

Issue 54

WELNEY NEWS

FEBRUARY—MARCH 2007

30p



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Hello Everyone

Welcome to the new edition of your Welney News.

Over the past few weeks we have been working hard to put together our 'Flood Special' and I am very pleased that it has all come together. (Pages 11-15)

Our aim with this issue was to get comment from three of the main players, namely the EA, WWT & RSPB and hope that their articles would go some way to explaining the recent prolonged flooding of the A1101.

It would be interesting to follow this up in the next edition and keep pressure on those responsible all year round rather than just this time of year, so if you have something to say regarding the situation why not drop me a line.....

Lastly I would like to thank Dave Gillett, Leigh Marshall and Jon Reeves for their articles, much appreciated and I hope they are just the beginning of a constructive debate!

Until next time.....

Rachel

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Welcome to Welney

Well here we are after a long and determined fight. We first saw Mill Farm bungalow on April 14th last year and immediately fell in love with the house and the village.

We are the Ash family.

Anthony, a keen falconer and part of the British Falconry club, is a builder by trade working in the Cambridge area.

Polly, a keen horse woman and for now a stay at home mum, so ladies pop round for a cup of tea!

Ellouise our 19 year old daughter, Beauty Therapist by trade is busy learning to drive and adapting to village life. Harley the rock of the family our 15 year old son takes it all in his stride and is our chief woodcutter and handy-man.

Philip our top fisherman, is a carpenter by trade and new member to the family as Elle's fiance.

Last but not least, our much loved pets, Promise our pony and Wishbone our Jack Russell.

So that's us really.

Very pleased to be here and looking forward to getting to know you all.

Ash Family

Well, not exactly in the village, but alongside Hundred Foot Bank, one and a half miles past the Welney Wetland and Wildfowl Trust. Scientist Dr. Vija (pronounced VEE-ya) Pratley and her husband Geoffrey, well known concert pianist and piano teacher, have knocked down the old wrecked building known as Wryneck Mill and built a new house.

They have been married nearly twenty years, and arrived last September from Bambers Green near Stanstead Airport. Their musical daughter Stephanie is a student of recorders and saxophone at Trinity College of Music in Greenwich where Geoffrey is a vocal coach. He was a professor at the Royal Academy of Music for forty years and is a music examiner and adjudicator.

They are looking forward to enjoying the study of bird life at Welney, but would also be very pleased to welcome students of music, and anyone requiring assistance or advice on gardening. Their number is 01366 377484.

DEADLINE FOR NEXT TIME IS MARCH 17TH

**All items gratefully received
WN team contact details on page 23**

Santa comes to town

For the second year in a row Santa stopped his Christmas preparations long enough to tour around Welney and meet a throng of admirers.

Santa's sleigh toured the streets and volunteers raced around shaking buckets at any householder who opened their door, all this was done by the Round Table in aid of the Childrens Wish Charity. The evening was a success and thanks to generous householders and sponsorship from local businesses over £200 was raised.



Generous Bequests

The Parish Clerk was pleased to be able to report to the last meeting that two letters (one addressed to the Parish Hall and one to the Playing Field) had been received from a firm of Solicitors in Chatteris.

Each letter contained a cheque for £300.00 from the Estate of the late Mrs. Ethel Grace Sweet. The cheques have been paid into the appropriate accounts and a letter expressing grateful thanks has been sent.

This was a wonderful surprise for the Hall and the Playing Field, and the money will be used for the upkeep of the premises, for the benefit of the village.

Welney Parish Council.

Poppy Appeal

The amount of money collected for the Poppy Appeal in this area has surpassed the previous year's amount by more than £200. The area covers Tipps End, Welney, Lakes End and Suspension Bridge with some of the collection points including Welney School, Lamb and Flag, W.W.T. and the Post Office.

The final figure comes to £699.96. so congratulations to all involved.

Graduation Success

Congratulations to Ben Carter who graduated from Huddersfield University in November 2006 with a BSC (honours) degree in Transport and Logistics Management.



Ben is a former pupil of William Marshall School Welney, and Downham Market High School and his proud parents are Doug and Jane Carter of Welney. He is now employed by Turners of Soham as a Traffic Co-ordinator.

Christmas carols around the tree

Welney rang with the songs of the season when a group of hardy villagers gathered to sing carols around a big Christmas tree in the church yard in late December '06.

This was the swansong of the EVENTS R US fundraising group, and Julie Perkins-Jones (who purchased the tree, thank-you) approached the PCC of St. Mary's with the idea, and to ask permission for the tree to be put in the church grounds as a centrepiece for the village get-together.

It proved to be a chilly evening, but was warmed by the conviviality of the carollers, and the steaming mulled wine and coffee that followed the singing. Mince pies and cakes were munched while everyone thawed out inside the church, chatting happily. It was a great success, with a good number of people braving the cold and foggy night to come out and join us. We hope that it was just the first of many years of village carol occasions.

The PCC of St. Mary's would like to thank all the people who have so kindly supported us over 2006 and wish everyone everywhere a peaceful and happy New Year.

With best regards from the PCC, Welney.

Advice that makes the difference: Welney is fortunate to have a regular Citizens Advice clinic in our parish hall; however, as it seems no-one in our village needs any advice the service is being re-considered and will end shortly if we don't need it.

If you have a pressing issue that you can't quite get your head around why not pop along to the Parish Hall and see what the CAB can do for you. Their advice is free, impartial, independent and confidential.

The CAB comes to Welney on the 1st and 3rd Monday of each month at the Parish Hall. 10 - 11.30am.



Old Welney

The Welney Archive and Social History Group are still keen to view your old photos of days gone by. You may well say to yourself that they wouldn't be interested in the contents of your old shoe box of memories – yes they would!

Or they would take away your precious personal memoirs and you wouldn't see them again – yes you would!

Or when they go through that scanner thing they may heat up and spoil – no they wouldn't!

We would treat your personal items with care and respect. Please have a good look in that bottom drawer and share your memories with the rest of Welney.

A contact number is 01354 610226

The WN editor has kindly donated space to us so that we can again show you some of our favourites to date.

This time we feature local land girls and labourers.

(Photographs courtesy of: Amy Markham O.B.E. and Jennifer Sindall).

