

## Letter to the Editor

Dear Ed. I simply had to send a couple of lines to express my sadness at the demise of Hazel Sheldrik She rang me following my last article in Village Life, regarding the ‘Pinfold’ that was in operation many years ago. It seems that her Great, Great Grandfather was at one time in charge of it and his job title was ‘Pinder’.

Hazel and I chatted on the phone and it turned out that she knew my family well, and I hers after getting past her married name. She went on to invite me round to talk over village history some more, and I’m so glad I went. We mardled about local people and places and she went on to show me lots of super old photos, the like of which still exist in so many cupboard and drawers.

I enjoyed my visit more than I can say and was looking forward, at her invitation, to going back for more at a later date. I was shattered then when I heard the next day that Hazel had died that very night.

At this loss I am of course saddened for all her friends and relations, but it painfully reminds me that so much of our social history is on the brink and is in danger of being lost for all time. Hazel, ‘God Bless her’ in sharing her memories with me has made an invaluable contribution to the log of our Heritage.

**Mike Coley (Pog)**

### Charities

#### Allotment Rents.

The clerk will be at the main gate on Saturday 8th of October between 2.00pm and 2.30pm to collect the allotment rents.

#### Education Grants.

Grants are available to students of further education, university, college and other specialised courses, up to the age of 20.

Please apply in writing to Mrs. J. Norris, 25 West End Northwold. Tel:728296.

### **Graeme and Jan Cooper who recently celebrated their Silver Wedding Anniversary**



*Congratulations and best  
wishes from all Family and  
friends. And from Village  
Life.*

# Village Life

NORTHWOLD & WHITTINGTON

## Northwold Has A World Champion



### Jason with The Coveted Trophy

**Jason Cooper** has won the World Superstox Stock Car Championship. On Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2005 at Wimbledon Stadium he lived out his dream to beat the best in the world and carry off the coveted trophy. As he says:-

“I have been racing on short oval tracks since I was ten years old, firstly in Mini Stox, then after I was 16 in Superstox.

I have been supported throughout by father Graeme, cousin Darren and other members of the families in the village including the Jenkinsons who mechanic at race meetings. Other companies also sponsor me including Geoff Roberts and Steven Eyles. I Can’t thank the team and sponsors enough for what they’ve helped me to achieve.

Of the race itself:- I had to keep a cool head in the early laps when a series of pile ups eliminated several competitors. Then I had to keep the pressure on to pursue the early leader, Steven Jackson, until he lost control and hit the barrier with 10 laps to go. I took over the lead and never looked back.



### Jason in Action

## St. Andrew's Church Christmas Tree Festival Sunday 11th December

Any group, street, individual etc. who would like to sponsor a Christmas tree in church, will be most welcome. Please let Brenda (728565) or Jackie (728571) know by FRIDAY 28TH OCTOBER, so that the trees can be ordered.

**Issue October 2005**

Copy date for the next issue is;  
**23rd October 2005**  
copy@northwold.net  
Tel. 01366 728233

**Northwold W.I** members spent a very relaxing evening in August in the company of Mr. Boulton

who entertained us with a musical trip through the Broads. In September Miss Reed came and regaled us with her poetic look on everyday matters. This caused many smiles as we all recognised the truth in several of her tales.

Our Lunch Club is going from strength to strength. In July we dined at Thompson Chequers and in August 18 members lunched at Lynford Hall. There's talk of a Chinese meal in September ..... The next few weeks will see us attending neighbouring Institutes and Groups for Harvest Suppers , Quiz nights and our Group meeting.

We are also involved in helping at the village Funday event which is planning to provide play equipment for the children on the Recreation Ground and we are supporting the Macmillan Nurses with the coffee day appeal - only we are holding afternoon tea.

Future plans are also in hand for our 68th birthday party celebrations in November and a trip to the Theatre Royal in January.

