

# Dersingham Village Voice

Issue No 31

November/December 2004

**THE EDITORIAL TEAM WISH ALL OF OUR  
READERS A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A  
PEACEFUL NEW YEAR**



May the Christmas of two thousand and four,  
Bring happiness to every door,  
In Dersingham and places near,  
So all are filled with joyous cheer.

As the clock strikes in two thousand and five,  
May folk be glad they are alive,  
With resolutions firmly pledged,  
For better times to lie ahead.

When every person old or young,  
Ensures their special festive fun,  
Endures not just this Xmas Day,  
But throughout a wondrous year will stay.

From the Wash's shore to Yarmouth sands,  
May floods be kept from fertile lands,  
So man and sea reside as one,  
For endless Yuletides yet to come.



## Parish Council Report

The September meeting of Dersingham Parish Council received a report on the results of the village appraisal from the steering group. 1062 households had responded, representing more than half the village. The Council agreed to consider the results of the survey at its next meeting.

The Council was concerned about the state of the footbridge linking the Sandringham View estate to The Drift: the County and Borough Councillors were asked to try and establish who was responsible for its maintenance. The Council congratulated the police and emergency services for the way they had handled the recent security incidents at the village post office.

Before the start of the October meeting a petition was submitted to the Council signed by 1,223 people opposed to the suggestion arising from the village survey that a new public hall should be built; it was pointed out that the Council had not yet considered this matter and that some of the facts in the petition were strongly disputed. The Council went on to consider the results of the survey and made the following decisions on the items for which it had responsibility:

### Transport

The suggestion that Post Office Road should be made one-way from east to west was not supported by the Council on the grounds that this would lead to speeding in a busy area and would exacerbate the existing problems at the western end of Chapel Road. However, the Council supported the extension of no parking restrictions and would ask Norfolk County Council to extend the yellow lines along the complete length of the wall adjacent to the former petrol station.

The Council also supported the suggestion that a push-button-controlled pedestrian phase be introduced for the traffic lights in Hunstanton Road.

The suggestion that the 410 bus service should be diverted via Mountbatten Road and Station Road was not supported, partly because it was felt that buses would have problems negotiating this route and partly because this would leave residents living east of Hunstanton Road further from a bus stop.

### Crime

It was noted that the survey revealed a low opinion of the police. The Council agreed to ask the Chief Constable to respond with proposals as to how to improve the situation. The suggestion that the Neighbourhood Watch scheme should be promoted more vigorously was supported.

In considering the suggestion that more social activities should be provided for young people to counter the incidence of antisocial behaviour, it was pointed out that the Council was already promoting this through the new Youth Council.

### Village Hall

The Council noted the petition (*see above*) opposed to a new village hall and also noted the considerable support for the idea from the appraisal survey. It was pointed out that the Council had neither taken any decisions nor even considered the issues before. It therefore agreed to set up a working group of Parish Councillors to

examine and recommend how the long-term provision of community centre facilities for the village can best be met. This group will, with the assistance of an advisory committee of representatives of voluntary organisations and interested individuals, identify what facilities the village needs and investigate how best these can be provided. Consideration will be given both to the potential for the existing buildings within the village to meet the need and whether these require upgrading or whether a new building is necessary. The working group will also have the task of investigating the financial implications of the choices available and the potential for gaining external funding.

The Council also agreed that, in principle, any options for major change should be put to a Parish Poll so that all residents could have their say prior to a decision being taken.

### **Other issues**

The concern over the lack of signposting on some footpaths was noted and the Council will check where new signs are needed.

On the suggestion that better facilities were needed for collecting household and garden waste for recycling, it was pointed out that the Council had tried to identify a site for a bottle bank and had also tried to arrange a garden waste recycling scheme, both without success so far.

The request for an investigation into the provision of facilities for small-scale industrial development to provide more local employment will be looked into by one of the Council's committees.

The Council considered that the cost of providing a public toilet would be prohibitive but it would attempt to see if such a facility could be provided as part of another development.

The Council noted the other more general points in the report and will take these into account when relevant.