W.A.S.H GROUP



Bett Hubbard,
Mrs. Bates,
Lil Bedford

Rosie Tuck,
Phyllis May Rolfe,
Edith Walker



Blanche Markham,
Elsie Gordon,
Miss Trower,
Hilda,
Grace Bedford



Working for
Headings farmers.
Just past The
Welney Hotel.

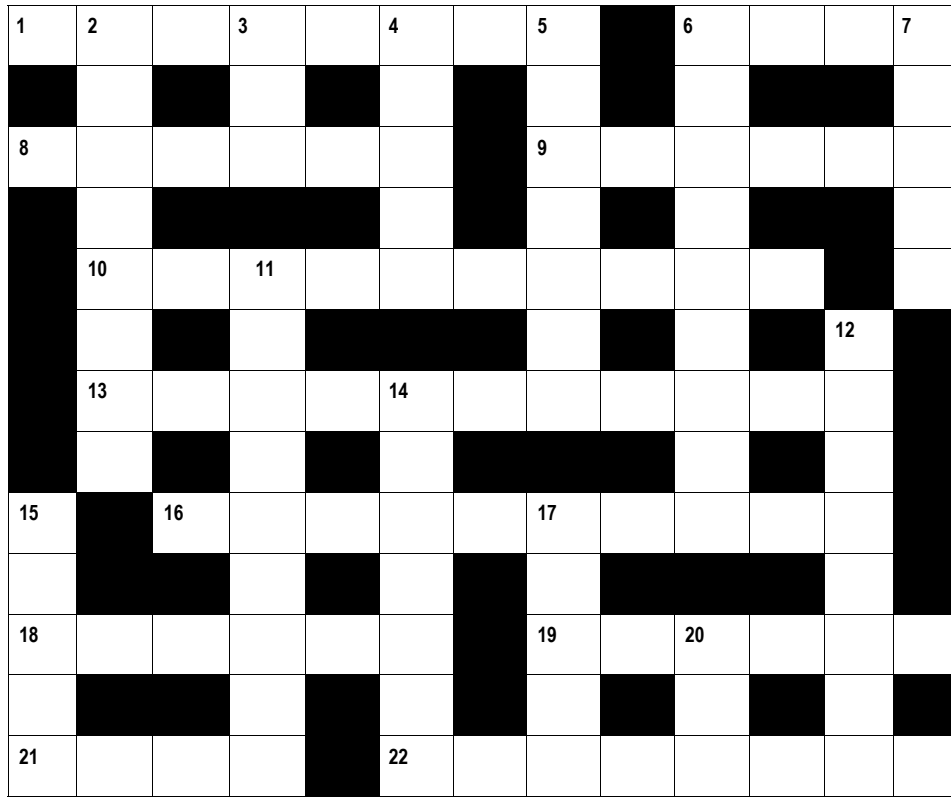
Bet Wakefield,
Phyllis Edwards,
Phyllis May Rolfe



Can you help
with the names
for these
gentlemen?

Or if any of the
above names
are wrong, then
please let us
know.

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD COMPETITION BY MARK BROWN



Please send your completed crossword to the editor at the address on page 23.



All correct entries will be entered into our prize draw.

The winner, drawn at random, will win a bottle of wine. If you do not wish to cut up your copy of the Welney News please write your answers, along with your name and telephone number, on a sheet of paper for inclusion in the draw.

(Closing date: March 6th)

GOOD LUCK!

Across

- 1 Various kinds stored as miscellaneous (8)
- 6 See 15 down
- 8 Seeking better view, dancer stretched neck (6)
- 9 Is bail the best defence the accused can provide? (6)
- 10 Sharing similar feelings with radio station regarding location (10)
- 13/3d Freedom of choice sees us all get what we want (4,2,5,3)
- 16 Risk a soaking and maybe even lose odd car by ignoring local sign (4,6)
- 18 Establishment for those who enjoy their game and chips? You bet! (6)
- 19 Bill responsible for seeing 20 down is maintained (6)
- 21 Work hard for money and respect (4)
- 22 Plenty of good fibre in this grub (8)

Down

- 2 Headed south on all fours, leaving poorly-written note (8)
- 3 See 13 across
- 4 Highs and lows a result of being in thrall to the moon (5)
- 5 Pull curtain to reveal co-ordinated effort to track down wanted persons (7)
- 6 Blunt pencil is of absolutely no use (9)
- 7 Hoarse dog (5)
- 11 Nineteenth century Australian (9)
- 12 One who generates goods in the film industry? (8)
- 14 Being outside can be so boring (7)
- 15/6a Repeated series of events leading in one, car-free, direction (5,4)
- 17 Monkey found hiding in collar extension (5)
- 20 Natural or man-made, that's the rule (3)

Name:

Telephone number:

First name out of the hat last time and winner of the bottle of wine was:

Mike Jones

SOLUTION TO LAST EDITION'S X-WORD

c	h	r	i	s	t	m	a	s		f	o	c	u	s
r		e		m		i		a		i		o		p
a	t	t	r	a	c	t		p	e	t	u	n	i	a
c		i		r		e				t		d		r
k	a	r	a	t	e			a	n	t	i	q	u	e
e		e			g			l			n		c	e
r	e	d	s	k	y	a	t	n	i	g	h	t		
s			k		p		e		d		a			t
		v	i	c	t	o	r	m	e	l	d	r	e	w
p		a		h			e		a			e		i
h	a	m	m	e	r	e	d		l	a	t	e	s	t
o		p		d				m		n		l		c
b	u	i	l	d	e	r		e	n	g	l	i	s	h
i		r		a		a		s		e		n		e
c	l	e	a	r			p	a	s	s	e	n	g	e

WORDSEARCH

D	E	T	N	H	P	N	S	T	W	R	C
R	F	C	A	I	A	O	V	F	O	L	A
A	D	R	E	D	G	I	N	G	A	E	S
N	G	W	S	I	L	T	Y	D	N	W	T
C	E	M	T	V	N	A	I	L	S	A	D
S	R	A	O	E	U	T	A	D	K	T	S
T	I	A	R	R	D	L	O	U	N	E	L
O	V	F	M	S	E	I	V	E	H	R	U
B	E	L	S	I	G	S	M	S	U	L	I
D	R	G	P	O	M	N	A	E	Y	E	C
U	L	F	U	N	O	W	I	N	D	V	E
I	Y	O	W	R	E	A	S	T	R	E	M
F	E	D	I	S	R	N	F	D	I	L	B
A	L	V	U	T	A	B	I	E	M	S	G
R	N	O	N	B	R	P	S	A	K	F	T
E	E	R	O	M	L	E	W		R	O	L
O	W	F	I	D	R	A	I	N	A	G	E

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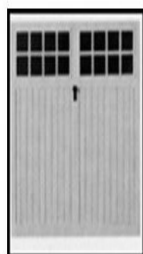
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How many can you find:

environment, flood, drainage, ouse washes, water levels,
storms, rain, wind, siltation, river, dredging, sluice, tidal,
diversion, welmore.

