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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.

Editorial

Well here we are again back in harness. .  
Already the snowdrops are out in flower, and yesterday was so pleasant that the gnats were flying around over the allotments, getting ready to bite everyone come the spring, unless we get some cold weather before long.

Have you noticed how the nights have already started to pull out as the sun starts to get a little higher in the sky. If you want to measure the difference all you need to do is go up Pinfold Lane and look across to Bryan Cater’s yard. There is a telephone mast there and on the shortest days the sun does not get up to the top of the mast at mid day. But already it is well clear of the top, so things are on the up.

My Wife's Grandfather had sayings for all things. he used to say, "As the days lengthen the Cold Strengthen". And February "Fill Dyke black or white". We shall see !!

The Common is flooded again. It seems nowadays that as soon as we get a little excess of rain, then over goes the little river, usually in Riverside, which creates a lake of stagnant water on the adjacent meadows which will harbour the mosquitoes which will then bite you, as mentioned above.

I cannot understand that having been a daily visitor to the common for the last 30 odd years this didn’t used to happen. I fear that the rivers are so silted up, that they have lost their capacity to hold as much as they used to. Where are the dredgers?

It is sad to note that there is yet again a phantom dog which is turning Pinfold Lane into a No Go Area. One can excuse the odd one but this is an owner who is taking no notice at all. Come on now let's be a bit decent before it finishes up in a messy court case for someone. **ED**

Doesn’t it make you feel good to know there are still people out there who are good and honest.

On Friday of last week a person in the Village went to Stoke Ferry to buy some nuts and bolts from Bonnetts. On his return home he discovered that he had lost his wallet containing almost £100, driving licence, Credit cards Photographs and all the usual things that wallets hold.

On the following Saturday evening at around 8. 30 pm he heard a car draw up outside and a knock came on his door knocker, but he was unable to go to the door.

Later, when going to his hall he found his wallet had been put through the letter box with absolutely everything in tact.

Consequently we have no idea who the good person is, and the person who lost the wallet wishes to remain anonymous.

**BUT** the good person who returned the wallet knows, and at Village Life we are asked to offer our heartfelt thanks on behalf of the owner of the wallet.

When we hear so much about the negative things that go on it is nice to be able to report about something good.

Thanks whoever you are !!

Derek Johnson

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Northwold Little Normans Pre School

All the staff and parents would like to say “thank you” and “farewell” to Andrea Jolly who left the pre-school at the end of last term and wish her luck for the future. Congratulations to Angela Wortley who has been promoted to the position of Supervisor and Claire Goate who has been promoted to the position of Joint Assistant Supervisor.

Welcome to the new members of staff joining pre-school this term. Christine McLaren who is Joint Assistant Supervisor, Holly Sandford and Michelle Ellis who are Pre-School Assistants. A warm welcome also goes to all the new children joining us.

Thank you to everyone that attended the Bingo on 23 November 2007 in the Sports & Social Club, Northwold. A total of £376.70 was raised and this money has gone towards the purchase of a new playhouse for the children. A special thank you to those that donated prizes and to the Sports & Social Club for the party.  
There will be a coffee morning during

half term on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> February @ 10.30am in the Sports & Social Club. Donations of cakes and raffle prizes are welcome and if you can help, please leave any raffle prizes at the pre-school by Friday 8<sup>th</sup> February. Any cake donations can be taken to the Sports & Social Club on the morning.

Topics the children will be learning about this half term are different



cultures & the seasons.

School closes for half term on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> February and reopens on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> February.

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Warning

How much did you last fill up of central heating oil cost you ?  
Roughly 4 times as much as it did a few years ago.

In fact the value of oil is so great at the moment that organised gangs of thieves are moving around the countryside emptying the contents of people's storage tanks.

It may seem an involved business to take the oil from someone's tank but to these people it isn't anything of the sort. All tanks are vulnerable especially the plastic ones which offer little resistance to the tools which are needed to do this job.

Cordless power tools are the main item of equipment needed, as with a pump attachment it is surprising how quickly the job can be done.

Be vigilant, and if you know someone is at your tank dial 999.



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**Thanks to the terrific response there is now sufficient money to buy the chairs, but donations would still be welcome for the trolley to wheel them about on**

Heather Everett Brought me an interesting cutting which appears to be a Northwold parish Magazine of February 1933. Unfortunately it is not in a good enough condition to reproduce in it's original form so I have copied the text word for word, and inserted what was the rather impressive heading.



