

Dave's Kitchen

By our Resident Chef,
David Wheatley

This week Dave has handed over the reins or should it be utensils to Tracey who has what we are informed is an irresistible delicacy

Crunchy Jumbles

- ingredients
(makes 36)
- 115g/4oz butter or marg at room temperature
225g/8oz sugar
1 egg
5ml/1tsp of vanilla essence
175g/6oz plain flour
2.5ml/1/2 tsp bicarbonate of soda
pinch of salt
115g/4oz of rice crispies
1 cup of milk chocolate chips
1. preheat the oven to 180 c/350 f

- gas mark 4/ lightly grease 2 baking sheets.
2. with an electric mixer, cream the butter or marg and sugar together, until light and fluffy. beat in the egg and vanilla.sift over the flour, bicarbonate of soda and salt and fold in slowly.
3. add the cereal and chocolate chips. stir to mix thoroughly.
4. drop spoonfuls of the mixture 2.5-5 cm/1-2inch apart on the prepared sheets. bake for 10-12 minutes until golden. transfer to a wire rack to cool.
- be careful not to over bake and burn them for alternative use coconut, raisins.
- Saffron Potato Topped Cod
- Serves 4
preparation time 10mins

- cooking time 25mins
- 1lb 4 oz potatoes, peeled
10 spring onions, trimmed
4 tbsp olive oil
6 tbsp milk
good pinch of saffron
4 portions of cod loin/or other white fish
1. heat oven to 220 c/425 f/gas 7
2. cut potatoes and cook in slightly salted water for 15 mins or until tender
3. meanwhile finely slice the spring onions and cook in olive oil for 2-3 mins to soften. warm the milk add the saffron set aside to soak.
4. drain the potatoes and mash in saucepan strain the milk into the pan add the onions and oil. season with salt and pepper and beat together.
5. place the cod portions on an oiled roasting tin season then spread the potato over the top of each
6. place in the oven cook for 10mins until the fish is tender and the potato is golden. serve with green vegetables.

Village Life

Northwold Tile Centre

A Village Success Story as told by Bill and Moira

14th March 1988 was an important day for the Smith Family as they opened their doors at NORTHWOLD TILE CENTRE to the public for the first time. 20 years later the business is still thriving and going from strength to strength.

Both wall and floor tiles have changed enormously over the years and the Tile Centre has huge displays of both. The Old Chapel is literally full of tiles in all shapes, sizes and colours and has far more selection than superstores.



Northwold Tile centre



Display stands

“It’s very surprising where people come from to visit our shop, in fact we were on holiday in Spain many years ago and got talking to a man who asked where we were from. Answering” A village called Northwold, in Norfolk he replied that he knew where that was as he had bought tiles from the Tile Centre there,” says Moira, (Who used to take the ironing to the shop to do but fortunately does not get time to do that now).

Bill and Moira would like to take this opportunity to thank those of you that have supported them and look forward to many more years of service to the public.



Bill and Moira Smith - Proprietors of Northwold Tile Centre

When you hear so much these days of shops, pubs and Post offices closing all over the place it is good to see people who have actually "Bucked The Trend". Well done to you, both from Village Life and may this enterprise continue to flourish as I am sure that it will .
Ed.

Issue June 2008
Copy date for the next issue is;
25th June 2008
copy@northwold.net
Tel. 01366 728233

More Fund

Raising at The Crown

On the 3rd and 4th of May we held a quiz night and car boot sale also had lots of raffles in aid of all of which raised £365 in aid of East Anglian Air Ambulance, which was supported by all our quiz customers and regulars of our pub.

It was a very good weekend and we would like to thank everyone concerned in making this a successful event.



Good to see that Air Ambulance is being well supported. Well Done !!
Ed

Almshouses

There will be two Almshouses available for letting shortly. For more details please contact Beryl Quilter, Clerk to the Northwold Charities Trustees, on 01366 727472.

Thanks From Jackie Hodge

Could I please say THANKS to Marion & Diane for their help on Sat 3rd May.

