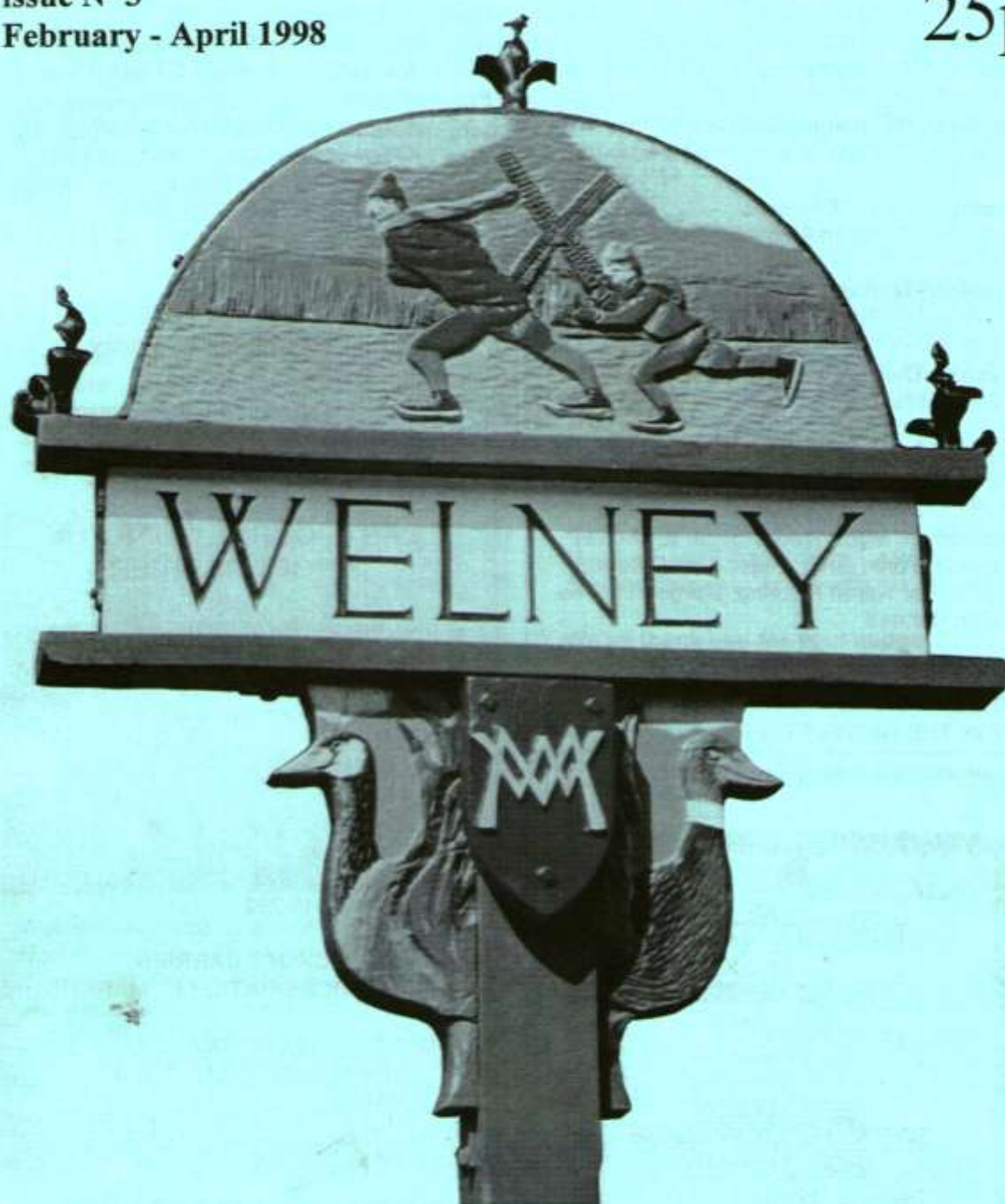


Issue N° 3
February - April 1998

25p



NEWS

Editorial Team

Editor Helen Barry 610 585

Organiser, Publishing Lay Out
Carol Green 610 401

Organiser, News & Events
Karen Fleming 610 523

Organiser, Marketing
Tim Bennett 610 433

Treasurer/Distribution Manager
Margaret Levesley 610 272

Secretary
Elaine Sweetman 638 287

Distribution: Marlen Moss-Eccardt, Michael Dickinson, Tom Fisher, Peter Cox, Charlotte Cox, Pat Rix, Karen Fleming, Margaret Levesley, Tim Bennett.

PLEASE RING WITH LETTERS, IDEAS FOR ARTICLES OR ANYTHING YOU WANT TO PUT IN THE NEWSLETTER.

Some Welney Services

Doctor's Surgery:

12 noon at the Parish Hall,
Monday, Wednesday & Friday

Prescriptions:

Can be collected from the Post Office (inform the Dr. or Upwell Pharmacy at the time)
Repeat prescriptions can be left and collected at the Post Office

Wet Fishmonger

3.00pm at Chestnut Ave and 3.15 at the Post Office every **Friday**.
(Orders taken)

LAST JOURNEY FOR THE CROFT CARRIER

Pat Rix writes:

The Croft Carrier will cease to operate its weekly services on **14th March**. This decision has been taken with regret, but we now only have 1 driver and she is no longer 100% fit. There will still be some kind of community transport, so that no one feels isolated, but the details are still being worked out. Regular users will be kept informed on their journeys, and anyone wanting information can contact me on **610 292**

CROFT CARRIER SERVICES UNTIL 14TH MARCH

SATURDAY: WELNEY/MARCH

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

WEDNESDAY: WELNEY/PETERBOROUGH

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

FRIDAY: WELNEY/DOWNHAM MARKET

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



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— ALL APPOINTMENTS —

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EDITORIAL

Well, Welney did it, we won BBC Radio Norfolk's Prize for the best parish magazine in the whole of Norfolk. David Line, one of the judges, said it all on the air, a parish magazine should be interesting not only to people inside the village, but to everyone else as well - and ours is because we have such a mixture of fascinating people living here. Enough stories to last us a lifetime. Congratulations to us all.

