

Dersingham Village Voice

Issue No 4

June 2000



Editorial

Time seems to rush by – this is now our fourth edition of the Village Voice. The team would like to thank everyone who has sent in letters and articles for the newsletter and I wish to acknowledge all the people who have stopped me and said that they are enjoying reading it – please keep the letters and views coming in.

In this issue you will find a full list of all the Rights of Way in Dersingham – the map showing these is kept in the Parish Council Office in Manor Road. If anyone knows any old tales about these footpaths we would be delighted to include them in our August edition.

You will also find within some dates for your diary. These include St Nicholas Church Flower Festival starting Thursday 20th July, the Millennium Garden Party on Saturday 22nd July, Parish Council Meeting on Monday 26th June and many more.

As you will know Dick and Sally Stanton have left Dersingham to live in Flitcham and I'm sure all the village will wish to send best wishes to them for their future happiness.

I would not like this opportunity to pass by without offering our congratulations to Bernie Twite and Alan Haslam who successfully completed the London Marathon in April.

The next Village Voice will be published in August. Please send items for inclusion by 15th July to me at 68 Mountbatten Road (Tel 542392)

Teresa Southam

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 by a 15-minute session for parishioners to raise problems or views. There is also a 15-minute session at the close of the meeting for the same purpose. The next meeting will take place on Monday 26th June at the First School.

Parish Council Office: Police Station, Manor Road

Tel: 541465 Email: DersPC@bun.com

Village Open Day

This had proved to be successful with many organisations participating. Photographs of the event are available.

Community Arts 2000

Sheena Carman and Phillippa Lee attended a recent meeting of the Council to explain they represented a group of people providing opportunities for villages to participate in and experience arts projects. A year long series of workshops and events were planned for Dersingham and neighbouring villages. The Council agreed to donate £50 to this worthwhile project. Details of the project appear in this issue.

Community Service Minibus

The West Norfolk community Transport Project had requested that the Council might give a donation towards the running costs. It was confirmed that there were 34 registered Dial-a-Bus members in Dersingham and, after discussion, it was agreed to provide the sum of £100 to help with costs.

Hunstanton Police Station

The Parish Council is to send representatives to attend a meeting on Wednesday 31 May concerning the threatened closure of the Hunstanton Police Station. The meeting will have the objectives of considering the effects of such a closure and deciding the best strategy to achieve retention of the Station.

Letter from Dr George Turner MP

A letter has been received from the above stating that rumours regarding the abolition of Parish Councils is untrue and should be disregarded. He said that in practice the Government is much more likely to strengthen the role of Parish Councils.

Village Sport 2000

This is a scheme to encourage and enable villages to set up sporting activities for young people during the school summer holidays. Jo Eames, who last year organised a week of cricket and tennis coaching, has offered to co-ordinate a summer sports event this year for the holidays but more along the lines of a Fun Week with different sports available, such as skateboarding, perhaps culminating in a trip to Lynnsport by coach.

Norfolk Village of the Year Competition

Dersingham has been entered for the Competition this year.

Garden Party – Saturday 22 July



To celebrate the Millennium the Parish Council is arranging a Garden Party to be held on The Pastures (by kind permission of Richard Stanton) starting at 2 pm. This Saturday coincides with the St Nicholas Church Flower Festival. We hope that villagers will come to The Pastures after visiting the Church. Also in the vicinity the Tithe Barn will be open and there will be displays in the Community Centre. Teas and refreshments will be available in the Church Hall. There will be a cricket match on the Sports Ground.

The idea is to have a 'Fun Day'. Events in the arena will feature dancing by children from the First and St George's Schools, Line Dancing, Dog Training Display, Tug-of-War competition, singing by children from the Puddleducks and St Nicholas Parent and Toddler Groups. During the afternoon there will be a release of pigeons and later a Balloon Race. The Evening WI is planning an Adults' Hat Parade and a Children's Decorated Cycle competition. The Surgery Horticultural Society is arranging a Tombola.

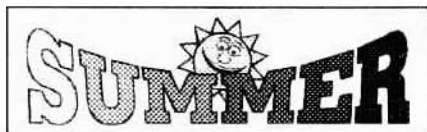
The Fire Station will have an Open Day and the Bowls Club will be open to visitors. It is hoped to have a Treasure Hunt for the children. The Tithe Barn will feature the History of Dersingham, taped interviews of local residents, and a specially commissioned Millennium Mug will be on sale. In the Community Centre there will be photographs by the Hunstanton and District Camera Club, and the Dersingham Surgery and their supporters will feature a display of 'Medicine through the Ages'.