My dear Friends,

I am mindful as I write that by the time the March magazine appears, Lent will have begun. March 1<sup>st</sup> is Ash Wednesday. When it comes I trust it will find us with our minds made up as to how we shall keep it. To recall the object in view is to determine the method of observing it – viz: to gain more mastery over self and grow in usefulness to others. We can decide for ourselves what special rules we shall adopt, what we shall do without - fasting - and what we shall save to spend on others – charity- and what extra time we shall spend in reading the Scriptures and Prayers – Meditation.  
I trust you will all do your best to attend the special services.

Yours very sincerely,        **Arnold H Wells**

**Choir Concert.**

Please note that the above has been postponed until February 8th, at 7. 30.

**Christmas and the New Year**

We were delighted to see so many at the Holy communion on Christmas Day and New Years Day. It showed that our people are ready to make a special effort to meet their God. We trust that they did not go empty away, and we would very respectfully suggest that if they found that “ It was good for them to be there” they might like to make that effort a little more frequently. We are grateful to Organist, Choir, Ringers and Decorators for their valuable help.

**Mothers Union**

It was a great pleasure to see so many mothers present at the first special Service in the New Year to hear the Rector’s Message for 1933.

**The Sunday School**

Our Sunday School goes quietly on the even tenor of it’s way. We can review the past year with neither Dismay nor Elation. Our chief difficulty is to find assistant teachers to help Mrs Hornsby and Mrs Goodrich. Both Miss L. Upton and Mrs H. Simper have been very faithful and we are most grateful to them, but both have been compelled to resign. We badly need two new teachers. The winter treat at the Village hall on January 17<sup>th</sup> was a great success. The children all thoroughly enjoyed themselves and that meant that all the Staff and helpers did the same. Anyone in doubt about this should ask “The Jolly Miller”

*Can anyone remember about these times and if so, what is the reference to The Jolly Miller ??    Ed*

**St Andrew's Church**

**St Andrew’s Church Diary for February 2008**

Sun. 3<sup>rd</sup> 11am. Holy Communion  
Rev Terry

Wed 6<sup>th</sup> (Ash Wednesday)  
7 pm. Ashing. Rev Kightley

Sun 10<sup>th</sup>     11am     Matins.  
                 Keith McCleod

Sun 17<sup>t</sup>     11am Holy Communion  
                 Rev Kightley

Sun 24<sup>th</sup> 11am matins Keith McCleod

**March**  
Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup>(Mothering Sunday)  
11am     Holy Communion  
                 Rev Kightley

**Petty Vandalism at the Church**

It is reported that there has been another outbreak of petty vandalism in the Church Porch.

The Church belongs to the Village and generations of Northwold families have loved and respected it We shall not hesitate to report the matter to the Police if the vandalism continues

**Annual Christmas Tree festival**

Once again the Christmas Tree Festival was very successful. This year we had 25 trees all decorated by local villagers.

The lights from these, together with over 100 candles glowing throughout the church gave a warm and welcoming atmosphere to start our festive season at St. Andrews. The church was full for the annual carol service on the Sunday Evening. The service followed it's now traditional pattern beginning with Joseph Whiting singing Once in Royal David's City. This set the tone for a very enjoyable evening of poems, readings, soloists and the Breckland Hand bell ringers alternating with the Christmas Carols

Martin Chilvers again returned to the village to host the event and this year we were pleased to welcome The Venerable Jim Rone who read the Nativity Story and led the prayers for us. The congregation then enjoyed mince pies and mulled wine and a bit of a mardle before leaving our beautifully decorated church and wending their way home.

Our thanks to everyone who works so hard to make this happen each year. Once the trees have been delivered from Didlington Nurseries our local team of tree men trim, pot and set these up in the allocated places, sometimes having to move them around in different positions in the church until the 'organisers' are satisfied! This is all done with much good humour and a few aching backs. Then follows a frenzied few days

whilst the decorators work their magic on the trees.

It's always lovely to see who will do what with their tree and what will the children produce this year for their trees. Of course, after all the services and events over Christmas the inevitable happens and everything has to be taken down by the 6th January.

