

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,
How many people take any notice of adverts ? I mean, we are bombarded with them all the time. We get them on the television, in newspapers and magazines, and even on the radio. At least we don't get them on the BBC programmes, and with the ITV there is no choice, you have to pay whether you watch their programmes or not. I suppose you could try not to buy products that were not advertised on TV but that would be nigh on impossible.

Some time ago, I was given a voucher, (20 quid I think) to spend at a shop called Comet, not in outer space, but somewhere in Bishops Lynn. Sorry, King's Lynn; can't get used to the name change. Anyway, what should I buy? I ended up with an electric shaver. Very pleased I was with it, the first one I ever had, but after I had been using it for some while, I happened to be glancing through the Argos catalogue, where I espied my lovely shaver was advertised, or promoted, by a professional footballer. I was appalled. To think that perhaps a tiny proportion of the money I paid for

my shaver might have gone to a footballer; somebody who do not know the meaning of work, or if professional footballers do regard playing football "work", well, they only "work" one and a half hours a week. When I played football on a Saturday afternoon, a few years ago, it was after I had worked sixty hours in a saw mill, and that included Saturday morning.

As I do ninety nine per cent of the washing up in our house, I do like to use the best washing up liquid you can buy. "Hands that do dishes are as soft as your face says the brand, I won't say which one. Do anyone believe that? I don't think it would make my hands soft, and as for my face, let's not talk about it. No, I could not use this soft as your face stuff. Anyway it's advertised on TV, and I try not to buy anything that is advertised on the telly. But after considerable research on my part and considering cost and performance, I have found the perfect washing up liquid. You have to go to Tesco to get it. (Yes, alright, I know Tesco is advertised on telly but not this particular product). It is called Tesco Value washing up liquid. It costs 13 pence a whole litre. You can buy 18

litres of this to one litre of the soft as your face stuff. You must be careful how you use it, one squirt in the bowl is enough. Any more squirts and the kitchen is inundated with foam. I have been using this for many years now. And my hands are still as rough as my face.
By the way, there is a brand of sauce that is called H.P. Sauce, and on the bottle there is a drawing of the Houses of Parliament. Who do they think they are kidding? Any school boy would tell you what the H.P. stands for.

Sun Cream, (should it be called anti sun cream?). This is sold in various strengths. So what strength should I use when sunbathing in the garden? My dear wife seems to know when she smears it on my nose. When serving in the RAF, and in Palestine and Egypt, they never told us what strength to use. I wonder, if I had asked my Flight sergeant what sort of reply I would have received. Of course, we had never heard of the stuff in those days. Do our soldiers in Iraq use it?
Yours Sincerely.

M Grumps

Village Life NORTHWOLD & WHITTINGTON

Please Help Hod And Eunice By Supporting This Very Worthwhile Cause

PROJECT LINUS UK.

Project LINUS began in 1995 in the USA after a small child stated that her 'security blanket' had been a great help to her in getting through some rather intensive cancer treatment. It takes it's name from the 'Blanket Toting Character' from the 'Peanuts' comic strip.

The idea is that people hand make blankets (knit, crochet, quilt, hand or machine sew) and donate them to the project which then passes them on to children who are seriously ill or traumatised and will benefit from having a 'cuddly' or 'security blanket'. The blankets need to be in 'child friendly' colours and, if knitted or done in crochet, they need to be of a tight pattern to avoid risk of small fingers or medical equipment getting snagged in them. The use of buttons or other embellishments should be avoided as these can come off and be swallowed.

At the PRODUCE SHOW AGM it

was suggested that a 'PROJECT LINUS UK' blanket, size 36 inches square, should be included in the Craft section of the show. The blankets entered will be donated to the local branch of PROJECT LINUS after the show.

Many people have supported the Produce Show over the past three years by entering knitted Jumpers in the craft section which, after the show, have been sent to 'Children in the Ukraine'. It is hoped that maybe some new faces (as well as the regular entrants) will be encouraged to enter this year as we are now, through 'Project Linus', supporting needy children in the UK also.

PICTURE BELOW: - Some of the children that benefited from the jumpers donated from last years show.



At Last here are the answers to Sir Royston's Bird Quiz which appeared in the February edition

- 1 Robin
- 2 Swallow
- 3 Razor Bill
- 4 Moorhen
- 5 Snow Bunting
- 6 Duck
- 7 Mallard
- 8 Spotted Fly Catcher
- 9 Arthur's "Dr Who" Merlin
- 10 Yellow hammer
- 11 Nightingale
- 12 Storm Petrel
- 13 Fire Crest
- 14 Field fare
- 15 Gannet
- 16 Sand Piper
- 17 Partridge
- 18 Kestrel
- 19 Starling
- 20 (Gossiping) Stone Chat
- 21 Turtle Dove
- 22 Wood Pigeon
- 23 Black Cap
- 24 Dipper
- 25 Siskin
- 26 Ruff
- 27 Hen Harrier
- 28 Grey Lag
- 29 Turn Stone
- 30 Kittiwake
- 31 Green Shank
- 32 Great Skua
- 33 Corn Crane
- 34 Hobby
- 35 Knot

How many did you get right, or more important, How many didn't you get right? Ed.

