

Below are listed some useful names and telephone numbers for the various organisations within the village and surrounding area.

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village NORTHWOLD & WHITTINGTON *Life*

Sylvia

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The Village Life Team



Editor
Michael Parfitt
copy@northwold.net
Tel. 728233



Deputy Editor
Graeme Whiting
Copy@northwold.net
Tel 727425

Advertising
ads@northwold.net

Circulation Manager
Mark Elwes
circulation@northwold.net
Tel. 728795

Committee

Chair
Carol Sharp
Tel. 728227

Secretary
Position vacant

Treasurer
Geoff Bartram
Tel. 728673

The views expressed in submitted items are not necessarily endorsed by Northwold & Whittington Village Life. Whilst we endeavour to ensure that all information contained in the newsletter is correct, we cannot be held responsible for errors. The Editor reserves the right to refuse or omit items without explanation.

Editorial

Looking back through the old editions of Village Life it dawned on me that I have now been the Editor for close on 18 months. Compare that to somebody who 5 years ago didn't even know how to turn on a computer and I suppose it is an achievement of sorts. Of course I realise that I could not have done this without a great deal of help from Graeme who still keeps a watchful eye on things.

I have also been very fortunate with the support that I have from what I call my team. Pog, Nija, Rita, Keith, Ian, Ivor and Jim all of whom regularly contribute, along with all the other people who contribute a lot I think we have made a fair job of things. Add to that all the people who fold and distribute around the parish giving up their time. Not Bad! Thanks to everybody for their encouragement and support.

It was with dismay that I arrived home during the month to find my wife upset having received a telephone call the subject of which frankly did not concern her, because although she supports me fully in the editing of the Village Life she has no part in it.

When this sort of thing happens one's first instinctive reaction is to say, "Chuck it in". Don't worry, I won't!

But, I do recall Caroline having a similar experience when Graeme was Editor. And it isn't nice. We don't get paid for doing this. It takes roughly 30 hours a month to do and a journey to Kings Lynn to collect from the printer. But we manage. As they say "in Norfolk We Do Different."

Anyway keep sending in the copy, I can't have too much, it's always handy to fall back on even if I can't use it straight away.

We regret that the schedule for the produce show was not in the May edition. This has previously been published in the June edition but I understand other arrangements have now been made

Best wishes to you all.

Mick

Mundford Open Gardens

Sat 1st July (10am - 5pm)
Sun 2nd July (12 noon - 5pm)

Come and enjoy the pretty village of Mundford and view a dozen different gardens.



There will be light refreshments, stalls and games. Admission by programme, adults £2.50, children free.

Proceeds to be divided between Quidenham Children's Hospice and St. Leonard's Church, Mundford.

Programmes available from Mundford Church, or any open garden (displaying a sunflower).

Northwold Spiritualist Group

Meetings in Northwold Village hall on Friday evenings on the following dates with speakers

16th June.	Eileen Cooper
30th June	Glen Ellis

Derek Johnson

PROPERTY & LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE

Interior & exterior painting, wood or UPVC fascia boards
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Hedges, bushes and ivy trimmed
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TELEPHONE 01842 810816

Little Normans Pre-School



With half term approaching the children will be getting ready to start crafts that will help decorate themselves and our float for this years carnival.

Following the carnival we have other activities planned for the children throughout June such as their annual Big Toddle with Tots and Co, having a trip to Banham Zoo and in July they will be training for Sports Day.

The older children that will be leaving us at the end of July have been kindly invited by Mrs Dawe to story time on Friday afternoons at the Primary School which they all seem to enjoy.

If you have a child(ren) of pre-school age and are interested in the Little Normans then please call in and collect one of our information booklets or phone 727804 and speak to a member of our staff.

The Pre-School opening hours are as follows :-
Monday. 9am - 12 noon

Village Hall

A car boot sale organised by the members of the Fund raising Committee held on Sunday ,14th May raised £201 for hall funds.

The next event is an evening entertainment, on June 23rd, and a pantomime is in the pipeline for later in the year.

Playground Project

We are currently looking for a New Chairperson, anyone interested please come along to the next meeting, new members always welcome.

Next Meeting is on Wednesday 21st June at Northwold sports and Social Club at 8pm.

Up-dated news on forthcoming events to follow in the next issue.

Rosa & Angie

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Foolhardy Folk Circus

Wednesday 28th June at Northwold Recreation Ground

The annual visit will be happening this year. Unfortunately due to unforeseen circumstances last years visit had to cancelled.