**Brenda**

## Northwold Spiritualist Group

Meetings in The Village hall for October, 2005.  
Meetings on alternate Fridays at 7.30pm. All welcome.

14th October. Peter Fox

28th October. Gloria Brown

Tel: Peter on 01440 702791  
Eileen on 01366 728289

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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.



The start of another school year has been as busy and eventful as ever.

We are delighted to welcome lots of new children into Reception and several others across the school. We are delighted to have them with us and hope they and their families will enjoy their time with us.

At the end of the first week we were delighted to take part in The Produce Show. Lots of the children won prizes but all of them took part with enthusiasm. Thank you to members of the community who invite us to take part in the show and encourage the children.

Last week we once more went to Harvest Festival at St Andrew's Church. The children had all prepared some thing for the service and it was a delightful celebration. Our thanks to Mrs.Ayres and Miss Luckman who make us so welcome and to Revd. Kightley who spoke to the children.

Throughout last week we were privileged to have Peter Kavanagh in school with us every day. He is an author and illustrator of children's books and the children enjoyed working with him. We were pleased to welcome students and staff from Methwold High School on the Friday afternoon to work alongside our children and the artist. All the children gained a great deal from this experience. This morning Year Five and Six pupils have been to Ely Cathedral

on a singing tour. It was a new and fantastic experience for us, especially the singing in the Lady Chapel. The awe and wonder felt by us all was truly amazing.

Our congratulations to Alys Ward who was 'highly commended' in a poetry competition and is invited to a reception with Stephen Fry at Norwich City! Well done Alys!

Links workshops have once again started on Wednesday afternoons and our first Charity Morning is on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> October at 10.a.m. All parents and friends are welcome to attend this event!

## Marion Dawe

<u>Church Diary October, 2005</u>	
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> October</b>	11am.Holy Communion. St Andrew's, Northwold
<b>9<sup>th</sup>. October.</b>	11am. Morning Prayer, StAndrews, Northwold 9.30 am. Holy Communion, All Saints, Wretton
<b>16<sup>th</sup> October</b>	8am. Holy Communion, St. Andrew's, Northwold 9. 30 am. Service of the word, Christ Church, Whittington
<b>23<sup>rd</sup>, October.</b>	11am. Morning Prayer, St Andrew's, Northwold 9. 30am. Holy Communion. Christ Church, Whittington
<b>30<sup>th</sup> October.</b>	11am. Benefice Service, St. Andrew's, Northwold



### Teaching Basic English

Sabah Parks Marine Research Unit by collecting data (coral

condition, fish and invertebrate counts) for the coral reef monitoring programme for Sabah Parks. After two dives I unfortunately suffered from quite bad motion sickness (just my luck) and was too sick to continue (gutted)! I spent the week acting as group leader though and organised our food and equipment for trekking.

effort by Sabah Parks to promote this remote and pristine area as an eco-tourism destination. During the trek we stopped in remote communities to assist on local projects and experience village life. We trekked through paddy fields which was awesome and I got to wash in the most beautiful rivers I have ever seen. We did however have to eat rationed food as we had to carry it all! This was hard work, I have never been so hungry and was completely sick of eating porridge and bean feast. I was also shocked when I got home to realize that I had lost a stone!

We then left the island and spent twelve days trekking 32km across the Crocker Range from Tikalod to Inabong passing through several remote villages on the way. During the trek, my group helped upgrade the trail through the dense rainforest as part of the ongoing

This phase finished with the 4095m climb to the top of Mt. Kinabalu! We managed to get to the summit for sunrise which was absolutely breathtaking and extremely satisfying. I still can't believe I got to the top of the highest mountain in South East Asia! The exhilarating climb passes through five different temperate zones from a dense rainforest to a barren alpine landscape and was absolutely freezing at the top.

The whole expedition was so so surreal and I can't put into words how amazing it was to experience the things that I have experienced this summer. I just want to thank everyone who made this all possible, yet again everyone in the village has been really kind and extremely generous with donations. I really do appreciate all the help I received. I have hundreds more photographs and am more than happy to show them to anyone who is interested!