EASY SUDOKU

	7		4					8
	3			6			5	2
	9		1			6		
	1		7		9	4		
2			8					3
		5			2		7	
		4			3		1	
6	5			7			8	
3					4		6	



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Farming Diary

Seeing our Welney News Editor gazing in awe at a shed full of freshly harvested Maris Piper potatoes made me suddenly realise that many of the things that I, and my farming neighbours, take for granted might be of interest to some of our village neighbours. So, where should I start? Well, after calling the column 'Farming Diary' it is probably best to talk about what is happening down on the farm at this time of year and what happens to the crops once they have left the field.

With crops harvested and fields either drilled with wheat or ploughed for the winter it can be a lonely place at this time of year. However much time is spent on crop planning, form filling, attending the many courses on offer to improve our knowledge base, or simply selling some of the crops currently stored in the barns.

Some of the potatoes grown on this farm are sold on contract to McCain, who process them into oven ready chips, fast food chips and other ready-to-use products. Just the week before Christmas McCain asked if the contracted potatoes scheduled to be delivered in January could be brought forward, which we decided to do, as costs associated with storage (such as sprout suppressant to stop growth in store) plus the cost of running electric fans to maintain a store temperature of 10 degrees centigrade would not be required. Maintaining a crop store temperature of around 10 degrees preserves both the fry quality and colour of the chip, which is important to McCain, as if the crop is chilled or stored at a lower temperature the starch in the potatoes may turn to sugars meaning the fry colour will be much darker and the chip sweeter, resulting in a rejection from the factory. The potatoes are graded over a grader, which removes those potatoes below 45mm, while any green, rotten or damaged potatoes are removed by hand in order to produce a good sample. The bulk lorries hold around 27 to 29 tons

and we do periodic spot-checks on sizing by collecting 10 kilos of potatoes from the grading line and counting them. Providing there is a count of 65 potatoes or lower per 10kg the factory will accept them as the sizing will be correct; anything higher means the potatoes will be too small and the load will be rejected, leaving the farmer having to pay the £12.00 or £14.00 haulage cost per ton to have them returned, plus the cost of regrading, so the emphasis is on doing a good job the first time.

Loads are booked into a scheduled time slot to be at the Whittlesey factory, which operates 24 hours a day, and during transit the potatoes are frost-protected, which is important to maintain quality. Once the load arrives samples are taken and washed; quality, size and fry colour are all checked, and any internal problems such as rust-spot will be addressed.

As a result of the extremely hot weather experienced during last summer many potatoes stopped growing, only resuming their growth when the rain returned. This resulted in many spuds producing mis-shapes as smaller potatoes sprouted from the originals. These secondary growths have caused many difficulties with fry quality, which can vary throughout the potato. Many wrists have become sore by the repeated breaking off of these 'dollies' as we call them. The next test of quality is the proportion of dry matter in the potato, which must be between 19% and 23%. [The remainder of the potato is moisture]. If they are below 19% dry matter they will produce soggy chips; above 23% and the chips will be too crispy, with a greater chance of damage, (black marks etc). Once the potatoes are accepted they are graded into various sizes for the various end products. They are then washed to remove any soil, before being batch steamed for a few seconds. This process briefly cooks the outer layer enabling the skins to be removed by pressure washing.

A further grading to check for any defective spuds is then followed by the potatoes being sent down water-filled tubes, which have cross-hatching of knives inside, much like a domestic chipper. The power of the water forces the potato through this chipper and the chip is formed. The chips, now in large numbers on wide conveyors, pass faster than the eye can see through a magic eye, which detects any marked or blemished chips, and a blast of compressed air removes the unwanted chip(s). To see this in operation is unbelievable, especially at the speeds the chips are racing by. The chips are then coated with any necessary oils/bastes before the final packing, be it as oven ready chips, waffles etc. They are then deep frozen before final distribution.

So next time you tuck into a portion of hot, tasty chips spare a thought for the effort that goes in to bring a quality product to your table.

Competition

The approximate price to the farmer for 1 ton of potatoes on a McCain January contract is around £88 per ton. A 907 gram bag of McCain oven ready chips costs £1. A free bag of Pates Tates goes to the person that calculates the price of 1 ton of McCain oven ready chips. Send your answers to the editor and in the event of more than one correct answer there will be a draw for the winner. If you have any spud-related questions please write to the editor and we will try and answer next time.

Ken Goodger



W.I.

Members at the December meeting were joined by Mrs Skidmore from March who gave a very interesting talk on a book she has written under the pen name of Celia Lucas. The book tells the true story of Isla Corfield and her 14 year old daughter Gillian who found themselves interned in the Santo Tomas prison for three and a half years when their evacuee ship was diverted to the Philippines. At first the camp was bearable but as the months progressed the Japanese soldiers made life very unpleasant for the internees. Isla had bought a lot of school exercise books and used these to create a record of life in the camp; some of this information was believed to have been used in the television programme Tenko. Thankfully despite the deprivations both Isla and her daughter survived captivity. Gillian never enjoyed robust health and died in her early 70s but her mother lived to the ripe old age of 90. It was a very moving story. Mrs. Skidmore also writes children's books based on her own pets which have proved very popular.

There were ten entries for the monthly competition which has reached the letter 'R'.

Mrs. Skidmore was judge and awarded the following points: Jean Newell 5 points, Amy Markham, Jennifer James, Blanche Markham and Vera Singleterry 4 points, Bettine Watson, Sheila Dore, Cissie Bedford, Carole Halls and Queenie Johnson 3 points.