This group of people are extremely hard working and get no help from government other than obstacles put in their way, etc.

This event always proves to be very interesting and entertaining and is well worth a visit.

See posters around the village for further details nearer the time

Tuesday 9am – 3pm
Wednesday 9am – 3pm
Thursday 9am – 12 noon

Claire

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**WHAT DOES THE DOCTOR
THINK THIS MONTH?**

MORE SCAMS (Spanish Lottery, Timeshare and Holiday Clubs): I received a letter from The International Lotto Commission in Madrid informing me that I had won six hundred thousand Euros (about £420,000) in the March draw but, due to a mix up with the names, they had only just discovered that I was a winner. The money was “deposited with a security company in my name” and they asked me to “keep this award from public notice to avoid double claiming”. I must make my claim within a week as the deadline for claiming was about to expire.

All I needed to do was contact the claims agent in Spain, giving all my bank details and a copy of my passport and they would deposit the money in my bank account, less their 10% commission. Before the money was transferred to my account, I would have to pay all the administrative charges (a few hundred pounds). The letter and the accompanying form for details all look very impressive and official. Of course, no money would come my way.

I was about to throw the letter away but it was intercepted on the way to the dustbin by Head-Office (Deannie) who used her new wireless (not radio) laptop to communicate with the world-wide cobweb. There, she found a notice from the real Spanish Lottery operators informing her that numbers of criminals of various nationalities were behaving fraudulently, using the prestige of the Spanish Lottery for personal gain as follows. The potential victim is informed that they have won a substantial prize (even if they have not participated in any draw) and, in order to collect this prize, they will have to pay taxes, bank costs, delivery costs, insurance, processing, etc. The victim is warned that the deadline to claim the prize is very soon and that they must act quickly to claim the prize.

The message ended “If you are offered “prizes” that seem to be linked to the Spanish Lottery, DO NOT PAY any amount. Please inform the local authorities of these crimes”.

For ten years, we have owned two weeks’ timeshare in Madeira. This has been really successful and, by swapping the weeks, we have visited many parts of

the world. Over the past few years, all sorts of companies have offered to sell our timeshare weeks, always for a huge sum of money and always requiring administration fees up front. All scams! If you would like to know more, type *crimeshare* into your search engine and you will read about hundreds of people who have been scammed with timeshare sales, timeshare purchases and holiday clubs. **This is really important information for those of you who will be holidaying in the sun this year. If you are approached by touts offering you a scratch card, you will be a winner, probably, they will tell you, the first winner for weeks! You will need to collect your prize and you will find yourself at a gathering where timeshare or holiday club ownership will be hard-sold to you. Companies which feature prominently on the Crimeshare website include the following: Chub La Costa, Marina Leisure, Resort International Unlimited, Club Class Holidays, Sunterra, and Holiday Warehouse. However, there are many, many more.**

If you are tempted by their presentation, always go to an internet access point and check out the company. If they are linked to the Crimeshare website, read about the problems before you part with any money. No matter what they say about cooling off periods and the right to change your mind, the Crimeshare website is full of letters from people who have been unable to recoup money from such companies.

BLUEBELLS: At present, despite my best subversive efforts, the garden is blue! Actually, I have nothing against bluebells (some of my best friends are bluebells) in the correct place, such as bluebell woods, roadsides or other people’s gardens. Even in our garden, I enjoy the gracefully drooping flowers of the English bluebells but I become seriously fed-up with all the greenery which seems to last for ever. Also, the greenery shelters weeds as the Costa del Sol shelters criminals; I am sure that bluebells would engage in money-laundering if they could. Then, when the greenery finally goes away, there are enormous bare patches to fill while the bluebells spread furiously underground and gather their strength to torment me again next year. I am well aware that my never-ending battle against convolvulus (bindweed) and

blue bells is only holding back the forces of nature and that, with my demise, nature will win.

I was interested to read in the Daily Mail (April 27th) that the “British Bluebell will be wiped out in ten years”. Unfortunately, the article went on to describe how the British variety will be replaced by the far more aggressive Spanish version. That would be a shame. However, I was amused to read that global warming is a threat to the bluebell because the warmer winters mean that they are in danger of being crowded out by other plants flowering earlier than usual. Not the bluebells in our garden! No other plant would dare to crowd them out.