Again our army of helpers clear the church with the same good humour as they showed when preparing for the start of the celebrations of Christmastide.

Our grateful thanks to everyone involved.

As most of you are aware, we have a charity tree in the church which raises money for the East Anglian Children’s Hospice.

This year the donations for the tree amounted to £52. This was added to the amount raised from the Chris tingle service and so a cheque for £132 will now be sent from the people of Northwold towards the deserving cause.

A special "thank you" to Mr and Mrs Leaver of Wellington Lodge who generously gave us the Christmas tree for the Churchyard.

Thank you all again and we wish everyone a happy and healthy 2008.

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Feltwell ~ Methwold

Methwold Hythe

Mundford



Northwold Youth Club

It seems ages since we last reported on our activities – but Christmas and New Year Festivities tend to have this effect!

Our AGM was a brief, but constructive affair. The quiz that followed could not be described in the same way. Children and adults alike were tested on their memory with a version of “the Generation Game Conveyor Belt” and knowledge of different cartoon rabbits and hares was sadly lacking (particularly amongst the adults!) The winning team (Orange) was captained by Rebecca Steele and the runners up (Green Team) was captained by Sally Goodrham.

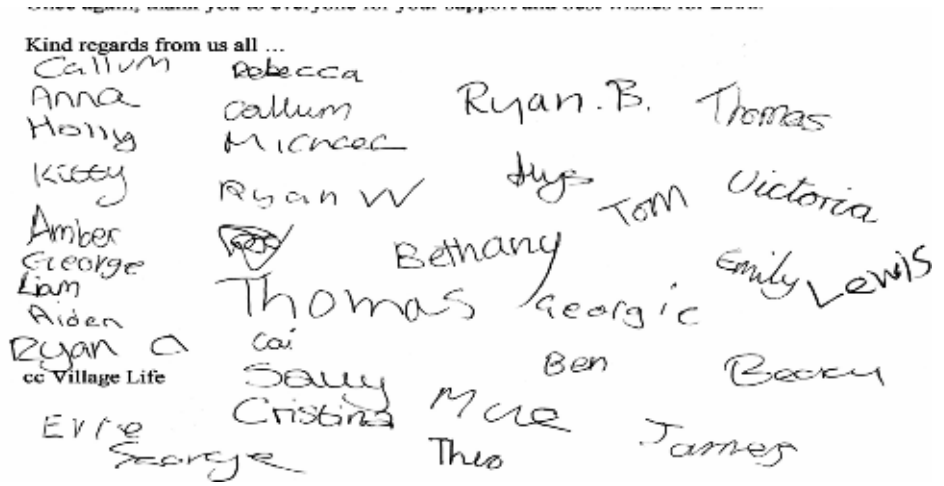
The last meeting of 2007 was the obligatory Christmas party. Thanks go to Christina and Mike for being the DJ hosts and to Santa for his surprise visit.

The first meeting of 2008 was kindly sponsored by Mr & Mrs Peate and was

a very informative session given by Mike Wabe, who told us everything we could wish to know about life in Medieval Times (circa 1175). With swords, axes, helmets and other exhibits on display the young members were enthralled with the lively presentation.

We are close to reaching full capacity for membership as 35 young members

A big thank you must go out to Santa, his helpers and Northwold Residents for the donation made during Santa’s visit at Christmas 2007. The money raised will be used to invite other demonstrators to ensure the young members get a varied itinerary over the next year.



attended our last meeting. With this number of children attending we do like to have a full complement of adult helpers. If any parent/grandparent/youth worker would like to join the team please do not hesitate to contact us! Anyone wanting further information or to join the club need to contact Sharron on 727675 or Jane on 728921.

Steve Freemantle

The Nija Morgan Health Column

Detox Treatment

This is a great time of year to have the No Hands Detox Treatment. Most of us have eaten too much over the Christmas season and being winter we tend to eat much more stodgy food. This tends to leave us feeling a bit on the bloated side, a few pounds heavier and for many a little less energy.

The Detox Treatment works mainly on two areas of the body the feet and the tummy area to work the colon. This stimulates the reflexes on the feet, especially the colon reflexes and the work over the colon stimulates the colon to get rid of waste efficiently helping to get rid of that clogged up feeling. The massage is very pleasant even though the work is quite deep, as the client you are always in control of how deep the massage goes working with your comfort levels on both the colon and reflex work.