Lucky raffle winners were Sheila Dore and Cissie Bedford.

The New Year started off with a social evening for the January meeting. There was much laughter and everyone enjoyed the games which were followed by a 'bring and share' supper.

Two members have gained the most points over the last year; both Jean Newell and Amy Markham gained 42 points out of a possible 50. They will each have the Winnie Smith Memorial Shield for six months. Winning the Runner Up Cup with 38 points was Jennifer James with Cissie Bedford coming 3rd with 36 points.

Queenie Johnson, Amy Markham, Blanche Markham and Jennifer James were winners in the draw and all members present paid the subscription for the coming year.

Adam Giles will be guest speaker for the February meeting when the competition has reached the letter S.

Enquiries to Amy Markham 01354 610340

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Applications are welcome from community and voluntary groups whose projects benefit their local community.

Groups need to demonstrate that local consultation has taken place and 25% match funding is required.

Types of projects that the fund has supported are:

- Play areas and equipment
- Village notice boards and signs
- Creating and improving wildlife areas
- Information / welcome packs for newcomers to your village
- Art exhibitions and family history groups

For more information and an application form please contact Pauline High at the Norfolk Rural Community Council on 01362 698216 or email Pauline@norfolkrc.org.uk



Flooding and the effects to WWT Welney

The Ouse Washes needs a shallow winter flood from October – March. This shallow water does not affect the road between Welney and Suspension bridge.

Shallow flooding on this site supports 13 nationally important and seven internationally important waterfowl. As the water levels deepens the numbers of dabbling ducks drop dramatically.

Water levels have been extremely high across the whole of the Ouse Washes since December. This has a detrimental impact on WWT Welney on both an ecological front and a financial one. In addition the visitors have not been able to experience the classic wildfowl and swan spectacle. If this spectacle is poor quality it may affect visiting numbers for years to come.

Our fortnightly wildfowl counts have shown that several of our internationally important wildfowl numbers are lower than usual. When the water levels are this high, flooding is across the whole area and therefore no food is available for the dabbling ducks.

Since the 4th December all six hides excluding the main observatory have been flooded. This has resulted in a loss of income due to lowering our admissions prices by sixteen percent per person. This may not seem to be a lot of money but the winter period is our busiest time for visitors and we have to be sustainable. It is really important that when people visit any WWT reserve they have a fantastic experience and leave with the knowledge that they have seen something really special. With the present water levels the swans are often not coming to feed in such great numbers as they are unable to reach the grain. Obviously this is affecting the visitor's experience and may influence our future reputation for delivering an unforgettable experience.

We can not control the weather but I hope the Environment Agency can solve this situation on the Ouse Washes and keep deep flooding to a minimum. Hopefully the present water levels will drop soon, particularly with spring around the corner. In spring the washes support large numbers of breeding waders. A small flood during May last year resulted in a 30% loss of ground nesting birds.

Leigh Marshall , Reserve manager



From Westminster to Welney

Christopher Fraser, our Member of Parliament is also getting involved in the discussions regarding the current prolonged flooding of the A1101.

In mid January he held an informal meeting with our Parish & Borough Councillors at the Lamb & Flag before walking up to see the flooded road for himself. (pictured below)

Mr Fraser is hoping to bring the matter before Parliament to see if any solutions can be found to ease the plight of Welney residents.

RB





OUSE WASHES

Background

The Ouse Washes are approximately 35km (22 miles) long and 0.8km (0.5 mile) wide providing about 2000 hectares (5000 acres) of land between the banks. The Dutch Engineer 'Sir Cornelius Vermyden' originally constructed them in the 1600's for the purpose of draining the fens. They are designed to store floodwater that would otherwise cause overtopping of riverbanks. Under current legalisation the Washes are a statutory flood storage reservoir under the Reservoir Act.



Over time the Washes have developed into an important conservation area and have local, national and international conservation status. It is also important from an agricultural aspect and is heavily grazed during the summer. This grazing is also important from a flood risk management aspect, as the Washes need managing to control vegetation and hence maintain effective transfer of floodwater.

How They Work

The water that floods onto the Washes comes from the Bedford Ouse Catchment. This includes all the rivers and tributaries that pass through Buckingham, Milton Keynes, Newport Pagnell, Bedford, St Neots, Huntingdon, etc. It does not take water from areas associated with Northampton, Cambridge, Ely, and Bury St Edmunds.

The Bedford Ouse drains an area of approximately 1400 hectares (3500 acres), most of this catchment is a clay area and there is very little ability for rainfall to percolate into the ground, hence rainfall run-off can be very rapid. Rainfall falling in the Buckingham area will take approximately 4 days to travel to Earith, Milton Keynes 3 days, etc. Therefore one day's heavy rainfall across the whole of the Bedford Ouse catchment can result in 4 consecutive days of high flows at Earith.

Water flows into the Washes via Earith Sluices. These sluices are fully automatic and open gradually in increments trying to maintain an upstream level. There are two different upstream retention levels, one for the summer and one for the winter. The summer level is higher than the winter level and reduces flooding of the Washes during the summer. The levels at which they operate are set through an Act of Parliament and cannot be overridden unless there are extenuating circumstances.

Water is evacuated off the Washes through Welmore Sluice, 2.7 km upstream of Salters Lode / Denver. This sluice was reconstructed in September 1999 because the old sluice had reached the end of its design life and was showing signs of mechanical and structural deterioration. The new sluice consists of three sets of large gates (approx. 7 metres wide) and is 50% larger than the old sluice. Each gate set has one set of 'V' doors (similar to boat locks) and one vertical sluice gate. When there is no water on the Washes the vertical gates are fully closed. When there is a need to discharge water from the Washes the vertical gates are raised and the 'V' doors control the discharge. The 'V' doors can only open when the level in the Tidal River is lower than the level on the Washes. As the tide falls the 'V' doors open but when the tide rises the pressure of the tide closes the doors.

To simplify the explanation of the Washes, it is similar to a bath. The taps at Earith continuously run filling up the bath, and the plug at Welmore is periodically pulled out to empty the bath. Depending on how much the taps are turned on and how often the plug is pulled out determines how much the bath fills up.