DEFRA: Last year, the Government changed the method of administering farm subsidies to a “single farm payment” system. The payments (£1.6 billion) should have come through in January but most will not come through until the autumn. No other country in Europe has messed it up and Scottish and Welsh farmers were paid on time. Many farmers have taken out large loans to cover the shortfall and they are running into serious problems with interest payments. I know that it is still fashionable in some quarter to bash the farmers and their subsidies. Possibly, in the 1970s and 1980s, this could have been justified. However, I have watched my farming friends suffer over the past ten years with over-bureaucratisation and falling incomes. Many farmers who have borrowed money or who rent their land are in trouble, thanks to Government lack of concern about rural communities.

Margaret Beckett has been head of Defra since 2001 and she must take some responsibility for this mess. The good news for Defra is that she is now Foreign Secretary. Now, I am really worried!

Don’t forget the FunDay on Saturday June 10th in Feltwell Surgery car park. There will be car-boot stalls, tombola, bouncy castle, cake stall, barbeque, nearly new clothes, book stall, raffle, face painting, hair braiding and tattoos for children, etc etc, all in aid of research into Sudden Arrhythmic Death Syndrome and in memory of Joe Riley.

Best wishes to you all.
Ian G. Nisbet



After the Easter holiday everyone returned to school full of enthusiasm for the term ahead. We all enjoyed an excellent Health and Fitness Week with visits from Football in the Community and a whole school outing to Brandon Leisure Centre where we were joined by Gary Hodder (West Norfolk Sports Coach) who ran the Easter Soccer school in the village and with whom we are working to provide some summer holiday activities for children. The week ended with a ‘going bananas’ day when all children dressed in banana colours and were given a banana to eat (if they wished) as part of the school’s healthy eating promotion.

We were delighted to welcome families and friends to the May Day celebration, the first time in my time at the school that we were not threatened with or drenched with rain! The children all looked wonderful and everyone enjoyed the dancing and drumming.

We took part in the cluster Netball Tournament and whilst we didn’t win we played well and very much as a team. Congratulations to all the players and to Mrs. Lavender a huge thank you for helping us with this.

Every week our Key Stage Two pupils are enjoying some excellent cricket coaching with a visiting cricket coach as part of the PE lessons.

Once again Year Six children came to school early during SATs week to enjoy breakfast together. This was a wonderful opportunity for the children to relax together before the tests began

and we were pleased to support the children in this way.

A special thank you to Mrs Pearce who came in to school to talk to the children about healthy hair as part of our Healthy Hair Day (an idea from parents during health and fitness week).

It seems difficult to believe that the half term holiday begins so soon, however we have packed a great deal into the last six weeks.

We look forward to welcoming new children to school shortly, the new Year R children have already stated to attend on Friday afternoons for Story Time.

On a less than happy note I am disappointed to advise everyone in the village that the Fendick Field is being used inappropriately. The field is not to be used by dogs at any time. We are regularly cleaning up after dogs and unfortunately do not always succeed before a child discovers the mess (usually by standing in it). There are beer bottles left by the play equipment and reports of inappropriate behaviour. Governors discussed these matters last week and we have no alternative but to report this to the police. If anyone has information about this please contact the school before one of our children is seriously hurt. I would urge all law-abiding users of this facility to be vigilant to protect the children.

My thanks to you all as I know how supportive this community is.

Marion Dawe

Found Budgie or one needing a home.

Recently Angela Knapp at Didlington found a green Budgie which was flying wild. The bird was caught without very much effort. It is a fairly accepted thing that Budgies do not survive for long in the wild as they are attacked by other birds. So at the moment it is living a life of luxury in our summer house. However we cannot keep it indefinitely. It is green in colour and we would estimate that it is a fairly young bird if not very young.

So if you have lost a green budgie lately or you would like to have it to keep then please get in touch with the editor and we will arrange for you to collect it. Obviously we would rather see it re united with it’s owner but seldom does this happen.



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St Andrew’s Church

In the not too distant future, work will begin on much needed repairs to the Church Roof, and general repair work on the Church fabric. After that, we may be in a position to have some redecoration of the interior. That we are able to afford this work we owe a debt of gratitude to past benefactors who left money in trust for the upkeep of the building and fabric. We greatly appreciate their foresight. Jane and Brenda. Churchwardens.

Sunday School will be held at all 11am services. Please phone Mrs C. Collins on 728 404 or Mrs B. Akers on 727478 for details.

