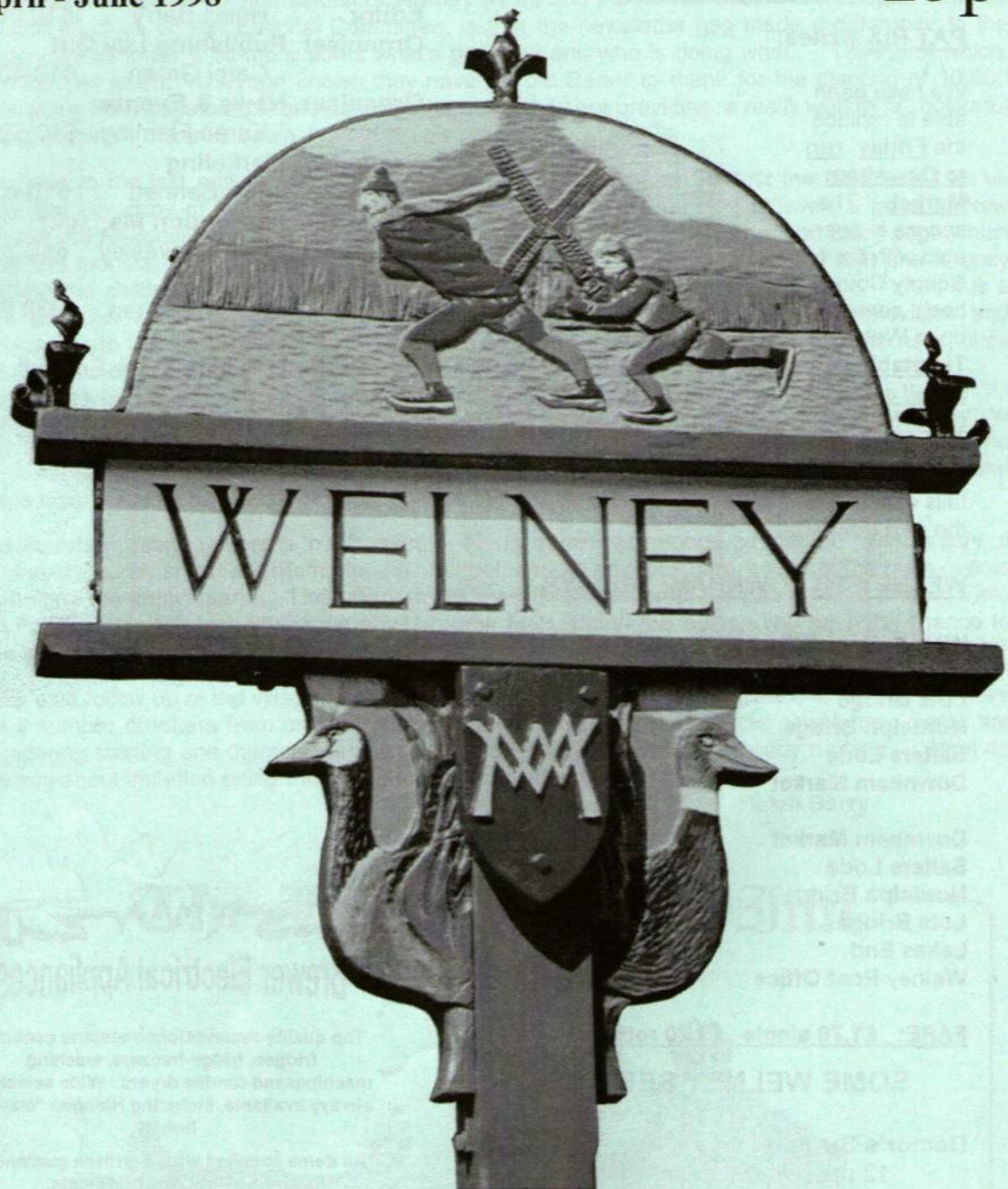


Issue N° 4
April - June 1998

25p



NEWS

NEW BUS SERVICE TO DOWNHAM MARKET

PAT RIX writes:

We have been able to replace the Friday run to Downham Market. The



service is operated with the financial support of Norfolk County Council. The bus starts from Wisbech, comes through Upwell and Christchurch on to Welney and through then to Downham. Timetable below. but the bus will operate on a Hail and Ride basis with a clear signal to the driver. I am now negotiating with FACT and the Council to see if we can replace the other routes serviced by the Croft Carrier. Details of results of these meetings will appear in the next newsletter.

WELNEY TO DOWNHAM: FRIDAYS

Welney Post Office	10.01am
Lakes End	10.06am
Lots Bridge	10.08am
Nordelph Bridge	10.14am
Salter's Lode	10.19am
Downham Market	10.26am

Downham Market	12.15pm
Salter's Lode	12.22pm
Nordelph Bridge	12.27pm
Lots Bridge	12.33pm
Lakes End	12.35pm
Welney Post Office	12.40pm

FARE: £1.70 single £2.20 return

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 doctor 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**.