The ability of Welmore Sluice to discharge water is totally dependent upon the low tide level in the Tidal River. If the low tide level does not fall below the level of the Washes then Welmore Sluice cannot physically discharge. Therefore the condition of the Tidal River is absolutely crucial for the effective evacuation of floodwater off the Washes.

In addition to the sluice gates at Welmore there are two permanent drainage pumps built into the structure and provision for additional temporary pumps. These are used to evacuate flood water off the Washes in the Spring when gravity discharge has ceased. The pumps are not designed to evacuate winter flood water off the Washes.

The rate of water flowing onto the Washes and the rate of discharge from the Washes are totally automatic, unless there are operational or technical issues that determine otherwise.

The Current Situation

The siltation of the Tidal River and hence its ability to discharge water is dependent upon natural river flows. The current higher bed levels are a direct result of a very dry last winter / summer and hence low flows. Whilst bed levels are high at the moment they are only slightly above those that were experienced in 1996/7 after another prolonged drought period. In 1998 we had the Easter Floods and the Ouse Washes were flooded to their highest levels for many years, but we were able to achieve effective discharge into the Tidal River. As a result of those floodwaters and sustained flood flows through Welmore and down the Tidal River, bed levels were reduced by over 1 metre thus demonstrating that sustained winter flows naturally reduce the bed levels.

Over time many technical reports have been commissioned that have confirmed that desilting of the Tidal River by dredging activities is not only a very expensive option but also an unsustainable option. In 1994 the estimates for dredging approximately 8km of the Tidal River were around £800k and would take 4/5 years to complete with no guarantee that bed levels would not increase again over the working period.

Siltation

Cause - The majority of the silt deposited in the river comes from the tide as it comes in and out. Because the outgoing tide travels slower than the inward tide the silt is deposited in the channel. Much of the silt is deposited between Denver and Stowbridge where the velocities are the slowest, but silt will be deposited where ever there are low flows. Under low river flow conditions the outward tide is even slower so more silt is deposited.

Many people have the view that dredging the Tidal River is the solution to the siltation problems. The many technical reports over the years demonstrate that dredging is not an effective solution. Dredging the Tidal River would be a large-scale operation that would take a number of years to complete. It also presents technical, environmental and financial issues. If dredging was to be carried out, there is a high probability that silt would be deposited in the excavated lengths before the work was completed or shortly after completing the work. Thus it is believed to be an unsustainable option. Desilting operations are, however, carried out on the Tidal River to remove the build up of silt on the edges of the channel. This is done to prevent structural slips occurring on the banks.



Continues overleaf

Continued from previous page

In 'the old days' many people can remember the bed of the river being maintained by disturbing the silt by dredging (but not excavating it) or dragging a harrow along the bed behind a tug. Whilst these methods may have been worthwhile at that time, it can only be effective when river flows are such that the disturbed silt is transported out to sea. If this method had been adopted this year, because of the low flows, the disturbed silt would have only moved up and down the river on the tide and would have not lowered the bed levels, just moved the silt around. Therefore this option is also considered unsustainable. It is also deemed to be a high-risk operation from a Health & Safety aspect under high flow conditions.

Welney Road Flooding

One of the consequences of poor discharge from the Ouse Washes is the potential for increased frequency and duration of Welney Road flooding. Obviously the probability of road flooding is also totally dependent upon amount of rainfall in the Bedford Ouse Catchment.

Water Resources / Abstraction -- Essex and Suffolk Abberton Scheme

Currently the Suffolk & Essex Water Company are looking to increase their ability to provide public water supply for the future. Part of the scheme is to vary the quantity of water taken at Denver for transfer to the Essex Reservoirs. At this stage a number of different options are being considered. The actual water abstraction licence at Denver belongs to the Environment Agency and any variation of the licence needs to be approved by the Secretary of the State for the Environment.

All of the issues related to the Tidal River will be considered as part of the licence review / variation.

Mr D Gillett at the EA

YEAR	TOTAL NUMBER OF DAYS ROAD FLOODED	YEAR	TOTAL NUMBER OF DAYS ROAD FLOODED
2007	24 *	1994	27
2006	37	1993	31
2005	0	1992	19
2004	11	1991	0
2003	29	1990	10
2002	19	1989	4
2001	57	1988	19
2000	75	1987	22
1999	32	1986	6
1998	28	1985	3
1997	0	1984	3
1996	4	1983	0
1995	11	1982	16

* Figures for 2007 correct as of 24th January





Peaks and troughs of wintering waterfowl on the Ouse Washes

Waterfowl numbers on the Ouse Washes and water levels in the River Delph have



been collated for the past 35 years by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), based at Welches Dam. River and flood levels are recorded every day and waterfowl numbers are counted once a fortnight, from late September to April in conjunction with the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT).

The Ouse Washes are renowned for their winter spectacle of waterfowl; numbers have increased significantly over the past four decades, with nine species acquiring the status of 'International Importance'. These include whooper and Bewick's swans, wigeon, gadwall, shoveler, pochard, pintail, teal and the Icelandic race of black-tailed godwit. These all migrate here from northern and central Europe from Iceland in the west to the Russian tundra in the east.

Man influences to some degree all factors affecting the numbers of these winter visitors on the washes. The climate is the catalyst for migration to begin: as it gets colder in the birds' summer breeding areas they begin to head farther south, crossing the North Sea to the Ouse Washes. Food availability and a safe environment are extremely important factors for birds in their choice of a wintering habitat, both of which can be provided by land owned by the conservation organisations on the Ouse Washes.

The levels of winter floodwaters are the final part of the jigsaw that will enable waterfowl to reside on the washes. Our studies show that the optimum winter water levels for most species are between 1 and 2 metres, measured from the bed level of the river Delph. At this level, the washes have deeper areas above the rivers and pools for diving ducks like pochard and tufted duck, but also plentiful areas of exposed grass for grazing wigeons and shallows for dabbling shovellers, gadwalls, mallards, pintails and teals.

The current flood levels, are resulting in limited habitat availability. Only the diving species, pochard and tufted duck, are maintaining reasonable wintering numbers. Currently the 26,000 wigeons on the washes are half the number that could be reached in an ideal flood. Gadwall numbers on 8 January this year were a mere 31 compared with a record count of 2,289 last winter.