I've just got bruises after a soak in the water. thanks again

Jackie

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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

For the last two and a half years Mike Coley, aka **Pog** has been contributing a column of what he calls "squit"

Now "**Squit**" is a word unique to Norfolk. You never hear it anywhere else. **Jim Booty** regularly uses it, and so do most of us who are native to the County, although we probably don't notice ourselves doing it. It's like going somewhere. We never go level, We either go up the road, or up the playing field, or down the pub or the shop.

Pog has done well! not only has he regularly filled a whole page of Village Life, but he has been interesting. I know he has made mistakes, and people have very readily let us know. But as Confucius Him say, " Man who never made a mistake never made much!"

I know Pog has so much more to tell us. He has shown me draughts of what he has already prepared for future issues.

He feels that at the moment he must give it a break. For those readers who are not aware, Mike Suffers from Multiple sclerosis as do others in the village, and life cannot be much fun at times. The future must seem very uncertain because as of yet there is no cure for this. And on top of this he has the same problems in life that we all have, which have to be borne sometimes with a bit of courage. Some people may find him Brash and somewhat rude at times but it is probably this attitude that gets him through his problems.

We wish him well and look forward one day to some more Squit.

Enjoy the carnival. **Ed**

Northwold Carnival

**Saturday
14th June
2008**

St Andrew's Church

Services for June and early July 2008

June

1st 11 am Holy Communion
Rev D Kightley

8th 11am Matins
Mrs R Kightley

15th 8am Holy Communion
Rev A Nicoll

22nd 11am Matins
Rev J Terry

29th 11am Holy Communion
Benifice Service
At St Mary's Feltwell
Rev D Kightley

July
6th 11am Holy Communion
Rev A. Nicoll

Thanks

Our thanks to Harry Everett for repairing the Church gate which suffered some damage which appears to be more accidental than wilful but could not be accounted for

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WHAT DOES THE DOCTOR THINK THIS MONTH?

Where do bluebells advertise? Those of you who are new readers, recently arrived in the village or readers of *The Village Pump* or the *Northwold Times*, will be unaware that, for well over 10 years, we have been discussing bluebells in these articles and this topic has produced more feedback from villagers than any other topic about which I have written.

To recap, we are all agreed that bluebells look wonderful in bluebell woods and other people's gardens but I take grave exception to the bluebells which occupy valuable space in my garden. The theme of the articles has been as follows: They are thugs, who spread like wildfire, putting out new bulbs underground, producing seeds and spending the Winter restoring their energy reserves so that they can trash my garden again in the Spring. They produce an enormous amount of greenery in relation to the number of flowers and that greenery is present for about three months while it dies back. I tend to forget that, in July, there will be massive black holes where the greenery used to be and this messes up my planting plans. English bluebells are very pretty, the heads hang down and the greenery is moderate. Spanish bluebells, on the other hand, have a massive amount of greenery and unpleasant, upright stalks and flowers. They tend to colonise at the expense of the English variety and will, eventually, take over the world, destroying my other arch-enemy, Bindweed, and, probably, Giant Hogweed in the process. That gives you the gist of the previous articles I have written. Initially, I was a pariah and I was roundly castigated for being so horrible about this poor defenceless little plant. Management was the worst of the lot as she loves bluebells and forbids me to damage them. Most women, when they go away, worry about what their husbands might be getting up to – Deannie worries about

what I might do to the bluebells. Of course, accidents can happen late at night when spraying nettles and the bluebells do seem to move around a lot when Deannie is away. Gradually, however, people started to sidle up to me and, speaking out of the side of their mouth, would tell me their bluebell horror stories – 3 bulbs brought up from the West country a few years ago, now needing regular *Roundup* to achieve any control – a newcomer who planted up her entire garden after moving in during the Autumn, only to see the whole lot trashed by the indigenous bluebells in the Spring, and so on.