Thanks

Jane and I would like to thank all our friends and neighbours for the cards and get well messages we received during my recent spell in hospital.

Charlie Askew

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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.

This interesting item was sent in by Pam Eyles. We can no doubt all learn something from it

The Life Of A Beer Can

When things in your life seem almost too much to handle, and 24 hours in a day are not enough to fit in all you want to do, remember the sweet jar and the can of beer.

A professor stood in front of a philosophy class. Wordlessly, he put on the table before him a large, empty sweet jar and proceeded to fill it with golf balls. He then asked the students if the jar was full. They agreed it was. The professor then picked up a box of pebbles and poured them into the jar. He shook the jar slightly and the pebbles rolled into the open spaces between the golf balls. He asked the students if the jar was full. They agreed it was.

The professor then picked up a box of sand and it filled up any spaces. The question was again put to the students asking if they thought the jar was now full. They agreed it was.

The professor then picked up two cans of beer and poured the contents into the jar. The students laughed.

"Now" said the professor, "I want you to recognise this jar represents your life. The golf balls represent the important things – your family, your health, your friends, the things that, if all else was lost, and only they remained, your life would still be full" "The pebbles are the next things that matter – your job, your house, your car".

"The sand is everything else – the small stuff".

"If you put the sand in first there is no room for pebbles nor golf balls. The same goes for life. If you spend all your time and energy on the small stuff, you will never have room for the things that are more important to you. Pay attention to the things that are critical to your happiness – give time to the family- play with the children - say hello to the neighbour - have a day out with your partner – take some family exercise together. Time may come when it is too late to enjoy your family. Cleaning the garage can be left till another day. Learn to set your priorities in the right order – always take care of the golf balls first then the pebbles and the rest is sand".

One of the students wanted to know about the beer.

"I'm glad you asked", replied the professor. "The beer just goes to show that no matter how full your life is you can share what you are doing with others – like giving someone a lift – or just spending some of your relaxation with someone who is alone. Taking a cup of tea, or a can of beer with another takes no longer than on your own and then neither of you are alone"

Author unknown.

Hamish's Bowls Club Football Pontoon

The last Pontoon of the Season was won by Mrs B. Gould with Huddersfield Town. There was only one winner with a prize of £ 52. 50p

I think the Bowls Club owe Hamish a thank you for all the time and work he puts into this project. Ed.



Derek Johnson

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secondary school because of lack of money. At primary school, school fees, books and uniform cost about 50,000 CFA (£50 \$100) a year. At secondary school these cost about 250,000. At the moment Prof. Ako has already arranged for the top three students at Ossing Secondary School to receive 50,000 CFA a year. If you would like to help, all you have to do is contact Prof. Ako at tako640@yahoo.ca and he will send you the details. I can absolutely guarantee that all the money will get to the child's family. In return you will get an annual picture of the child and a copy of his/her report card and a letter. You might well end up following the child all the way through his/her school years and develop a real relationship with him/her. One drawback is that the bank charges £20 to transfer any amount so it is not very efficient to send just £50. If a few people combine together they can all send the money for the same £20. Northwold might want to consider adopting Ossing as a twin village.

Thanks to Frank and Mary for this very interesting article. Ed.



Little Normans Northwold Pre-School

Everyone is settling into the Summer Term and at last the children can wear their sun hats.

Preparations are well underway for the Carnival. The children always enjoy making their costumes and items to attach to the float.

We have finally received the full report following our Ofsted inspection earlier in the year. Everyone was very pleased with the excellent results, a few quotes from the report follow:-

"The premises are warm and welcoming to children and have a range of activities to promote children's development"

"Staff support children well in their play and learning"

"Links between Pre-School and home are good"

"Good emphasis is put into equality of opportunity"

"Staff use spontaneous moments to enhance learning"

"Staff enjoy helping children to make progress, by making learning fun and

using props effectively"

"Relationships between staff, children and their parents are robust"

The only action required pending the next inspection, was regarding the condition and cleanliness of some of the older toys and making better use of floor space. This have been recognised, and new toys have been purchased and the classroom rearranged. Overall an excellent inspection. A credit to everyone involved, well done!