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/Illustrator	Elaine Sweetman	638 287

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EDITORIAL

Well, here we are into our fifth edition of **Welney News** and the reaction from most people, as it has reached all of us on the Editorial Committee, is that the newsletter has made a difference to the village - we all know a bit more about what's going on and who is doing what. Talking of which, after the last edition everyone knows they have Harold Carter to thank for the planting of 10,000 bulbs along the village banks, and as we go to press, they are providing a really wonderful, colourful Spring display. Thanks again, Harold.

Reactions to the last edition ranged from Nancy Roberts bemoaning the fact that she hadn't let us know that her copy of **Welney News** goes much further than France or Kuwait, it goes to New Zealand - to Headmistress Jasmine Golson rebuking us for using a design on the Diary page which prints the months of the year without an initial capital letter. She pointed out that she is busy teaching the children the rules of language and literacy and we are breaking them! Well, it is a point although it can be said that even very young children are open through television and newspapers to the sophistication of a design which draws the attention by breaking the rules, titles and cast lists on plays, for example, often use this ploy.

Dennis Booth told us that he has sent the last two editions of **Welney News** to Trevor and Christine Bray, now working in Qatar and letting out Rose Cottage in their absence. They have a real and affectionate interest in the village and gave substantial donations for the last two re-paintings of the village sign. At this rate perhaps we should be thinking of an overseas edition!

Two important village concerns in this issue. Firstly some background on the 150th anniversary of St. Mary's Church and the William Marshall School, and an advance programme of the main events celebrating the anniversary. Then there is the important question of the future of the Playing Field and Pavilion. In the last edition we gave you the facts and in this edition you have the chance to have your say in what should be done in the future. Look for the questionnaire on the back page.

Lastly as a follow up of the village winning the prize for the best parish magazine in Norfolk, we have had a number of letters from other Norfolk villages asking for a copy of the newsletter. Some are considering starting one themselves, and some want new ideas for one already running. What do they say about imitation being the sincerest form of flattery?

Helen Barry

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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, Vice Chairman, Mrs. Pat Rix, and Councillors Tim Bennett, David Bonner, Dennis Booth, Alison Burrows, Charlotte Cox, Tom Fisher and Pauline Pullum. The Parish Clerk is Mrs. Pat Copeman (Tel. 610 226).

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING TUESDAY 10TH MARCH 1998

Mrs. Pauline Pullum of Wren Cottage, Main Street, was co-opted onto the Council to fill the vacancy.

Arising from the flooding of properties in New Road during December, **Mr. N.J. Wilson, an Environmental Health Officer with King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council** attended the meeting and gave a brief talk to the Council and Parishioners present regarding **First Time Sewage** in Welney. If sufficient households showed interest in the principle of being connected to the mains, the Borough Council would progress the matter further and explore the options and likely costs. It is likely that only those properties in the main part of the village will have the opportunity to be connect. The cost to those who choose to be joined up will vary according to the distance between their property and the pipeline. It will be possible to be connected later but the cost would be greater. Additional charges for the sewerage rate would be approximately the same as those charged now for the water rate, in effect doubling the annual charge, but there would be no further cost of regular emptying of sewage tanks. Although no decisions have yet been taken, it is likely that a small treatment plant would be built on the outskirts of the village. A questionnaire has been circulated to those households most likely to benefit from the scheme.

Cllr Bennet submitted a report of his meeting with **Mr. Porter, the Borough Council's Rights of Way Officer**. They visited a number of sites in and around the Parish and amongst the issues they discussed were possible circular routes and drove encroachment. Mr. Porter will be taking up the issue of shooting along Bedford Bank with the Environment Agency, since it is illegal to shoot within 50 feet of a public bridleway, and even the presence of people with guns is felt to be highly intimidating. It was

suggested that a meeting be arranged with the **Trees Officer** to discuss a programme of regular pollarding of the willows along the Wash Road.

The future upkeep of the **Croft River** was also discussed. This would clearly benefit from being cleaned out, especially along the length adjacent to Main St, where it is currently far from the great asset it should be. The new Environment Agency Water Level Management Plan confirms that it should be kept flowing. It was suggested that a public meeting be called later in the year to gauge people's opinions and prepare a plan for its continued maintenance.

The final draft of the **Playing Field questionnaire** was tabled to be included in the April edition of Welney News. (see page 20) It was hoped that sufficient interest will be shown to ensure the active future of the Playing Field and Pavilion. A Marshall Charity grant of £750, offered last year, has been taken up and estimates obtained for redecorating the exterior of the Pavilion.