What set me off again? Well, this year, while weeding around and amongst the wretched things, I found both bindweed and cleaver in a bed which had previously been clear of these. I have spoken before of the bluebells' propensity to shield and protect weeds but I am now forced to the conclusion that the malevolent little XXXls have been advertising for unpleasant perennial weeds who would like a good start in life, sheltered by bluebells. Head Office tells me to "Get a Life" so I must leave this topic while wondering where and how the little thugs advertise. A friend of mine, who lives in Essex, tells me that his garden is taken over by white bluebells which smell strongly of onions – any ideas?

The Tesco Problem: Do many of you gentlemen accompany your wife on the Tesco shopping trip? I know you do, because I have seen you! Happily for me, we only visit Tesco rarely because we have an excellent Spar store in Feltwell. However, when we do, I always have the same problem – I lose management. We write two lists before we go, one each. On arrival, we split up – she heads for the fruit and vegetables, via the clothes section, and I head for the dairy section, via the “Going cheap today because it’s nearly out of date” section. You would be amazed how many products appear in that section that I have never seen in the main store. I then try to find everything else on my list and there is always one item I cannot find so I look for management. The problems start here – What was she wearing this morning?

can't remember! I walk up and down, backwards and forwards until every aisle has been covered but she is nowhere to be seen. Now, Deannie, whilst not exactly vertically challenged, has just realised that she has short arms and legs. This makes her lower than the goods in the aisles so she is very difficult to see. Those of you who know her will be of the opinion that she is infinitely compliant and accommodating – this is not always true. I bought her a large halogen balloon on a six foot piece of string and asked her to tie it around her neck as she went around the store so that I could find her when necessary – I am sorry and surprised to say that she refused point-blank! I suppose we must, in future, remember to charge our mobile 'phones, remember to take them with us and to turn them on, remember to take them into the shop and, assuming that all goes well, use them to communicate our whereabouts to each other. As we are both fairly anti mobile 'phones and cannot understand why all the kids seem welded to theirs, we would appreciate any better ideas to solve the problem.

Best wishes to you all

Ian G. Nisbet

I can sympathise with You Ian as I have the same problem. Mainly because the place is so big, I often spend more times searching for what you call management than finding what I want. But I have solved the Tesco problem by shopping somewhere else. **Ed**

**AFTERNOON TEA AT THE
OLD HOUSE, FELTWELL
SUNDAY, JUNE 22nd at 3pm**

**Deannie and Ian Nisbet invite you
to the above event.**

Hopefully, strawberries will be available, but there will be scones with jam and cream, lots of cakes, etc. telephone 01842 828956 if you would like to come.

Tickets £5 in aid of St. George's Church, Methwold.

DARBY NURSERY
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PLANT SALE
METHWOLD

This year Darby's sale will
take place on
Saturday 19th July
from 8am to 2pm. (Children
under 14 years 10am – 2pm)
Rain or shine – no problem
– it's under cover!

The entry fee for this event is £1 per car, £5 per van or car with trailer, and it's free for pedestrians – with or without wheelbarrows!

Please note that this year families with children aged under 14 will be welcome from 10am – 3pm. We have taken this decision with a view to the safety of youngsters, by avoiding the congestion caused by the early rush!

Payment for plants can be made with cash or cheques – with a valid cheque guarantee card.

Please note we have no facilities to accept credit or debit card payments.

All entry fees and 25% of all sale proceeds will be split evenly between the Motor Neurone Disease Association and Methwold Primary School.

*Anyone wishing to avoid the early
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Important information regarding Flooding from District Council

I have been asked to circulate the below by the Emergency Planning Department for inclusion in your Parish magazines.

Emergency Planning have some Flood Roadshows to publicise for this summer:

Flood Roadshows

Dates already planned with Central
area Environment Agency are

30th July Wiggenhall St Germans

7th Aug Snettisham

13th Aug King's Lynn

20th Aug Heacham

27th Aug Hunstanton

We are also attending a Safer Norfolk day on 28th May at Hunstanton, focussed on the west Norfolk Coast.

Queries to kevin.kent@west-norfolk.gov.uk, 01553 616287
Emergency Planning Officer

If you have any further queries please contact Kevin Kent on 01553 616287.