### **Other business**

Other business considered at the meeting included the ongoing issue of the provision of more affordable homes in the village. After hearing a presentation by the Rural Housing Enabler from the Norfolk Rural Community Council, the Council agreed to support a full survey of the need for affordable housing in the village. This will be carried out early in the New Year.

Now that the Sandringham View estate is complete, the Council agreed to seek the completion of the footpath from Station Road to The Drift.

The Council agreed a grant towards the cost of the repair of the clock on the tower of St Nicholas Church.

*PRB*

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**Cover Photograph:** "St Nicholas Church and Snow – 2003" by Paul Burall

**Cover Poem:** "Endless Yuletides" by Kathy Jordan © 18 October 2004

*(The recent warnings of future flooding in the area prompted this poem)*

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## Editor's Notes

Well here we are again with another bumper edition (56 pages) of Village Voice to either amuse, entertain, or annoy you, or even to cause your hackles to rise as you say "They've got it wrong again!" Over the last year I have had approaches from one or other resident of the village who is of the opinion that an item which we have published has not been totally accurate in its content, particularly where dates are concerned. Other matters which have been pointed out to me are when contradictions have occurred between one writer's entry and that of another, again, mostly to do with dates. I must defend my own position in that I tend to accept articles at face value, and, unless they are considered to be contentious, (in which case I have in the past either drastically edited or rejected such items), I do not feel that it is my place to query the content, preferring you, good reader, to write in with what you believe to be the true historical facts. I would like you to bear in mind that many of our contributors are relying on their memories of long past incidents and hearsay, details of which tend to fail, (and sometimes become more colourful), over time. Please! Please! Please! If you have anything to say, either for or against what we publish, let me know in order that I may have the opportunity to pass it on to other readers. Just in case you thought that I had taken up ventriloquism when seeing the above photo, I should tell you that it has a bearing (no pun intended) on two articles in this issue, as it was taken at George Pratt's Celebration Dinner which is reported, and that the teddy bear wears a sweatshirt with the words Sandringham Fire Station emblazoned on the front, which directly relates to Denis Wright's Personality Profile. I included this picture at the insistence of our resident photographer, Tony Bubb.

You will notice that there is no article in this issue entitled "Sandringham View – What's in a Name?" This is caused by the difficulty I am having in collecting the background information needed to deal with the names which have not so far been covered. Perhaps you have some knowledge of these streets and would be willing to write a piece about them, or you may prefer to pass the information to me verbally in order that I can write the article based on the facts which you give. It will come to your attention whilst reading the magazine that there are an increasing number of letters and articles included which have been sent in by people who live outside the village, but who have past or present links with it. I am finding it very satisfying to learn that not only is the magazine being read by those to whom it is delivered, but that we are now discovering that the shops and other places in which we leave copies for collection are running out on the day of receipt, and that although many of these are taken by people who do not receive a doorstep delivery and by visitors to the area, there are many copies being sent to ex-patriots abroad, and I have received reports of them ending up as far away as Scotland to the North, South Africa to the South, Canada to the West and Australia/New Zealand to the East. Gosh! We've gone international! Don't forget, It is **your** contributions that have helped to achieve this success, keep them coming! *Bob Tipling*

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### Dersingham Parish Council Office Opening Times

Monday 10.30 am – 2.00 pm Tuesday 10.30 am – 2.00 pm

Wednesday 10.30 am – 12.30 pm Thursday 10.30 am – 12.30 pm

Tel: 01485 541465

Email: [Dersingham@wncb.net](mailto:Dersingham@wncb.net)