Can we remind you that if you wish your child(ren) to attend the Pre-School in the near or distant future, you must contact us to register them. We are currently running 8 sessions per week and 5 of these sessions are now full and a waiting list is in operation. To register please telephone the Pre-School (01366) 728804 or Tina Billmen (01366 727090) or you are always welcome to come and see us at the Pre-School. Mon & Friday 9am – 12 noon or Tues, Wed, Thur 9am – 3pm, term time only.

Tina

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In January of this year, Frank and Mary Fendick visited Mary’s Home Village, Ossing, in The Cameroon. The Story Concludes

We then went to a bank to change our money. There was one teller who worked very slowly and kept shouting at the people waiting to sit down. We were advised that we would have to fill in a form so we should go up and ask for one. We filled in the form, which included mother's maiden name, and eventually got to see the teller. He ripped up the form and called for a bank messenger to take us to a local dealer. Euros are very much in demand by business men and the teller



Mini Bus On The Road

obviously had an arrangement with the dealer. Mary did not trust the dealer not to give us counterfeit notes so we eventually changed our money (some 2,600 Euros) in Mamfe where she could get advice on whom to trust.

We needed to get to the motor-park at Mile Four and it was difficult to get taxis to come up the rough track to the hotel. The hotel owner kindly got her driver to take us to the park where we booked on a mini-bus to Kumba. These buses are Japanese vehicles with four rows carrying four people crammed together and two more people on the seat beside the driver. The luggage is loaded on top of the bus with some in the back. The roads vary from excellent new roads where people kill each other by going too fast, through tarmac roads full of pot holes to mud (laterite) roads some of which have been graded since the rainy season (when they are deep in mud) and some that are still full of deep holes. We left Limbe at 12 noon and arrived at Kumba at about 2 pm. We then had to take a taxi to the other side of town to the motor-park from which the buses and taxis left for Mamfe.

When we arrived at this park there were crowds of people trying to snatch out luggage so that we would go on their bus or taxi. At Limbe the buses had taken people in turn. Here there

was just chaos and fighting between the rivals. Mary had to decide whether to take a taxi or a bus and, if a bus, which one. The taxis are saloon cars which officially carry four people in the back seat and two beside the driver (in practice, on shorter journeys, there are often three people beside the driver and sometimes someone riding on the luggage in the back.) The taxis charge 6,000 CFA per person to Mamfe and get there in about four hours. The buses charge 5,000 CFA and take at least five hours. Mary was advised by a girl going to her school reunion not to take a taxi as they were too dangerous. She decided to take a "Brothers" bus rather than an "Ali Baba" bus. This turned out to be a bad decision as two "Ali Baba" buses filled up and left before us. Our luggage was wrapped in plastic bags in order to keep the dust out. A boy also came round selling face masks for 100 CFA (10p). We later regretted not buying one. We sat drinking beer and listening to the music until the bus eventually filled and left at 6.30 pm. While we were at the park we learnt that a bus coming the other way had caught fire and that everyone had been killed.

We had not travelled very far when there was a loud bang. We had a puncture. They took about 30 minutes to change the tire and then we started off again. We were coughing from the dust all the way. After a few hours we came across the scene of the bus fire. The roof of the bus was still burning and inside the skeletons were sitting side by side, one with a baby in her arms, as though they had not tried to get out. One large skeleton had his head near a cracked back window. He had obviously tried to break the window with his head. I apologize for not taking a picture. I was afraid of offending someone, although one lady said to me, "Why you not take picture?" We found out later that the driver was smuggling petrol from Nigeria. Some petrol had leaked on to the exhaust and caused the fire. A passenger shouted "Fire" and the driver had turned his head around and had gone into the ditch beside the road. The bus turned on its side with the door against the ground. The only door left was the driver's. He and three passengers managed to get out. One

girl was running around trying to remove her burning clothes. The driver tried to get back in the bus to save his wife and child but he only got badly burnt. By the time we left Mamfe all but one passenger had died. Two days later the authorities brought a digger and and buried the bus with its contents. Shortly after the scene of the fire we came across a checkpoint and I thought "These are the men that didn't stop the driver carrying petrol together



Changing a Wheel

with people". We arrived at Mamfe at 12 midnight and hired a guy with a handcart to take us the 500 meters to Mary's cousin's house. He banged on the door until he eventually woke the caretaker who let us in. We were badly in need of a shower. The last time we were in Mamfe, in 1997, we had given the cousin £900 in order to build a shower, toilet and kitchen. Nothing had been done so we remained with our dust. We tried sleeping on the floor and on the couch and then went back to the park at .5.am...We got a taxi at 6.am and arrived at Prof. Ako's house in Ossing half an hour later. The journey had taken from Tuesday night to Saturday morning. At age 74 I found it a bit stressful. Mary had a quick shower and took a taxi back to Mamfe in order to get her hair done and outfit made for the 40th reunion of her school that afternoon. In the evening we went to the reunion dance.