The Washes have a history of peaks and troughs of flooding and wintering bird numbers. The last prolonged flooding in the winter of 2002/03 resulted in a reduction in bird numbers, followed by two acceptable winters. From the perspective of the internationally important visitors, it is important for the status quo to return for their continuing success on the largest and arguably the most important lowland wet grassland in the United Kingdom.

Jon Reeves, RSPB Ouse Washes nature reserve, site manager

Water a palaver

Right, so you don't want the water on the Wash Road, so where do you want it? On your front room carpet, halfway up the dog basket? Let's face it; it's where it should be, on the designated flood plain. Workers who tootle to work in the March/Wisbech direction are quids in, Ely workers have to bear the costs of "going round". What a wonderful phrase "going round". When you eventually get to work or to relatives at Littleport they ask "did you have to go round?" After the 20th time it grates a bit, but "go-rounders" are made of stern stuff.

It should be remembered that new-comers to Welney (and not so new ones) settled here accepting the package deal of Welney + Washes = trouble in winter. This isn't going to alter no matter how many letters are written by the parish council.

Apparently if the water was to come over then the likes of Upwell and Manea would flood first, so that's not so bad then is it? But that's being pessimistic, Welney has never been in a flood situation and if you shop around you won't get penalised when you come to insure your house.

Decisions, decisions, those commuters who work in the wonderful city of Ely have big decisions to make (perhaps March/Wisbech workers would like to read the bus services timetable while we discuss the merits of travel to Ely?). So are you a Downham Market go-rounder or a Manea go-rounder? Not forgetting that there are sub-decisions for Manea go-rounders. Here after leaving Welney you could fork right for the 16' and head for Stonea or take the sign posted Manea way. But what happens when you get nearer Manea do you take the left fork for the back door way into Manea or right for the Station? The back door way means that you are on a farmer's personal lane and the muck that you collect in your wheel arches can be used for your pot plants as it is good black land here.

What a wonderful opportunity to converse with our EU partners as you attempt to explain that the road is flooded ahead and why the hell have you brought that dirty great artic right up to the bridge which means you have to attempt to reverse and demolish fences and screw up grass borders. So language skills come to the fore. Please be kind to the French and don't say 'cinq centimetres' when there is 3' of water where they will definitely 'sink'.

What about the plight of local farmers and businesses? Well they are in the same 'boat' as the rest of the villagers, but not for a few years yet one hopes, as long as the water stays where it should be.

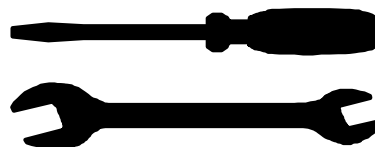
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Friendship Club

After the AGM in November the Friendship Club had a new chairman. Having reached the age of 90, Cissie Bedford decided to retire and Pat Rix, who has been vice chairman for a couple of years, took over. Pauline Ware is now treasurer, after the late Rita Sweet had retired.

Club Members had a delicious Christmas meal at the Lamb and Flag and restarted meetings after the Christmas break on 2nd January. Numbers are down a little as two members who travel from Littleport have been unable to get through the Wash Road due to the flooding.

Destinations for the summer trips have all been decided and when all prices and details have been finalised notices will be posted in the Post Office and elsewhere in the village.

If any one is interested in the outings would they please contact Pat Rix on 01354 610292.



Molly Dancers: On a chilly but sunny Saturday afternoon in late January the Lamb & Flag played host to a gathering of Molly Dancers. Two coach loads of Mollys turned up and all were dressed in their individual groups colours, the groups danced and spun their way around the car-park. Afterwards everyone retired to the pub for a well earned drink and a bite to eat.

RB

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Delph House news (Marifa Lodge Care Home)

Our Christmas and New Year events all passed successfully. Residents enjoyed the performance of **Aladdin** before Christmas, and participated vocally as an audience. Another chance for residents to show their singing prowess came with community singing with Fiona.

As usual most residents had their friends and families present at our Christmas party, in spite of the weather and the flooded road at the Wash. The draw for the Christmas raffle has now taken place. Please check at the home if you hold a ticket to see if you won a prize.

In addition we had a party for Reg Lowe's 90th birthday, held on 6 January, with more singing and dancing.

The majority of our staff and residents' visitors come from Welney itself, or March, Downham Market or Wisbech areas but some come from Littleport direction and are having to make a detour. We hope that the flood will subside soon.

Snowdrops and aconites have started to flower in the front garden and will soon provide a cheerful display.

Day Care

We provide care and support for a number of residents of Welney both in our home and in their own homes. In January we re-opened our Day Care Centre and this is available to Welney residents.

We continue to deliver hot freshly cooked lunches to older people in and around Welney and Upwell. This service is much appreciated by our current clients.

If you are interested in day care or having lunches delivered please contact us.

Care Manager

At the end of December we said Goodbye to our Acting Manager Hazel Thorne. Hazel has returned to her home in Hertfordshire. We wish her good luck for the future.

Zoë Thompson has returned here to work full-time at Marifa to take up the position of **Care Manager**. Zoë has extensive experience in care of elderly people both at Marifa Lodge and elsewhere. She will be in day-to-day charge of residents' care. Graham and Teresa will continue to manage the home.

Web-site

We now have our own web-site: www.delph-house.co.uk

Why not take a look and get to know more about your local services for elderly people and for more information?

Graham Rainbird

Teddy Church

Hello Teddy fans,
HAPPY NEW YEAR!!

The turn of the year brings a new beginning for our church in Welney, with a new Reverend, Kevin, and a new family at Teddy Church. A very warm welcome to you both. For all newcomers to Welney and / or the Welney News, 'Teddy Church is a fun and informal birth to bathchair churchservice which happens on the FIRST MONDAY OF EVERY MONTH, starting at 9.30am and finishing when the biscuits run out!

We meet together at ST. MARY'S CHURCH, WELNEY. to sing some songs, share a story, and have a ramble around the church. All this is hoped to help our young children to become comfortably familiar with the church environment and family, and to give an opportunity for parents and children to socialise within a welcoming and relaxed group. Any pre-school age child is welcome, ideally armed with a teddy or other favoured toy, and a pet adult of their choice. Please feel free to join us.

you don't need to book a place or pay a fee, just turn up. Older brothers and sisters are very welcome at sessions that fall within school holidays.

We look forward to seeing you soon.