Captain Marvo will entertain the children. There will be a small roundabout for the children and College of West Anglia students will offer face painting. Anticipating a hot day we have arranged for an ice cream van to be present. The RSPB are bringing their Exhibition Trailer with information, children's gifts, displays etc.

The Council would ask two things:

- Please make a note of the date and come along with the family and enjoy yourselves on 22 July
- It is still not too late to add events to the programme. If you would like to provide entertainment please contact Peter Box on 544587

***Garden
Party***



***The
Pastures***



Community Arts Programme

Community Arts 2000 was started last May with the idea of bringing the Arts to a rural area where sometimes the opportunity to experience different art forms can be limited. All our events are open to all, regardless of age and ability. Since then we have held various workshops and events in the area, willow lantern making - willow deer making, puppet show, storytelling and a Christmas decoration workshop are just a few examples. Over the next few months we have lots more events taking place.

During the month of June, Wood Sculptor, Mark Goldsworthy, will be carving a sweet chestnut tree into a nine-foot high sculpture of St Felix. He will be working on site in Sandringham Woods by Donkey Pond. Please do encourage him by going along to see the work in progress - any budding carvers could get some useful tips! Mark is also going into 3 local schools to help carve their own pieces. Again, if there are any willing budding carvers in the community who would be willing to help with this project in the schools we would love to hear from you.

We are also working with several schools and artist, Maggie Campbell, to create some pieces for the Sculpture Trail. Maggie has worked with well-known organisations such as Madame Tussauds and she does lots of work in education. She will be working for 3 days in each school. We were lucky enough to receive part funding for this project from Arts in Education.

We are holding music workshops, drumming, percussion and rhythm from around the world with community musicians, Squawk, during the first week of the summer holidays. We also hope to obtain enough funding to have community dance workshops as well - leaflets will be distributed in the schools shortly.

On 1st July we are having a seaside craft family workshop at West Newton Village Hall. All this will come together in a Community Sculpture Trail to be created and on site during the weekend of 11th, 12th and 13th August. There will be storytellers, workshops and other family events on at the same time in a marquee at Donkey Pond.

We are a non-profit making organisation and rely solely on funding for every event we have - this as you can image takes a lot of time and form-filling. Locally Sandringham Estate has been very supportive providing materials, manpower and lots of encouragement as have King's Lynn Council, especially Arts Officer, Jane Falkner. Norfolk Coastal Project have also been generous in providing funding. In the long term we hope to secure a permanent base to have a Community Theatre, workshops and exhibitions for which we are already working on getting funding for. Please do come along to our events and see what we are doing. So far we have received lots of positive feedback, especially from the children who seem to have lots of fun, which for us is what it is all about!

OooOooo

~ Royal British Legion Annual Dinner ~



In the picture, reading from left to right:

Tom Morris, Peter Reynolds, Vivienne Randall, Ann Jardine, Rev Tom Jardine

In early Spring the Dersingham & Sandringham Branch of the Royal British Legion took the opportunity of gathering members together for their Annual dinner in the Feathers Hotel to say some farewells and thanks.

Rev Tom Jardine, who had been Vicar of St Nicholas Church for the past 8 years was thanked for all his support during his time in the village. Also, Mrs Vivienne Randall was thanked and warmly congratulated on her 40 years as Poppy Appeal Organiser for the area. Her role will now be taken over by Mrs Dee Morris.

Rev Jardine was presented with a desk set hand-turned by Tom Morris, the Branch Chairman, from wood discarded from St Nicholas Church and Mrs Jardine received a beautiful orchid grown by Peter Reynolds, the Branch President. Mrs Randall was presented with an engraved glass bowl commemorating her many years of fundraising.