To top it all, on our return from Cameroon, we both had to spend three days in hospital with malaria.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO MAKE A REAL DIFFERENCE TO A CHILD'S LIFE FOR JUST £50 A YEAR?

I met many intelligent young people who had had to leave primary or

Northwold News Jim Booty

Reports on activities, news and events in and around Northwold

Parish Council

During the last three months the Community Car Scheme has organised 54 journeys, totalling 1369 miles at a cost to the scheme of £ 286. 70p.

A large number of potholes was reported to the Highways authority. Re surfacing of the A 134 from Beckfield to Whittington roundabout has started, and will last until June. The Annual Parish Meeting will be on May 3rd at 7 pm. Some yobbish behaviour has occurred lately, such as kicking footballs into pensioners gardens. Parents have been told and we hope such nonsense is stopped.

The Village Hall

The Committee is applying for a grant to help pay for damp proofing and re plastering of the main hall.

Small Schools Football Tournament

The Annual 6 a side football tournament took place on the Fendick Field, Northwold, with nine schools competing. Results:

Gooderstone 0 Northwold 1.
Weeting 0, Stoke Ferry 2.
Hockwold 4, Hilgay 0

Shouldham 3, Methwold 0.

Wimbotsham 1, Gooderstone 0.
Hilgay 0, Northwold 2.

Gooderstone 0, Hockwold 1.
Weeting 0, Shouldham 1.
Hockwold 1, Wimbotsham 0

Stoke Ferry 1, Methwold 0.
Gooderstone 1, Hilgay 2.
Wimbotsham 0, Northwold 0

Northwold 0, Hockwold 1.
Methwold 0, Weeting 3. Hilgay 1, Wimbotsham 0
Stoke Ferry 0, Shouldham 1.

FINAL. Hockwold 1, Shouldham 2.

Quote of the month.

By **Paul Ayres** when he saw his mother Brenda on the front of the last issue.

“It Could Have Been Worse. They Could Have Put You On Page Three”

This is page three, which is normally occupied by Jim. We have no plans at present to publish a picture of him, unless of course we have a real demand from his adoring fans.

Ed.

Northwold Village Playground Project

The playground project is progressing well. New members and ideas always welcome. Next meeting at the sports and Social Club at 7. 30 pm on Tuesday, 24th May, 2005. Dates for your diary: Car Boot sale at the Village hall on Saturday, 14th May at 8.00 am until 12 noon. Stall Holders from 7am. 11 Pitches inside at £8 and 10 outside at £5 will be allocated on a first come first served basis. Contact Caroline Whiting on 727425. There will be a playground stall and all proceeds to go to the project. Tea and Coffee and bacon rolls will be available at a small cost. Also there will be a family disco at the Sports and Social Club on Saturday, 9th July. Family ticket £10, Adults £3.50, Child £2, under threes free. Any support will be most welcome as this project will benefit all the children now and in the future. Thank you for all your continuing support.

May 1, through the newsletter, express my thanks to Kelly and all the other kind people who stopped to assist me following my accident in the High Street. Everyone was most kind and helpful.

A letter has been sent to the Parish Council drawing their attention to the dangerous state of the pavement in the area near the Lych gate of the church. Roots from a tree have forced their way through the tar-mac and made the surface most unsafe.

Thank you once more to all who helped.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Arthur Robson

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Neighbourhood Watch

Fishy Business

Please be aware of the people who are visiting the villages in a van selling fish. They will show you a sample of good quality fish but what they sell you will not be of the same quality. This does not apply to our regular Fish vendor(s). These are one off people out to swindle you so have no truck with them. Likewise people selling any kind of goods dirt cheap at the door. The product is either poor quality or stolen. So don't get caught.

Telephone scam

If you receive a telephone call telling you that you have won a sum of money and that all you have to do to claim your winnings is to transfer money to the organisers, then promptly put the phone down. No other advice is required.

Mowers and Sheds

This is the time of year for lawn mowers etc to go missing. Don't leave your lawn mower out if you aren't using it, and keep your shed locked at all times so that people can't see what you have inside.