Once again many thanks,

Molly

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**Molly Waring Reports On Her Charity Work In Borneo.** As told by Molly in her own Words

Wow, where do I begin? As you are all probably aware back in July I travelled to Borneo in South East Asia where I spent seven weeks working for the youth development *Raleigh International*.

I was quite anxious as to what to expect when I arrived in South East Asia, as I had not travelled out of Europe before. Travel guides and Internet research gave me a bit of an insight into Malaysian culture but the prospect of “the real thing” was still quite scary. However, from day one in Borneo I felt that I was always learning new things about the indigenous customs of the country. *Raleigh’s* host country venturers were all really friendly and welcomed us with a local song and



**Laving a water Pipe line**

some traditional Malaysian dancing.

You couldn’t help but learn about Malaysian culture, it was such a big part of what Raleigh is about and cultural awareness was included within most activities. Our induction week was spent at ‘Jungle Camp’, an outdoor adventure activity centre that backed on to the Kiulu River. The week comprised of Ray Mears’ style jungle survival training! We learned what it’s like to brave the elements, how to cook on fires, use field radios, practice first aid, how to make porridge without burning it, and learned how to build a jungle hammock or ‘basher’ to ensure the most comfortable and undisturbed

night’s sleep possible!

As well as it being extremely fun it was also extremely informative and from this I felt that I gained a great insight into Malaysia, the country, its history and the people!

I was then placed in my first group and spent six hours driving cross-country in a pick up truck to the very remote Kampong Saguan. There we were to spend three weeks installing a Gravity Water Feed System as the Kampong currently relied on rainwater as well as taking water from the Kinabatangan River which is polluted and causes ill health amongst the community.

This remote and under developed kampong is situated in the centre of Sabah in the Tongod district. The community has approximately 530 inhabitants of Sungai Makiang origin living in traditionally built housing of bamboo and leafed roofing. In some houses there are up to 2 families co-habiting. The population is predominantly Christian. Subsistence farming is practiced with hill rice grown on a rotational basis on nearby land. A secondary source of income comes from a small amount of rubber tapping.

The headman of the kampong wrote to PACOS Trust in November 2004 requesting assistance in constructing a Gravity Water Feed System. When we arrived the villagers all turned out to greet us and were very excited about our arrival. Work began immediately and during the first week we trekked 3km through the jungle every morning to get to the located water source.

We had to collect hundreds of rocks so that we could dam the river and

then built a platform for the water tanks to rest on. We spent the rest of the time laying the piping, of which there was a hell of a lot and then had to dig it all into the ground.

We worked alongside the locals from 8am – 1pm then spent the afternoons teaching English lessons to the adults and children, playing different group sports and participating in cultural activities.

Living within a community for a period of time like we were gives you so many opportunities to grasp life true Malay style. With no electricity and obviously no running water we slept in our mosquito nets on a concrete floor, washed in a small, brown river and dug a 5ft hole in the ground for our toilet. It was good fun and makes you realise just how much you take for granted! The Kampong invited us to join in with so many activities such as rubber tapping, basket weaving and even tapioca wine making. The locals loved the fact that we were so excited about their everyday tasks and we just couldn’t believe we were able to partake in them. Our ladies footy team also proved to be a big hit, maybe because they were so good at it and we were so rubbish! On our last day in the Kampong we organised an Olympics for the kids which was a huge success and was a wonderful way to say goodbye! They were so sad to see us go, even though a new group would be arriving to finish the work. On our last night they threw us a farewell party in which they all made us gifts and presented them to us individually. It was so overwhelming, I honestly didn’t want to leave. I also got proposed to which was the highlight of my night, I declined the offer but it was nice all the same.