Public Rights of Way in Dersingham



- 1 Footpath No 1 runs from Bridleway No 2 to Parish Boundary: begins from the termination of Bridleway No 2 at a point south-west of The Decoy and runs westward to the Parish boundary.
- 2 Bridleway No 2 to Footpath No 1: starts just north of Dersingham Station from the railway and runs eastward, gradually bearing north-westwards to join Footpath No 1 near to south-west corner of The Decoy.
- 3 Footpath No 3: starts at the Hunstanton Road/Bank Road junction and runs just outside of the recreation ground boundary fence for approximately 180 ft in a south/south-westerly direction, and then approximately 465 ft in a north/north-westerly direction between the allotments and the recreation ground – the footpath ends at Station Road
- 4 Footpath No 4: starts from Manor Road, opposite St Nicholas Church, and runs westward through Church Hall grounds to the Sandringham Estate Boundary (Pasture)
- 5 CRF Road used mainly as Public Footpath No 5: starts from Centre Vale and runs eastwards to Pasture's Gate at the Sandringham Estate Boundary
- 6 CRF Road used mainly as Public Footpath No 6: starts from the King's Lynn Road at the junction of Manor Road – The Drift and runs westward on to the Sandringham Estate Boundary
- 7 Footpath No 7: starts from the King's Lynn Road near a house called 'Sunningdale' and proceeds in a south-westerly direction alongside a dyke to the Sandringham Estate
- 8 Footpath No 8: starts at Heath Road entrance to the Open Common and runs westwards crossing the Lynn Road and continuing across the Fen to Footpath No 7
- 9 Footpath No 9: starts at Heath Road entrance to the Open Common and follows the northern boundary of the common in a north-westerly direction to the Hunstanton/King's Lynn Road
- 10 Footpath No 10: starts from Heath Road on Shut Up Common and runs south-eastwards, then turns and runs north-eastwards for a short distance before again turning south-eastwards to Sandringham Hill
- 11 Footpath No 11: starts from Footpath No 10 (where it turns and runs north-eastwards) and runs southward across the common to the Sandringham Estate boundary
- 12 Footpath No 12: starts from Heath Road on Shut Up Common and runs southwards across the Common to the southern end of footpath No 11
- 13 Footpath No 13: starts from Sugar Lane (Chapel Road End) and runs northwards to the top of Fern Hill
- 14 Footpath No 14: starts from Manor Road, immediately to the west of Forresters Hall and runs in a northerly direction for a distance of approximately 55 m to join a tarmac surfaced footway to Iveagh Close
- 15 Footpath No 15: starts at Pansey Drive and runs in an easterly direction immediately south of the hedge boundary at the northern end of the field for a distance of approximately 24 m to join Woodside Avenue

~ The Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes (or Buffs) ~

Most people are baffled as to what this group of men are about, imagining some sort of secret organisation with strange rules, rites and rituals.

In fact, it is a group of like-minded people who meet regularly for social reasons, and also to organise fund-raising activities for local and national causes.

The Dersingham Lodge is based at the Gamekeepers Hotel, where they meet on Tuesday evenings. Their full title is *The Sandringham Lodge, No 10499*, and was re-founded in the early 1990s.

In the 1914-18 War every Buff worldwide gave a halfpenny each week, and with this money 14 ambulances were purchased and sent to France, every driver being a Buff volunteer.

After the war 2 buildings were purchased, one in Weston-super-Mare and the other in Harrogate. Both are now convalescent homes and holiday homes.

There are now Lodges throughout the UK and worldwide. So wherever a Buff goes he can be assured of a warm and friendly greeting.

In Things Essential	Unity
In Things Doubtful	Liberty
In All Things	Charity

The Lodge welcomes new members who must be

- (a) Male (even today)
- (b) Over 18 years
- (c) A supporter of the British Constitution

Any applicant may telephone me on 540675 at any time of the day.

Michael Keogh

Dersingham Patient Participation Group

Scout/Guide Fete – 24th June

The Group will collect items and arrange and run a stall to support the Scouts and Guides.

Parish Council Millennium Party – 22nd July

Dr Brown has agreed to create a tableau depicting medicine in 1900 and 2000.

17th March. Blackbirds, thinking of nests, are collecting beakfuls of dry grass and evergreen leaves. They look plump and glossy after their winter diet of 'wild bird food'. Chopped peanuts, leftover porridge (which they've taken from an old soup plate each day), and our surplus cooking apples. They've devoured leftover cat food, too!

21st March. Planted out 150 Sturon onion sets, a variety that does well in our garden. Dersingham soil is considered sandy, I'm told, but it certainly responds to lashings of garden compost. The onion bed also receives a few bucketfuls of wood ash in late winter. The soil is rich and crumbly now and full of earthworms, thank goodness. As Gilbert White wrote, over 200 years ago '... men would find that the earth without worms would soon become cold, hardbound, and void of fermentation; and consequently sterile ...'

27th March. A yellowhammer joined the feeding chaffinches. What a bright head it has!

15th April. After all the rain and cold the birds are hungry again. A pair of siskins visited the nut baskets. We haven't see siskins for a couple of years. Then in the late afternoon, a near tragedy: a male greenfinch stunned itself on the kitchen window. What a thump! It lay prone on its back, wings outspread. I propped it against the foliage of grape hyacinths below the nut basket it had been feeding at. There was no blood at its mouth, and its wings and legs seemed undamaged, but it was unconscious. We watched, fascinated, as its mate examined it, sometimes perching a foot or so above it on honeysuckle shoots, sometimes standing within inches of the inert little body. Once or twice she prodded it gently with her bill. An hour later, the little fellow stirred and staggered, then sank down. Another half hour passed. And then he flew! We swore we saw the look of relief on the female's face as she followed him!