Regards.

Becky Malkin
Members Information Officer
Democratic Services
Tel: 01553 616632
Email: rebecca.malkin@west-norfolk.gov.uk
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For details of the above position, please send a current C.V. with a covering letter to:
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Northwold W I



The May meeting of the Northwold W.I. took place on Tuesday 13th May and was attended by 29 members. The meeting was delighted to discover that the restoration work on the village War Memorial would begin on Monday 19th May. The Community Chest project was almost complete and plans for the W.I. contribution to the Village Carnival were well under way.

The group had been asked to provide tea and coffee for patients attending the monthly Nurse's Clinic which is held in the village hall. This was discussed and agreed to be a good idea and a list of volunteers was collected.

On Friday 25th April 11 members enjoyed an excellent lunch at the New Inn, Hockwold. We were made most welcome and the home cooked food was greatly enjoyed by everyone. The Lunch Club in May will be held on Friday 30th May at Timber's Restaurant.

Following the business of the meeting we all enjoyed an interesting wander around "Odd Corners of East Anglia" with Alan Durrant and his beautiful photographic slides.

This month's competition was for a photograph of an "Odd Corner of Northwold". First place went to Ann Howarth for an interesting view of the village sign and Ginny Robson Hull was second with a colourful picture of our Plough Monday St Andrew's Mummers. Barbara Booty came third with a lovely photograph of the gargoyle on St Andrew's Church which is thought to have been the inspiration for Sir John Tenniel's illustration of the Duchess in Alice in Wonderland.

Next month's meeting will be held in the village hall at 7.15 pm on Tuesday June 10th when the speaker will be Georgett Vale who will talk to us about 3D Fabric Flowers. Visitors and new members will, as always, be most welcome

Ann Howarth

Northwold Art Group

Annual Art Exhibition

At Northwold Village Hall.

Saturday 12th July and Sunday 13th July.
10 am to 4 pm on both days
Admission Free

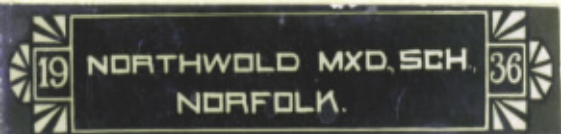
Come along and have a look at the work that has been produced by local people who do this sort of thing for the love of it.

You may be pleasantly surprised by the work, and there is an ideal opportunity to buy a Christmas present or two.

Or you might like to try your hand at art. Anyone is welcome at 7 pm on a Thursday night. Just come along to the Village hall and you will be made most welcome!!

Bryan Cater came up with these two photographs of yesteryear. He explained that they were inherited along with Peach House, which was originally the home of the late Mr and Mrs Card

The first picture is of Northwold School taken in 1936 which was apparently a good year Can anyone fill us in on the names? Some must still be in the village



And this one is a bit of a mystery. It is obviously taken at some ceremonial event.

I think the men in peak caps are Special Constables, as are those in civilian clothes because they are wearing badges in their lapels which Specials used to wear years ago

The man centre front on the seat is a Police Inspector. Any ideas what this picture is about and why it should have been kept by someone for a reason. No I'm not that old. Ed.

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Northwold Little
Normans Pre
School



The children have been very busy preparing for the carnival float. The theme of this year’s carnival is “A day in the life”.

On June 6th the Pre-school children and Tots & Co will be visiting Banham Zoo for their annual summer outing. All the children are very excited.

Last week the children had a taste of the lettuces that they are growing at Pre-school. They have enjoyed planting the seeds, watering them and watching them grow. Thank you to Holly and her green fingers. If anyone has any plastic flower pots they no longer need (any size) the Pre-school would be grateful for any donations.

