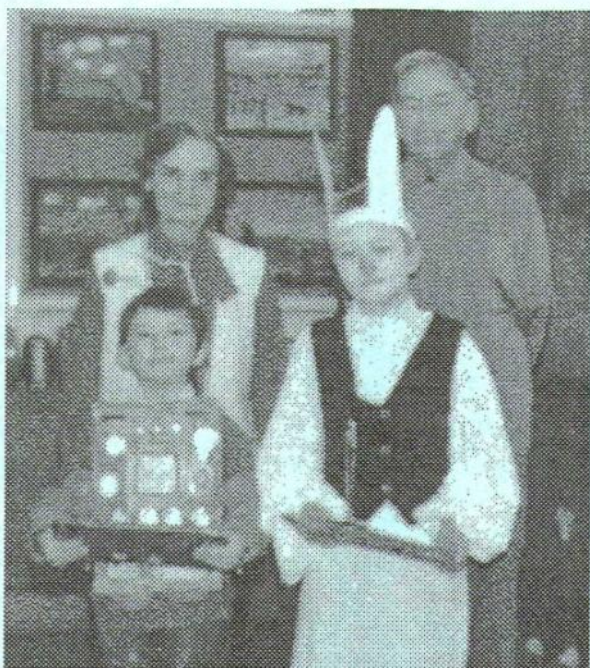
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£12.75
- 6 Gammon Steaks 8oz - £12.25

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VIEW FROM A TRACTOR

Have you ever wondered why your potatoes collapse and turn fluffy when boiled?

Conversely have you ever considered why home-cooked chips are not always as good as those from the local chippy?

It may come as a surprise to learn that there are more than just two types of potato; in fact there are approximately 350 different varieties commercially available in the UK today. Each have characteristics different from the next - improved flavour, higher yield, better disease resistance, rounder shape etc.

Of the potatoes grown in the UK, the biggest market - just over half - is for 'fresh' use, that is grocery sales: frozen and chilled potatoes account for nearly a quarter of the market, and ten per cent for making crisps; another ten per cent go fish and chip shops, about five per cent for canned potatoes and the balance for export.

Potatoes with a high percentage of dry matter are best for roasting, commercial processing and chipping - for example Maris Piper. Those with a low percentage of dry matter tend to be more waxy in texture and there are best for boiling. Crisp manufacturers prefer potatoes which are uniformly round. McCains prefer long, thin tubers for oven-ready chips.

Merry Christmas
Stuart Cree

HELPING CHILDREN AT CHRISTMAS

Jane Carter told us of how she has been able to help make a better Christmas for those troubled teenagers who have run away from home, perhaps from a situation made unhappy by things beyond their control. The Church of England Charity "The Children's Society" has three refuge homes for such teenagers and appeals now for funds to make Christmas a special, caring time.

Jane gave a three course dinner party for her friends and told them the Chamber Pot in the hall was for their donations. Everyone enjoyed Jane's food and the party games and had a great evening and the Chamber Pot collected £140. But it isn't quite full, and if you would like to add something to this Charity, contact
Jane Carter on 610 500

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