My second phase then began and I was lucky enough to spend six days living on the island of Mamutik which is part of the Tunku Abdul Rahman Marine Park. There we were involved in a SCUBA diving conservation program in partnership with Borneo Divers and Sabah Parks. After undertaking SCUBA training, my group assisted the

**The Great Memorial Cricket match**

On Bank holiday Monday the long awaited cricket match between Northwold Cricket Club and The Chairman’s select X1 took place. The game was played in memory of the late Ian McDowell who sadly died earlier this year. The Cricket Club batted first, and were somehow restricted to just over 160. Bearing in mind that most of the fielding side were in their 50’s 60’s or in one case, “Smithy” who admits to being 76, (Pictured bowling his slow left arm spinners), not such a huge target.

By the time that the Chairman’s team, went in to bat, Adrian and his team were well into producing a delightful barbeque. David, one of the openers missed his first ball and was bowled, combined with the catch he dropped in the field, made it a memorable trip all the way from Cornwall. But they got their heads down and slowly but surely grafted their way to a brilliant victory.

The two umpires were seen congratulating each other on their splendid performance, but I doubt if anybody else did..

They say the main reason for this result was to some extent due to the presence of a young man known as “Harry”.

One man was conspicuous by his absence. But if he was looking down on this event he would no doubt be happy with way his old contemporaries performed, probably finding little to disagree with.

**Altogether a good day in memory of a good man..**



<b>Bowls Club 100 Club Draw for August 2005</b>		
1 <sup>st</sup>	R. Proctor.	£50
2nd	K. Woods	£25
3rd	B. Ayres	£15
Sylvia		Ed.

Apologies to Sylvia this was accidentally omitted from the last issue.

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**Pre School**  
**From Claire Cater**



The Children at Pre-School have had a busy start to this term, starting with making sunflowers for the produce show. They used yellow tissue paper and seeds with 1st prize going to AnnaKate, 2nd prize to Bethany and 3rd prize to Rachel. Well done to all the children that took part.

The children were also invited to the church along with Tots & Co for a Harvest Festival Service. This was given by Mrs Dawe, after the children had presented the church with their gifts they took part in the service and enjoyed themselves. Thank you Mrs Dawe.

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 call 728804.

The Pre-school opening hours are as follows:  
Mon 9am – 12pm  
Tues 9am – 3pm  
Wed 9am – 3pm  
Thurs 9am – 3pm  
Fri 9am – 12pm

**Claire**



Northwold  
Playground Project

Thanks to all who came and supported the Funday on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> September. We had a fantastic time and managed to raise over £1300 towards our playground funds. The sun smiled on us all day and we had a great turnout. The day kicked off with the duck race at the common, organised by Haeli and family. None of the ducks escaped or were shot at or harmed. Thanks to all who sponsored the ducks. The chicken on the recreation ground helping with Sheena’s chicken plop game was also in safe hands and after doing “the business” was safely returned. At the Rec everyone was very busy – the WI were doing the teas, Langley’s kindly did the ice cream, Claire Cater was face painting, Bev Eyres doing balloons,Eve doing hair braiding and much, much more. Lillian and Jane with the Brownies organised the family sports which everyone enjoyed. Mark, Allen &

Terry did a great job on the BBQ. Tina and Paul were great sports as well. Thanks to everyone who baked cakes for Christine on the cake walk or who helped in any way. Fizz and Spiderman made special appearances and our other local celebrity (Holly) made a live broadcast on the radio (for a small fee donated to the playground you can have Holly’s signature!!) The day was such a success because of the support given by local businesses and individuals who donated lots of prizes and money and we also thank everyone who came down on the day – we hope you enjoyed it too – we are all very grateful. We also would like to thank Caroline Whiting who really sorted us out and stopped us from cancelling the whole event the week before!!! We had Methwold Fire Brigade on hand for emergencies. Luckily there were none, while Mr Booty’s St Johns escaped having to deliver babies that were due on that day. Unfortunately is doesn’t stop here for

trying to get more money in for the playground. Our grants committee have been busy bees submitting g r a n t applications so we are keeping our f i n g e r s crossed on those. Also Holly, who never sits still, is compiling a calendar so if anyone has anymore pictures please contact her on 01366 727759 If you would like to know more about the project please call Carrie 01366 727344 / Holly 01366 727759 On behalf of the committee we would also like to express our sympathy to Jane and Terry and the rest of the Sheldrick family on the sad loss of their mother Hazel on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> September.