The prize was a handsome and expensive set of computer desktop publishing and the Editorial Committee (minus Margaret Levesley who had a hacking cough type flu) posed at our last meeting with the prize.



Welney was made 'village of the week' on Radio Norfolk and stories of the William Marshall Charity with Dennis Booth and Jasmine Golson and the sounds of the schoolchildren contributing, Jonathan Revett on his fungi and the Wildfowl Trust were featured. We also received publicity in the EDP, the Wisbech Standard, the Lynn News and the Ely Standard. And some have asked for copies of our Newsletter so that they can follow up our stories and our people.

And our Newsletter does travel. We, on the Editorial Committee puzzled over one fact. If almost every household took a copy, how come Wendy sold 18 copies last month. Answer, they go further afield. One villager told Tim Bennett that she bought four copies to send to folk in Norfolk and another one to send to France!

Bryan and Peggie Turner heard of our prize whilst listening to Radio Norfolk - they take a copy in Hunstanton and rang several friends to say how delighted they were - Ian Warrington has e-mailed his delight at our prize from Kuwait

- he pays for and gets a copy sent out..

In this Edition we're delighted that the article - from Mary Dockerty - was entirely unsolicited - please if you have something to say, say it to us. A **Personally Speaking** feature has been introduced with the article from Charlotte Cox on page 14.

But it doesn't have to be your opinion or about you - perhaps you feel someone else should be mentioned - Marlen Moss-Eccardt wondered whether everyone knew how much work Harold Carter puts into making our village a wonder of spring flowers, so we've talked to him and you will find his story and photograph on page 9

We thought with the three week flooding of the Wash Road and the Public Meeting that that topic would be on your minds so we've an article from Tom Fisher and a report of the Meeting - we'll leave room for wider opinion in the next Edition in April - why not be part of it?

We all thank you for your support.
Helen Barry (Editor)



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WELNEY PARISH COUNCIL

The Parish Council meets bi-monthly on the second Tuesday of the month at 7.30pm in the Parish Hall. The Council comprises the Chairman, John Frost, the Vice Chairman, Mrs. Pat Rix, and Councillors Tim Bennett, David Bonner, Dennis Booth, Alison Burrow, Charlotte Cox and Tom Fisher. The Parish Clerk is Mrs. Pat Copeman (610 226)

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING TUESDAY 13TH JANUARY 1998

Cllr Douglas Carter had written tendering his resignation as a Councillor due to pressure of work. It was noted that he had served on the Council for 10 years, and the Clerk was asked to write thanking him for his support and assistance over the years. The vacancy will be advertised in the press and Welney Post Office. Anyone interested in applying should contact the Clerk.

It was agreed to ask the Environment Agency and Highways Authority to consider placing a barrier across both ends of the Wash Road when it is flooded. The partial barrier was not a sufficient deterrent to lorries and private cars, and as a result the fire brigade had been called out to rescue stranded motorists. A meeting will be arranged shortly between the Environment Agency and the Highways Authority to discuss water control on the washes.

Due partly to the heavy rainfall, but in the main to poor soak away facilities, older properties on the west side of New Road had been flooded: in one case a family had to be evacuated in the early hours by the fire brigade. A group of residents attended the meeting to request the Council to try and sort out who was responsible for the drainage in the area. It was agreed to write to the Highways Authority to check if storm drains were running into private sewers, and the Manea and Welney Drainage Board to check on the water levels. Special attention needed to be drawn to the state and upkeep of the drainage ditch along March Road as it was felt this could be causing the water to back-up.

No decisions were made on the future of the Playing Field and Pavilion, except to change the locks, pending the outcome of the public meeting on the following Thursday.

It was agreed to write to the Charity Commissioners to obtain copies of the Constitutions for Welney Playing Field and also of Bishops Land Charity, since it appeared that the Trustees do not have a copy.

Karen Fleming advised the Council that due to family commitments, she would be resigning as co-ordinator of Welney Homewatch. It was agreed to help with finding a replacement. (All enquiries to Karen on 610 523)

The Highways Department committee would be asked to place warning and chevron signs on the bend along the Hundred Foot Bank where it turned towards Ten Mile Bank village. Many vehicles appear to miss the bend and end up on the concrete road which is not a through access. A request will be made for improvement works to Sandgate Corner, and also for tarmac to be laid along the pathway between Chestnut Avenue and the Old Nursery. The ownership of droves and bridleways in the area is still being investigated. The village sign is now back in position.

Charlotte Cox :s

The next meeting: Tuesday, 10th March

VACANCIES ON WELNEY PARISH COUNCIL

At present there is **one** vacancy on the Parish Council, but there will shortly be a **second**. If you are interested in becoming a Councillor, then please contact the Parish Council Clerk, Mrs. Pat Copeman, on 610 226 for further information. If more than two individuals are interested, then an election will be held, otherwise the two vacancies will be filled by co-option.