A big thank you to everyone who has been helping with the cleaning. It is really hard work, and we do appreciate all the time and effort that has gone into making the Church look and smell so fresh and clean.

Church Services for June 2006 4th

11am **Northwold**
Holy Communion
9 30 am **Wretton.**
Service of the word

11th
11am. **Northwold.** Matins
930am **Wretton**
Holy Communion

18th
8am. **Northwold**
Holy Communion
9. 30am. **Whittington.**
Service of the word

25th
11am. **Northwold**
Matins
9.30am **Whittington.**
Holy Communion



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Reader: Keith MacLeod, West Barn, Ryston Road, West Dereham. Tel. (01366) 500960 or 07766766137 email: keith.macleod@virgin.net

Keith MacLeod’s Monthly Report

This is a busy time in the Church’s calendar – not just busy – it is a very important and significant time, as we remember and meditate on the anniversaries we commemorate.

As I write, we are still in the ‘season’ of Easter, marvelling at the story of the Resurrection of Jesus. Some of us are also marvelling at the story of the Da Vinci Code. Personally I found it a cracking good yarn (moreover I read a first edition, before all the brou-ha-ha started, so I was not influenced by anything except the book). Much as the world of Middle Earth was created by Tolkien and we enter into a belief system as we engross ourselves in the adventures of the Hobbits (except those who cannot stand the stuff, of course), so a world of myth was created by the authors of *The Blood and the Holy Grail* thirty or more years ago and Dan Brown peopled it with some more imagination. Again, purely personally, I agree with the publishers that there is no need for it to be labelled as Fiction, when that is clearly what it is.

So coming back to Church *history*, we are coming away from Easter to the time of The Ascension. This falls on a Thursday and so few people, even committed Christians, spare much time for this festival in their thoughts. But it is fundamentally important to the story – it is, in fact, a necessary part of the story. At the time of Jesus’ execution as a criminal, his disciples were distraught and dumbfounded. Whatever they had believed in and of him seemed to have been brushed aside by a real event. Jesus was gone – dead – end of story! But on Easter Sunday, he appears to some of them, apparently alive and in his body – by no means a ghost, despite the unfortunate 16th Century translation of Holy Spirit as Holy Ghost, both in the Bible and in the Book of Common Prayer.

For forty days Jesus made it his business, not to preach to the world, but to be with many of his disciples, reaffirming his teaching and proving to them that he was alive and that everything had changed fundamentally for the better. At the end of that time he left them – the Ascension. The whole point of his coming, his staying and his eventual departure was to re-affirm God’s Covenant of Love with mankind and then to let mankind try

again to live up to his high standards of live and living. It is very arguable that we are not doing much better than the ancient Jews did – but we have far less excuse! God’s revelation through the life and ministry of Jesus is so much more than his previous revelations of himself to Abraham, Moses, the prophets and the Israelites generally.

Following the Ascension, we celebrate Pentecost – the birthday of the Church. This was the day when the disciples (hundreds of them – not just the eleven apostles) were strikingly reminded that Jesus may have left them in body, but the power of God was still with them in Spirit and that from that day forward they had to lead the Church and preach the Good News of Jesus to the world.(if necessary, as St Francis of Assisi had it, using words).

Then following this comes Trinity Sunday. Apart from the time when the Lord spoke to Abraham and then appeared before him as three angels, there is no reference to a Trinity in the Bible. This was a doctrine which grew over the early decades, indeed centuries of the Christian Church I have not checked when Trinity Sunday entered into the Church’s calendar, but it cannot have been in the first two or three hundred years. However, it is now a very important festival, when we ponder on and marvel at our Three in One God.

These three festivals all occur in the three weeks starting with the last week in May. They all relate to mystical events or factors – difficult to explain in few and simple words, even to seriously interested enquirers – impossible to convey to those who are not really interested or are downright opposed to this (or any) religion.

Dan Brown could make the same claims about his book. The opposition to it is from committed Christians who fear that too many will take it at face value and accept that the underlying background is factual, even if the detailed storyline is fiction. Mr Brown could say that nothing is provable – there are just strong inferences – he could claim that his version of the story of Jesus is as likely to be true as the one put about by mainstream Christians. Is the story of Jesus ascending to heaven in a cloud any less fanciful than that the

members of Opus Dei are ready to commit multiple murder in order to maintain the false story of Christianity?