Helping the system to work efficiently and getting rid of all that waste will help to increase energy levels. The massage actually helps to breakdown waste which has become stuck to the colon walls and helps the muscles to remain healthy so they push the waste material along and out of the body.

You can help yourself at home by drinking plenty of water, must be warm though so it goes into the bowel and eating enough fibre, fruit, veg and seeds. Avoid too much bread, pizzas etc.

The other real bonus about this Treatment is it’s a lot more pleasant than going for a colonic irrigation and you can have three of these 30 minute Detox Treatments for the price of a colonic irrigation.

Hope you all have a great 2008.

Nija



Before I begin my first article for Village Life I would like to say what a pleasure it is to be able to make a contribution and to thank everybody for the warmth of the welcome I have received in the first few weeks of my time at school.

Those two weeks have been very eventful and extremely enjoyable. The school staff had two training days before the children arrived and these were spent busily preparing for the term ahead. A highlight was our group First Aid training course from the St John Ambulance. After a morning of theoretical and practical training we, as a staff, feel confident that we are able to deal with all eventualities. I am sure it is of particular comfort to Mr Bowles that I was able to demonstrate my ability to check whether he is breathing and/or injured and then put him into the recovery position.

The children have returned to school with lots of energy and enthusiasm. They have benefited from a variety of extra curricular activities even at this early stage of the term. The Juniors have had some excellent tennis sessions which have been very well received. The infants have had a talk on Fire Safety from the Fire Service. As a result of conversations with the children and seeing some of their work, I feel that they have understood a great deal and have very developed plans about what to do in the event of a fire. The whole school enjoyed a talk from the RSPB, which has inspired us to collect Postage Stamps in order to save the Albatross –(should anyone have used stamps they no longer require, we have a collecting box in reception and would be very grateful).

The children also very much enjoyed a performance of the Pantomime Dick Whittington, from a local company of players, which has brought some lovely work out of Class 2, which can be seen on display in the school. We welcome visits! The most notable happening, of course, has been the residential visit to Kingswood, on the coast at West

Runton. Many of the juniors were able to go on the visit and had a fantastic time, taking advantage of activities like; canoeing, caving, climbing and archery to name but a few. It is so wonderful to enable children to experience activities that we just cannot provide in school, and remarkable to see children shine in other areas than the purely academic. My heartfelt thanks go out to Mr Bowles, Miss Webster, Miss Randell and Mr Whiting for their commitment and skill in ensuring a successful and worthwhile visit.

I must also pay tribute to the parents and children involved in the visit, as we had an interesting occurrence before the trip had even got underway. Our coach, due to problems we are no closer to understanding, turned up over an hour and a half late. Despite our best efforts, information was in very short supply and yet everyone was very supportive and understanding during a most infuriating wait. I must confess that, in the end, I rather enjoyed chatting to everyone over a hastily arranged cup of tea, and thought myself very lucky to be among such a sensible and thoughtful group of adults and children.

As I write I notice that the diary is quickly filling up and so I am very confident that my next instalment of school life will be full of activity and incident. My very best wishes to you all

Rob Hothersall

Thanks Rob for a very good report and welcome aboard.

In the next issue I will endeavour to do a profile on Rob so that the village knows a little bit about the new Headmaster before the Gunge tank event at the carnival.

Ed.(Past inhabitant of the gunge tank)

Don't forget !! Book early for Winston The singing Farmer, appearing at the village hall shortly. See front cover.

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## QUIZ AND SUPPER NIGHT

For all you budding Masterminds out there, the popular Quiz & Supper Night returns to the Sports & Social Club on Saturday, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2008 at 7:30pm.

Further details and tickets, priced £5.00 per person (inc supper) are available from:

Gary Cater – Tel. 727932  
David Lavender – Tel. 727111  
Sharron Freemantle – Tel. 727675

## Northwold Carnival

Don't forget the carnival this year is on **Saturday 7th June**. Any information can be obtained from Roger on **727694**.