others of God’s creatures could not understand. Our cat torments the mice or moles that it catches, without knowing it – but I do – so my meat eating and my other ‘animal’ instincts have to be moderated at all times by my understanding of Love and of caring. This moderation is partly the result of development – historical development – the extent of the moderation is progressive. It is no good us now in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century complaining of the (to us) unbelievable cruelty of times past – possibly even of other cultures that exist today. We will probably all be vegetarians in times to come – maybe the lion will learn to be so too and the Biblical prophecy of the lion lying down with the lamb will come to pass – but we are not there yet. In the meantime we can only do our best to care for God’s Creation as best we can, without mentally crucifying ourselves because we crush insects and plants every time we go for a country walk. Eventually we may be able to effectively subscribe to such high standards of care – but not yet. For now we should try to advance the standards that we have to higher and better levels. In this way, we will actually learn to know and to appreciate the beauty of Creation more and more. We will also unconsciously reveal more and more of our own beauty. Wordsworth wrote a poem with an impossible title – ‘Ode on Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Childhood’. I was told some years ago by a family friend who was an Anglican priest that aspects of this poem are heretical from a Christian standpoint – and it is

the passage to which he took exception that I wish to quote – if it is heretical in word, it is not in Spirit!  
*Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:  
The Soul that rises with us, our life’s Star,  
Hath had elsewhere its setting,  
And cometh from afar:  
Not in entire forgetfulness,  
And not in utter nakedness,  
But, trailing clouds of glory do we come  
From God, who is our home:  
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!*  
If we can accept this version of our birth and our origins, then who can doubt that at that point we are beautiful. And the same applies to all of God’s Creation.

The poem goes on to describe how we become soiled by our lives, imprisoned by our badness. But nothing changes our fundamental nature. We tend to characterise some people as just evil through and through – we think of Hitler, Stalin, Milosevic and Saddam – but that really is too easy. What they did may have been inexcusably evil, but we cannot understand the reasons for them becoming like that – and we have to understand that inside they were still the pure human beings that they were at the moment they were born with Souls trailing clouds of glory from God. I like to remember that cynical, nasty man in Charles Dicken’s ‘A Tale of Two Cities’ – Sidney Carton. While not being of the evil calibre of the men named

above, he was a rather nasty piece of work. But in the end that innate core of loving goodness emerges – and for the first time that he can remember he discovers that he is beautiful. By one act of love and caring, he totally redeems himself and throws off the viciousness that has always seemed to be his cloak. Those who have read the book will remember its last words – spoken by Sidney Carton as he awaits execution –  
*It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done;  
It is a far, far better rest that I go to, than I have ever known.*

It is for us all to remember our origins and to reflect on our destinations and to simply be our true selves in our relations with other people and with all of God’s creation. If you doubt your beautiful origin, you might care to think of a one line thought that Ralph Wright had. His brother was Abbott of Ampleforth, who wrote that ‘This prayer attracts me because it highlights the truth that only God understands the uniqueness which is each one of us’. Ralph wrote that when God made you there was silence for five minutes. Then God said ‘How come I never thought of that before?’

Keith MacLeod  
Licensed Lay Minister

Owing to a shortage of space the results of the Produce show will be in the next months edition Ed.



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# Keith MacLeod's Monthly Report

September 2005 Anglican Church Letter

The world is a beautiful place. Christians believe that we are made in the image of God and so we are beautiful as well. I don't believe the aphorism that beauty lies in the eye of the beholder, if that means that it lies ONLY in the eye of the beholder. Real beauty is not superficial at all – it is what you make of yourself. That statement is not accidental. All Christians – probably most theists – believe in a Creator God – and God knows that all he created is beautiful, however much dirt we cover ourselves in, however much we try our hardest to be less than beautiful.