25th April. How intense flower colours are just before dusk! Especially the blues of grape hyacinths and forget-me-nots.

7th May. Spring is here! The frogs are sunning themselves on stones, in and around our small pond. We're hoping our two toads will soon reappear, the big one, and the one we call Muscles (because it may be little, but it's built like a wrestler). They're not merely old friends, but are pretty efficient slug-slayers...

Note to Advertisers: If you wish to extend the period of advertising beyond the August Issue, please contact the Parish Clerk



Norfolk Elders Advocacy Alliance
is a registered charity set up to develop advocacy services for older people throughout the county, who may not feel able to speak up for themselves in certain situations.

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Tel: 01603 629781



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by

21 June 2000



~ Dersingham First & Nursery School ~

Our new pond project is well under way. CITB have been brilliant in providing the plant and labour to level the site and dig the pond for us. The children enjoyed going up to the area to watch the boys using the mini digger and creating a new pond. We will now get the lining fitted and start the planting programme. We are grateful to the Parish Council for sponsoring some of the boardwalk. This will be wooden decking, which will allow the children to pond dip and be on a safe secure platform around the pond. We appreciate the financial support of £100 – it will certainly be of good use. Villagers can watch the development of the new natural area from over the fence in Fern Hill.

Our year 3 class have been on their residential 3-day trip to How Hill near Horning. How Hill is a private house and environmental studies centre. Each year we take a group to look at various habitats and engage in some of the old broad traditions such as thatching and weaving. The children have been on a boat trip to Barton Broad to learn about how the broads were formed and how they are now being dredged to restore the original life. This is always an exciting 3 days enjoyed by all who attend.

Thank you to all who have collected tokens for us. We are now in the process of counting and ordering computer items and books. I will let you know what we will be receiving in the next issue.

I was delighted to take Ruth Pennington and Peter Melhado to the Town Hall to receive their certificates from the Mayor for their work submitted as part of the Mayor's Millennium Project. The school had sent a variety of mini projects completed by the children and the Mayor chose 2 pieces of work to go into the time capsules. The capsules are going to Massingham and on the Quay at King's Lynn, the highest and lowest points in the Borough.

Thank you to all who supported the Friends' Bingo – it raised £250 for the school and the prizes were excellent. We are now launching our Summer Raffle. If you can help by selling tickets for us please collect some from the school office. All the children will have books to sell. The draw will take place at the Open Evening and BBQ at the end of the summer term. Raffle prizes are always welcome. If you would like to donate one please, again, take to the office or phone us on 540022.

I am delighted the children are involved in the sculpture trail at Sandringham. We will be making face masks from clay which, I understand, will be used as markers on the trees at Sandringham. It sounds an interesting project and I believe, again, sponsored by the Parish Council. I look forward to being able to walk round and see the children's work.

At the end of this term the children will be celebrating the end of the year in church on Monday 17th July. This will be an afternoon service of songs and verse with instrumental work from violins and recorders. It is good to see the church full for these occasions, so all are welcome. There will be a collection at the door for Mohan, the little boy we sponsor in India.

J Ward, Head Teacher

J. & M. LINDSAY

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~ The Heathland ~

"Around Sandringham are some large heaths, that of Dersingham being famous for the beauty of its heather..."¹

Lowland heath is a rare habitat confined to western Europe and seen at its best in southern England. Norfolk was once rich in heathland; particularly in the Brecks, around Norwich and along the north Norfolk coast. Dersingham is in an area that was formerly heathland. The surrounding woods are growing on what used to be heath and patches of heather can still be seen in clearings and alongside some roads.

Heathland is a semi-natural habitat created by grazing livestock on light, acidic, nutrient poor soils. Dersingham Common is an example of a heath created by the communal grazing of livestock during the middle ages (and earlier). The reduction of grazing pressure in this area led to the dense forest of gorse that has been partially cleared recently to allow heather to re-establish. Ideally heathland should be a mosaic of plant types including heather, gorse, bracken and silver birch. Grazing (and possibly occasional burning) is required to prevent the degeneration of the open heath to dense woodland. Cattle are now being used to graze the heath that forms part of the Dersingham Nature Reserve. They can often be seen within the fence that forms the boundary of the reserve alongside the road to King's Lynn. This heath, known as Sandringham Warren, was maintained as a rabbit warren until the mid 1800s when each year *"60 Couple of rabbits be paid to the parish in lieu of Tithes"*. The reserve is managed by English Nature and Site Manager Phil Holms is pleased with the effect the cattle are having on the heath. The introduction of cattle follows a lot of hard work in clearing unwanted trees and invading scrub.