Charlotte Cox

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Tuesday 12 May at 7.30pm

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SOME MORE DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

april april april april april april april april april

Friday 17 th	9.30 onwards	Mobile Library	
Monday 20 th	10 - 12 noon	Playbus	Village Car Park
	6 - 8 pm	Youth Group	
Tuesday 21 st	1.30 pm	Friendship Club	Village Hall
Wednesday 22 nd	7.30 pm	Whist	Village Hall
Friday 24 th	7.30 pm	Bingo	Village Hall
Monday 27 th	10 - 12 noon	Playbus	Village Car Park
	6 - 8 pm	Youth Group	
Wednesday 29 th	7.30 pm	Whist	Village Hall

may may may may may may may may may may

Saturday 2 nd	10 - 12 noon	Mini-Mart	Village Hall
Monday 4 th		Bank Holiday - No playbus or Youth grp	
Tuesday 5 th	1.30 pm	Friendship Club	Village Hall
Wednesday 6 th	2.00 pm	W.I.	Village Hall
Thursday 7 th	7.30 pm	Whist	Village Hall
Monday 11 th	10 - 12 noon	Playbus	Village Car Park
	6 - 8 pm	Youth Group	
Tuesday 12 th	7.30 pm	Parish Council Meeting	Village Hall
Wednesday 13 th	7.30 pm	Whist	Village Hall
Friday 15 th	9.30 onwards	Mobile Library	
Monday 18 th	10 - 12 noon	Playbus	Village Car Park
	6 - 8 pm	Youth Group	
Wednesday 20 th	7.30 pm	Whist	Village Hall
Saturday 23 rd	8.00 -12.00pm	Fundraising Dance	Pavilion
Monday 25 th		Bank Holiday - No playbus or Youth grp	
Wednesday 27 th	7.30 pm	Whist	Village Hall
Friday 29 th	7.30 pm	Bingo	Village Hall

june june june june june june june june june june

Monday 1 st	10 - 12 noon	Playbus	Village Car Park
	6 - 8 pm	Youth Group	
Tuesday 2 nd	1.30 pm	Friendship Club	Village Hall
Wednesday 3 rd	7.30 pm	Whist	Village Hall
Saturday 6 th	10 - 12 noon	Mini Mart	Village Hall
Monday 8 th	10 - 12 noon	Playbus	Village Car Park
	6 - 8 pm	Youth Group	
Wednesday 10 th	7.30 pm	Whist	Village Hall
Friday 12 th		Mobile Library	
Monday 15 th	10 - 12 noon	Playbus	Village Car Park

A DIARY OF THE APRIL FLOODING

What do the **Environment Agency** mean when they talk about communication?

17th February

Public Meeting on flooding on the A 1101, **Nigel Woonton** from the Environment Agency states they look for better communication with Welney. I send him our Newsletter, with the account of the Public Meeting, and a letter suggesting that he should contribute informational articles.

11th April

Flooding starts early evening. **Pat Copeman** rings Control Room at the Environment Agency to say it is dark, and there are no warning signs. Control Room say they were 'taken by surprise', whereas we all expected it after the tragic flooding in middle England.

14th April

I rang **Mr. Woonton's** office asking for information to put in this Newsletter, what was happening, how much more flood water was expected, and how the Agency were coping with it. Mr. Woonton's secretary rang back to say that he couldn't contribute anything - not even given four days to respond - because he was too busy coping with the emergency.

At mid-day BBC Radio Norfolk rang to ask about our road flooding and wanted me to do an interview for them. I did this, after consulting Wendy and Pat Copeman on the facts.

Later that day **Nigel Woonton** found the time to ring Tim Bennet and give him an update seeing as how Tim knew how the washes worked and as a Parish Councillor could perhaps get the facts circulated.

At that point the Agency were having problems with Welmore Lake Sluice. They had closed the sluice and using the relief river to empty the flood water. The levels would rise over the next few days, the situation equalled that of 1947 and it would be three or four weeks before it cleared.

15th April

My interview went out on Radio Norfolk, followed by **David Gilliat** (also at our Meeting) who had found the time to give Radio Nor-

folk much the same information as Nigel Woonton had given Tim Bennett.

Later on the same day, **Margaret Levesley** rang the Control Room being anxious at how the level was still rising on the bridge over the Old Bedford. She was told the situation was being monitored and police and local authorities who supplied sandbags would be informed.

Later still in the afternoon, **Nigel Woonton** again rang Tim Bennet and said the Agency had now opened the Welmore Lake Sluice to full and had brought in 100 tons of limestone to support the Hundred Foot Bank. Ely and Erith were on Red Alert.



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Going - Going - Gone

The water rose surprisingly fast from its first trickles across the road on Saturday. The depth post on the Suspension Bridge side lasted all of a couple of days before submerging completely. The level has dropped back to about 5 feet deep as at Sunday 19th April. It is still going to take some time for it all to go!

Remember this - It was taken for the last issue of the magazine. Things haven't changed that much as you can see from this photograph taken in 1937.



Most of the people are known and are listed beneath the photo.



left to right

Eric Smart, Ken Smart (no relation whatever), Harold Smart Sid Taylor Mr. Beeston, Mr. Allen Charlie Beeston, next two unknown, Mr. Bensley, Alf James (Ernie's father) Mr. Lambert. Ernie Smith Enie James extreme right

Graffiti on the Bridge

Isn't it sad that the new "Suspension Bridge" has suffered at the hands of the spray can vandals. With all that fresh concrete they could have used their "canvas" for some artwork. Instead we have some very badly spelt swear-words and anatomically inaccurate drawings.