This is an impossible question to answer properly in this short article. But the evidence of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus is actually overwhelming. The documentary evidence for it is far greater than the documentary evidence for much of the totally accepted history of the Roman Empire. There is little strong evidence of the Ascension if you do not accept the Resurrection, but if you accept the Resurrection (for which there is strong evidence) then that Jesus disappeared in some way or another a few weeks later is incontrovertible. There is no evidence for the continuing life of a Jesus, who escaped from his crucifixion in some way, married one of his disciples and had children and lived out of sight and out of mind, completely unlike the way he had lived and exposed himself in the previous three years of his ministry.

So, I will continue to read Dan Brown with much enjoyment. I shall continue to read about the archaeological and other evidence that continually emerges of the life and ministry of Jesus, but that will not strengthen or weaken my faith in that Jesus, which is based on what he was and what he taught, not on just which star could have led the Wise Men or where exactly was the tomb in which he was laid or on whether Simon Peter was himself a fisherman or simply ran a fishing business . . .

For me, the festivals we are about to celebrate are and remain important festivals, which we need to celebrate to remind ourselves of the core beliefs of our faith. It is important to have regular dates for them, so that we remember them easily every year, but it does not matter if the dates are themselves inaccurate (the same for Christmas, etc). For those of us who find it hard to remember these festivals as important milestones, I would ask them to try. Remembering the event is a trigger to remembering what it is all about and why we are here.

Keith MacLeod

Licensed Lay Minister



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The Nija Levis Health Column

You can be ill because of what you think.

Our minds are a very powerful tool for us to use in many ways. We're all aware of positive thinking but we can choose to use our mind in a negative way and much of the time we don't even realise what we are doing.

The reason we are told to think positively is because what we think is what we create in our lives. So, if there is something you don't like in your life have a look at what you think around it and you'll see how this manifested.

The same thing is true for illness. I hear people manifesting illnesses all the time and it occurred to me that those people had no idea of what they were doing. So I thought I'd explain to bring awareness to what to do if you

have aches and pains etc. I think that the over 50's are the worst for manifesting illness because of their age. At this age to many people think that because of their age they will start suffering with more aches and pains, arthritis etc. This acceptance of now I'm suffering with, manifests the problem further.

So, what should you do? Be aware that you body is trying to tell you something by the aches, pains or onset of illness. Go to the doctor to find out what's going on if you need to, for example pains in your hands you may be told it's the being of arthritis. You now know that the body is unbalanced in some way, don't accept you have arthritis, instead work to let go of whatever it is that is causing this imbalance in your hands. This has just happened to my brother-in-law. His left knee became very painful and swollen where he had to use crutches and he was told it was arthritis. Not accepting this he worked to find out what was causing this which turn out to be an emotional upset in the past and his knee is now totally back to

normal. This applies to anything not just arthritis.

So, how do you let it go? You need to get support and NO HANDS Massage is excellent for that creating the right touch for you to be able to work to release whatever it is that you are holding onto. Use your mind and whole being to heal yourself. The body does heal itself, if we get a cold the body heals, we accept it will but it can heal itself with all illnesses if you let it. The next time you say something negative about your health correct yourself with a positive statement to support your body's healing.

Nija

At The Risk Of Offending Again

Son to father. Dad where did I get all my intelligence from?

Father. You must have got it off your mother because I've still got mine!!

RITA'S RAMBLINGS

How are you this month? I hope that all is well with you and your families – and that you will be enjoying some summery weather when you get to read this. The newspapers are full of dire predictions for a summer of hosepipe bans and other drought measures across the country. Although I appreciate the seriousness of the situation it does all seem rather far-fetched this week with the heavy rain showers that have been blown across the village on the unusually strong winds. Nevertheless, we can only do our best and use water wisely. Irrespective of whether the water companies should have taken action to repair their leaky pipes I believe we should do all we can within our own households. If the weather does turn hot I shall try and make sure that I keep the bird bath topped up – either from the water butt or using the cold water normally wasted when I want hot water for washing up! The birds have certainly kept me entertained throughout the month. Last week at work my attention was drawn to a small group of rooks flying with a much larger bird. It soon became clear that the larger bird, (I think it was a buzzard), was being mobbed by the rooks. I don't know whether the buzzard had strayed within their nesting area and they were escorting it away or whether the rooks were just being mean! As the buzzard flew in wide lazy circles individual rooks flew towards it and almost seemed to brush past its outstretched wings. This unusual aerial dogfight lasted for at least five minutes before the buzzard took the hint and flew on to a more congenial hunting area. The