If you have a child(ren) of Pre-School age and are interested in the Little Normans Pre-School, please call

Angela Wortley on 728804 and make an appointment to look around.
Session Times:
Monday, Wednesday & Friday
9:00am – 12pm
Tuesday & Thursday
9:00am – 12pm & 12pm – 3:00pm

Karen Muir

Northwold Spiritualists
Group

Meet in the Village Hall on Alternate Fridays at 7. 30 pm and on other specific day listed .
For further information call Eileen on (01366)728289

Friday 6th June **Pamela Romero**

Friday 18th June **Peter Fox**

Saturday 28th June **Joyce Gobbett**
Clairvoyance evening

Friday 4th July **Nick Brown**

The Nija Morgan
Health Column The

No Hands Massage at
the Carnival

I’m really looking forward to this year’s carnival on June 14th as I will be again giving No Hands taster sessions. It was great last year with lots of people trying it and like last year I’ll be donating all the proceeds on the day to School funds. It will be a great opportunity for you to enjoy the massage and donate £5 to our School!

Paul & I are also having a stall with a range of crafts and other wellbeing items we sell in the No Hands Massage Centre I recently opened in Brandon. There will be a great selection of local & Moroccan crafts, Jewellery, crystals & candle holders & relaxing CD’s.

The best way to understand the power of No Hands is to see it, or most importantly feel it so I hope to see or treat you on the day

Nija

School Report



NORTHWOLD

The past month has been an interesting one for the Norman School, not least because of the weather. Thankfully we have been blessed with lots of glorious sunshine which has allowed the children to make the most of their playtimes and indeed their PE and games lessons. It is so nice to be able to ‘pay back’ all those sessions which are lost to the weather during the winter months.

One notable exception to the lovely weather was, of course, the first time we attempted to hold our May Day Celebrations. Not for nothing is the ‘Hothersall Curse’ mentioned in hushed tones around the teaching community. My record for having events cancelled at the first attempt due to weather is legendary (mark my words, the reserve day for Sports Day will be the one!)

However, the second attempt for our Maypole Celebrations was excellent. We couldn’t have asked for a better day and we couldn’t have asked for greater commitment from the children. I had spent some weeks before the event, walking around school catching glimpses of accordion music and seeing groups of children twirling about but nothing could prepare me for the excellent display from all classes. Not being known for my prowess on the dance floor, I looked on in genuine admiration as Class 1, including 5 year olds, proceeded to dance with great proficiency. Each subsequent class followed with even more impressive reels and jigs, finally culminating in Class 4s excellent teamwork with the maypole. I could not have been more

impressed and I am sure that I shared that feeling with the many spectators who were able to join us on the day.

Another notable event has been the visit of Years 1 and 2 to Walsingham. Having been inspired by the pilgrims that we met before our Easter assembly at St Andrew’s Church , the children were very keen to learn about Walsingham and attracted many comments about their excellent behaviour and application to their studies. They made us very proud.

Of course, a very important event, especially for our older children, are the SATs. These tests at the end of Year 6, when the children are 11 years old, are very important and have been since their inception in the mid 1990s. I am pleased to say that this year’s crop of Year 6 children have approached the tests with care and courage. It is a nerve wracking time and yet the children have tried their best all week and supported each other enormously. I feel that they have ‘grown up’ a lot during the past week and it does them great credit. The Year 6 children were given an extra boost by the provision of SATS Breakfasts throughout the fateful week. An enormous ‘thank you’ must go to Mr Bowles and Mrs Ward for providing such delicacies as Croissants, Pain Chococats and Scrambled Eggs and Beans, alongside the ubiquitous toast.

In matters sporting, the Norman School have managed a creditable 4th place in the Cluster Cricket tournament and we look forward to

competing in Rounders, Netball and a further Cricket Tournament in the next half-term.

Wishing you all the very best for the

Northwold Village Hall

The Trustees held a Committee Meeting on Tuesday, 27th May at which Mr. Jim Booty resigned as Secretary and Treasurer. The Chairman, Mr.Ian Haye, expressed the Trustees very grateful thanks for the many years that Mr.Booty had served the interests of the Hall. Mr.Booty will remain the keyholder .

Mrs.V.Lynch has agreed to act as Secretary for the next three months, but at the moment the position of Treasurer remains vacant.