All the best from Sally, Holly and Queenie Honorary Teds!).

Teddy Church
is the place for you
if you're too young
to go to school.
We get together,
rain or shine,
each month's first Monday
at half-past nine.
Welney Church is where we meet,
so steer your pushchair
or your feet.
Bring a teddy or favourite toy
and help us fill the church
with joy.
We hope you join us before too long
to help us sing our Teddy songs.

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PARISH COUNCIL: The December Meeting took place in the Parish Hall on Wed 13th, at 7.30 p.m.

Siltation Problems Great Ouse - Further meetings had been held with the Environment Agency and the Council were still awaiting information from them for inclusion in the WN.

Meeting with adjoining Councils - Hilgay Parish Council had forwarded details of a Parish Log system which enables them to give details to the Police. It was agreed to circulate the information to all Parish Councils in the Group and to see if someone from our Council would be willing to undertake such a scheme in Welney.

Clerk's Salary Review - It was agreed to increase the clerk's salary to the figure recommended by the National Association of Parish Councils, and to leave the salary on Spine 17 for the present. It was further agreed to increase the clerk's paid weekly hours from 6 - 7 to 31st March, 2007, when this would be considered again.

Insurance Claim - It was reported to the meeting that an accident outside Westwynds, Wisbech Road on 11/11/06 had caused some damage to the electric light and bracket. A quotation had been obtained from our Maintenance Contractors, and the Council's insurance company had given the go-ahead for the work to be carried out and the invoice to be sent to them for settlement.

100 Club - The draw for December, and the Christmas Bonus Draw took place. Results are shown on page 23.

Elgoods Proposed Development and the Parish Hall - A meeting was held on 17/11/06 at the Playing Field, with a representative of the Planning Department from the Borough Council. The Parish Council were verbally advised that an application for a new Community Centre would be considered, but it was very unlikely that an application from the Carter Family for housing on the land fronting Wisbech Road would receive consideration as this is outside the Village Development Area. However, Council were advised that if a letter was sent to them setting out all the details and including information on the proposed residential development, then it is possible this might be considered. The Carter Family had given the Chairman permission to speak to their Architect, as soon as contact is made with him a letter would be formulated for sending to the Planning Office. A letter had been received from Norfolk County Council Highways giving their initial approval (with certain stipulations) to an access being made to the land in question from Wisbech Road, adjacent to the Marifa Lodge entrance.

Correspondence - A letter was received from the CPRE offering to come and talk to the Parish Council regarding Planning Matters and the new Rules and Regulations. It was agreed this would be an excellent idea, and that a meeting should hopefully be arranged in the new year.

Planning Matters - The following approvals were received from the Borough Council:

Ref No.06/01705/O - Mrs.C.Thompson, Tofino Lodge, March Road, Welney - Outline permission for the construction of two dwellings on land South of Tofino Lodge.

Ref No.06/01967/F - Mr. & Mrs. Moseley, Kendrick Cottage, Suspension Bridge - Alterations to pitch and materials of roof and installation of a window to the W.C.

Ref No. 06/02175/F - Mr.P.J.Cheese, Tall Pines, Suspension Bridge, Welney. - Single Storey Extension.

Highway Matters - Martin Edmunds of the Highways Department had agreed to come and talk to the Council regarding traffic calming measures and highway matters in Welney.

A letter was also received from NCC regarding Speed Awareness Message. Leaflets were included which have been displayed around the village, and it was confirmed that the team are hoping to visit Welney to monitor the traffic. They were thanked for their letter and advised that it is no good visiting the Village whilst the Wash Road is flooded.

Wash Road Flooding - It was confirmed to the meeting that no information had been received by anyone regarding the current flooding of the Wash Road. Not even the Village Flood Warden (Cllr.T.Bennett) had been advised by the EA that the water would be coming onto the road. The Chairman confirmed that he had spoken to the Police regarding the Road Closed signs and they had confirmed that there is no legal requirement that prevents motorists from entering a flooded road. The Clerk had spoken to Highways who had confirmed this and had also stated that all the signs were in place. After discussion it was agreed that a letter should be sent to Norfolk County Council Highways, with copies to the Police, Environment Agency and the local MP (Christopher Fraser) expressing our concern about the flooding of the road particularly with regard to local business, environment impact, and the sustainability of the village and to ask for the road to be raised to allow the continual passage of traffic. It was also agreed to point out that we consider there should be clearer notice boards at the New Road junction so that large vehicles could not go any further - this would save vehicles having to turn round, and cause damage to the Lamb and Flag car park, fences etc.

W.A.S.H. Committee held a very successful Social Evening on 10th November in the Parish Hall. It is hoped to arrange a similar evening with a speaker in March/April 2007.

Archiving work is progressing well, Numerous photographs, films and cuttings have been put onto the Computer and where possible, some names and details are being added. All the computer equipment has now been added to the All Risks Section of the Parish Council Insurance.

Pat Copeman
Parish Clerk.



PARISH COUNCIL: The January Meeting took place in the Parish Hall on Wed 10th at 7.30 p.m.

A visit from the CPRE to talk about planning matters has been arranged for 31st Jan in the Parish Hall at 7.30 pm.

Save our Waterways - Cllr.Brown explained the situation with regard to cuts in funding for the Waterways, and it was agreed to write a letter expressing our concern.

Closure of Rural Post Offices - Following receipt of literature, it was agreed to write to the Post Office Minister, the MP, the Countryside Alliance and a copy to the Post Office expressing our grave concern.

Finance - It was reported to the meeting that a generous bequest had been received for both the Parish Hall and the Playing Field in the sum of £300 from the Estate of the late Mrs. Ethel Grace Sweet.

On 17th December Events R Us held a Christmas Fair and the proceeds were donated to the Parish Hall. The total sum raised was £234.58 (£134.58 raised on the day and a generous donation of £100 from Mrs Julie Perkins-Jones) A letter of thanks was sent to them.

The Annual Grant for the Welney St.Mary PCC towards the cutting of the churchyard was considered and it was agreed to send £200.00

The Parish Council Financial Regulations were adopted for a further year. The Clerk advised that the Annual Return had been received from the District Auditor duly signed, and that everything was in order. Copies would be placed in the Notice Boards and in the Village Shop and on the Parish Council website. Parishioners could purchase a copy of the Annual Return if they required.