rooks, meanwhile, reverted to their normal pastime of making a thorough nuisance of themselves! My second unusual bird sighting came at the weekend. Mum and I were sitting having a leisurely breakfast when I glanced out of the window and saw a heron. As I drew Mum's attention to it I spotted a second one in line astern. I then lost sight of them both as they flew behind the roof towards Didlington. Mum continued to scan the sky and her patience was rewarded when they came back into view – they had obviously completed a large U-turn and were heading back towards the village. As we watched one of them alighted on the roof of my neighbours shed and the other landed amongst the top branches of an adjacent walnut tree. For some reason it had never occurred to me that they would be able to land on a branch (albeit with considerable disturbance to the foliage). The heron on the roof remained absolutely motionless – they really are an ugly shape when they sit like that! I wondered whether it was considering whether the fish in our garden pond were a suitable pre-breakfast snack. Whether or not the plastic heron proved to be any deterrent or whether they decided it wasn't worth the effort they decided to fly off to pastures new. The bird on the roof clumsily took to the air and tucked its feet up and it was soon followed by another great rustle of leaves and swaying branches as the second bird became airborne. As they headed onwards towards the village I hoped that other fishponds would be as fortunate as ours had been! However, if you did lose some fish from your pond one Saturday in May you can presume it was probably this

pair of rogues. Until next month, take care of yourselves and your fish.

Rita

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Our Past According To POG Aka Mike Coley



If you ever had the slightest doubt as to our rural credentials, this fact should give you food for thought. “*There were more than 20 Farming Families in the village during the 1950s*” when I was a lad, and that doesn’t include the labourers they employed. Most of them would have employed either full or part time workers to bring their operation up to strength when seasonal crops needed harvesting. Now sadly, **unbelievably**, there are only 2 such families from the village still operating today.

There was always a diversity in what our farmers chose to work with, either, **Arable** (*crops*), **Live stock** (*Beef cattle, Sheep, Pigs or Poultry*) **Dairy** (*milk*) or in most cases, a **combination** of some or all the aforementioned.

Dairy farms were prolific amongst them, and this was when milk churns were collected from wooden platforms every day by lorry. These platforms were invariably placed at the farm gate or at the end of the loke that led up to it.

I remember an occasion, when (*I don’t remember why, as it was usually bottled by that time*) the milk was brought to our door on the back of a small yellow milk float. That pony-drawn float belonged **to Arthur (Hoppy) Hopkins** from Pooley Farm. I also remember that people provided their own receptacles into which the milk was ladled that day, directly from the churn.

Although the milk was normally bottled, the bottle tops were made of **cardboard** rather than from the foil with which we’re more familiar today. I imagine that the metal to produce foil tops would have been in short supply in those days, probably due to the requirements of the Aircraft and other industries during, and just after the war.

Later, when churns became obsolete,

(*becoming objects for narrow boat artists to decorate*) the milk from the farm was kept in large stainless vats until it could be pumped directly into road tankers that would transfer it to the bottling plants in Peterborough or some other far flung place of mystery.

Workers carried the days refreshment in their **Dockey Bag**, which was invariably bread and cheese, or a bit of cold rabbit pie. This was invariably washed down with a bottle of cold black tea.(no canned drinks then)

I remember my own dear Grandad getting stung on the tongue by a wasp that had crawled unseen into his tea. After taking a mighty swig from the bottle, the old boy nearly choked to death as his tongue swelled to the point that he was almost unable to breath. After that he adopted the sayings: **“Wasps are pretty little flies bor, but blast hen’t they got hot feet ”**

People often fell foul of these little blighters in those days, but none worse than the day that **Doug Cracknel** inadvertently ploughed up a whole nest of them whilst working at Dilton. Sadly, with no protection around him, because tractors didn’t even have cabs in those days, he simply didn’t survive the swarm’s fury during the frenzied onslaught that ensued.

Seasonal labour was called for during the corn harvest of course, an activity (*which is now almost entirely mechanised*) that led to the long summer holidays from school that children still enjoy (*I wonder if they really do*) Of course kids worked in those days and were glad to do so as money was short.

The soft fruit harvest was also a good little earner, the whole family would troop along to Harold Smart’s **Strawberry fields** in little London, as they did to Jimmy Benton’s when the **Blackcurrants** were fit on the Watermill Farm.