Lowland heath supports a rich fauna. In Dorset the heathland contains national rarities such as the smooth snake and Dartford warbler. The heath in the Dersingham Nature Reserve does not have these, but recent management work has helped to increase the numbers of two special birds. These are summer visitors the nightjar and woodlark. Nightjars get their name from their haunting nocturnal churring call, that can be heard on the local heaths at this time of year. They nest on the ground, where their mottled plumage gives them near perfect camouflage, and feed on moths and other night flying insects. Woodlarks are relatives of the more familiar skylark and have a melodious liquid song. They are also ground nesters and their numbers are increasing following a period of decline.

Europe's heaviest bird, the great bustard, once lived on the heaths around our village. These magnificent birds resemble large elegant turkeys (one shot locally in the nineteenth century weighed 28 pounds) and, like turkeys, the male performs an elaborate courtship display. The last European strongholds of great bustards are the plains of Hungary and central Spain.

"In February, 1838, a bustard was sold at Cambridge which, it was ascertained had been killed at Dersingham. This Dersingham bird was the last of a group of seven which had been observed at Hillington, not far off, and which soon dwindled down to three."²

An encounter with a flock of great bustards must have been an experience that stayed long in the memory, as it was for this nineteenth century cleric.

"In the beautiful open country near Sandringham the great bustard was comparatively common at the beginning of this century; it must have been a sight never to be forgotten to see a flock of eleven rise up together from the heath almost under your horse's feet, as happened to an old Norfolk clergyman in 1803, who recently died"³

Historically heaths had a bad press, often described as "waste", their wildlife, landscape and cultural importance has only recently been recognised. Thomas Hardy's "Wessex Tales" romanticised heaths, but even here they are associated with poverty and desolation in comparison to the richness of the lush green river valleys. We have lost 72 percent of our heaths in the last hundred years to forestry, agricultural "improvement" and urban development. Even more was lost to the parliamentary enclosures of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Hopefully the tide is now turning. Locally heathland restoration work is being carried out by English Nature, the RSPB and the Norfolk Wildlife Trust. It is also possible to re-create heaths on their former sites, after a lot of hard work reducing the artificially high nutrient levels in the soil. Perhaps one day the conditions on our local heaths and farms will be right for the great bustard to return to its Norfolk home.

"Wild birds flew in flocks over the sea-flanked district; the great bustard, which has ceased to breed in Norfolk for more than forty years, crouched among the corn, or winged its way to headquarters, or rising slowly in numbers, as a dark cloud, startled the solitary peasant on his homeward way."³

David Bingham

¹ Norfolk - Dutt W.A (1902)

² Sandringham Past and Present - Mrs Herbert Jones (1883)

³ The Arcady of our Grandfathers in the Nineteenth Century - Rev. A. Jessopp, D.D (for May 1882)

The nightjar



~Recollections ~

These interesting recollections were sent in by Gerald Warnes, Fern Hill. He describes how Dersingham has changed since he first came here to live

It was 20th October 1964, the day we packed all our worldly goods on the back of Billy Bird's coal lorry and moved to Dersingham, a move that was to transform our lives by offering a better home and prospects. I remember the day was overcast and we faced an onerous task, not made any easier with 2 small children, but I am reminded that I insisted that we should start the day with a good traditional English breakfast of eggs and bacon.

We were at Mannington Hall, the place that now holds the National Rose Collection. I was taken aback when the lorry arrived expecting at least a covered van and was reluctant at that late stage to make the move, but my decision was duly prompted by the driver who informed me that he and his lorry were needed that afternoon to transport sugar beet to the factory at King's Lynn, plus the fact the house we were leaving would be needed for my successor.

We duly arrived at the old Alexandra Hotel opposite Dersingham Railway Station and off-loaded our home. The arrival had been less ceremonious than our very first visit to West Norfolk a month previous, when my wife and our youngest son were dropped at the Red Pumps Garage and from there we walked to the Manor House for a job interview. It was a beautiful September evening and we were greeted by the sound of bagpipes being played by a house guest of Mr Stanton's standing on Hill Pasture at the rear of the house.

We had not been in residence long before we became aware that Dr Beeching had not yet closed this line. It was something that we made good use of in those early days as we had no transport other than our trusty cycles. The station house was occupied by the porter whose job amongst others was to open the gates for the train, there being no automatic barriers then, and one of the 6 cottages was still occupied by a signalman.