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SOME MORE DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

february february february february february february february

Monday 23 rd	10 - 12 noon Playbus	Village car park
	6 - 8 pm Youth Group	
Tuesday 24 th	1.30 pm Friendship Club	Village Hall
Wednesday 25 th	7.30 pm Whist	Village Hall
Friday 27 th	7.30 pm Bingo	Village Hall

march march march march march march march

Monday 2 nd	10 - 12 noon Playbus	Village Car Park
	6 - 8 pm Youth Group	
Tuesday 3 th	7.30 pm AGM Village Hall Committee	Village Hall
Wednesday 4 th	2.00 pm W.I.	Village Hall
Thursday 5 th	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	
Tuesday 10 th	1.30 pm Friendship Club	Village Hall
	7.30 pm Parish Council Meeting	Village Hall
Wednesday 11 th	7.30 pm Whist	Village Hall
Monday 16 th	10 - 12 noon Playbus	Village Car Park
	6 - 8 pm Youth Group	
Wednesday 18 th	7.30 pm Whist	Village Hall
Friday 20 th	Mobile Library	
Monday 23 th	10 - 12 noon Playbus	Village Car Park
	6 - 8 pm Youth Group	
Tuesday 24 th	1.30 pm Friendship Club	Village Hall
Friday 27 th	7.30 pm Bingo	Village Hall
Monday 30 th	10 - 12 noon Playbus	Village Car Park
	6 - 8 pm Youth Group	

april april april april april april april april

Wednesday 1 st	7.00 pm Women's' Institute	Village Hall
Thursday 2 nd	7.30 pm Whist	Village Hall
Saturday 4 th	10 - 12 noon Mini Mart	Village Hall
Monday 6 th	10 - 12 noon Playbus	Village Car Park
	6 - 8 pm Youth Group	
Tuesday 7 th	1.30 pm Friendship Club	Village Hall
Wednesday 8 th	7.30 pm Whist	Village Hall
Wednesday 15 th	7.30 pm Whist	Village Hall
Friday 17 th	Mobile Library	

LIFE AS A TEENAGER IN WELNEY IN THE FIFTIES.

I moved to Welney in 1952, having been born and raised at One Hundred Foot Bank in Pyrmont. My father was Will Kent who lived as a boy at the Welney Hotel. My mother had been a local midwife before marriage, so most of the Welney people knew the family well, if not directly related.

On moving to Welney we moved into the Three Tuns on the Bedford Bank. My father was landlord of this establishment and also helped out on the land and also occasionally went punt gunning and shooting.

At the Three Tuns, we took in fishermen, mostly from Sheffield, London and Leicester. Many came to us every year while we lived at the Tuns. They paid 5 guineas a week for full board, which included breakfast, lunch, tea and supper. This was very hard work for my mother as we sometimes had 18 men staying with us at any one time. There was always a big crowd from Sheffield in the two weeks when the cutlery firms closed down for the holidays. When we had so many guests, I was moved next door to stay with Lionel and Hazel Carter, so that my bedroom could be used to house extra guests. If you are wondering where they all slept - in those days the living room was off the bar, where the modern toilets are now - and upstairs there were as many as six beds to a room. These fishermen from Leicester, pictured here with me, tried catching eels.



Some fishermen came just for a Sunday's fishing arriving in buses and my mother made a suggestion to enable me to earn some money to

buy a racing bike I had set my heart on. She suggested that I sell cups of tea to the fishermen when they came up from the riverbank to catch the bus. As my mother kept my overheads at a minimum by providing me with the tea, milk and sugar, I was soon on my way to Wisbech to purchase my much dreamed of new racing bike. Unfortunately my bike proved no match to the speed of Roy Loveday's which had a fixed wheel.

During the summer evenings we all met at the Delph River, where we had a special place for swimming and, of course, during the winter we would all be there with our skates. I learned to skate with the help of a chair on the river outside the Three Tuns. I remember one day Lionel Carter speeding from his house through the bridge to the Eagle Tavern. He had a lucky escape because the ice had melted under the bridge and he had to do a 'James Bond' type leap to safety on the other side.



Elaine Sweetman

Many of the under age young men in the village started drinking at the Three Tuns. My father was very strict and would only allow them so much. He also had a knack for knowing when the local 'bobby' was about. One young man (who still lives in the village) insisted that he wanted more to drink after my father had said that he had had enough, so my father took the offender down to the river and ducked his head under! I was allowed my first cream stout on my thirteenth birthday.

Many Friday night dances were held in the Village Hall at about the time that the electronic organ had just started to become popular. I was not allowed to go to the dances, but enjoyed listening to the music from my bedroom next door.

During the week, in the winter, we often used to have only one customer, Mr. Bill Rolfe from the Bedford Bank near the pumping station. To save the expense of lighting the taproom, Mr. Rolfe used to come into our living room for his Guinness. As he would never drink from a glass, he did not make much work.

All drinks served in the pub were kept in the cellar located down some steps at the back of the pub. Pints were drawn from barrels. We had a piano in the taproom and when my Uncle, Hugh Carter, was persuaded to play, everyone had a good singsong. I remember that the taproom had a red floor, which my mother polished with Cardinal red polish. We had two elderly men who regularly came to the pub. Mr. Alf James (Ernie's father) and General Booth. Whoever arrived first would sit by the fire in the 'Granddad' chair and the other would spend all night glaring because they had not got the good chair.

My teenage years in Welney were happy ones. On a spring day, we could wander among the washes which would be covered in cuckoo flowers, buttercups and daisies. I had a fishing rod which was a particularly handy excuse when I wanted to get out of helping Mum wash up.



Elaine Sweetman

Sometimes, too, I would go over to the apple trees near the Lamb and Flag and climb up with my book, hidden from sight. I was always getting told off because I had my head buried in a book, just the same as teenagers are today with the Tv and computers.