DID YOU KNOW?

Here are a few facts and figures about the Welney Washes that may come as a surprise to you. The details given are all approximate to help make them clearer.

- When flooded, the washes are the longest lake in England at 30 kilometers long, that's almost twice as long as lake Windermere and nearly as long as Loch Ness.
- The flooded washes extend from Earith to Wellmore Lake.
- The widest part of the washes is at Welney and is about 900 m between banks.
- The narrowest part is at Mepal and is about 200 m between the banks.
- The washes can flood to a depth of about 2.75 m over the wash road and still be held by the banks (only just).
- Between Good Friday and Wednesday the washes held an extra 50,000,000 m³.
- That's enough for about ten baths for every single person in Britain.
- Its also enough water to drink for two days for everone in the world.
- It is about 2 months supply of rain for the whole of Norfolk.
- If it was in pint glasses, you could stack one on top of another and reach the moon - **52 times!!!**



Big, isn't it - Taken from Suspension Bridge



The floods have caused mayhem for the sheep as well as the people of Welney. As you can see from these photographs, the poor shepherds had a rough time of it, as the water came higher and higher on the Old Bedford River bank. With very little notice the shepherds gathered in the sheep, which were spread over a couple of miles of bank, and loaded them all into trucks at the bridge.

The water got high enough for real concern in the Village and eventually sandbags were provided so that a barrier could be placed on the bridge in case the water came over. There was little information passed to the villagers and we all hope that better arrangements can be made to inform everyone who might be worried or

concerned. We all appreciate that flooding may or may not occur when we have heavy rains in the midlands but we also know that it takes three or four days to reach Welney, and a very good estimate of the flows should be readily available after a day or so. So even if flooding is not particularly likely, at least a warning of the potential to flood could be given.

Radio Norfolk and Radio Cambridge did give regular notices of the closure of the Wash Road, which is extremely helpful for many of the motorists in this area. Of course, the road is the only link across the Washes for 10 kilometers in either direction, so those people who did get



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caught had a long drive to get round!

One concern about the traffic diversions is that vehicles approaching Suspension Bridge from Littleport are diverted through Ten Mile Bank. This is not a problem for cars and small commercial vehicles but the very large articulated lorries, particularly those with containers, have great difficulty negotiating the bridge at Ten Mile Bank. I have seen at least one Spanish driver looking very very puzzled as he wondered whether he had reached the end of the world and was about to drive off it!

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YOUTH GROUP

The youth group is now meeting at the Pavilion, still on Monday nights from 6pm-8pm. Numbers have increased with an average of 12-14 children attending each week. The children enjoy the new venue, with the playing field now available to them in addition to the indoor activities on offer.

A fundraising dance has been arranged for Bank Holiday Saturday, May 23rd - this will be held in the Parish Hall, with Sam's Sounds providing the music. Proceeds will be used to buy more equipment and to cover routine costs.

The first Anniversary of the group is coming up in mid June and a celebratory disco is planned for this. Details will be available at a later date. Adrian is hoping to begin his Youth Leaders' training course soon.

Once he is enrolled on the course there will be many benefits for the group; they will be entitled to take part in activities organized by Downham Market Youth Club, to use the Downham Market minibuses, and to have free loan of Youth Club equipment such as computer games and camping equipment.

WELNEY A HUNDRED YEARS AGO

As we look forward to celebrating the 150th anniversary of the Church and School in Welney, Peter Johansen and Charles Bastock thought we might be interested in this account of Welney in 1890 printed in Whytes Norfolk Directory. It was given to them by Don Jackson, who farmed at Suspension Bridge and was a former Chairman of the Marshall Charity.

"Welney is a village and extensive parish in the cultivated fens of the Great Bedford Level. Like Upwell and Outwell, it lies partly in the Isle of Ely and county of Cambridge and partly in Norfolk, the counties being divided by the Welney or Croft river, which runs through the village. It had 1,026 inhabitants in 1881 (527 in Norfolk and 499 in Cambs), the acreage is 3,527 in Norfolk, rateable value £5,580; and 1,760 in Cambs, rateable value £3,368. The principal landowners are Messrs. F R Beart, W R Beart, Morley Beart, William Little and James Failes.

A little above the village the River Croft is crossed by those broad drains called the Old and New Bedford rivers, which open a direct navigation to the Ouse at Denver sluice. The New Bedford commonly known as the Hundred-foot river, is spanned by a handsome suspension bridge of great height built by the late Rev. W. Townley at his own expense in 1826 from a design of Captain Brown.

In 1848 the old church was taken down and a new one erected. The new Church, dedicated to St. Mary the Virgin, is a neat building of ragstone, with white stone dressing in the Early English style, and consists of chancel and nave with a turret over the chauncel arch, containing two bells. It is seated for 420 and has a handsome stained-glass east window. The present rector is the Rev Edward Wilford, M.A. J.P. He has a tithe rent-charge of £1,2458.18s 2d and 13 acres of glebe. A new rectoryhouse in the Elizabethan style, was built in 1864.