The work on improving and modernising the kitchen is nearing completion and the Trustees were happy with the new layout which they trust will also please the users of the hall

Unfortunately some vandalism was reported. The glass in the Hall Notice board had been broken and Messrs.George and Haworth agreed to carry out the repair.

The Hall Charity was set up in 1896, the Committee to comprise 2 elected members plus 16 representative members from Organisations and Clubs within Northwold and any co-opted members. At the present time about half of the organisations and clubs are represented, but it is hoped that in the future more Organisations will be prepared to nominate one of their members to represent them on the Village Hall Committee. Anyone interested, please contact Mrs.Lynch.

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Our Past According To POG Aka Mike Coley



So my dears, a slightly different format for today’s bit of squit, but as always it’s squit none the less on the menu, so tuck in my greedy ones, here it comes.

Do you remember when **Billy Eliss**, a school mate of mine, dived into the Big River from the Didlington Bridge, only to render himself incapacitated (*I never did learn to what extent Billy’s injuries led, I only know that I can’t remember ever seeing him again.*) Billy was one of the foster children that Old Shuck Horn had taken in at that time, together with another lad called **Russell Shrimpling**. It was of course a devastating thing to have happened to the boy, in a moment of madness aimed at impressing the girls no doubt.

This shallow stretch of the river, a favourite place bathe for all members of the family (*who may not themselves have been the worlds greatest swimmers*) was also accused of being from whence young **Christine Krazawich**, (*Spee-Jac’s pretty little sister*) contracted that dreadful disease, Polio.

So now my old Bewties, it’s with something of a heavy heart that I sit down to complete this piece, for what has to be, for the time being at least, my final contribution (*what’s that riotous sound that I hear swirling over the hill?<Whittington Hill of course> Sounds a lot like “Hip-Hip Hooray’s!” to me.*) I’ve been fortunate enough to have shared a good many of my memories with you all for the past two and a half years or so, via the smartest little newsletter in the county bar-none. I assure you that it isn’t by choice that I’ve decided to pull out, or that I’m taking time off to sharpen up my well used quill pen, and it’s certainly not that I’ve run out of things with which to fill these pages each month. There are still a myriad of tales to share, tales like being viciously assaulted by that sleek black denizen owned by **Archie Arbour**, no it wasn’t his dog that savaged me, but his **Jackdaw** (*who*

would have thought that I would eventually own such a bird of my own one day? Going back quite a bit in time there was the occasion when members of our community, long ago pooled their skills and resources to produce a **prosthetic limb** for one of our own. And then again what happened to our Church at a time before essentials like **lightning conductors** were even thought of, far less installed?

Of course we could look back at times when **cruelty to wild creatures** was commonplace, like the intentional blinding of cage birds. Then again, in human terms, **infant mortality** in our community, like everywhere else in the country at that time, was exceptionally high.

Then again we should never forget that accepted methods of **hunting game** were often (*questionable*) to say the very least, (*like the time when I saw a Hare shoot taking place and witnessed the heartless practice of crossing first hand*) Then there’s the matter of **Ghosts in the village**, some from years ago, (*and there have been a great many* of those) right up to modern times, and so on, and on, and on again. I could prattle on for ages yet, but I don’t know that you’ve necessarily deserved that.

All things considered though, looking back has been an absolute joy for me most of the time, even though some things have left me shuddering with disbelief at times when the full repercussions, that were obviously horrendous for those affected and forced to cope with back then.

With all that, I’m more than a little thrilled to discover that my feeble offerings have, for the most part anyway, been generally well received. That small fact is very gratifying to me indeed and I want to thank you all so very much for tolerating my humble writings for so long, I truly hope that you would welcome my return should that ever prove to be possible.