So, we may appear less than beautiful to those whose perception is limited to our appearance at any particular moment. Actually most of us find ourselves less than beautiful, as we look back at the things we have thought and done. But God is more forgiving and sees the real us whether we like it or not.

True happiness lies in knowing ourselves well enough to begin to comprehend God's vision of us. The trick, of course, lies in getting to know ourselves that well – not easy, because typically we are extremely good at keeping ourselves hidden, even from ourselves. Perhaps beauty really does lie in

the beholder, because the only way to see ourselves as beautiful is to discover that others see us in that way and to learn to see ourselves through their eyes. Mother Teresa was certainly not beautiful in the glamour mag sense by the time that she became famous throughout the world, but she was beautiful in every other sense because she cared for others and had not a care in the world for herself.

If we care for God's Creation enough, then we will reflect that beauty in ourselves and our own beauty will shine through. I am not an avid environmentalist or a member of the Green Party – I like meat, just as others of God's creation like meat, but I dislike cruelty, in a way that

# Rita's Ramblings

Our editor has the patience of a saint – having to remind me about copy dates yet again!! I can only blame the passing of the years – the days go so quickly and the months rapidly pass one into another. So, apologies to you Michael.

Our building work is all but finished now – thank goodness. It was certainly not an easy time but we are all very pleased with the end result. Although loud cheers were heard when the cement mixer was removed there was even more jubilation when the Portaloo was manhandled onto the back of a lorry. Suddenly, the garden seemed a much more inviting place to be. Now my work will begin in earnest as I adjust various flowerbeds and paths to maximise the potential of new outlooks. It will also give me the opportunity to re-site a couple of nest boxes for the birds. I'm not completely sure whether our feathered friends appreciate my efforts in providing potential accommodation sites, as they seem to have done very well for themselves this year. In fact 3 pairs of blackbird nested in the honeysuckle and we managed to see the youngsters grow day by day. I later found another 2 nests empty – one low down in a spiraea bush and seemingly quite exposed to predators. Hopefully, the occupants succeeded in their quest to raise a family or two. I have been disappointed in the number of swallows settling on the overhead electricity wires this year. Normally

we see probably close to a hundred preening themselves for that long journey south – but this year I probably saw less than a dozen. Maybe I was just in the wrong place at the wrong time – I hope so as it would be a great pity if they did not return next year to treat us to their beautiful song and their aerial antics.

Those of you who have read these ramblings over several months will remember that I took Bonnie to Puppy Classes in Kings Lynn. Recently, I saw some more training classes advertised, this time in Swaffham, and duly enrolled us both. Bonnie gets really excited beforehand and it is as much as I can do to hold her attention but we are both getting there slowly. Fortunately the classes are not very large and we all have the opportunity to put theory into practice – and then find out what we are doing wrong! It can be very difficult though when one of the other dogs spends the first half of the lesson barking. Fortunately, it was then taken outside the room and given some individual attention from one of the helpers but we could still hear it through the door. The course lasts for 11 weeks and although we have been to 3 of the classes most of the training, so far, is reinforcing all those things we learned at puppy classes. This week we have had to teach our dogs a new trick – I have tried to teach Bonnie to roll over on the command 'Roll over'. When she learns to do this on command Nigel will, no doubt, extend the phrase to 'Would you rather be a pilot or roll over'? As he used to be a navigator he is looking forward to demonstrating this trick to his pilot friends when they see us!