Suspicious Vehicle

A red Astra with a blue tailgate, registration number N345SAY has been seen driving around farm buildings where quad bikes are stored in the Upwell area. Please keep an eye out for this vehicle and report anything suspicious to the Police on 01553 691211 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

A team of bogus officials has been targetting the South Norfolk Area and may well move to our area. The three males, all in their 20s, are using aggressive selling techniques in an attempt to obtain victims bank details. The advise you not to miss out on a special offer for a phone related product. Once again you are advised not to divulge your bank details to anyone unless you are entirely happy they are genuine. If you are approached by anyone fitting the above

descriptions then contact the Police immediately, use 999 only if appropriate. Any information can be passed anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Early warning

Would you like to join our e mail early warning system. I have a lot of contacts but I could do with plenty more. Briefly all it entails is knowing your e mail address. Then when I get warnings from the Police I immediately circulate them round the village so that people are aware of anything they should be on their guard for. If you want to join all I need is a small e mail from you so that I can take your e mail address off it and put it on my list. This has proved very effective to date. If you are already on my list please ignore this. If you aren't sure I can soon check for you.

Mick Parfitt

The Parishes of St. Andrew's, Northwold, All Saints, Wretton with Stoke Ferry & Christ Church, Whittington

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

Keith MacLeod's Monthly Report

The General Election will be upon us as you read this. However, as I write it, the campaign has only just started – the strangest start to such a campaign that I can remember – the long phoney campaign when everyone knew the eventual date, but it had not been announced – and then just as we came up to the formal announcement came the illness, death and funeral of Pope John Paul II, followed the next day by the marriage of the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall and then the birth of a first son for the Liberal Democrat leader. Also, after years of publicised, but behind doors warring between Blair and Brown, there they are, day after day working together wreathed in smiles and Blair promising to be effectively a lame duck Prime Minister if re-elected.

It's not clear that politics was much in evidence during this period! There has been a considerable absence of conviction. The Tories probably, on balance, agree with what Mr Flight, Vice Chairman of the party, was heard to say in a private gathering about plans to cut taxes, but can't bring themselves to say so, or possibly do not quite know how to say so in an attractive and convincing way. Labourites either love Brown's economic success, but can't quite see themselves going back to Old Labour and are terrified of him becoming leader OR, on the other hand, love Blair's (at least till recently) political success, but can't stomach New Labour and its not-really-Socialist leanings. We all love the humourousness of Charles Kennedy, but can't be sure that there is enough depth in his party and its policies.

It all rather reminds me of Jane Fonda, a life long, born and bred atheist, always following her own path, who, now in her 60s, has become a Christian, but cannot say why! She says 'I'm still not ready to defend it [Christianity] or analyze it or anything, but I have become moved by it, fascinated by it and helped by it – and I'm not even sure what it is. But I am humming with reverence and going at it in my usual full-bore way.' As a reporter in Time Magazine has recently written, Jane Fonda has never let a lack of certitude translate into a lack of enthusiasm, and she understands that the exuberance with which she broadcasts

her new self – accepting Christianity after years of spiritual apathy – will undoubtedly raise eyebrows.

I wonder how many of us have never let, not the lack of, but the possession of certitude (whether for our Christianity or for our belief in our chosen political party) translate itself into actual enthusiasm or exuberance – and we too often excuse ourselves by claiming to be British – the never failing excuse for our lack of action, emotion or anything visible to anyone else.

During the Royal Wedding in St George's Chapel, the Creed – the statement of the fundamentals of Christian belief – was sung by a Russian Contralto – it was the Creed by the Russian composer Grigoriev. It was sung in Russian – rather it was chanted in Russian. Actually I not like the words 'sung' or 'chanter' in the context. She 'delivered' it with such power that anyone paying attention (which is more than the cameraman did!) could not but be gripped. This was not a mere statement of belief; this was an assertion, an affirmation, a testimony - defying any listener to deny it. It was done with so much power that it seems as though her whole body was going to come out of her mouth, not just words and notes. If Jane Fonda was first attracted (which obviously she was not, but please come along with me) to Christianity by this performance, then it is so easy to understand why she was 'moved by it, fascinated by it and helped by it'.

It would not be possible to leave this discussion without paying a short visit to Rome and Carol Wojtyla's funeral. That man had been a little like Grigoriev's Creed – his life had been a statement, an affirmation, evidenced by his whole being, right up to those last days when he spoke to the world silently just by being there. More than words had always come from him. Many of us disagree with aspects of and some of his words, but his life and his presence were never less than Holy. Many of those who wept in St Peter's Square and in Krakow and watching their TV screens around the world were not Roman Catholics. I suspect that many were not Christians – but God speaks to us all in

our own language.

