

Dersingham Village Voice

Issue No 8

February 2001



Editorial

Here we are in 2001 – time certainly flies! The Village Voice has been alive for a year and I would like to thank everyone who has contributed, as without you we wouldn't have this newsletter.

I think this time of year is lovely as it is the time of year when we can walk round the village and see lots of snowdrops growing in the wild. Nature is wonderful and, as you can see, fully appreciated by our regular feature writers.

There are a few important dates to remember in February, a special one being Valentine's Day. In case you need reminding it falls on 14th February – so make sure you buy flowers or chocolates for your loved ones. The next date to remember is everyone's favourite except those still on a diet from Christmas - Pancake Day (Shrove Tuesday) on 27th February. So don't forget to stock up on your Jif (and I don't mean the cleaning fluid!). The third date to remember is Ash Wednesday which falls on 28th February.

Other dates to put in your diary include: Parish Council Meetings 27th February and 26th March, Phobbies Easter Coffee Morning, 29th March, PPG Meeting 14th April.

Once again, thank you for all your contributions we have received. If you want an item included in the next issue please send it to The Editor, Dersingham Village Voice, c/o Parish Council Office, The Police Station, Manor Road. The deadline date for the April issue is 23rd March.

Teresa Southam. Editor

Parish Council News

All meetings of the Parish Council are open to the public. The full meetings begin at 7.15 pm and are preceded and terminated by a 15-minute session for parishioners to raise any matters. The next meeting will take place on Monday 26th February at the First School, and thereafter on the last Monday of each month.

*Parish Council Office: Police Station, Manor Road
Tel: 541465 Email: DersPC@bun.com*

Speed of Traffic in Chapel Road

It was resolved to request the traffic department to forward to the Parish Council results of all speed checks in the village.

Sensory Garden, Orchard Close

Plans have been drawn up on a voluntary basis by a local landscape gardener. Consultations have taken place with the residents of Orchard Close and they are happy with the proposed planting scheme. The plans have now been sent to the Borough Council for their approval.

Car Parking in Post Office Road

The Minister of the Methodist Church has written to the Council and after a full discussion it was resolved to write to her stating that her concerns were fully appreciated and asking her if the Church would support the proposal of yellow lines outside the entry to their car park.

Annual Parish Meeting

The date agreed for the Annual Parish Meeting is 14th May – venue will be St Cecilia's.

Interactive Speed Signs

The Council is to write to Norfolk County Council requesting an interactive speed sign at the entrance to the village from King's Lynn.

Planting Trees

It has now been agreed that trees are planted in the following locations: Admirals Drive/Doddshill Road Junction, Mill Road, Mountbatten Road – opposite junction to Earl Close, Hipkin Road – either side of Wallace Twite Way junction.

Dates of Parish Council Meetings

Dates for meetings for 2001 are published on p3 of this newsletter. It is hoped that parishioners attend as often as possible so that their opinions and concerns can be aired.

Precept for 2001/02

At a recent meeting it was resolved to set a precept for Dersingham of £38150 for the year 2001/02. The tax base for Dersingham is 1701 and this will result in a precept charge of £22.43 based on a Band D property, representing a 3% increase.

Parish Boundary Changes

At the public meeting held on 29th January a resolution to reject totally the draft proposals was unanimously carried. This will be communicated to the Borough Council. Letters concerning the proposed changes may be directed to John Edwards, Chief Executive, BKLWN, King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn, PE30 1EX.

Public Meeting – Burial Space in Churchyard

A meeting was held on 15th January to discuss the above where over 70 members of the public attended. Many points and areas of concern were discussed. At the meeting it was resolved that:

The Parish Council investigate the acquiring of the donkey paddock as an extension to existing churchyard.

The principle of a 'green burial ground' is investigated by the Parish Council.

Consideration is given to the field at the west of Shernborne Rd by the Mill Rd junction as an area for a green burial site.

Consideration is given to the Trustee land at Shernborne Rd by the Chalk Pit for use as a green burial area.

Consideration is given to the land between Sugar Lane and the cottages by the Shernborne Rd junction to be used as a cemetery.

Consideration is given to the land between Manor Farm buildings and the cottages by the junction of Manor Rd and Church Lane to be used as a cemetery.

The Parish Council supports the faculty for re-burial at the churchyard.

If the PCC ceases to remain as burial authority if churchyard is closed then the Parish Council use its power to become a burial authority.