At an earlier time, when Brookville was within our parish boundaries, the people that lived there were called **Colonists**. This was because the area as a whole was known as the **Fruit Colony**, and as well as actually growing the fruit, there was also a **Jam**

Factory there to service the excess crop.

Sugar beet also relied on casual labourers, especially in the early stages of the crop’s development. After the young plants had been **Chopped Out** with hoes by the regular work force, they would need **Singling** by hand. That’s where us casuals came in, earning every penny that was paid us by the acre.

Mechanisation largely improved the output of the industry, but decimated the workforce in the process. A man and a **horse** could plough an acre a day, but now a man and his **tractor** can turn over many times that area before Dockey time. Some of the bigger machines now available can plough **40, 60 and up to 100 acres per day**.

Combine Harvesters that developed from the scythe and pitchfork, now gobble up the corn at an alarming rate. This no longer allows for the catching of the rabbits and hares that once hid in the middle of the un-mown crop, to be flushed-out and dispatched by nimble lads, armed with heavy sticks. This annual ritual was a much needed perk of the job to help to feed the family.

Mechanical Beet Harvesters supplant the need for **Knock’n an Topp’n** and for loading trailers by hand. Consequently this, and so many other innovations have undeniably made life easier everyday for the workers, but it has also put a great many more out of work, forcing a massive change within the very culture that we live.

Associated trades like Blacksmiths, Wheel-rights and Horse-breakers have also gone by the wayside. If an implement breaks or wears out today , we simply get on the phone and order a new one. Once upon a time we would have made another one ourselves, or we knew a chap who could.

But that’s just part of the throwaway world we live in today, just like you’ll chuck out this bit’o squat when you’re done a’read’n on it. Never mind, I shall still be **looking forward** to **looking back** next time, despite all that.

‘Til then, do yew keep a trosh’n bor, **Best Wishes Pog**

Riverwatch by Ivor Hook

Summer has apparently arrived. Spring was somewhat short this year. Poor Mother Nature must surely have felt hurried as the change of seasons was hardly the gradual process that we normally enjoy. Unexpectedly hot days arrived and then disappeared but we have been left with a noticeable warmth. In just a week or so the countryside seemed to burst forth to become a lush rich green. Likewise life within the river has been changing.

The weed which died down and disappeared in winter is rampant again. Almost overnight a stretch of slack water alongside the main river is transformed into a cabbage patch! The fish and in particular the tench are now enjoying the increased water temperature. For them the lethargy of winter is forgotten and replaced by urgent activity. The females have just spawned and all day is now spent searching the riverbed for worms, snails and virtually anything to satisfy their new hunger. Tench are not big shoal fish but in reasonable numbers they weave in and out of the underwater maze of stalks and weed in their quest for food. During the winter these fish had little appetite. Life was then somewhat sleepy and for weeks on end they sought refuge in the mud. Now all is different. The warmth has encouraged them to seek more shallow water and where possible to escape the main thrust of the current. On top of the water an expanse of lily pads vibrate and thus broadcast the movement of the fish below. Their feeding sends a stream of bubbles up

to the surface which will also quickly be spotted by the attentive angler. Sunlight refracts through the murky water but hardly reaches the bottom. Normally feeding is at either end of the day but now is ‘wake up’ time. At present the fish are totally preoccupied stirring up the bottom and seem oblivious of the world above. However in a few weeks time they will be much more cautious.

The tench are always associated with the long hot days of summer. Their thick chunky shapes and wide pelvic tail fins make them extremely powerful. With olive green and sometimes almost dark brown colouring they have the perfect camouflage for life at the bottom of the river. At times it is impossible to see them. Most fish blend into the background especially the predators but none more effectively as this species. The large granddad specimens are usually solitary so thus more difficult to locate. Certainly such a fish is very special to behold.

To fish for tench it is often suggested that a swim be raked every day for several days beforehand. The cloudy water and the freshly unearthed food supply should quickly bring fish to the confined area. Years ago the same cleared swim would also be baited with buckets of oxblood from the local abattoir and several wheelbarrow loads of ripe farmyard manure. This was a guaranteed attractant. Later when fishing with large worms as hook bait success would be instant. Today there are still a few fishermen who prefer and use the old traditional methods but it is a rarity for anyone to make such preparation.

Alongside the river at this time of year is a true pleasure. New life is everywhere and with the next fishing season just a few days away I will soon be spending many hours in the company of my friend - the good old river Wissey. I may even give the blood and manure a try!

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