Mary Dockerty

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CHURCH NEWS

A young lad came rushing out of Sunday School desperately seeking one of his parents. On sighting his father, he grabbed him and yelled, "Man, that story of Moses and all those people crossing the Red Sea was great". Dad smiled gently and asked to be told about it.

"Well, the Israelites got out of Egypt, but Pharaoh and his army chased after them. So the Jews ran as fast as they could until they got to the Red Sea. The Egyptian Army was getting closer and closer, so Moses got his walkie-talkie and told the Israeli Air Force to bomb the Egyptians. While that was happening, the Israeli Navy built a pontoon bridge so the people could cross over. They made it!"

By now Dad was rather surprised, to say the least. "Is that the way they taught you the story?"

"Well no, not exactly," the lad admitted, "but if I told you the way they told us, you'd never believe it, Dad."

In his innocence the lad hit the nail fairly and squarely on the head of the world of adults - cool scepticism reigns supreme. It's either black or it's white, fact or fiction - but there can be no space for the miraculous.

Let's leave the miracles to children's fiction; to stained glass sanctuaries where you need great emotion and much imagination if you are to make them interesting. Let's face it religion needs a few miracles! So the secular world grows ever more sceptical and mocks the history of the Israelite nation just as it mocks the birth of the Son of God and all that follows.

Yes, it would take an age to try to account for some of the things that happened - the fish that filled the nets; what brought Lazarus back from the dead; why Jesus' body has never been found, how come the Bible is still around. Smart, keen-thinking sceptics don't have to worry about explaining things like that. It's much easier to totally deny the miraculous....which is all well and good.....until they wish to celebrate Christmas or the Millennium, or get to the point when they need miraculous help in crossing life's final river.

What happens then? Well, if I told you what the Bible really says, you'd never believe it.

Sheila Tooke

CHURCH SERVICES

February

22nd 9.30am. Morning Prayer

March

1st 9.30am. Morning Prayer
8th 11.00am All Age Worship
15th 9.30am Holy Communion
22nd 9.30am. Morning Prayer
29th 3.00pm United with Manea Methodist

April

5th 9.30am. Holy Communion

9th Maundy Thursday

Fellowship Meal with Breaking of Bread

7.00pm Manea Church Rooms

10th Good Friday

10.30am Walk of Witness: Christchurch

2.00-3.00pm Meditation in Welney

12th Easter Day

11.00am. All Age Worship/Baptism

TEDDY BEAR SERVICE

Are you not yet old enough to go to school? Then perhaps you would like to join us at our **Teddy Bear Service on 4th March 1998**

It will be held in St. Mary's Church, Welney from 10.30am until 11.30am. Please do make sure that you ask Mum, Dad, Grand-parents or another adult to bring you and also bring your Teddy Bear if you have one. It will be a fun-time with singing, stories, prayers, various activities and a cup of tea/coffee or squash.

Everyone is most welcome so do come along and join with us if you possibly can.

DO YOU HAVE A FLAIR FOR FLOWERS?

There is to be a Flower Festival at St Mary's Church on **19th-21st June, 1998** - this is part of the **150th Anniversary celebrations.**

A meeting is being held on **9th March, at 7.00pm in the Church** and anyone interested in helping in any way at all is invited to come along.

SPRINGTIME IN WELNEY

Have you ever thought, when you walk through Welney in Springtime, who plants the thousands of flowering bulbs that light and colour the banks and wayside places in the village. Well, the man who bought and planted every flower you see is Harold Carter.



Seven years ago Harold thought it would brighten up the Churchyard and the banks along the Croft to plant a few bulbs.

"And that's what I did", he says. "It was just me, I was the one source, I funded myself. You sometimes have to have committees, but when you're a one man band, you can get along quite well, you've got no opposition and no hassle have you? And that's how it's gone on and now I go to Gerry James corner on the March Road, and to Derek Bedford's Farm and now along to Suspension Bridge.

Nowadays, people get interested. I had the help of a gentleman of New Road - Frank Harmer. He wanted to get rid of some bluebells - which can be very invasive - from his garden, and he said would I set them in the Churchyard? They'd look nice. And I said, now a better idea than that, you help me, and when you come along, you say 'Well that's Franks bluebells along there.'

This year you'll see about 10,000 bulbs. Over other years, I haven't done so much, I put in 7,000 but I done more this year because it's the 150th anniversary of the Church and School, so I've done more this year, planted another 3,000 because I thought it would look nice. I start planting work the first week of November and carried on a few days into January.

I get pleasure planting them and if people get pleasure seeing them, that's a bonus like"

A real bonus for us all, thank you Harold.

SCHOOL NEWS

On **Friday 27th February** the Friends of Welney School are hold a **Spring Fair**, starting at **2,00,pm**. There will be various stalls including Bring and Buy, Cakes, Cards, a Raffle, and Games and Competitions. Donations for any stalls would be greatly appreciated and we look forward to seeing you on the day. Please note that there is no jumble stall.

THE PLAYBUS

The Playbus returned in the New Year with heating system problems, so on some of the colder Mondays the bus has not been able to come to Welney because it could not be kept within the legal temperature limits. The problem is about to be discussed at a meeting of the playbus staff and committee.. It seem likely the heating system will need major alterations to function adequately. Meanwhile a number of Welney mums and toddlers have taken to meeting in each others' homes so as not to miss out completely on a favourite social event. The playbus takes a break between 3rd - 20th April

WELNEY W.I.