So are you going to vote? Can you find enough certitude (not just in the mere words and Manifestos of the parties and their leaders, but in what they mean, in what they seem to want to make of life – their own and ours) that you can be exuberant in choosing to vote (or choosing as a political act not to vote – to actively abstain). How fantastic it would be if we could have a General Election in which every one on the Roll voted or abstained out of positive conviction, not negative posturing or tactical gerrymandering. How marvellous if we could all vote for what we believe is right, not for what will be to our personal benefit. For example is it wrong that we are signed up to the 1951 United Nations Convention on Refugees (ie asylum seekers)? If it is not wrong, then it is almost certainly right and our only concern should be to ensure that we can recognise a refugee when one presents himself. Vote, but do vote out of conscience, not out of pragmatism. Vote for principles of truth and compassion, not for short-term gain, whether for you or even for your country.

To do this, you will have to look beyond the electioneering, this acting and posturing that we demand of our political leaders and representatives.

Having lectured my readers, I am left with my own lack of certitude – I will vote, hopefully with exuberance and from my heart – but I am not quite sure how to apply that to the choice before me! So I have no option but to do some real work – I have to find out what the parties are going to do with British Society and to the rest of the world. Given that for the very most part there are only differences of degree between the major parties, I am left to consider whether there are specifics that one or other of them are offering, which I find morally unacceptable.

I wish I could finish this with a rendering of the Russian Creed by the lady who sang at the Royal Wedding. In my mind I am rehearsing it again now and I am yet again convinced and excited.

Keith MacLeod
Licensed Lay Minister



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As usual we have begun the summer term with a flourish. Before I relate to you what we have done so far and what we intend to do I would like to express our thanks to Ken Cookson who has sponsored our column in Village Life until his retirement. On behalf of us all I wish him and Mrs Cookson a long and happy retirement.

The first Thursday of term was the Football Tournament. Northwold played very well, winning two games losing one and drawing another. Hockwold Primary were the overall winners but the main reason behind the tournament is that children can have fun together and enjoy playing football.

Congratulations to Callum Peate, the captain this year and to all the team and dedicated players who stayed after school to develop their skills. A special thank you to Tony Waring and Ryan Spindley who refereed the games for us.

It was good to see many members of the community at this event. A thank you also to the hard working P.T.F.A. who served refreshments for players and visitors.

Next week we are having another 'off curriculum' day when the children will work in their school families to design and build a town using lego, work on developing the grounds with volunteers and the county grounds staff and have time for some additional sporting activities.

This term we are also offering more extra curricular activities, a drama group, a running club, a netball club, art club and friendly football matches.

This half term is especially busy for pupils and teachers as the End of Key Stage Assessments take place. We will, as usual be providing breakfast for Year Six pupils to help them to feel at ease before the tests begin. This has been very popular in previous years and helped to reduce the stress that these tests can be for some children. On May 3rd we are celebrating May Day with our usual festivities. I am

reluctant to publish this date as this usually invites rain but we hope for a fine day and congratulate Lucy Hogan who is the May Queen.

As a school we are taking part in a pilot programme called 'Links' to help parents and children to have time together during the school day to work together. Already this is proving very successful and is greatly enjoyed by parents and children.

As you will no doubt realise after reading this article, the term is very busy but we are always pleased to provide new and exciting opportunities for the children and to invite you to share them with us when possible. I would like to take this opportunity to invite any member of the community to our next 'Charities Morning' on Friday 27th May. We look forward to seeing you then.

Marion Dawe



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Rita's Ramblings

The official harbingers of spring have been spotted here in Little London. I know one swallow doesn't make a summer but when they sit on the power lines delighting us with their beautiful song it is hard not to be optimistic about the summer months to come. Then this morning, while I was hanging the washing out in the sunshine, I heard the distinctive call of the cuckoo. My neighbour reminded me of the old saying that whatever you are doing when you hear the first cuckoo call, will be what you spend most of the summer doing! On that basis I will be very clean and we will have a warm and sunny summer! Our resident blackbirds are busy raising the next generation and gathering nourishing food to feed to their young. While I was gardening this week I found several of those ugly chafer grubs. I carefully placed them in the open (where I could keep an eye on them) and, sure enough, the blackbirds came and gathered them in their beaks before flying off. They must have thought they were dining at the Ritz because they kept coming back for more. At one point I looked up and there were 3 birds waiting for the next juicy morsel to appear!

Way back in the dismal days of winter we were lucky enough to win a weekend stay at a top hotel, in Bath, in a prize draw at Christmas. A couple of weeks ago we left the dogs with Mum and headed west in the car. Traffic bulletins on the radio suggested there were traffic jams on the direct route so we set off across

country – finally arriving four and a quarter hours after setting off. As soon as we turned into the drive we were greeted by a vista of well-tended gardens gently rising to the front of the hotel. After parking the car (round the side of the hotel) we made our way to the main entrance and were greeted by a smartly turned out member of staff who directed us towards reception. Our room was very pleasant – although the view out of the window comprised a building site (as the hotel is being updated at he moment). I was amused to discover that the bathroom had a remote speaker (complete with volume control) from the radio/TV; however, it meant that I didn't have to miss any of the news the following morning while I was getting ready for breakfast.