Following on from a question asked at the meeting:

The Local Authority has no power to make planning decisions or serve compulsory purchase orders on the Sandringham Estate land. None of the law applies to the Sovereign's own personal property.

Dates of Monthly Parish Council Meetings in 2001

26 th February	30 th April	25 th June	24 th September	26 th November
26 th March*	21 st May (AGM)	30 th July	29 th October	17 th December

*Meetings in the First School apart from * in St Cecilia's*

Dear Editor

I am writing in response to a small paragraph on p3 of your last issue, regarding parking in Post Office Road. As Minister of the Methodist church may I say how hurt we are as a church to be sited as the cause of all the parking problems in the road, without a consultation, or an opportunity to put our point of view. The implication that we are the cause is just not true. There are many reasons for the congestion.

We, like most people in the village, are aware that there is a problem over parking. We are concerned about it too. May I through your paper point out that we do have two off-parking spaces and a car park at the rear of our church, all of which are often inaccessible because people park across the entrances. I am particularly concerned that this happens on weekday mornings when our mother and toddler group meet, and mums have to unload small children in the road because the car park entrance is blocked. Disabled people also find this a problem at times too. Please could people help us by leaving our driveways clear and helping to avoid potentially dangerous situations? We have no means of knowing if cars parked there are for only a few minutes or longer, so we would appreciate our access being left clear.

I know our members try to avoid even bringing a car unless it is vital simply because they do not wish to be a problem to others. And I am sure people understand that if we have a wedding or a funeral then we will take up space in the road on these occasions.

We acknowledge that there is a problem to be solved about the parking, and hope it can be resolved amicably, which is what we feel should happen.

On behalf of the Methodist Church

Rev Pam Bayliss

Note from Editor. We sincerely apologise for the implication. The Parish Council is fully aware of the problem and do not feel that it is caused in any way solely by the Church. The topic was raised at a recent Parish Council Meeting – see p2 of this issue

We are pleased to publish the following letter of appreciation from Elaine Richards and Ben

I would like to extend a big “thank you” through the Village Voice to the anonymous person who kindly found and took the time to return through my letterbox at The Green my labrador's collar and disc. I lost it at Sandringham around early December. When I moved here earlier this year knowing no-one I soon began to believe that Dersingham is a good place to live. If this little thank you note reaches the person concerned I will be very pleased.

Letter from Joan Scolah – see her poem on p20 graphically describing her intrepid walk to the sea

Dear Editor

In February 2000 my husband and I attempted to walk the path to the sea from the end of Station Road. The initial sign there was the only one on the entire route and it was difficult and hazardous to find the way. When we finally reached the Wash there were no clear pointers as to how to find the car park area and toilets. I always understood you could walk along any beach up to the high tide mark (as the sea in the past has come over the banks – where would that be?). But signs appear to make this a private beach and are very off-putting. Maybe someone knows the rights of way of the area and these could be signed clearly so we can all enjoy the path to the sea in safety, as it is a public footpath. I know some people have tried to find the way and have given up, so in reaching the Wash we were fortunate indeed!

We do not want to lose Dersingham's ancient footpath to the sea. It even appears to be indicated on the copy of a 1797 map I have!

Editor's note: Thank you for your letter. The Parish Clerk has said that if you call in to the Parish Council Office she will show you a definitive map of the area and hope to clarify the position for you.

A letter received from a concerned resident. Any suggestions regarding a safe place for the lads to skateboard and ride their scooters?

Dear Editor

Christmas has been and gone – the children left with the expensive presents – very nice!! But, safe – I don't know – brings one's heart into your mouth when you see the narrow misses. We had scooters as youngsters but then the traffic was much less, much slower and more careful – nobody argued with a horse and cart.

I feel with what I have seen – scooters, skates and skateboards – it is just waiting for an accident to happen. The people on the pavements and the elderly do not stand a lot of chance to get out of the way. But perhaps this will be a five-minute wonder – here's hoping.

From Gp Capt RAF (retd) & Mrs J A V Short – a little jingle about their birch tree situated on the boundary of their property

THE TREE

Four happy starlings sitting in the birch,
Delighted to find somewhere to perch.
Since it was pruned, there's far less lurch!"
Good food on hand, means less need to search.
Man has been helpful in providing a church.
Eight happy starlings sitting in the birch!!

King's Lynn & W Norfolk Local Plan Review Programme

A workshop recently took place in the village where participants got together to discuss a range of issues relating to Dersingham. The following lists outline a summary of the views expressed during the workshop session.