The Church of England old School at which the children of the poor receive a free education, was erected at the same time as the new church, and is attended by 120 children.

The Hundred-foot Bank Church of England School, commonly called the Mission School was built in 1874. At this school the children of the poor likewise

receive a free education and is attended by 73 children. Both these schools were built by Marshall's Charity.

The parish contains the following chapels: A PRIMITIVE METHODIST CHAPEL, near Suspension Bridge, erected in 1872 at a cost of £175, it contains 172 sittings. There is also a small PRIMITIVE METHODIST CHAPEL near the old Bedford Bank, erected in 1839. ZION CHAPEL (Calvanistic Baptist) was erected in 1873 at a cost of £270; it contains 120 sittings.

The funds of Marshall's Charity are derived from lands left by William Marshall, Esq. who in 1661 bequeathed 466 acres of fen land in a place called the Wield, the proceeds of which were to be applied as follow: 'One-third for repairing the church and the bridge leading to it; one-third for relieving poor widows and apprenticing poor children; and the other third for repairing the highways of Welney'

The estate, which formerly realized only £70 a year, has now so increased in value as to bring in a net income of about £500 a year. This income being found more than necessary for the objects named by the donor, a new scheme was approved by the Court of Chancery in 1819 for the future application of the net rents and profits, by which one-third part is applied annually for relieving poor widows and apprenticing poor children, and two thirds are applied in repairing the church, bridge, and highways and in supporting the schools.

In the same year as the church and old school were built, the charity had almshouses erected for poor widows, who, in addition to living rent free, are allowed 3s 6d per week.

POST, MONEY ORDER and TELEGRAPH OFFICE and SAVINGS BANK at Mr. George Stoke's. Letters arrive by mail cart at 6.5 a.m. and are despatched at 6.15pm via Wisbech. "



The original Suspension Bridge - Road still flooded!

A VILLAGE CELEBRATION

At the end of June, Welney celebrates the 150th anniversary of the building of the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, of the William Marshal Primary School and of the almshouses all built in 1848 from the income bequeathed to the village in the will of William Marshall in 1661

William Marshal was a London lawyer engaged in contracts for the great draining of the Fens in the mid 17th century. He took sick - possibly from native malaria, and was kindly cared for by the villagers of Welney as he lay in the Lamb and Flag. He rewarded them with a gift of land in his Will. For the next 300 hundred years Welney has benefited greatly from this Christian man's gratitude.

We celebrate in June particularly that his generosity built our Church, our School and our Almshouses. We might reflect whether we would have all three in the 1990's if his money, now reflecting an income of £18,000 a year, did not continue to subsidise them all. It is almost like having had our own village lottery money given to us without strings 300 years ago!



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THE JUNE CELEBRATIONS

Friday 12th June

Cheese and Wine Evening: 7.30pm
at the School for past pupils and staff
Tickets available from the School

Saturday 13th June

Exhibition in the School: 2.00-5.00pm
Old Photographs, artifacts and all things to do with the life of the School.
Refreshments will be available.
GILLIAN SHEPHARD M.P. will be attending at 2.30pm to unveil a new School Name Board on the front of the School building

Sunday 14th June

All Age Family Worship in Church
11.0am.

Wednesday 17th June

Concert in Church by the schoolchildren.
7.00pm

Thursday 18th June

Victorian Day in School
Hopefully all the children and staff will dress in Victorian Costume for the day.

Friday/Saturday 19th 20th June.

Flower Festival and Exhibition in the Church.

Sunday 21st June

Songs of Praise in the Church
3.00pm

It is hoped that Bishop Stephen will attend
There are plans for a banner and decorations and flowers in Main Street, linking the School and the Church and the Almshouses to highlight the week of celebration.

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CHURCH NEWS

The Parish Church was once again beautifully decorated for the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ on Easter Sunday.

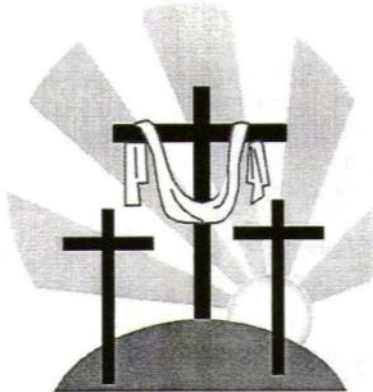
At our service of All Age Holy Communion, we celebrated the joy and wonder of the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the promise of new life through and in Him. We also had the privilege of celebrating and sharing with the family of Holly Revett as she was baptised on this very special day of the Christian year.

We looked at the Easter story through the eyes of various ancestral spiders from their many vantage points through from Maundy Thursday to Easter Sunday evening when Jesus appeared to his disciples - these spiders are everywhere and it's surprising what they notice and pass on through the years!

I have often puzzled over the fact that even those who profess no faith at all in Almighty God know, and often sing, the carols that abound over the Christmas period. The whole country and many others celebrate in some way or other the fact that God became man in the form of Jesus and was born at Bethlehem.