But remember Roger works shift work so bear that in mind when phoning or knocking

## Northwold Spiritualists Meetings and events for February

We meet on Friday evenings at 7. 30 pm and on Saturdays at 7pm

Friday 1<sup>st</sup> James Cook and John Heigham

Friday 15<sup>th</sup> Shirley Cimelli

Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> Angie Morris.  
Clairvoyance Evening

For further enquires and information call Eileen on 01366 728289

## Bowls Club 100 Club Draw for the following months

### November 2007

Steve Freemantle	£ 20
Stephen Eyles	£ 15
Ketelyn Payne	£ 10

### December 2007

M Hull	£ 20
B Ayres	£ 15
J Haylock	£ 10

### January 2008

D Rust	£ 20
P Everett	£ 15
D Lanario	£ 10

From Sylvia. Wishing everyone a happy new year

Apologies to Sylvia from the editor for mislaying some of the previous results

Ed

## Northwold Art Club

### Report by Patsy Hood

The Northwold Art Group held a Life Drawing Workshop with Norfolk Artist Bob Larking as tutor at the Village Hall on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> December. The workshop was attended by 12 members who spent the day happily endeavouring to capture the poses presented by Judy the model. Lunch, which was provided by the Art Group and catered by Glenda Burton and myself, was well received and after a full meal and a glass or two of wine, the poses didn't seem so difficult. The day ended with a review of everyone's work by Bob. There will be another workshop taking place in January.

On Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> December the Art Group held its second Christmas Party at the Village Hall attended by members and their guests. Reg Siger (an artist and demonstrator) entertained us with music played on keyboard throughout the evening, except when we had a game of Bingo called by Mick Parfitt much to everyone's amusement, or should I say bemusement. Glenda and myself took this opportunity to thank the members for a great year and point out the full programme of events planned for the first quarter of 2008.

At the end of the evening Glenda and I were very touched and surprised to receive a bouquet of flowers each for our contribution to the Society during the year. Many thanks from us both; we look forward to seeing you all next January 10<sup>th</sup> for our first demonstration of the year by Christopher Hollick.

We started up again after the Christmas Break with a demonstration by professional artist Christopher Hollick. We had a super evening and Mr Hollick generously shared his techniques with us and we all went home very inspired. His wife Hillary brought along greetings cards, many of which featured scenes of Northwold, and these were well received. Our next demonstration evening is Thursday 7th February at 7pm at the Village Hall and everyone is welcome to come along (members or not) and see what it is all about. Jackie Jones, an artist from Newmarket will be demonstrating her technique painting horses and other animals in watercolour. The cost is £3 for the evening, which includes tea and biscuits. For more information please ring Patsy 727582 or Glenda 727018.

**Congratulations and best wishes to Samantha and Jake on the birth of their son....**  
**This means that from now on, on Thursday nights Jake will not only have to cook the meal- he will have to baby sit as well !!!!**  
**Ed**

## Thanks

**Doreen Gunstead and her family would like to express their thanks for all the messages of sympathy and the support that they received following the death of Ken.**

.....  
Ken was a familiar sight in the village walking his guide dogs. Even when he was not well I never heard him complain. I am sure he will be missed by a lot of people. Ed.

## Northwold W I

The December meeting for the Northwold WI was attended by 29 members. Following the Group's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday party last month at the Mulberry restaurant, a newspaper cutting had been discovered reporting the Group's 25<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations.

The speaker for the evening was Maureen Drake, who demonstrated the art of pastel pictures. Following this spellbinding demonstrations everyone enjoyed some birthday cake and a glass of wine, while the competition prizes and shield were presented.

Finally, the meeting presented Joan Gains with a table lamp in thanks for the many years that she has served as Treasurer for the Group.

On January 8<sup>th</sup> the Northwold WI gathered for their first meeting of 2008. There were 24 members present and following the normal business of the meeting every one was anxious to find out about the surprise speaker, a Miss Terri Guest! This turned out to be our very own Glenda Burton who gave a most fascinating talk on reading hands. We learned about the basic lines to be found on the palms and the characteristics indicated by the shape of fingers and nails. Everyone had a great time linking each others characters to hand, finger and nail shapes!

Next month's meeting will take place in the village hall at 7.15pm on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> February, when the speaker will be Gail Loopowitz, who will talk to us about Dichroic Jewellery.