Members were given a warm welcome to the February meeting by President Amy Markham. Mr. Brian Payne was introduced. He gave an interesting and informative talk on Margaret George, a former W.I member at Guyhirne, about her life in a Fenland village. It was illustrated by slides of the many photographs taken over the years she spent at Guyhirne, including the 1920's and 30's.

In charge of the Bring and Buy Stall was Jennifer James. The monthly competition was 'My Prettiest Christmas Card', judged by Mr. Payne. Points: Jean Newell, Bettine Watson, Sylvia Galley, 5: Sheila Dore 4: Cissie Bedford, Betty Smith, Blanche Markham 3: Vera Singletery, Queenie Johnson, Amy Markham, Jennifer James 2. Raffle winners were Queenie Johnson, Ada Thorpe and Rita Sweet.

The next W.I. Meeting will be on March 4th, the speaker: Mrs J. Miller.

WET WEBBED FEET ON WELNEY WASH ROAD

Tom Fisher, as Chairman of the Wash Road Working Party, gives a view of what has happened in the last few years - a view he subtitles

'A Tale of Flood, Flotsam and Frustration'



Elaine Sweetman

We start on our journey on the Wash Road and flooding with some jottings from Parish Council files:

"... recordings show that the road was flooded for 65 or 68 days between Sept. 1992 and Jan. 1993. More flooding continued after January"

"At the Jan. 1993 Parish Council meeting several parishioners made complaints ..."

"Open meeting held in the Parish Hall, 27 April 1993.

First address—Mr Bullivant—NRA—History of the Washes.

Second address—Mr Eastgate—Norfolk County Council—"... the cure would be a new road, but this was not a possibility."

"A second open meeting was held on 20 July 1993 — the subject was to ask the NCC to raise the Wash Road."

All of the above and what followed involved the "great and the good", professionals in Highways, Water Management, Conservation interests, Borough Councillors, County Councillors, Members of Parliament; even a Cabinet Minister by proxy via correspondence; And of course businesses and naturally, inhabitants of the area.

A lot of good information was made available. People became more knowledgeable. The meetings also produced their share of red her-

rings, false trails, good and bad assumptions.

The positive thing which arose was the setting-up of a Wash Road Working Party under the chairmanship of Ken Sorensen, which set about looking for solutions, strengthening support over a wide area in order to demand a remedy; whether legal action could be taken; what sources of funding might be available for a remedial project; producing a superb brochure outlining the problem for other bodies; and much more besides.

This short story cannot even begin to give a true picture of the immense amount of activity carried out. However there are in existence two large box files of communications and correspondence, as well as two thick backing files of further documentation and relevant publications on the Ouse Washes, which are available for perusal.

Ken resigned from the Parish Council and the Working Party in May 1995 and I took over the job in July 1995, fortunately persuading Ken to stay on in the group.

There had been a slowing down of activity on the issue from about the middle of 1994. Ken and I revived meetings with Norfolk County Highways and Transportation Dept., in October 1995. These continued until February 1997, at which time the Planning and Transportation Department underwent a major reorganisation. Communication ceased but has been taken up again in December 1997.

In this second phase the County Council, under pressure, produced about £12,000 to carry out feasibility studies for raising the Wash Road.

The outcome of this phase was the production of engineering drawings to show possible alternative schemes which were roughly estimated to cost between £0.75m and £1.5m at that time. The drawings are in our file.

The trouble is that the County has no money for such a project. Neither is it in their list of priorities. Subsequently we were told the proposals would have to be discussed with English Nature and others. We have heard no more.

At the January 1998 Parish Council Meeting, with more than two feet of water on the road, the Chairman suggested we do something to shake

up the powers that be. I proposed that we demand a meeting between the Parish Council and representatives of the Environment Agency, the Borough Council and the County Council, and that we seek an explanation for the current extensive flooding and dislocation of the community and pose specific questions as to what they proposed to do to solve our **problem**. All of this would be in the light of the facts that little or no flooding has occurred since the great "outcry" of 1992/1993 until the present moment when we have had three weeks plus of disruption of peoples' lives.

rivers, summer and winter flooding, drainage, conservation, wildfowl, farm management, irrigation, flora and fauna, etc.. This is all excellent material for anyone wishing to study matters in some depth

I maintain that nowhere have they really addressed the problem of the flooding of the Welney Wash Road and the inconvenience and cost to parishioners and many other concerns.

Preserve **our** habitat!!!

Yours squelchingly,

Tom Fisher



My proposal has been turned into one for an open public meeting on 17 February 1998.

This leaves me with a sense of "deja-vu". However there are many newcomers to the Parish who may not know the previous saga and the meeting may serve as a public relations exercise for the Environment Agency, though this is not what I had in mind, (more a sort of Spanish Inquisition).

Our files include comprehensive brochures on the Management of the Ouse Washes, published in the 1990's. From this perspective one could say that it is only very recently that the Environment Agency has begun to get it's act together. Perhaps not yet enough! These handsome publications cover management of the

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WASH ROAD PUBLIC MEETING 17TH FEBRUARY

Over a hundred people crowded into the village hall for this meeting. It was disappointing, therefore, that although the Environment Agency and the RSPB were represented,

Michael Young, Senior Engineer of the Planning & Transportation Department of Norfolk County Council, had 'flu and apparently it

was impossible to send a deputy spokesman to our public meeting.

Nigel Woonton, Flood Defence Manager of the Environment Agency, introduced **Peter Cowie**, Project Engineer, **Richard Nunn**, Principal Engineer and **David Gillett**.

Nigel Woonton outlined the history of the Ouse Washes and reasons why the recent flooding had lasted so long. Building a new sluice at Welmore Lake had reduced the area into which flood water could be drained. The force of the flood water, when released at low tide, had dangerously affected the Bank which protects The Hundred Foot and Suspension Bridge area, so outlet was slowed down.