Depending on how Bonnie gets on throughout the course I may consider going on to the intermediate and advanced classes in the future. Although there is nothing to stop me training her myself it is useful to get some expert advice every so often and it also gives me an incentive to actually practice every day – after all who wants to make a fool of themselves in front of other people? It is a moot point though, who is being trained? Is it the dog or the owner? Every time Amber wants to go out into the garden she barks. One of us will then go and open the door and out she goes. So, the million pound question is have we trained Amber to bark to go out or has she trained us to open the door when she barks? Answers to the editor! No doubt you will get to hear about Bonnie's efforts in future ramblings, but for now I must get a few more treats in my hand and carry on with 'heel', 'sit', 'lie down' and that all important 'roll over'.

Until next month, take care

Rita

# Whittington

Halloween Quiz at Whittington Church on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> October. 7.30pm.  
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Our Past According To POG Aka Mike Coley



We in the village have always been a well educated lot, well for the past hundred years or so we have been. And this was in fact due, in no small measure to an extraordinary act of altruism by a woman called ‘**Caroline**’.

Caroline was the wife of Charles Norman who happened to have been the Rector here for about 40 years during the 1800s. It has to be said that the old term ‘**as poor as church mice**’ could hardly have been used to describe the Normans, however their being rather well to do was nothing but fortuitous to the inhabitants of Northwold at that time, and ever since of course.

Caroline Norman’s name appears on the large memorial to her and her husband that stands to the left of the lychgate, just inside the churchyard. However this good lady’s fame is assured in a far more tangible way, her memory is held in perpetuity as a result of a magnanimous bequest to the community at large. Her gift to the village was of the school that we all know now as the “**Norman School**” which has continued to serve us from well beyond any living memory.

Of course we did have a school prior to that and it was held in the building we know today as ‘**the Village Hall**’. The stone plaque that was once above the main entrance is now to be seen on the floor where the old Donkey stove used to stand. I well remember that as it gave off quite a heat in the winter when the snow was on the ground. However education only became free of charge to everyone as a result of the 1870 Education Act. Schooling before that time was charged for and no doubt there would have been many who missed out on even the most rudimentary learning as a result.

Caroline Norman’s gift to the village must have seemed quite spectacular, as indeed it was, comprising not only the ‘Big School’ that we all know and love, but of the Little School ( *the infant School* )down Hall Lane too. And it wasn’t just education that the

good lady was intent on bringing to her husbands flock, it was another highly prized facility for the community at large that subsequently came into being. It arrived in the form of what we still know as the ‘**Reading Room**’, ( *converted now into living accommodation* ). It eventually became redundant due to lack of use, ( *they do say, ‘use it or loose it’ you know* ) and it hadn’t been used significantly for it’s intended purpose for quite a number of years in the end. This despite the fact that it sported a full size snooker table as part of its attraction.

I remember two of the teachers from the Secondary Modern at Methwold using it for a game one night in the winter and I remember that one of them our own ‘Drew Muir’ as it happens, invited me and a friend to go in out of the cold to watch. I also vividly remember that his playing partner for the evening arrived shortly after and promptly told us to leave in no uncertain terms.

Drew was a thoroughly nice man, a Scotsman that attempted to teach us ‘Heathens’, English, ( *I wonder if it was that that sent him prematurely grey* ). The contrast between him and his opponent that night is best illuminated by their later professional achievements. Drew moved on and became a popular Head Master eventually, whilst ‘Scaz, well the only thing I remember about him was that he delighted in beating the boys with a cricket bat. **Little Git.** (*many of the teachers applied corporal punishment quite liberally at that time*)

The Reading Room Is situated right next door to the old infant school and occupies what had once been an old Farm House, dated 1635 ( *about the same vintage as many of our older properties in Northwold.*).

Mrs Norman’s endowment further include a library ( *not a lending library I think* ) containing some 150 books to be housed in that establishment. Later, between 1873 and 1880, another clergyman that succeeded the Normans, the reverend Richard Snowdon-Smith, gave a further bequest of books to the village. I

assume they were to be housed in the Reading Room also but about that I cannot be completely certain.