Bad Things about Our Community	Good Things about Our Community
No adequate village centre (hall) Speeding traffic Too much development Street/paving cleaning/maintenance No bank Lack of youth involvement No bottle bank and recycling No community spirit Lack of burial space Street lighting	Shops and other facilities Having a Post Office Good public transport Good play area/sports field Schools – Nursery, 1 st and Middle Facilities for the elderly Safe environment Police sector based in Dersingham Green open spaces Large number of clubs/societies

Our Community in the Future What do we want to happen?

Traffic calming
 No more major development
 Village hall
 More local policing
 Improve village cleanliness
 Maintain Post Office in village
 Councillors listening and responding
 One-way traffic in Post Office Road
 Pedestrian crossing – Lynn Road
 Larger burial ground
 Local Parish land strategy
 Greening - trees
 Community transport within village
 Bank
 Village communication
 Recycling facilities

These contributions were duly forwarded to the Borough Council– the information gained through the workshops will be considered by BKLWN as progress is made through the various stages of the Review.



Repulsive, Revolting Stories!

at Dersingham Library

Thursday 22nd February - 2.30 - 3.30 pm

Children under 7 must be accompanied by an adult.

Resolution for the Future

I'll imagine that I'm someone else,
Imagine that I'm you.

A white-haired woman, stooped
and old,

Chilblained with the winter's cold,
Waiting, waiting by the road

To cross

And so

I'll brake my car

And wait for you,

And let you go.

I'll imagine that I'm something
else,

Imagine I'm the blackbird

That flies in sudden, carefree
curves,

That loops in light, abandoned
swerves,

To dice with death, to shred my
nerves

Each day.

And then

I'll drive with care

And hope to spare

Your avian zing!

I'll imagine that I've changed my
skin

For his or hers or its,

A little child, a woman old,

A pregnant mum, a young man
bold,

A blackbird, sparrow, pheasant
gold,

All living.

I shall,

In my cocoon,

I'll empathise.

I'll be them all.

But imagine that I'm who I am,

Imagine that I'm me,

That, having stopped to ponder at

The ways of him and her and that,

I'm kinder, warmer, wiser than

I was.

And so

I'll drive with care,

I'll walk aware

They've let me go.

June Stephenson

Dersingham Phobbies Club

A date for your diary:

Easter Coffee Morning 29th March 10.30 am in Church Hall

Advance Notice (more details in next newsletter)

Garden Fete

11th August, 2 pm
14 Heath Road, Dersingham

Sale of Work

24th November, 2 pm
Paintings, cakes, Raffle, Tea/Coffee

Dersingham Seniors' Club

The club held their first meeting after the Christmas recess on 12th January and will continue to meet in the Church Hall on alternate Fridays.

Just before Christmas members had a shopping trip to Peterborough – all the more enjoyable because the weather was very kind to us.

At the meeting before Christmas members enjoyed a full turkey lunch prepared by the committee. This was followed by Carol singing, a cup of tea and a mince pie, and as each member went home they were given a parcel of 'goodies'.

A varied programme including talks, slides, bingo, quizzes and outings are planned for the coming year.

If you are interested or would like to see what we do, give Terry (540643) or me a ring (540375) and we will be only too pleased to give you further information. The subscription is £6 for the year or if you wish payments may be made quarterly or half-yearly.

Nancy Cable (540375)

A letter of appreciation for the Senior Citizens' Christmas lunch

To: Terry, Nancy, Pat and the Committee

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you all very much for a wonderful start to the Christmas festivities. We enjoyed a very nice turkey lunch, plum pudding, mince pies, coffee etc.

Last, but not least, our thanks for our very nice "edible" present. It was all very much appreciated.

Happy 2001!

Joyce, Mary and Peggy

Dersingham Surgery Horticultural Society

Our Christmas Social Evening was, once again, a huge success with some sixty members and guests attending. The evening commenced with the presentation by our Chairman, John Jenkins, of two cheques to the surgery and school. Dr Holmes, who was later joined by Dr Brown and Dr Hambling, received £500 for the purchase of two dermatoscopes which, added to the one already being used at the surgery, would provide each doctor with one of these valuable items of equipment. The second cheque was presented to Anne Fletcher of the Dersingham First and Nursery School. This was for £200 which represented the balance of the £650 the society raised for its Millennium Wildlife Green Project. As readers will know, the initial £450 has provided a shed for the school – the balance to be spent on fittings and tools.