Yet, and here is the puzzle, so few celebrate the fact that this same Jesus was crucified, died, was buried and actually was raised again to life. It may be, of course, that Christmas is a much easier celebration. There is the baby, snug and warm in a cattle trough; his mum and his earthly dad looking on in wondrous rapture; the shepherds and wise men paying homage - a pretty picture and easy to handle if we don't wish to think about it too deeply. Easter, on the other hand, is not so pretty. Right from the outset there is pain - the pain of foreseen betrayal and denial and on both counts this comes from friends one held dear. The pain of an unfair trial at the hands of those swayed by forces other than the cause of honest justice. Then there is the pain of death by crucifixion. No, Easter is certainly not a cosy situation to handle if we are to take it seriously.

We may wonder, we may have some reservations but we joyfully acknowledge that the tomb was empty and that God has victory over death.



There is a hope, a tremendous hope for the future of this world in which we live and Easter is the promise of that hope and the certainty that Christians all over the world celebrate and proclaim. The tomb was and is empty, this tells us

that there is no full stop, no final curtain in the life story of Jesus Christ - He is forever and for everyone who will allow themselves to turn their lives around and trust and believe in Him.

The arguments about the empty tomb will continue but the Christian Church joyfully acknowledges the reality that the 'Word who became flesh and made His home among us' has been raised to glory as promised, and on Easter Day Christians all over the world celebrate this truth and sing

their praises to the Risen Christ.

Sheila Tooke, Rector

CHURCH SERVICES

April		
26th	9.30am	Morning Prayer
May		
3rd	9.30am	Morning Prayer
10th	11.00am	All Age Worship
17th	9.30am.	Holy Communion
24th	9.30am.	Morning Prayer
31st	11.00am	Pentecost United Service: MANEA
June		
7th	9.30am	Holy Communion
14th	11.00am.	All Age Worship

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PARISH HALL NEWS

At the AGM on 3rd March, Rosi Beckford, Chairman of the Parish Hall Committee, reported a lively year including a successful Water Gala and Dance, two charity auctions run by The Cherry Tree, a Village Garden Walk in July and continuing interest in the Mini-Market, started last Spring.

David Bonner's report as Treasurer, (read in his absence in Canada) revealed an exceptional year for fund-raising which had turned around the rather desperate financial situation a year ago. Despite payment of £300 for new electricity meters following the change in size of the 50p coin, and several hundred pounds for essential repairs, finances were healthy, but it must be borne in mind that simply keeping the Hall open, licensed and insured for any event costs £1,800 a year.

Jane and Bob Frusher and Pat Rix resigned from the Committee, although Pat generously agreed to continue opening the Hall for doctors' surgeries and calling the Bingo, and to help in any way she could.

The outgoing Committee was re-elected with Marlen Moss-Eccardt taking over as Vice-Chairman.

There are now **two vacancies** on the Committee and anyone willing to help in promoting events and doing the work to keep the Hall open for the Village would be warmly welcomed.

NEXT MINI-MARKET

Saturday 2nd May 10.00-12.00

Well into Spring, now so come with whatever you have to sell - plants, produce, bric a brac, cakes, anything. Or come to buy a bargain, or just to look and have a cup of coffee and have a sociable gossip.

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CHARLIE WON 33 to 1 AT SHEFFIELD



Well, let's be formal on this momentous win. This is **Fenland Hawk**, a Welney greyhound, with his trainer **Gerry James** and his kennel hand **Jennifer James**. He won against all odds, including the local dog which was 5 to 4 at Sheffield in the **Super Track Competition** last year.

This was the peak, so far, in Gerry's new life as a greyhound trainer. He had always been interested in greyhounds and when he retired, five years ago, he decided to concentrate on training and racing greyhounds.

The **Super Track Competition** covered the whole county. Gerry won our local competition which covered Mildenhall, Swaffham and Great Yarmouth. He then went on to the Central England round and won at Nottingham. Then it was Sheffield and Charlie against the best dogs in the country. Our Welney dog led from the start against the local hero who was in the betting stakes 5 to 4. I wish you could see the video of the race, Charlie leads from the start and just before the finish, when the local dog comes up beside him, he turns his head, looks



at the competition, puts on an extra spurt and wins by three quarters of a length.

In the five years that Gerry has been training and racing his dogs from Welney, mostly at Mildenhall, he has won more than fifty trophies, and he put them out in his garden for us to see

Gerry and Jennifer's life now revolve around the eleven greyhounds they have. Only a few of those are racing dogs, most are dogs in retirement whose racing days are over, because Gerry and Jennifer care for their dogs throughout their lives.

When Gerry retired, he had an interest in greyhounds and Jennifer bought him the video and book illustrating George Curtis methods of training, and he has followed those methods for the five years.

Gerry says that means there are no short cuts, the dogs have the best of food and lots of attention.

The day starts at 7.00am when the dogs are let out for half an hour into a fenced gallop. Then they come back for breakfast which includes a pint of milk each and vitamins.