Peter Cowie described the building of the new sluice, its effectiveness and its cost - 5.2 million pounds. It would be 50% more efficient than the 80 year old sluice.

Questions from the floor ranged from complaints against the Environment Agency for lack of efficiency to those which should properly have been answered by the NCC Transportation Dept. if a representative had been present.

Among a number of issues raised:

Tom Fisher maintained that work on siltation at Welmore Lake Sluice should have been started two or four weeks earlier before such a mass of water had built up. He had watched the terrifying spectacle of the head of water through the sluice and felt it was a much more dangerous incident than had been acknowledged.

Nigel Woonton accepted that they might be acted differently if they had known how the flow was going to develop, but said that he felt they had got the timing exactly right.

Howard Kent asked how the new 5.2 million pound sluice would ease the flooding on the Wash Road, that was what the community

wanted to hear. **David Gillett** said the Washes were an official flood storage area; they were there to relieve an overflow in the relief channel and the water had to travel down before it could

be released through the sluice. Flooding could not be prevented, the new sluice would be 50% more efficient but not ensure 50% less flooding.

Nigel Woonton agreed with **Marlen Moss-**

Eccardt that the road was too low, built at a time when there was less mobility, and stated that he, too, if he lived here would resent travelling an extra 25 miles to work. **Howard Kent** asked why Welney still had the problem when so much of the water which previously drained into the Washes was being siphoned off into irrigation reservoirs. **Nigel Woonton** said drought and the reservoirs meant far fewer 'amber alerts'; there had been less flooding and because of that there was more resentment when it happened. **Pat Rix** asked if the new sluice would mean less deep flooding and for a shorter time. **Richard Nunn** would make no promises but offered more flexibility.

Peter Redman accused the Agency of ignoring the siltation problem for too long and allowing, since the late 1980's, virtually all the water discharged from the Great Ouse to go through the relief channel. The recent flood water went through the relief channel. **Peter** said there had been a week's delay before any attempt was made to release flood water. He said Agency people should have to undergo what Welney people did, and that was 35% cut in your money, 2 hours a day extra work and £25 a week extra petrol to get round to the other side of the village. He also said the RSBP were opening slackers and letting water in whilst the Agency were running it out.



Cliff Carson of the RSNP said the slackers were never opened after the cattle had left the Wash, but **Peter** said he had seen one open that very afternoon. **Cliff Carson** went on to talk of the RSPB priorities and the needs of birds and **Howard Kent** asked where the human race fitted into all this. **Tom Fisher** pointed out that the Wildfowl Trust supported the idea of a raised road because a deep flood was not in their interests.

Nigel Woonton believed that no-one had an interest in the continued flooding the Wash Road. He hoped that the meeting had been an opportunity not simply for the village to criticise the Agency but for the Agency to explain what they were doing and discuss ways forward.

Barry Roberts brought attention to the 1980 Highways Act under which it is illegal to obstruct the highway, and the County Council have powers to prevent hazards, including flooding. He suggested the Agency liaise with the Council and both put money towards a relief of the flooding.

Nigel Woonton approved the idea but government funding did not work like that, he regretted the fact: joint schemes could be helpful to communities as a whole. Throughout the meeting, many questioners were frustrated by the lack of a spokesman from the Transportation Dept. of the County Council. He said he would study the 1993 proposals in the brochure prepared by **Ken Sorensen** and would get in

touch with the NCC and talk in a positive way with them. The Agency welcomed a raised road provided there were culverts for the flood water.

County Councillor Richard Rockcliffe passed on the apologies of **Councillor Harry Humphrey**, but said they would both strongly press and support the case for a raised road. All speakers were applauded at the end.

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SPEAKING PERSONALLY

Charlotte Cox gives her personal and unsolicited view on an issue in the village and emphasises that she is **speaking personally** and not in her role as Parish Councillor.

WELNEY PLAYING FIELD AND PAVILION

"In December 1997, the Chairman and all but two members of the Welney Playing Field Committee resigned. As a result the responsibility for the upkeep and control of the pavilion and playing field has reverted back to the Trustees, who are Welney Parish Council. During January 1998, the pavilion locks were changed and the key is now held by the Parish Clerk, Mrs. Pat Copeman,

The Parish Council called an open meeting in the Village Hall on 15th January to discuss the future of the playing field and pavilion. This was attended by members of the Parish Council, Pat Copeman, Karen Fleming, a former Playing Field Committee Member and three parishioners all of whom offered to help - one even offering to clean the pavilion! Apologies were received from Steve Kerr, the remaining Committee Member, who had written indicating his willingness to assist. As a result of this poor turn out and seeming lack of interest in the amenity value of having a playing field and pavilion available in the village, it was decided to devise a questionnaire which could be printed within the April edition of Welney News.

Since this meeting three Councillors inspected the Pavilion and found it to be in great need of cleaning, maintenance to the roof and replacement of a broken window pane.

So please, everyone, between now and April when you see the questionnaire, give some thought to what you consider would be the best use that can be made of our playing field and pavilion. There is already a well equipped play area in one corner of the field which has been allowed to become somewhat neglected. I am sure there are parents who would be willing to spare the time to help with the maintenance and general supervision of this area to ensure their children are safe.

All the facilities were paid for by the village both from fund raising events, some in conjunction with the Village Hall and from Parish Council grants from the Precept. In other words **you** have contributed towards the upkeep of the pavilion and grass cutting etc. but very few of you have made use of the facilities provided.