One of my first tasks was to visit the Co-op on Lynfords corner, passing on my way Mr Nurse's coal yard where Valley Rise is now. When I returned I was to discover that the family pet cat had got through a hole in the floorboards somewhere and was in the cellar under the house with no obvious way of getting to it.

That afternoon I was taken by the farm foreman to the marshes by the sea-bank to be shown my tasks for the Monday. I had arrived in response to an advertisement that had appears under Situations Vacant in the EDP for a tractor driver/part-time stockman, and would be looking after cattle on the marsh in the winter.

I can now look over those 36 years and I am amazed at the changes that have taken place.

The village must have doubled in size. The field opposite our home housed only the pillbox which is now hidden by the vast development of the Mountbatten estate. The aforementioned Valley Rise estate did not exist and a beautiful mansion stood next to the pottery. It was destroyed by fire and on its site now stands Saxon Way, the doctors' Surgery and the Infants' School. Fields opposite and behind the Red Pumps garage have been developed, King's Croft and Old Hall Drive estates. To the rear of the Police Station many of my former workmates had very productive allotments where Hanover estate now stands. One of the early developments we were to see was the building of the Orchard Close bungalows on the site of an orchard and nursery owned by the Reynolds family. There are many smaller and individual developments that are far too numerous to mention that have sprung up since 1964.

On the morning I started work, 12th October 1964, I would imagine there were nearly 30 men employed on Manor Farm. That number today would be perhaps less than 5. Many factors would be the cause of this, not least of all the departure of the beef cattle, larger machines and the reduction for the need of hand labour. Even graves today are dug by machine.

In 1969 my wife started work at St George's School canteen. She can still be seen cycling morning and afternoon to fulfil this task. She speaks of many changes. Many of the children there today are children of the children she helped to feed back in those early days. It is a job she enjoys and will miss when eventually she has to finish.

In 1977 we left the Alexandra and bought a cottage in Fern Hill. So much was our love for the village and the friends we have made that in spite of all the changes – some for the better, some for the worse – we are hopefully here to stay.

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Dersingham Patients Participation Group

Do People Really Care?

The Heacham Medical Practice is made up of 3 separate surgeries at Heacham, Snettisham and Dersingham. Each surgery has its own Patients Participation Group (PPG), the main aim of these being to provide a link between patients and doctors. A secondary aim is to raise funds to buy medical equipment for the surgeries that is not readily available through the NHS.

The PPGs also produce (and pay for its production) the Practice News which reaches over 4000 households in the Practice area.

My involvement is with the Dersingham PPG which meets at the surgery in Saxon Way every 3 months when matters concerning doctors and patients are raised. This obviously does not include individual medical matters which must always remain confidential to doctor and patient. We have a variety of speakers on topics which affect us all.

However, we are not a self-centred group as we support many events which are run by other village organisations.

Very recently an illustrated presentation entitled 'The Practice – Past – Present and Future' was given by Dr Ian Campbell, the Senior Partner in the Practice, at the Gamekeepers Lodge. Dr Campbell spoke of how the Practice has developed over the past 25 years and had some interesting thoughts on how he sees it developing in the future.

This was an an absorbing presentation aimed at the Snettisham and Dersingham PPGs which have a collective total of about 8000 patients. How many turned up.....20 people!!

The event was well publicised in advance. Posters were displayed in the surgery, library, post office, chemist, the churches, the pubs, all the village traders and several other places. In addition it was given front page coverage in the Practice News.

This kind of response saddens me because the PPG is important and of benefit to everyone in the village. At our meetings we have just one young mother who attends, Where are all the other young mums and dads? The surgery must be important to them and their children. But this apparent lack of interest and enthusiasm is not confined to them alone. It applies to every age group. We should all remember that patient participation is important to everyone in the village.

Sometimes I wonder 'is it all worthwhile and do people really care?'

*George Barton
Chairman, Dersingham PPG*

Dersingham Flower Club

I am writing this on the 14th May – 10 days to CHELSEA FLOWER SHOW!! Lorraine and I are getting excited and nervous, but confident we will do our best to put Dersingham on the map! We are depicting “FAITH IN THE TIGHTROPE” CHARLES BLONDIN.

We have been overwhelmed with the support, help and encouragement we have been given. Thank you Dersingham businesses, Parish Council, village people, members and friends of the Flower Club, for the wonderful response we have had in raising money for the Chelsea fund. We have more than exceeded our target.

We will be repeating the display at St Nicholas Church Flower Festival in July.