Visitors and new members will be most welcome

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Our Past According To POG Aka Mike Coley



You know it’s been brought to my attention that over the past 3 years of trying to whet your appetites with matters concerned with things of interest from yesteryear and which especially appertain to our village, that’s Northwold of course, I have been somewhat remiss in including, to any great extent our cousins from Whittington. In my defence I can only say that my personal knowledge of our past, upon which I have drawn heavily for my articles thus far, is somewhat limited beyond Northwold itself, other than the times that I remember as a very small boy when my Dad worked as a lorry driver for Buckenham and Tucks who owned the properties opposite the Church, ‘The Maltings’. For a great many years Whittington, although being within the parish of Northwold, didn’t actually have a church of its own. The present church, opened in 1875, was and is called ‘Christ Church’. It, as well as the schools, village hall and reading room in Northwold were all built as a bequest from ‘Caroline’ in memorial to her husband the ***Rev Charles Manners-Norman.*** ( *Their combined stone was ultimately placed within the grounds of Northwold Church to the West of the lichgate* ) The Maltings in Whittington were a veritable hive of industry years ago and worked in conjunction with those buildings opposite to what had been the old ‘Bull’ public house near the river crossing in Stoke.

I rarely stray from those subjects that I don’t have first hand knowledge of when I put together my little rants, usually because I feel on pretty safe ground when writing from memory although I never pretended to be the fount of all KNOWLEDGE of course, it’s just that for the most part I know that the things that I put down are indisputably true, something that sadly cannot always be said when the information gleaned has been procured second hand, often regarding things that occurred before my time. Howsomever there comes a time when a little reliable corroboration is a welcome thing to augment ones own memories and thus, much of the corroborating evidence that supports various items in today’s little piece comes from a splendid old booklet that had been produced by a Victorian gentleman, One ‘Freddie Bush’( *himself of Whittington decent* )

*who died in 1984.* I can’t claim to have known the author directly but I was delighted to see that it had been edited by a lady whom I knew very well as she had been the senior mistress ( *known to us affectionately as Musical Min* ) at Methwold secondary school in my day, **Mrs Doris Coates.** ( *now the high school* )

Whilst flicking through the pages of this little book I’m happy to say that I was never tempted by the desire to plagiarise the content of it in any way, except to highlight the question posed therein regarding the name of ‘Whittington’ itself which is suggested may have originated as ‘**Whiting-town**’ due to the Lime burning industry that had thrived in that village at an earlier time. However the book certainly did put flesh on the bones of a good many of the well known tales and stories regarding Whittinton and Stoke ( all pre-dating the building of the very busy by-pass which culminates in the roundabout at the bottom of the hill and which connects the Thetford, Brandon and Lynn roads at this point. It’s hard to imagine nowadays but all this was at a time when **river traffic** was the major source of commerce to us all.

This was long before the roads were in any fit state for travelling upon generally and even before the railways ( *the Great Eastern*) took hold throughout Norfolk, which of course they most certainly did, hence the station at Stoke Ferry. The Lynn News and Advertiser reported that in August 1951 there were ten thousand passengers in one day between Kings Lynn and Hunstanton alone, sadly even that busy little gem fell prey to the infamous ‘Beeching Axe’ in the end.

Previously the only modes of transportation available to us, apart from the river that was widely used back then, were of the Horse-drawn variety. It was the difficulty they encountered thus that lead to one of the ‘hard to imagine’ stories that did the rounds long ago, one that concerned the Whittington hill itself. It was said that this hill, the steepest in the district by all accounts, had been so sheer at one time as to cause difficulty to horses and drivers alike, when trying to control any heavily laden vehicles, especially when trying to make a safe decent of that precipitice incline. As a result it was decided eventually to excavate it to some large extent to help alleviate the problem. Hard to imagine nowadays of course

but not so when we remember that even many of our major rivers ( *Like the Great Ouse had been re-routed by hand previously* ) all without machines to help with the donkey-work back then.

I have included this unlikely tale however as the aforementioned booklet actually gives some credence to the story of the trimming down of the hill, although not directly you understand but by virtue of the piece concerning the somewhat ornate road bridge in Stoke, situated by the old Bull Public house, against the river and opposite another of Buckenhams granaries. This bridge had to be replaced for similar reasons it seems to the problems encountered by horse drawn vehicles further along at Whittington. The bridge had originally been constructed with river freight very much in mind, hence the steep nature of the hump that certainly facilitated traffic passing beneath it but did little to aid anything hoping to cross over the top. Even smaller road vehicles like tumbrels ( *which were widely used then* ) all of which relied entirely on animal power for their propulsion, often proved too much for most of the hapless creatures that struggled to negotiate this seemingly perfectly normal construction by the old causeway along that stretch of the highway.