After our guests has expressed their gratitude for the society's donations, two large tables heavily laden with food, generously provided by members, became the focus of attention with all present enjoying the feast, the company and the chat.

To end the evening, Doreen and Derek Asker provided a most entertaining quiz which provided a great deal of fun – ensured we all remained alert and sent us on our way in an appropriately light-hearted mood.

Our January meeting commenced with another presentation, this being a certificate of Life Membership to Peter and Pat Williams in recognition and appreciation for their noteworthy contributions to the society. After thanking members for this unexpected tribute, Peter was able to update the news of our project for the school. The shed had been erected to the delight of staff and pupils and, by the time you read this, should have been fitted out and a selection of tools purchased ready for the season ahead.

Members then welcomed Barry Gayton who, among other things, is one of Radio Norfolk's gardening experts. He started by introducing himself and his extensive "Desert World" garden to our newer members. Then, turning to his primary subject "Hellebores", he gave a detailed, informative and interesting slide presentation on the care and cultivation of this beautiful group of plants, finishing with a description of some plants suitable as "companions".

This was Barry's fourth visit to the society and, in showing their warm appreciation, members indicated that there will be a fifth in the not too distant future.

David Clark

Have you a forthcoming event you want to tell us about? Do you want to publish an appreciation or an account of an event that has taken place? Do you want publicity given to a concern you may have? Contributions for the April Issue of the Village Voice should be sent to the Editor by 23rd March.

Fakenham & District Crossroads Caring for Carers

If you are looking after someone at home who is ill, disabled or frail and you are worried about leaving him or her alone when you have to go out, we may be able to help.

Our Care Staff are trained to provide high quality care to the person with care needs thus enabling the carer to have a break for a few hours with peace of mind. Care is individually tailored and agreed between Crossroads, the carer and the person with care needs. The service is confidential and free to users as we are funded by grants from Social Services, fundraising and donations. We have recently been awarded funds from the Carers' Grant specifically to support carers of those suffering from the various forms of dementia or confusion.

If you think you may benefit from our help or would like to know more about our service, please contact the Co-ordinator, Ros Attridge, on 01328 851858 (Mon/Wed/Fri am) or write to use at Fakenham & District Crossroads, 28 Norwich Road, Fakenham, NR21 8BB.

We are a registered charity (No 1078788) and are affiliated to the National Association of Crossroads – *Caring for Carers*.

St Valentine's Day

This day has always been a day dedicated to lovers. One legend of St Valentine stems from real-life martyrs from the Roman Empire known as Valentines. It is unsure who was the St Valentine but there are 2 candidates. One of them is believed to have been a Roman priest and physician killed in the 3rd century, during the persecutions of the Emperor, Claudius II Gothicus (the Groth). His status comes from legends of harbouring Christians from persecution, curing the blindness of a cell keeper's daughter and of, possibly conducting marriages while they were forbidden during times of war. It is perhaps this last repute and the Lupercalia (the Roman festival celebrating the coming of Spring - February) that coupled to honour St Valentine as the patron saint of lovers.



My Not-So-Funny Valentine

A shout up the stairs – I'd be too late for school!
Made me grab for me clothes – Oh, isn't life cruel!
It was then I remembered the homework not done.
This particular teacher had no sense of fun!
"Your post has arrived" another voice stated –
My sarcastic sister whose teasing I hated.
They were all having breakfast and looking so smug.
"It's so nice to see you", said Mum with her mug.
And there on the table 'gainst the milk jug it stood –
I wanted to disappear, if only I could.
An envelope, massive and coloured bright pink
From which there exuded a sweet sickly stink!
"At least somebody loves you" my Dad tried to say
With a mouthful of cornflakes which he tried not to spray.
He didn't succeed and my brother went "Urrrgh!"
As he fished something out of this tea as he stirred.
"Are you not going to open it?" my sister said grinning.
If this was a battle, I sure wasn't winning.
"Cereal or toast? But you'd better be quick.
"And sit yourself down or you'll make yourself sick".
"Thank you dear Mother" I said to myself,
"For your kindly concern over my state of self!"
But all of the family were watching me now,
Even Dougal the dog with an eager bow-wow
Had sat up in his basket and joined in the stare:
I felt like a rabbit transfixed in the glare!
"Let me open it for you" sister kindly suggested
"To give time for your breakfast to be properly digested!"
And reaching across she grabbed for the card
But my brother grabbed first and held onto it hard.
There followed a struggle and the envelope tore
And out fell the Valentine straight onto the floor!
With a pounce from his bed and a great grizzled growl
Old Dougal was on it – and oh boy did they howl!
They all roared with laughter, their eyes full of tears
As my first true romance in one gulp disappeared.