Our Juniors entered 8 collages of “A Painted Plate”. We are delighted that they have been selected to go on show at Chelsea. These will also be at the Flower Festival.

Doreen Asker

We look forward to seeing the displays at the St Nicholas Flower Festival - Editor

St Nicholas – Dersingham

FLOWER FESTIVAL

“From the Beginning”

20 – 24 July 2000 • Daily 10.00 am – 7.30 pm

Music in Church

Organ Music daily • Heacham & W Norfolk Singers – Thursday 8 pm
Flute and Friends – Friday 8 pm

Church Hall

STALLS • RAFFLE • REFRESHMENTS

Book lunches with Ruth Mountain 01485 541523

BARBECUE • 8.00 pm

Saturday 22 July

SUNDAY SERVICES

10.30 am Morning Service • The Bishop of Norwich
6.30 pm Songs of Praise with King's Lynn Town Band
Rev Jonathan Calvert

WWW.DERSINGHAM.COM

We have set up a website called Dersingham.com to establish a worldwide Web presence for the village of Dersingham.

The aim of the website is to provide a complete reference site for everything in and around Dersingham, so that local people and visitors to the area have a source of information on the Internet.

The website can be found at www.dersingham.com

You can contact us using the details below or telephone me at home - 543176 - *Jamie Asker*

www.DERSINGHAM.com

PO Box 228, Dersingham

Norfolk PE31 6WQ

Email webmaster@dersingham.com

☎ 01485 543418

Come and explore the Norfolk Coast Norfolk Coast Millennium Access Project

The Norfolk Coast Millennium Access Project is a one-year project mainly funded by Heritage Lottery as part of the Millennium Festival, run by the Norfolk Coast Project in partnership with the RSPB, The Environment Agency, Kelling Heath Holiday Park and The National Trust. It will make the Norfolk Coast more accessible for people with disabilities.

Many events have been organised - all are accessible for people with disabilities and are FREE! Come and explore the coast with us, try out a new hobby - drawing, painting, bird watching ...

Enquiries are welcomed - to get information about the many events contact *Gill Lambert, Project Officer* on

☎ 01328 711533

Email: nor.coast@dial.pipex.com

An interesting and amusing letter received from Gp Capt J A V Short of 21 Earl Close – a perceptive and avid bird watcher

Birds Bistro!

Our large 3-bedroomed house at Toftwood, Dereham, where my wife and I spent 20 happy years, had a Virginia creeper on its north wall and variegated ivy on its southern side. These substantial plants provided excellent hangarage for roosting and nesting a wing (30) of house sparrows. Being a retired RAF Group Captain I looked on these birds as squadrons and daily watched their antics flying to a convenient Leylandii from which to attack a seed feeder throughout the day. Feeding was normally accomplished by making landing but there was some air-to-air refuelling made on the hover! Activity, continuing throughout daylight hours was intense and it was entertaining watching the early summer ab initio sparrows marshalled by their parents attempting to refuel! Then, as the sun set they all returned to the night roost hangar! We had certainly done our bit for the declining house sparrow.

As our family in the Old Bakehouse at Snettisham decided that we were almost decrepit(!), we left our old home a year ago and purchased a small bungalow at the above address on the western side of the village. Everyone was welcoming. The tiny garden, previously used as a play area by two young happy children and patrolled by the family cat was virtually a desert. From our point of view, the saddest aspect was the almost total lack of birds! Within 3 months, however, we had established an attractive garden with a nice grass area and borders planted with a variety of decorative shrubs; all in a benign cat-free environment! With 3 feeders containing a selection of seeds, a bird table and ample ablution facilities, the scene was set to attract our feathered flyers. Alas, initially, we couldn't even muster one flight of our old companions. But then other species began to appear. First a pied wagtail scampered across the grass and a robin visited. A pair of collared doves found the bird table a handy place to land, rest and refuel. Then a force of medium bombers (starlings) raided the garden devouring whatever was on offer. Then at last a dunnoek or two and a pair of house sparrows made a test reconnaissance – great! Next, finches, chaff and green, called in and presumably reported back their findings, for suddenly an entire squadron of gold finches arrive to spend half the day refuelling on the sunflower seed feeder and making more mess than a children's tea party! They have since become daily visitors using the silver birch just beyond our boundary to organise their refuelling and flying activities. The tree was initially used each morning by a single blue tit singing his dainty song from the top branch. Overseeing the entire flying programme is the resident cock blackbird nicknamed 'Genghis Khan' who tolerates no other blackbird except his hen in the garden! I don't know what his attitude was to the bird equivalent of a Lockheed C5 Galaxy (Marsh Harrier) which arrived for a look around a few days ago. The harrier deduced the runway was too short and departed – what a sight!