The fact that all these things formed part of a bequest , means that they were put into a charitable trust in order to ensure the fidelity of future management. However, the ‘**Best Laid Plans of Mice and Men**’ can so easily go astray, bearing in mind always that hindsight is a wonderful thing. I feel certain that we would all have done some things differently in our lives, had we known in advance what else may materialise as the years go by. .

Its said that the fine old Snooker table, which by all accounts was still in pretty good nick at the time, was eventually sold off in the end for the princely sum of a **Fiver**. The thing that qualifies this as a perfect example of ‘**Sods Law**’ is the fact that, within a year of it being sold, the BBC began televising ‘**Pot Black**’, the program that brought cue games to such prominence throughout the country.

Life is full of ‘**If Only’s**’ and here’s another group. With the subsequent leap in popularity of snooker and billiards, **if only** the old table had remained, and **if only** the potential of a combination of the Reading Room and the recently vacated ‘Little School building’ had been recognised, **and if only** imaginations had been exercised at that time, **well!**, what an asset we would have had in our midst today. The obvious thing for such a complex would have been a licensed club to add to our village amenities.

Not only would such an enterprise have utilised the existing premises, which would have been ideal for the purpose, but as the community at large would have benefited, it would have undoubtedly been in line with the thinking and aspirations of Caroline Norman, the original benefactor.

Well there y’go together, I hope that like me you’ll be **Looking Forward** to **Looking Back** again next time, till then,

Best Wishes Pog

Riverwatch By Ivor Hook

Heavy rain had been forecast but it seemed a nice morning so there I was alongside the river ready for a few hours fishing. My groundbait was in and almost immediately I had a fish. Then in the space of a few minutes the sky became black, a strong wind appeared.....followed by the predicted rain. I was forced to admit that I had got it wrong. But I was there and I was determined to stay. The rain fell and fell hard. However, perhaps because I was the only unfortunate person still outside, the gods of fishing must have taken pity on me as the fish not only continued to co-operate but they got bigger. I had found a shoal of large bream. They were obviously unconcerned by the torrential rain and for an hour or so I enjoyed terrific sport. Eventually I returned home, wet through, but the day had been good and the river Wissey had excelled itself yet again.

Bream are invariably a shoal fish so if you find one there are invariably others. They are not particularly attractive and very slimy to handle. However they do have an insatiable appetite and as a result grow to a fair size. They feed on the bottom and the only problem for the fisherman is to hold their attention with large helpings of worms, maggots or similar.

Autumn has definitely arrived. The temperature has dropped abruptly. Any sun is now a bonus. Days are shorter and the mornings misty. A wind is noticeable most days. Wet and changeable weather is predictable. The deeper sections of the river are already less clear as the flow increases. Reflections are disturbed by the

breeze. The brightness of summer has disappeared. Shortly the rife weed will die off and the seasonal debris will be swept down-stream. Assorted bees and butterflies are still busy amid the wild flowers but their days are now numbered. Inaccessible blackberry bushes are still laden with fruit. The red berries of the hawthorn provide the dominant colour along a wide stretch of bank. Everywhere bushes are overgrown in a tangled mass and block the narrow pathway. Activity in the water under an oak tree is a mystery until the plops are recognised as falling acorns.

The heat of summer reduces the activity of most animals and birds so a new season sees more wildlife again. A flight of ducks rise in formation and fly immediately overhead making their ceaseless noise. The disturbance unsettles the geese who likewise take off with a similar outburst of honking. However you know very well they will all soon return and land with the same commotion. Conversely, a pair of swans serenely patrol the reed beds. A while later the same swans are on the bank in their quest for food. Their enormous feet now make them look clumsy. Without warning a canoe appears. It glides effortlessly along and disappears equally as quick. The fleeting presence of another person disturbs the peace - until then I was lost in my own special world.

Although perhaps a contradiction each season is a favourite. The ongoing change is always welcome. Nature never stands still and likewise its enjoyment provides an endless pleasure.

Ivor

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