~ The Village ~

House martins

Dersingham, then as now, had its sandy and solitary footpaths leading towards the village, which from the fourteenth century, has been crowned by a church remarkable for size and beauty - *Sandringham, Past and Present* - Mrs Herbert Jones - 1864

Last summer a skylark was singing above a weed covered corner on the 'Sandringham View' development building site. Skylarks are birds of the open countryside and the field on which the new houses are now being built once supported several pairs. They were sometimes joined by other birds with a preference for wide open spaces including all three British harriers - marsh, hen and Montagu's - together with barn owls, kestrels, meadow pipits and curlews. The balance sheet of wildlife profit and loss is very much in the red when houses are first built on land that was formerly open fields. This situation changes very quickly and, with a little help from the new residents, can even go into the black.

Buildings provide nest sites for a number of birds and the houses in Dersingham have been used in this way for centuries. Two summer visitors, the house martins and swifts, are totally reliant on buildings to provide safe places in which to nest. Both of these species formerly nested on the cliffs at Hunstanton. These days house

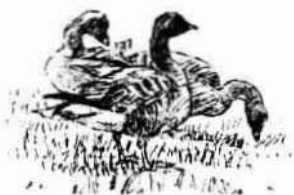
martins construct their mud nests under the eaves of houses and swifts find homes in roof spaces. It may interest you to know that swifts only land at their nest site. In fact, if you are lucky enough to have swifts nesting in your house, the young leaving the nest will remain airborne until they make their first breeding attempt - which may not be for several years. Another bird closely associated with buildings is the house sparrow. House sparrow numbers have halved in the past twenty five years. The reason for this decline is not known, although the fact that the losses have been greatest in urban areas leads many people to suspect that pollution could be the cause. A local birdwatcher, who moved onto the new estate, had to wait for nine months before he saw a house sparrow in his garden.

The design of new houses - with the emphasis on low maintenance and energy efficiency - are not very welcoming to wildlife. They do not have the nooks and crannies of older buildings and the roof does not overhang the walls sufficiently

to allow house martins room to construct their mud nests. In fact the old houses in Dersingham share this design and house martins can most often be seen under the eaves of houses built between 1960 and 1985, and some ornate Victorian buildings. New houses do, however, attract bats into the roof space. They can squeeze through small gaps and seem to like the conditions found in the lofts of modern buildings. Pipestrelle bats are the usual species and they can be seen flying over the gardens of the new estate during warm summer nights.

Wildlife will increase in both number and diversity when the builders leave the new development. The plants and animals will be taking advantage of the gardens and not the buildings. The area of land covered by gardens in England exceeds the total area given over to nature reserves. The wildlife find food and shelter in gardens. Birds are attracted to feeders, nest boxes and winter berries and fruits. Butterflies and other insects are attracted to the flowers. Ponds bring in all sorts of aquatic wildlife that find it difficult to survive in the surrounding agricultural land. A few years ago Dersingham was lucky enough to be visited during the winter by large numbers of waxwings. These exotic looking birds were feeding on

berries and were most numerous on the new housing development. The cotoneaster bushes planted by the householders provided plenty of food for them and they stayed for several weeks - the open fields would not have been visited by these birds. With a little bit of effort it is possible to attract a wide variety of wildlife into your garden, wherever you live in Dersingham. I will describe how to do this in the next article - more from theory than practice unfortunately because I don't do as much gardening as I would like. *David Bingham*



Goose Update:

The pink-footed goose count on 2nd January at the Snettisham RSPB reserve was 18,250. This contributed to a record count that day with over 80,000 geese between Dersingham and Wells - almost a third of the world population of Icelandic pink-feet. The geese have not been flying over Dersingham so much this winter, usually leaving their roost in a southerly or north-easterly direction. They are flying to where the food is, which changes from year to year depending on where and when sugar beet is being harvested.

Your Local Post Office Services

(Article sent in by Mr J Lindsay, Dersingham Subpostmaster)

Did you know that there are some 18,500 Post Offices throughout the United Kingdom today? A network which is visited by half the population every week. The Post Office is not just a shop or a place where you collect your pension or child benefit – it is at the very heart of many communities. A Post Office is far more than just a range of services and products. It is a place you can trust, a place where you are known and feel comfortable and a place which is vital to any vibrant community.