Bath itself was a delightful town. Neither of us had been there before and, as we wanted to make the most of the weekend, we had booked into the theatre to see 'The Birthday Party'. I must confess that the play made no sense to me whatsoever – nevertheless, it was an enjoyable evening out. During the day we had walked into town and marvelled at the houses made of Bath stone and the extraordinarily wide streets. You could almost expect to see Mr Darcy or Jane Austen walk out of the door and take a horse drawn cab. As the weather was sunny and warm we took the open top bus tour and were treated to many a tale of times past. I don't know how many of the stories were based on fact but the guide certainly

worked hard to bring history to life. Bath was an important town in Roman times because of the thermal springs and we felt we really had to visit the Roman Baths. What a complex! It must have been a real treat to laze around the warm mineral rich waters protected from the elements by a vaulted roof. I was amazed at the intricacies of the methods for diverting the water here, there and everywhere. The actual baths are testament to the quality of roman architecture, as they have survived basically intact. As I strolled around I wondered how many of our own buildings would still be standing in 2000 years time. On the way out visitors are invited to sample the waters but we had been warned in advance that it tastes awful - absolutely nothing like that provided by Anglian Water.

Until next month take care and make the most of every opportunity given to you,

Rita

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Our Past According To POG Aka Mike Coley



How pathetic it is to see that we have only one shop in the village now, albeit one that’s combined with the Post Office and tries hard to cater for most of our needs. There were however shops of every kind previously, to the extent that some people (*with the exception of wartime*) never left the place, or even felt the need to do so. Perhaps a quick trip by bus to Swaffham market on a Saturday afternoon may have been the exception to prove that particular rule.

Apart from the Eight shops that were still in business at that time, a number of them had already ‘been and gone’ by the time that I came on the scene. These included **Billy ‘Phippy’ Bovils** sweet shop, renown for his meticulous adherence to always giving the correct weight, to the extent that he would actually bite a sweet in half rather than let the bag weigh too much. *(this despite the old skinflint having, by all accounts a mouth full of black stumps and discoloured fangs, lovely)*

Spinks the butchers had a shop where our post office is today and a bit further along Mr Fox ran **Moore’s** butchers shop (*a few years later I actually worked with old George Moore at the Meatmarket in Brandon*) And finally, **Haylocks** had a shop at ‘west end’ where they sold Pork from the farm.

There was a **Greengrocers** opposite the Wesleyan Chapel and **Gotobed** had a general store in the ‘West End’. Shops often describe themselves more specifically, e.g. as ‘Drapers,’ to set them apart from simply ‘General Stores’, which on their own came to refer to an emporium where almost anything could be purchased, including groceries, tools and sometimes paraffin.

As for the shops that were still in operation when I was growing up, we had quite a selection that between them, offered everything that could be desired. **Albert & Florry Goymour** ran a Newsagents in the High Street, most people collected their papers but he would deliver to outlying properties in his, already by that time ancient Morris

car. They were an odd couple really, he being a small man with ‘10 to 2 feet’ was the spitting image in every respect of Charley Chaplin. Florry on the other hand was (*beneath her sweet little old lady exterior*) something of a moaner and regularly gave Albert quite a hard time (*probably deservedly so*) His response to her when she went a little too far was to go upstairs and urinate in her clean linen drawer, satisfied that she would then have something substantial to moan about.

Chrissy & Sid Filby ran the ‘**Top Shop**’ as a general store, situated opposite the church. It had previously belonged to ‘Harrison & Christmas’ who gave the shop its name. They were Milliners and ran it almost as a little department store, the shop having two main rooms. I’ve often wondered if the name ‘Top Shop’ came from the fact that they dealt in hats, dressing peoples ‘top’ as it were. Chrissy was leader of the Girl Guides and was ably assisted by Winny Bloomfield who was Brown Owl to the Brownies.

Percy Cawston ran the ‘Drapers / General Store’ opposite the Beeches that had previously been situated across the road in the lower floor of Sycamore House. This was the first shop in the village to open (*back door trade only*) on a Sunday morning. Blocks of ice cream were the comestibles of choice and ‘Korky’ (*as he was affectionately known*) would trundle off singing his own little song to himself “ *vanilla, vanilla, the lady killer* “

Tom & Queenie Bowers ran a ‘Spar’ shop at no 1 Methwold Road, which was a big step up from the little shop they had at the end of Odd Fellows Row, facing Common Drove. Tommy had previously made his name as a boxer and later, as well as the shop he ran both Building and Undertaking businesses.