Then Gerry has his own breakfast - provided of course by Jennifer. Later on in the morning, the racing dogs have to be walked. Gerry reckons about six miles there and back. Gerry says all the dogs are individuals, some like to walk the six miles, some tug at the lead, some want to go further.

Then later on in the afternoon the dogs have their main meal and so it goes on.....

A HUSKY TAILPIECE

In our first proper edition we featured John Carter and Ann Lunn of Wisbech Road, who spend most of their spare time preparing for and participating in sled dog racing all over the Country.

The 1997/98 season was particularly successful for John, who won the British Championship in both the 6-dog and 4-dog classes; a feat never previously achieved.

John's Grand Prix style Championship results were stunning and included 8 first places and four second places in just fourteen races. (the other results were a 3rd and a 4th place)

WELL DONE JOHN & ANN



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Does your dog need to go?

There are plenty of dog lovers in our village and of course that means there could be quite a lot of dog poo.

Dog muck is now recognised as a significant cause of blindness in children because there is a parasitic creature in the muck which can get on children's shoes then onto their hands when they take their shoes off. If this happens and the children rub their eyes or touch their mouths then the parasite can be transferred to the child and blindness can result.

Even if this doesn't happen, there are few things so unpleasant as treading in dog poo and walking it into your house.

If you own a dog then consider this - if you don't like the idea of dog poo on your own garden where you might tread in it then you certainly shouldn't leave it on the highway for others to tread in it.

Take a plastic bag with you then you can pick up the offending mess and take it home for disposal - Please!



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PLAYBUS

The Playbus is now doing well after a difficult winter; the new vehicle had been beset with a number of problems, mainly to do with the heating system. Fortunately, due to very mild weather in February and March, the bus has been able to appear on most Mondays recently. The heating system will be undergoing remedial work over the Easter break so hopefully we will have a four-season bus from now on!

On a positive note, the number of people using the playbus in Welney has increased in the last few months. There are a number of families with young children who have recently moved into the area, and both the Mums and their children are now enjoying the benefits of this invaluable resource. One familiar face has disappeared however; play leader Dawn, who has been with the playbus for three years, has now moved on and is working as an Occupational Therapy Helper. Dawn's tireless enthusiasm will be much missed. Her post has recently been advertised and meanwhile the two remaining staff, Louise and Julie, are holding the fort.

FRIENDSHIP CLUB

The Club President Cissie Bedford was admitted to hospital in March for a long-awaited hip replacement operation so the meeting on 24th March was chaired by Vice-President Madge Singleterry. As well as the afternoon meeting on April the 7th, a trip was made to the Corn Exchange in Kings Lynn in the evening to see a stage show put on by the Bettina Dance School.

Please note that all afternoon meetings from April onwards will be starting at 2-00pm.

The schedule of coach outings for the summer has now been drawn up. There will be a visit to the Rural Life Museum at Gressenhall on 19th May, with a lunch stop at East Dereham. The June trip is a seaside day out to Skegness on the 16th, and on 14th July is - a mystery tour! Watch this space for details of the late summer and autumn outings.

Harold's Bloomers are showing

We reported last issue on all the wonderful bulbs that Harold Carter has planted throughout the Village. You can see from these photographs what a wonderful display this gives.



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HOMEWATCH

As no-one has yet come forward to take on the role of village coordinator there are no Homewatch activities taking place at present. However, we are still here, in our own quiet way!

Most of the local coordinators are on the Ringmaster systems of both Norfolk and Cambridgeshire so that we get information on some local criminal activities - anything relevant enough or worrying enough will always be reported to the village via notices in the shop and the pubs.

It is intended to hold another meeting of coordinators in the near future to further discuss the role of Welney's Homewatch, with the specific goal of ensuring the long-term survival of the group; recent criminal activities in the village show only too clearly the need to continue, and to back up the local police in any way we can.

The current trend for our part of Norfolk is that the bulk of crimes are those relating to vehicles or to criminal damage. More specific to the village however has been the recent spate of burglaries, both of houses and outbuildings. During March and the first part of April there have been a number of attempted break-ins and actual burglaries at houses in March Road, Wisbech Road, Main Street, and Tipps End.

In at least one of these the house owners were away on a long weekend break, and it is possible that the house was watched and seen to be unoccupied. The advice as always is; never be complacent about the security of your property even if you are going to be out for only a few hours, and always try to let someone you can trust know if you are planning to be away overnight.

There have also been at least two cases of break-ins at sheds or garages; the police warn that there is often a seasonal trend in springtime of thefts of garden equipment, and that it is important to check how secure your outbuildings are. It is also a very good idea to mark valuable garden tools with your postcode using UV pens or gloss paint. The pens can be obtained from me - Karen Fleming - and I also have a number of bicycle marking kits available at £1-50 each.

It seems that we are never going to be free of the travelling con-men! There has been yet another warning from the police, this time concerning two men who are offering to tarmac peoples' driveways. They begin by quoting a low price and then charge a much-inflated figure

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when the work is done, the work also being of very poor quality. The two men wear luminous yellow jackets and are driving a white Mercedes car. Any sightings of these men should be reported to the police.