As your Subpostmaster I am committed to maintaining this unique role, but I can only do this with your help and loyalty. As more and more of the Post office's traditional business, such as pension payments, are being eroded it is important to realise just how much your Post Office can do for you. Were you aware, for instance, that you can get your travellers' cheques and foreign currency here, arrange your travel insurance or even top up your mobile phone?

In recent months and years many bank branches and village shops have already closed because of cost. Unfortunately, the Post Office is not immune from this commercial pressure. Just like any shop we need to sell and we need you, our customers, to use us. Without your support we cannot survive and our motto needs to be 'Use it or lose it'.

I have already mentioned some of the products and services you can get from the Post Office and in recent months we have been working hard to extend this range and provide you with an even better service. We have all seen the press and news stories about bank closures, but how many of you realise that you now have an alternative bank at your Post Office. If you are a customer of any of the following banks you can make deposits and withdrawals at the Post Office:

- Alliance and Leicester Giro
- The Co-operative Bank
- Lloyds TSB
- Barclays Bank
- Cahoot
- National Savings
- Smile

And this is just the beginning.

I am optimistic; I believe people do want their Post Office to survive, do want to preserve the unique service we provide and will ensure this by using the Post Office to deal with their everyday business.

Community Car Service - Drivers Wanted

This service is well-used by members of the village who require assistance to reach an essential destination such as the hospital etc. If you require a lift you should ring a mobile telephone number - 077791 22006 when your request will be dealt with. Liz Salt has kindly agreed to take on the role of Co-ordinator.

The service relies on volunteer drivers and more are required. If you are able to offer your services in this way please contact the Parish Clerk at the Parish Council Office, Old Police Station, Manor Road (Tel: 41465).

The Parish Council would like to thank Bill Watt who has retired from the position of volunteer co-ordinator. He performed a very valuable, time-consuming task over a long period for which we are very grateful.

Thank you!

We wish to thank all those people who bought copies of our book *Dersingham Then and Now* and all the shops and other outlets that sold copies for us, especially Moss Chemists, Thaxters Garden Centre and Bowden newsagents.

The excellent sales have enabled us to make an initial payment of £1500 to Campaign Care '94 to support The Bob Champion Cancer Trust and Tapping House Hospice

Many thanks to you all.

Simon Massen, Walter Blaney

POPPY APPEAL 2000



The local branch of the Royal British Legion is Dersingham and Sandringham and the annual appeal which takes place over the two weeks before Remembrance Sunday is mainly made up of collections from house to house, static points such as shop counters, street collections on the final weekend, donations from the local churches from their Remembrance Day Services and wreaths laid at War Memorials.

Our total for 2000 was £2919.02, slightly up on last year's total and a tribute to all those who gave up their time to help in any way whether house to house, on street corners or by any other fund raising activity. At a time when there seem to be so many requests for aid one way and another it is rewarding for those collecting to find people so ready to help when they see the Poppy tin. Clearly our objective for this year is to reach that elusive £3000 mark. *Dee Morris, Poppy Appeal Organiser*

24th October. Our young sorbus vilmorinii, five years after planting, is dainty with pink berries. A pair of goldfinches have been feasting on fade lavender. They've a methodical approach, drawing three stalks together for stability as they swing near the flowerheads.

30th October. Rain and strong winds overnight have damaged Brussels sprouts and purple sprouting broccoli, despite having them staked earlier. May try shorter varieties next year. Sowed Aquadulce Claudia broad beans in ground protected previously with plastic sheeting.

6th November. Lovely am, but soil sodden. Have been sorting our alpinas out. Result: over two hundred small bulbs and plants waiting in pots to be replanted. A female pheasant fed alongside the usual garden birds. She has a lovely eye, a dramatic black stripe, with white and chestnut patches. She's a more determined feeder than the cock, which struts around, showing off his finery.

12th November. On this day last year, on transplanting our thornless dessert gooseberry, I wrote "Hope it survives! It's due to fruit in 2001!". Well, it has, and it did fruit, deliciously.

18th November. A few dry hours mean sweeping leaves and turning them into the leafmould bin. Any further work on the 'rockery' is postponed to next year, as I uncovered a hibernating toad. I hurriedly replaced its covering of roots, leaves and protective stones.