Mrs Carr ran the small Post Office/ Grocers shop opposite the memorial cross, and her assistant was **Miss Wicket**. The village phone box stood outside and the Postman was Mr Fish who lived at Lancaster Cottages where he was something of a ‘radio ham’ in his spare time (*this led to some with overactive imaginations thinking that he must have been a spy*). His son Victor sadly died after a game of

football and became the last body to be transported to the church by his mates on the parish hearse (*an ancient but ornate wooden handcart , later ‘appallingly’ given to the school so that kids could use it to ride on when collecting bundles of old newspapers*).

Maggie Rolph ran the Tobacconist/ Sweet Shop in the High Street opposite the Methwold Road junction. Her daughter **Conny and Husband Fred Smith** took it over later and ran it as the kind of shop where you could buy all manner of things. Fred was a driver on the big red ‘Eastern County’ busses that were garaged by the ‘Top Road’ near the petrol station.

Lew Jones sold an assortment of non-edible goods from his timber built workshop between the Council and Swedish Houses on Methwold Road. He was also the local Cobbler / Barber.

Len Catlin was the butcher who’s shop was next to Cawstons. I started work here and served my apprenticeship, first under Lens Son ‘Peter’ then directly under the boss himself .(*Peter Catlin wasn’t a popular man and was called by many, ‘Farouk’ after the Arab King of that name, after all they could almost have been twins to look at*)

Eventually Peter and his wife Joyce moved back to her home in Scarborough, where they opened a Hotel. That was great as far as I was concerned because old Len was as different as chalk and cheese to his bombastic offspring. He was a real Tradesman and a Gentleman who taught me many things, including attitudes that have benefited me throughout my working life.

Many of you will remember me from those days I’m sure, with my clean white coat and rosy cheeks, pedalling the old trade bike with its big basket and little front wheel, through the village and as far a field as Gooderstone.

Well that’s merely a glimpse at the shops we had and the people who ran them
So again I say, Til next time,

Best Wishes Pog

River Watch By Ivor Hook

The days are noticeably longer and an evening wander alongside the river is now an ideal time to fully enjoy the upper reaches of our River Wissey.

New life is all around. Most trees and bushes are in leaf again. The Winter is almost forgotten. Flies and insects have reappeared to herald fine weather although a luckless few will soon end up as food for the fish who have all but completed their spawning. The occasional trout will certainly be seeking out his favourite flies as daylight comes to an end. In the fading light his feeding is often both seen and heard. The banks and pathways of the riverside are returning from sticky mud back to grass. Now is the time of real growth with the seasonal combination of wet and warmth. As always there is a backdrop of wild fowl but only the geese are still engaged with their noisy courtship. The aggressive males relentlessly chase the poor females who must just long for peace and quiet! Alas, the controversial cormorants are also ever present-their enormous appetites can deplete a whole fish stock in a matter of days. Their black shapes circling overhead look really menacing. When spotted I always hope they will soon have an urgent calling to fly away and leave our river alone.

It is still the close season for river fishing so I now spend my time merely looking and watching. It must seem rather comical but to slowly creep about and keeping very low to avoid the skyline with good polarised glasses you can often locate fish. Sometimes

the only signs may be bubbles or a surface disturbance. Other days moving shadows and shapes can betray the presence of really large specimens in the long ribbon weeds. The strong flow is deceptive for a narrow river. It is strange how certain fish are attracted to different places. The most inaccessible spots – the overhanging willows and submerged bushes always provide shelter for the perch family. They just love the maze of underwater branches. A shoal of large dace are stationed mid stream in the shallows lined up facing the full flow until disturbed. These places are all noted for when the new fishing season begins next month.

The rabbits who in winter were often only evident by their droppings are now regularly seen. Their cosy burrows have perhaps become less inviting. The new warmth also means that other animals can be more easily spotted.; The friendly field mice will pay you a visit if you stay still long enough. (Sometimes when fishing I have found these same fellows feeding in my ground bait bowl and within minutes of being tipped out they have returned for second helpings!) A timid family of hedgehogs have condescended to wake up and begin their quest for food. A solitary deer has been spotted but in an instant it has disappeared as if by magic.

Sometimes only noises are evident. The welcoming early morning and evening serenade of birds is back. The high pitch bark of a fox is heard. Intermittent rustling in the undergrowth and plops into the water also prompt the imagination and add to the intrigue as to who else is out there.

(After dark would you get the willies?)

There is still much waiting to happen. Every day something new or different can be seen and enjoyed. At home even my compost heap has now become a source of pleasure as with careful attention it will soon provide me with a supply of red worms to use as bait in the months to come !

Ivor

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