So why not take the time to visit the playing field when you next drive up March Road and take a look at the potential of this recreational area for your family and the community.

There may not be many teenagers in our community at present, but there are new families with young children moving into the village, and if we do not have recreational facilities for them then more than likely they will move away within the next few years.

So, if the community as a whole show sufficient interest in using the playing field then the Parish Council can ask the Highways Authority to reconsider the provision of a footpath from New Road and Hernside. The County Council will only do this if it is proved that it will be used frequently by the majority of people requiring access to the playing field. The same applies to the overgrown footpath between Wisbech Road and the Playing Field. If the facilities are not used then we cannot expect the local authority to provide and maintain them."

Charlotte Cox

If you feel strongly on this or any other issue in the village, why not write in.

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BEEN THERE, DONE THAT! ARE YOU SURE?

Are you aged between 13-19 years? Want to try something new? Maybe your local Youth Club can help. Downham Market Youth Club has regular meetings on Mondays and Thursdays 7-00pm-9-30pm at the Youth and Community Centre, and holds a disco once a month; the coming ones will be on 27th February, 20th March, and 24th April. Other activities include cheap transport to Peterborough for shopping or the Showcase Cinema, days out to Anglia Television Studios with the opportunity to take part in current affairs or chat shows, and inter-club visits with other local Youth Clubs; these may be sporting challenge events or a disco. Downham Market Youth and Community Centre has qualified instructors for a range of skills and sports e.g. canoeing, climbing, off-road cycling, and dry slope skiing.

Coming Events:

Saturday 7th March; Abseiling and Climbing day held at Hautbois House, Coltishall. Open to 13-19 year olds, cost £6-00 for the day includes all transport, equipment, and insurance. No previous experience necessary!

Also on 7th March; Disco at Peterborough Ice arena. 7pm-11-30pm. Cost £6-00 includes transport, entry, skate hire. Open to 14 yrs upwards.

Saturday 31st March; Off-road cycling challenge event in Thetford Forest open to any 13-19 yr old in Norfolk. Cost £5 for the day includes transport and entry. Some bikes available for those without their own who want to give off-roading a try. There are a variety of courses over tracks, bomb holes, by-roads etc. to suit everyone.

Ring for more details, advance bookings etc: Downham Market Youth and Community Centre on 01366 382010.

Footballers Wanted!

The Youth Club is hoping to start up five-a-side and eleven-a-side football teams (girls or boys).

Also Wanted!

Any young person who wants to have a say in their local community. Do you want to be heard? Then this could be for you. For either of these, ring the Youth and Community Centre.

Young Persons Clinic

2nd and 4th Wednesday each month, 3-30pm-5-30pm at the Health Centre, Paradise Rd, Downham Market.

Drop in or telephone 01366 383241 for an appointment. All young men and women welcome, all services free. Help and advice available on all confidential medical matters.

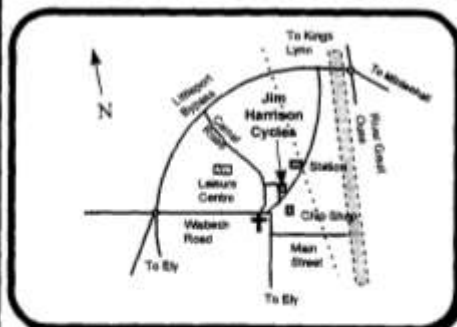


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FRIENDSHIP CLUB.

The Club held a New Year party on the 13th January with lively entertainment from the **Four-in-Hand Bell Ringers from Wimblington**. Each member held four bells, two in each hand; each bell of a different note or tone. What Friendship Club members had not bargained for was becoming part of the entertainment when some were press-ganged into performing a tune themselves - though with only one bell each, they did get off relatively lightly! Members also enjoyed a special New Year tea organised by the Committee, and there was a big raffle which raised £42 for the Club kitty.

Events for 1998 start off with a guest speaker; **Mr. Ingram** from Wisbech will be giving a slide show and talk on **Photography** at the Club meeting on **24th February**.

There will be a meeting of the Committee in late February to arrange the programme of trips for the rest of the year.

Are you a Senior Citizen new to Welney, Interested in meeting some new friends, getting to know the village, going on some excellent value summer trips and shopping expeditions? Then why not join the Friendship Club; always open to new members. If you want to know more please contact **Cissie Bedford** on 610206 or **Pam Sorensen**, 610516.

WELNEY YOUTH GROUP

The **Youth Group** is hoping to move to the Playing Field pavilion for its meetings. The members are keen to pursue more outdoor games and activities once spring comes, and the pavilion and playing field are ideal for this. The date of the move will depend on the progress of cleaning up and preparing the building for use.

Meetings every Monday except bank holidays, the next being Easter Monday 13th April.

Phone Adrian 610 525 for information

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BARCLAYS

WELCOME TO WELNEY

A well travelled life so far and the desire to settle down in a quiet country village seems to link three households new to the village.

Barry Bruce, has moved into Threeways, Main Street. He is an electronic engineer with a particular interest in radio communications and has moved here from Essex. During a 25 year spell with Marconi, he spent some time working in Iraq before the Gulf War! Recently, after various short term contracts, he settled in Welney, believing he'd landed a permanent post with Ionica in Cambridge. He has very recently been made redundant, but is keen to stay in what he regards as a nice, friendly village. Bruce is keen on astronomy and hopes to set up a telescope in the back garden in due course.