2nd December. So much rain! The "wettest autumn since 1766", says the Met Office. Bright today, however, I've been chucking vine weevil grubs to the robin. It loves them! The Village voice arrived inside the Citizen. Thank you, Sue Jenkins, for reading my notes! I enjoyed your poem!

Boxing Day. Pruned wisteria to three buds from main stems. It flourishes, providing shelter and food for sparrows and bluetits, but it doesn't flower. One day, perhaps.

28th December. A pair of fieldfares ate apples on the grass, quite near the house. A jay arrived, snatching a piece of bread. The dunnocks were more noticeable than usual, flicking their wings and tails constantly, hovering up the tiniest morsels left by others.

30th December. A flock of whimbrels flew over, silent in their westward flight, and followed by about thirty curlews, heavier, with longer necks and longer bills and slower wing beats. They seem to cry "Cur...lew", less high and piping, more plaintive than the whimbrels' usual call. I'm learning by observation, backed up by books, but identifying birds on the wing isn't easy, I find ...



Scottish Country Dancing



A Scottish Country Dance Group meets in
The Dersingham Methodist Church Hall
Every Wednesday evening at
7.45 pm.

No need to bring a partner. Excellent form of exercise.
For further information please ring (01553) 761798.

Patients Participation Group (PPG)

At the Annual General Meeting of the Patients Participation Group (PPG) on the 17th January, the activities of the previous year were reviewed, various matters relating to health services discussed and the group's plans for the next year outlined. The major event over the next few months will be a Summer concert on 14th July in Dr Brown's garden. This event will be sponsored jointly by the PPG and Friends of St Nicholas Church, so please make a note in your diaries.

This meeting saw the retirement of the group's Chairman, George Barton. During his period of office George has proved to be dependable, dedicated and loyal to the group. His efforts in both fundraising, safeguarding and promoting health facilities have been conducted with unflagging enthusiasm and unwavering dedication. His leadership will be missed but, luckily, despite the pressures of his many other voluntary activities, George will remain within the group where the new Chairman, Tom Morris, will undoubtedly seek his experience and advice. George, thank you for all your hard work.

The next PPG meeting will be on 14th April at 7.30 pm in the Dersingham Surgery.

'COUNT ME IN'

April 29th 2001 is Census Day. Recruiting is now taking place for Census Enumerators to assist in administering the Census. The fee for this work is £318 plus expenses and you will need to be available during April and May for the work and for short training periods in March. For an application form or to find out more please give me a call on (01760) 337773.

Dick Coleman, Census District Manager

Chernobyl Children Life Line

Chernobyl Children Life Line is a charity established to help children living in the Republic of Belarus who are suffering from the effects of radiation in the aftermath of the disaster that occurred at the Chernobyl nuclear power station in 1986.

Although this tragedy happened many years ago, the situation in Belarus has not improved; radiation levels are just as high, much of the land remains contaminated and the sickness levels amongst children are rising. The need for our help has never been greater.

The principal aim of the charity is to bring these children to the UK to live in our homes for a four-week period, giving them good food, fresh air and the warmth of family life. This period of healthy living provides a much-needed boost to their weakened immune systems and offers them hope for the future.

The *West Norfolk Link* of the Charity has been formed to raise funds locally to bring a group of ten children to our area. We hosted our first group of children in September 2000 and are now planning for our next group this year. We particularly need to hear from families that could host two children for the four-week period.

If you would like to know more about hosting or any aspect of the charity please call me on (01760) 337773 or visit our website at – www.chernobylchildwestnorfolk.org.uk.

Dick Coleman

Chairperson – West Norfolk Link

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To take the train from Dersingham to King's Lynn was amazing. All the trees were covered in thick glistening ice crystals and as you approached Wolferton Station it looked absolutely magical. Everywhere was white over. There was always a huge decorated Christmas Tree on the platform in those days when the Royal Family used the train from London and regularly arrived at Wolferton. As you trundled along in the steam train rabbits and deer could often be seen from the windows. I remember paying one shilling return to Hunstanton and two-and-sixpence return to King's Lynn. It was a sad day when the railway closed - from my kitchen window when we saw the steam train appear through the trees from Ingoldisthorpe there was just time to leave, run down the hill and catch the train for King's Lynn. We ran a little quicker in those days!