Looking back of course is really a way of living in the past and I would be first in line to claim that I have had a wonderful life, when the present has presented me with so much excitement. My past has been liberally

littered with successes and achievements beyond the horizons of most old country boys like me. Though inevitably there have been equal shares of pain and disillusionment along the way as well. So it’s relatively easy for me to empathise in most cases and thereby to edit many of the stories, which in some cases were simply too uncomfortable to comprehend in their raw state. Carefully rewriting them, so as to present them in a more palatable format for those intimately involved at least, **is a must**. Taking care to keep that fact in mind is something of a duty for any responsible writer, lest one day they get bitten on the bum for some other unforeseen situation that looms up to grab them unawares.

When we talk of the future, the same degree of clear-sightedness cannot always be said to exist for situations in the present day, as the benefits of hindsight are not always readily accessible to the same degree as they were when the story had previously fully unfurled and its repercussions became apparent. At times when tragedy strikes today, an individual’s sensibilities **can**, and **should be** very carefully considered before judgements are reached and often uninformed conclusions are all too readily jumped to. It has always been thus I’m afraid, sadly many lives have been blighted in the past, not just by the things that have been disclosed about their situations in the first place, but by the inevitable onset of Chinese Whispers, fuelled by mainly unthinking and even occasionally malicious gossipmongers that have, on occasion dwelled in our midst.

So there we go together, that’s about the best I can do for you this time. I hope you found it interesting in places and that it managed to jog your own memories in others, from that point of view I have always believed there to be a place for a page such as mine in our Magazine, ----- or perhaps that’s a measure of my conceit.

Fare-thee-well together, and remember what I’ve always said **“Take Care”**

My sincere **Best wishes**

Pog

River Watch

By Ivor Hook

I turn off the tarmac road down a narrow grassy track and enter a completely different world. I leave behind the convoys of lorries and the hustle and bustle of everyday life. Here beside the river is my utopia with total peace and tranquillity. Both universes run parallel to each other and are separated by just a few minutes of anybody’s time. Transfer from one to the other is simple but alas most people are part of the hectic race and pace so they do not make the journey. Thankfully for me time is plentiful. I have escaped (for which I am eternally grateful) and thus often have the endless banks of the river Wissey all to myself!

Frequent visits could be imagined as boring and repetitive but this is not so. Within the distance of a few miles the geography has many changes. The narrow fast flowing upper stretches soon lead to the slow and wider sections and each has its own happenings, creatures and features. Nature like the river itself is always moving and does not stop.

Today is hot and tepid. There is no breath in the air. It is slow and melancholy. Bright green and blue painted dragonflies flit backwards and forwards between the towering reed mace like intrepid circus performers. Hosts of delicate nymphs and flies weave intricate patterns and below in the shallows the water buttercups provide colour amid the beds of water

mint. Every form of insect life seems represented above and below the surface. Beetles and bugs, water boatmen and more amass and just heave in large numbers. Countless fat tadpoles furiously wriggle but make no headway and streams of tiny bubbles indicate more unseen but busy beings. An almost unnoticed newt in holiday mode idly floats along enjoying the sun and just sums up the whole lazy atmosphere.

Then horror of horrors! A large white cruiser with gleaming stainless steel trim moors up regardless of the many notices forbidding such an unwelcome act. Children galore pour out followed by a crocodile of gross adults. Shouting fills the air and a radio at full volume shatters the peace. A radius is scoured for firewood and branches are wrenched from trees. A fire is made and soon volumes of smoke drift in thick clouds across the river and beyond. A barbeque banquet follows and beer cans are emptied and thrown into the water. To the surprise of the ignorant they float and become targets for stone throwing. The calamity spreads along the bank as trees are climbed and geese are chased but mercifully there is a god and the destruction of all around is coming to an end. A claxton horn blasts to summon the trippers back to their floating grotto and soon the mysterious tribe disappear down the river in a gigantic tidal wave of wash.

With total relief I recover from my faraway thoughts. I had momentarily been lost in timelessness. Some may describe it as sleep but to me it was a nightmare. I peer down again into the river and see a fleet of tiny fry darting about. A water snail pauses amid its

laborious journey to cross a lily pad leaf. A father frog pops its head out of the watercress and blinks (or was it a wink?) and nothing has changed. Thankfully everything is still as it was intended to be!



Ivor

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