Oh yes, the entertainment provided by the airborne circus is not only free but beyond payment. Moreover the RSPB are content.

~~~~~

## ~~ The Way Things Were ~~

*We are indebted to Cliff Riches who has sent in some early memories – he describes vividly the Dersingham of years ago. His memories stem from 1912.*

### School and the First World War

These were hard times – there were zeppelin raids over the village. One woman was killed in Doddshill. There was no sewage, no tarmac roads. In the summer steam rollers - summer dust everywhere. We had oil lamps and candles, no main water and wells and pumps were often shared with neighbours. The only news was via newspapers and PO telephone. Only a few large houses had flush toilets. 90% of villagers had a closet in the garden, some with a pail emptied weekly by householder. Most people had tubs or tanks to collect rain water. Several old men had a donkey and cart in which they rode to work. Most men had nicknames, I remember. There was Donkey Daw, an old carpenter.

On the Donkey Common there would be several donkeys and a few goats. Most villagers kept a few hens and rabbits for food, also a large garden or allotment for wages were very low. People had large families to keep on very little money.

We were lucky – Dad was the local shoe repairer and also made handmade boots for people who were handicapped. Dad worked from 5 am to 10 pm. Mother was a wonderful woman – she brought up 9 children, 5 boys and 4 girls. She did everything – cooking, washing, house decorating, bread making etc. She even made wines, jams, lemon curd and marmalade. She was proud of her children – we were some of the lucky ones! Dad's shop was the local club. As many as 20 youths and men would occupy forms in the evenings. There was nowhere for them as in winter everywhere was pitch dark. Dad was a good man and kept many lads off the street. Even now grandfathers, who were then boys, will tell how they would spend their winter evenings at Ernie's. He also sold cigarettes and minerals so it also helped our livelihood.

### The Village

Dersingham has grown beyond bounds. What were once green fields are housing estates, but it is still a pleasant place now it is a dormitory of King's Lynn and a place where hundreds have returned to. We have Sandringham Woods, the beaches at Snettisham, Heacham, Hunstanton, King's Lynn with its markets, local shops and a Post Office (for how long?), a beautiful church, chapel and Catholic church, various clubs, excellent sports facilities and well equipped play areas. In my youth we had very little! We made our own fun and made the best of our simple pleasures. On summer evenings we would walk to our beach for a swim – very few lads possessed a cycle. My friends and I made tents from Tate & Lyle sugar bags and camped by our local beach and were quite safe. We had fun cooking streaky bacon, eggs etc. Our games included marbles, hoops, pop guns, bows and arrows, cricket and football.

School was the 3 Rs. We left school at 14 – the brainy boys and girls who passed the 11 plus would attend the Grammar School or High School in King's Lynn, as did my 2 sisters who both became hospital nurses. Many girls went into service with well-off people – a hard life, long hours – certainly not the good old days compared with these times! It was an almost daily occurrence to see old men tramps moving from one workhouse to the next – 10 miles or more apart. Each morning they did a task before moving on. The Welfare State was non-existent – old couples were sent to the Grubber and the Workhouse, and there often parted – not the good old days at all!

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## † Friends of St Nicholas †

### Dates for your Diary

#### *The Mardling Acre*

will be held on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> June at 8 pm at The Gamekeepers. This is a programme of folk tales, legends, music and songs from East Anglia by a master storyteller, Hugh Lupton. In turns funny, frightening, bawdy and playful, this performance evokes an celebrates the gossiping acres of Norfolk, Suffolk and the Fens (*mardling being the Norfolk word for gossiping*). The tickets will be £5 for adults and £3 for children. For tickets, telephone 544866, 540865, 540463 or 540423

#### *The Country and Western Evening*

will be held on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> September at 7 pm in the Church itself.

If anyone wants to join as a member, please contact  
Nigel Sisson for details (Tel: 540081)

### Dersingham Evening WI

#### Millennium Garden Party - 22 July 2000

Members will be taking an active role in this event and organising the following:



Decorated bicycles for all ages



Decorated and/or home made hats for ladies



A car race around Britain. A game for children of all ages involving a trail and clues and will take place throughout the afternoon

To be judged at 2.30  
and 3.30 pm approx

We hope to see many entries for decorated bicycles and hats. Please come along and give us your support



Dick, Margaret, Allan and Mandy  
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will be dis-  
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letters and  
views, news,  
articles, and so  
on by 15th July  
for inclusion in  
this issue.

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