During the winter the gardens were frozen 6 to 8 inches down and many homes were without water and had stand pipes in the road. We were lucky being on a hill our pipes were well down in the ground and we had running water. It was so cold when you hung nappies on the line, which everyone did in those far off days. They froze solid before you got to the end of the line. I often brought them back in like frozen bricks... No central heating, no spin driers. Nappies had to dry in the kitchen over an old coke stove which was most temperamental. I would often stoke it up to the top and then it would go out. It is a wonder I didn't burn the house down as sometimes in desperation I threw paraffin on it. There would be a big whoosh and the coke would light. Wonderful!

There was a beautiful old house owned by the Lloyd-Pratt family called "The Oaks" with stables where the pottery stands today. They had an amazing extensive garden with wonderful old mature trees - no housing developments around in those days. Sadly it burnt down some years later and all the land surrounding was sold for building. Opposite was a field with Mr Towers' donkey in it - what a loud voice he had, often to be heard on the way home from a shopping expedition. Mr Towers took the donkey into the hospital at Christmas time - the donkey had special overshoes made so he didn't scratch the floor. I'm sure everyone in hospital loved to see him. Mr Towers owned the butcher's shop we still have with the Royal Warrant over the window. In those days they slaughtered the animals in the back yard. I remember once asking for liver and he said it's still walking around - come back tomorrow. Somehow I didn't feel the same about liver the next day!

Mr Thaxter had a shop in his front room and you were served from behind a huge lovely wooden counter. We had C Playford, the baker, with a shop on Manor Road and twice a week bread was delivered to your door from a huge basket - very tempting smells of newly baked bread - I can smell it now. We had a Co-op shop where the fish shop now stands and you took in your order and it was delivered if you wished, or you could call and pick it up when ready. There were lots of shops in the village. On Manor Road we had Miltons the Butchers, Hanfords, a small grocers, a larger general store, Parkers, on the corner where Sandringham Windows now have a showroom. There was another grocer and greengrocer, D Andrews, on the corner of Post Office Road, and E M Walker, Market Gardener, supplying vegetables and flowers on the main Hunstanton Road opposite the Newsagents which is still there under different ownership. We had a small surgery on Bank Road, a tiny waiting room with about 12 seats - no appointments, you just waited but we were used to it and no-one complained. Sometimes if you had a very sick child people were kind and let you jump the queue, but not often. The doctor always seemed to have time to listen and took great care of your children calling regularly when they were ill - it was very reassuring. *(to be continued)*



**Dersingham School (now the Community Centre)
In the early 1900s**

AGE
Concern

ADVICE SESSIONS

Thursday 15th February

WN Disability Info Service (10 am)
Info on all aspects of disabilities

Thursday 1st March

SJP Solicitors
Free legal advice (ring for ½ appt)

Thursday 8th March

Independent Financial Advice
Free advice (ring for ½ appt)

Thursday 15th March

WENFENS
Info for visually impaired people

Thursday 29th March

Southery Environmental Services
Free advice on pest control

Friday 6th April

WN Disability Info Service (10 am)

Sessions are held between 9.30 am to 12.30 pm

Age Concern Information Centre
16 High Street, Heacham (Tel: 579077)

The Elusive Path to the Sea
by Kathy Jordan

The sign looked so inviting -
'Public Path to the Sea'
Though bitter winds they were biting
It was beckoning me.

Past the old level crossing
I took my life in my hands.
Traffic near sent me tossing
As the bypass I spanned.

Through the silence I wandered
Down that marsh field's rough track.
At the aged dairy I pondered ...
To plod on or turn back.

Dangerous rust tinted dykes
Edged the way on both sides.
If they're filled to great heights
Then beware of the tides.

With no pointers to guide me
Which way should I go?
With my map there beside me
I just went with the flow!

So make clear the directions.
Then how pleased folk will be.
They'll have rosy recollections
Of that path to the sea

O'er the bridged ingol river
Up the sea bank so I ong.
Now in rather a dither
The path seemed to have gone!*

So the causeway I followed
Of the RSPB.
As those waders they wallowed
A superb sight to see.

At the wash - barriers barred me
'Private Road' - 'Private Beach.'
Once you roamed there so freely
Beach house then in quick reach.

Nowadays to find byways
You near need a morse code.
So I made for four crossways
And hiked back by the road!

It seemed half of Norfolk I'd been to.
I arrived home a wreck.
My sea stroll had turned into
A cross country trek!

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NB * It appears that the path used to carry on straight across the lagoons here, but was scoured away when the sea broke through the defence banks in 1978, and the RSPB constructed the present causeway 100 yards further along.

MICHAEL YORK – Tax Consultant

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