Since the coming of the roundabout the road itself has been re-routed and earlier public-houses situated there, like so many of their ilk, ( *like the four out of the five we had in Northwold* ) met their sad demise.

Well there we go together, I hope you all found it interesting to dwell upon a little of the past with Whittington in mind, and if you are a native of that place yourself I hope it gladdened your heart to have at least some of your roots exposed for all to see.

Take care of yourselves and of each other everybody, as we venture into yet another year of rural delights. Just to live here is a delight and I hope it always will be, don’t go trying to change it for something else that isn’t ‘Northwold’ , **be glad for what it is.**

All the very best of the New Year, until next months bit of squat gets into print at least, when I will most certainly be **Looking Forward** to **Looking Back** with you all again.

A very happy 2008 to you each and every one,

Pog

Riverwatch

by Ivor Hook

The dog fox was fast asleep. It was the middle of the day and certainly not the right time to venture out. He lived in a cosy hole hidden away in the middle of a large mass of bramble hedge. The tangle of branches and thick undergrowth provided the perfect protection he needed. On one side were endless meadows and at the rear the upper reaches of a river. From the entrance he could survey his surroundings whilst the river was the marker he followed to find his way home when travelling near and far on his quest for food. Most days were just lazy but at night the old fox was always afoot. He would follow the hedgerows and only rarely would he use the footpaths and farm tracks.

As evening approached he became fully alert. Pangs of hunger stirred in his stomach but he waited for complete darkness to arrive before he left his den. This evening he trotted off at a fast pace but regularly stopped to check out any foreign sound or smell. There was no wind so his senses were fully alert. He passed several stubble fields and then suddenly froze. He flattened himself against the ground and only his bright eyes betrayed his presence. Two rabbits in the same field also stopped - they too had sensed something. Eventually the fox raised himself, paused and chased at the rabbits but with the comfort of distance and fast reactions they quickly disappeared down an unseen hole.

Undeterred our fox continued on his way. The ground was now glistening

and signalled the coming of a frosty morning. Full of purpose he stopped again and listened. The only sound was a far away owl. He carried on his way and came to a range of derelict farm buildings. The rusty corrugated tin structure had collapsed long ago and just beyond was a small stagnant pond. A clear sky hosted a full moon which cast a ghostly reflection onto the water. Beside the pond was a grassy clearing where ducks and geese frequently gathered - their smell was still in the air. The presence of our friend put a cock pheasant up into the air. It screeched and clattered as its long tail just cleared a row of bushes. This lonely place was well known to the fox. He bristled with confidence and sat completely motionless. Eventually a handsome drake-duck appeared and paraded backwards and forwards at the waters edge. The fox’s ears twitched but otherwise he remained quite still and just watched. Then with great deliberation and with a single movement he leapt forward. There was a splash, a long feeble quack and the fox had found his dinner.

With the duck firmly clamped in his mouth he scented the river and found his route home. Assuming an air of importance he trotted past endless rows of reed beds. The hard frost was now turning everything crisp and white. Natural instinct continued to make him cautious but when he somehow disturbed a large flock of sleeping geese he was unconcerned. With great noise some took to flight while others slid down the muddy banks into the water to escape - they were unaware our fox was fully satisfied. He continued to follow the many bends of the river Wissey but

gave wide berth to a concrete road bridge. He then skirted the village of Northwold, which was fast asleep, and within minutes he was home.

Apart from a few bones, some feathers and a pair of webbed feet the duck was soon devoured. The fox then curled up with his nose resting on his tail and a long deep sleep took over.

Ivor

Anyone for Table-tennis?

With the aid of some grant funding, the Youth Club has managed to purchase two Table-Tennis tables - one full size and one ¾ size.

We are keen to make sure the equipment gets full use, not restricted to just Youth Club evenings, so the tables will be available at the Sports & Social Club on Friday evenings.


For anyone interested, the Club (and bar) is open on Fridays from 8:00 pm.

Annual membership - £5 per adult; £2.50 per child.

We look forward to seeing you there!!

I think this the game that I call "Ping Pong." Personally I have no objection to the "Ping"

Ed

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