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6 Chicken Breasts Skinless/Bonesles - £12.75

6 Gammon Steaks 8oz - £12.25

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HERE TO STAY

We spent many years in the Armed Services and lived in places exotic (Hong Kong, Kenya, Cyprus) and places less exotic (Aldershot, Chatham). We were in the enviable position of being able to choose where we lived when our service life was finished. We both had very "transferable skills" as far as future employment was concerned so we had the whole of Great Britain, Europe and even the Far East to choose from.

So why Welney, you may ask? Well - we had dear friends in Ely who we visited frequently, and we quickly came to love our weekends in such a sky-filled environment. The seasons were so clearly defined by the sky - great grey expanses in winter, rainwashed with skudding clouds - it looked cold and made us happy to return to the fireside after exhilarating walks. And the huge bluer than blue canopy through the summer months. One early summer evening, whilst driving close to the Hundred Foot Bank, we saw a barn owl flying parallel to the road. It was so very beautiful that we decided then that we would look for a house in this locale.

This was before we knew about the Washes and the Wildfowl Trust. We went to view a house at Suspension Bridge in a freezing and very wet February and found the house flooded out because frozen pipes had thawed. We were so disappointed and decided to drive into the Village to see if there was anything else for sale and saw for the first time the flooded washes. It was magnificent, even on that grey and bitterly cold afternoon. The great volume of water - it looked like a huge inland sea - even though the Wash Road was only a foot under water. So many birds - swans, herons, ducks, and little black things we didn't know the name of. Despite the flooded house we absolutely knew we wanted to live here.

We had to wait a while before another house went on the market but when it did we bought it. We now look from our upstairs windows over the Washes, see the barn owl, see and hear the swans and experience those stupendous skies every single day. OK, so we have a significant drive to work each day, and yes, we do swear sometimes when we can't get over to Wendy's, and we are definitely peeved when another swan hits the power lines and the electricity goes off. But the price is well worth paying and we are here to stay.

Richard and Carol Green - Old Crown House



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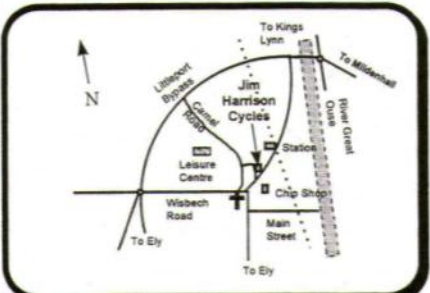



WELCOME TO WELNEY

Springtime is popularly thought to be the time when most people move home. However, that certainly hasn't been the case in Welney so far this year, because I'm only aware of one recent change of household.

Just before Easter Barry and Joan Lewis moved into No 17 Chestnut Avenue from Kings Lynn with their Labrador cross, Goldie. Joan, who likes knitting and crocheting, having spent most of her life in the country, was keen to get out of the town. Welney would seem to be as good a place as any, since she has friends and relatives in Downham Market, Lakes End and Christchurch. With an already empty property in Chestnut Avenue and another soon to be vacated, there should be at least two newcomers to welcome to Welney in the next edition. If, in the meantime I have missed anyone, humble apologies and do get in touch so that I can make amends in June.

Jim Harrison (Cycles)



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WELNEY PLAYING FIELD AND PAVILION

From: The Parish Council

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 Mr. Adrian Rust of The Cherry Tree, who has volunteered to act as Caretaker until such time as a new Committee is formed.

During discussion at an open meeting called by the Parish Council on 15th January, it was felt that more emphasis should be given to providing indoor and outdoor activities, rather than just team sports. We would like to hear from anyone who is prepared to be involved in forming a new committee. You do not need to have any professional qualifications, just enthusiasm.

Parish Council do need to know what sort of facilities you would like to have available at the playing field and inside the pavilion. You do not necessarily have to be active or youthful. What is needed is a good cross section of ages.

Please show your support by completing and returning the Questionnaire on the reverse of this page and send it to the Parish Clerk or leave it with Wendy Redman at the Post Office no later than 30th April.

During May the Parish Council will analyse the results of this Questionnaire and call an Open Meeting to appoint the new Playing Field Committee

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(/Ideas: 5 or 7-aside football; netball / basket ball, cricket (could just be net practice), boule, practising cross country running using Hum Drive, table tennis, indoor mat bowls, snooker, billiards, chess, board games, keep fit classes for all ages)

✓We think it is important for recreational facilities to be available at the Welnev Playing Field or in the Pavilion

YES / NO

If the answer to the previous question was "Yes" please enter your phone number here

/We do not have time to help with the running of the Playing Field and Pavilion but would be interested in using the facilities YES / NO

Please cut along dotted line and return by 9th May 1998 to: Mrs Pat Copeman, Parish Clerk, 1 Chestnut Avenue, Welney, Wisbech, Cambs. PE14 9RG, or leave with Mrs Wendy Redman at the Post Office.