Following consideration of the Interim Income and Expenditure Account to 31st December, and projected expenditure for the coming year, it was unanimously agreed to precept the Borough Council for the sum of £7,750 (an increase of £250 from last year.)

100 Club - The draw for January took place. Results are shown on page 23.

Elgoods Proposed Development and the Parish Hall - A telephone call had been received from Elgoods confirming that they are still awaiting a reply from the Borough Council with regard to their proposed planning application. The Chairman confirmed that he had spoken to Mr.Humphrey (the architect acting for the Carter Family) and he was quite agreeable to the Parish Council submitting a letter outlining the complete package. It was agreed that a Working Group would meet on 16th January to compile a letter and as soon as this had been approved by the full council, it would be sent off.

Playing Field - The Clerk confirmed that whilst bookings for the Pavilion were well down in December, they had started to improve at the beginning of January.

Planning Matters - The following planning application was received from the Borough Council and was recommended for approval : Ref No.06/02563 - Change of use and conversion of Barn at Copes Hill Farm, Wisbech Road, Welney to residential dwelling.

The following grant of permission was received from the Borough Council: Ref No. 06/02279/F Mr. & Mrs. Willis, Construction of a Chalet bungalow on land south of Tofino Lodge, March Road, Welney

Highway Matters - Mr.Graham Simpson of Highways, will attend the February meeting of the Parish Council to talk about highway matters and traffic calming measures,. The question of Speed Monitoring had been taken up with the NCC and they had confirmed that the current scheme had now finished but a new one would be starting in April, and Welney would be included on the list.

Wash Road Flooding. - The letter discussed at the previous meeting had been circulated to all bodies concerned but at the time of the meeting no replies had been received. The Chairman confirmed that several articles had appeared in

the local press and on the local TV. He had also spoken to Mr.Edmunds with regard to the signs who had confirmed that the signs were inspected everyday but it was felt that this was not the case, because they were often damaged or been moved out of the way. He also confirmed that the depth gauges on the Wash Road did not show the correct amount of water, as he and Cllr.Brown had measured the depth and found it to be very different from that shown. Cllr.Bennett confirmed that he had spoken to the EA regarding the signing, and it had been agreed to arrange a meeting with Norfolk and Cambridgeshire Highways, EA and ourselves to try yet again to get the signs sorted out. Dist,Cllr.Spikings confirmed that Christopher Fraser MP would be attending the Lamb and Flag on 12th January, and that as many councillors as possible should attend to lobby him for support with the problem of the flooding on the Wash Road.

W.A.S.H. Committee - The date of the next meeting was arranged for Wed 24th Jan at 7.30 p.m. in the Parish Hall.

The date of the next meeting of the Parish Council is Wednesday 21st Feb 2007 at 7.30 p.m. in the Parish Hall

Pat Copeman
Parish Clerk.



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E info.welney@wwt.org.uk
For more information please visit our
website: www.wwt.org.uk



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100 Club winners

December Draw

1st £50.00 No.24 Ivan Scarff
2nd £25.00 No.25 Helen Scott
3rd £15.00 No.15 John Cunningham
4th £10.00 No.32 Julie Jones

The winner of the Christmas Bonus Draw for £100 was No.32 - Julie Jones.

January Draw

1st £50.00 No.22 David Pope
2nd £25.00 No.90 Julie Jones
3rd £15.00 No.63 Derek Loveday
4th £10.00 No.18 Les Brookes.

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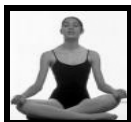
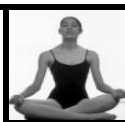
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Bus Services — Monday-Saturday

March (Broad St)	9.00	13.08	15.20
Welney (Post Office)	9.20	13.30	15.57
Wisbech (Bus Stn bay 5)	10.01	14.06	16.33

Wisbech (Bus Stn bay 5)	10.05	12.05	
Welney (Post Office)	8.24	10.41	12.41
March (Broad St)	8.50	11.03	13.03

March (Broad St)	9.00	13.08	15.20
Welney (Post Office)	9.20	13.30	15.47
Downham Mkt (Bus Stn)	9.57	14.03	16.22

Downham Mkt (Bus Stn)	7.50	10.08	12.05
Welney (Post Office)	8.24	10.41	12.41
March (Broad St)	8.50	11.03	13.03

*****Some changes at Three Holes may be necessary

USEFUL NUMBERS:

Downham Market Police :
0845 456 4567

March Police : 0845 456 4564

Q E Hospital Kings Lynn:
01553 613613

North Cambs Hospital Wisbech:
01945 488088

Upwell Health Centre: 01945 773671
NHS Direct: 0845 4647

Disclaimer: Articles that appear in the Welney News are not necessarily the opinion of the editorial team. Articles submitted for publication may have to be edited for reasons of space.

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Carpet Bowls: 7.15pm
Pavillion



Doctor: Monday Noon
Nurse : Thursday 10am
At Village Hall



Citizens Advice
10 -11.30 am Village Hall



Yoga at the Pavillion
Thurs: 10am-11.30am



Parish Council meeting:
Village Hall 7.30pm



Youth Club: 6.30pm—
9pm at the Pavillion



Womens Institute: 7pm
Village Hall



Friendship Club: 1.30pm
Village Hall



Bingo: Doors open 6pm
Game stars 7pm
Village Hall



MP Morning Prayer 9.30am
18th Feb.
25th Feb.
18th March Mothering Sunday
25th March

HC Holy Communion 9.30am
4th Feb. Ven.D.Fleming
4th March

AAW All Age Worship 11am
11th Feb. Revd.K.Fitzgibbon
11th March

The above services are subject to change due to the arrival of our new minister Revd. K Fitzgibbon who begins his work on February 5th.
Please check notice board outside the church for further details.

FEBRUARY 2007

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
				YC		
4 HC	5	6	7	8 YC	9	10
11 AAW	12	13	14	15 YC	16	17
18 MP	19	20	21	22 YC	23	24
25 MP	26	27	28			

MARCH 2007

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
				YC		
4 HC	5	6	7	8 YC	9	10
11 AAW	12	13	14	15 YC	16	17
18 MP	19	20	21	22 YC	23	24
25 MP	26	27	28	29 YC	30	31