Mark Archer and Paul Martin, now living in Nursery House, next to the Playing Field, have only moved over the County boundary from Littleport, where they had spent two years renovating an old farmhouse. Mark is another electronic engineer, who currently commutes to St. Neots to work. Originally from Liverpool, he prefers country life after a spell in the army. Paul has travelled very widely, working in several foreign countries before becoming a factory supervisor in Soham. Both are keen to have a go at gardening: undaunted by the challenge of creating something out of part of the old nursery site.

Ronald and Nancy Grant, have retired to Wellcroft, Taymor Place, and have a long history of seafaring behind them. They moved to Whitstable, Kent from Sherlock Holmes' Baker Street in London, in order to sail their Cornish Crabber. They then headed north to Fort Augustus. Here they spent some 11 years crofting and sailing round the Scottish Isles in a Brixham Trawler.

They have moved to Welney for health and family reasons, despite Nancy originally stating that she wouldn't in a bungalow and certainly not in the Fens! However, at least they're now in sight of the so called 'Ship of the Fens', which should keep them happy. Perhaps they'll take up their old hobby of motorcycling again, once all the DIY is finished.

Finally, a newcomer to the village of a different kind is Elanor Naime Fleming, who was born on Sunday 8th February to Nigel and Karen of Bridge House. Congratulations to them both. Apologies to anyone else new to the village who

I've missed out, but no-one has told me about you yet!

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WELNEY HOMEWATCH.

From mid-October to mid-January, five crime incidents are recorded for Welney: thefts of some gates, a garden tractor, fishing tackle, a garden sundial, theft from a car. To give an idea of the picture for West Norfolk, in one week in January there were 188 recorded crimes. 72 of these were in Central Kings Lynn. Of the total 49 were thefts of or from cars; the message being "watch your car as well as your home!"

Towards the end of January warnings were received from both Ely and Kings Lynn police concerning a blue transit van seen in the border area of Norfolk and Cambridgeshire; the occupants were posing as odd jobbers and offering to carry out roof repairs, particularly for elderly people. They then attempted to charge very large amounts of money for their work. Fortunately several of their intended victims reported them to the police. A number of warning notices were distributed around the village. Hopefully they won't trouble anyone here, but yet again we are reminded of the utter callousness of people who are prepared to target the most vulnerable members of rural communities; and of the need, to be constantly on our guard.

NB: Norfolk Constabulary are currently looking to recruit more Special Constables. If you are interested, telephone **01603 276159**.

Welney Homewatch are looking for recruits too! The current village co-ordinator (me) is stepping down owing to increased family demands though (hopefully) will continue to act as liaison with the local police. If you can spare some of your time to organize a raffle, "man" an information stall e.g. at the Mini Mart, attend meetings with other Homewatch groups, or would be interested in arranging/helping to arrange public meetings occasionally with guest speakers from the local police force, then we need you! Please contact:

Karen Fleming on 610523.



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VIEW FROM A TRACTOR

In response to the Goodwin family's letter in the last issue of Welney News (thanks for your comments) I have taken up the suggestion to look at farm machinery. Unfortunately, I have no pictures to show you, but if you are really interested then - armed with this description, I am sure any tractor driver would be happy to point out the relevant bits.

Before any new crop can be planted, the ground must be prepared to produce a fine seed bed, free of weeds and with the correct soil lumps to protect the seedlings from the weather whilst at the same time enabling strong root development and deterring pests such as slugs.

The vast majority of crops drilled to date since harvest would be winter wheat, with some winter beans and winter oilseed rape. The remaining ploughed land surrounding the village may be awaiting the time for planting either sugar beet or potatoes, some mustard, peas, spring beans, or linseed. Some may remain ploughed or stubble to meet stringent EC setaside requirements.

Following harvest of the wheat crop the stubble is generally lightly cultivated with a set of disc harrows. These are often two or more sets of



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saucer-shaped discs depth of 50cm and fixed to a frame, which therefore a big tractor is required to pull a frame tractor. The depth of drilling is adjusted by the tractor hydraulics. The aim is to break up the stubble remains and promote germination of unwanted weed seedlings or grain left lying on the surface.

Ploughing follows two weeks or longer after 'discing'. Fields that suffer from poor soil structure or may be waterlogged can be 'sub-soiled' before ploughing. A sub-soiler, as the name implies, is drawn through the field in parallel lines, breaking up the soil structure and thus adding drainage.

If seen on the back of a tractor, the sub-soiler would look like a strong frame with one or more substantial legs. Sub-soiling can be to a

I am assuming everyone knows what a plough is. The traditional plough only has right-handed mouldboards which means that the tractor driver can only plough in one direction and so wastes time driving back to the start of the next furrow; in consequence most ploughs are now reversible, having a second set of left-handed mouldboards mounted directly above the first set. At each end of the furrow, the plough is turned over using the tractor hydraulics; thus time and money are saved.

Once ploughed, the soil requires further cultivation to prepare it for

(Continued on page 20)

(Continued from page 19)
drilling.

Again there are many different cultivator implements which condition the soil; in essence they are industrial versions of the garden rakes and tines used in any kitchen garden.

The final main implement I feel ought to be mentioned, as it is used by virtually every farmer in this area, is the 'Power Harrow'. This cultivator has powered reciprocating short tines, which smash up the soil to a very fine tilth. Attached to the implement is a rolling cylinder of rods which trails behind the powered tines and levels the surface ready for drilling.

No more space now, next issue we'll be into spring planting and I'll continue the saga then.
Bye for now Stuart Cree

CHILDREN'S COLOURING COMPETITION

The winners were:

Infants (5-7) **AMY WARING (AGED 5)**
Juniors (8-11) **CATHY INGRAM (AGED 10)**

Well done, your photographs with your prize
in the next edition.



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