**Christmas and New Year Opening – Closed from 12.30 pm 23 December**

**Re-open 10.30 am Monday 3 January 2005**

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## Letters to the Editor

*Mr S W Elders of Branston in Lincoln writes:* I left the village in 1968, although I continued to visit on a regular basis until the death of my mother in 1986. Since then I have passed through occasionally, and a few days ago found me doing just that and taking some light refreshment in the Feathers. When my wife passed across a copy of the "Village Voice," which I have not seen before, I thumbed through with interest, to see if there were any names I knew. Firstly, I saw the article on Philip Nurse and my mind wandered back to the early 60s when I would visit my grandmother for holidays, when we still lived at Grimsby. My grandmother also lived in Chapel Road and Philip and I would sometimes go up into the field that was at the back of her house at that time. Whilst we saw less of each other in future years, it was still a shock to hear from my mother of his tragic and premature death. In looking at the article on older village properties my mind went back still further to the late 50s when my step-grandfather, Harry Green, had been head gardener at the Oaks. This impressive country residence used to stand where the surgery and school are now located on Chapel Road. The house, known as Ivy Cottage, where my grandmother lived, plus stables that now make up the art studio, were incorporated within the grounds. A Mr. Lloyd Pratt owned the Oaks and he was a widower who spent a lot of his time away during the day at his businesses in Wisbech. Thus on my summer holidays, I could wander the gardens almost freely with my grandfather and play in the barns and stables, as well as the field to the rear, where Philip and I would go in the years to come, and which belonged to the Oaks. There was also a field to the front on the other side of the quiet and safe Chapel Road, which had a fantastic pond for catching frogs, to keep in jars in the stables. The gardens themselves were indeed something to behold, a large entry drive and lawns to the front, formal lawns to the rear for receptions and croquet and a walled vegetable garden for supplying the kitchen. Mr Pratt had a son by adoption, Brian, and whilst he had spent his earlier years at the house, during the time I was there he was travelling extensively. My grandmother had worked in the Oaks' kitchen at one time and used to prepare food very much to his liking. Brian was always fond of both my grandmother and grandfather, and continued to make a point of visiting them for many years after, even though he mixed in circles well outside their lifestyle and had been introduced to the Queen on at least one occasion. In 1960 my grandfather retired and they moved out of Ivy Cottage to the house in Chapel Road. The cook retired around the same time and Mr Pratt took a housekeeper, who he eventually married. On his death, probably in about 1966/7, the house was left to Brian but the contents went to his new stepmother. Brian showed no interest with moving into the Oaks but complained that the land to the rear could not be developed due to the lack of a satisfactory entry road. I moved to Dersingham in 1966 with my widowed mother and began to attend King's Lynn Technical College. On one morning in 1968 as I set off for college, upon turning into Chapel Road, I came upon a commotion of firemen and bystanders outside the Oaks, which had burnt down during the night. Rumours abounded about how an empty house could have caught fire. Vagrants were one theory and some villagers spoke of seeing someone running from the house at around the time it must have started. Whatever, the broken shell was beyond repair and after a while, the remnants of this once beautiful house and gardens were cleared away to make way for the surgery, school and housing that is there today. At the time my grandmother lived in Ivy Cottage there was no bathroom or inside toilet, just a single cold tap in the kitchen and no electricity upstairs. It is all too easy to forget the harshness of the times but those fields and warm summer days are still

something I remember with fondness. Trust you find this of some interest and would appreciate a copy if you publish.

**Mr A J Guilbert of Jubilee Drive writes:** I thank you and your contributors for a very informative and humorous Issue No 30 of the DVV. Being a lifelong imbibor of ale I was particularly interested in your article on village Pubs. However, the old Ordnance Survey maps show an inn in Station Road opposite the old railway station, now Semba Trading. I believe this inn was called the Station or Railway Inn and is now a private house; can anyone supply photographs and history? On a more serious matter; perhaps the Parish Council/Highway Authority could consider moving the 30 mph speed limit on the Lynn Road to 50 yards south of the junction with Heath Road. If this is not possible, perhaps extending the 30 mph limit in Heath Road to the junction with the Lynn Road.

*(Editor's footnote; the hotel in question was the Alexandra Hotel which is mentioned in the first paragraph of Dick Melton's article.)*

**Dick Melton of Hunstanton writes:** Village Voice No 30 was as good as ever, in fact I think they are like old whisky, they are getting better with age. In the September/October edition there is a very good article by Elizabeth Fiddick called 'The Oldest House in the Village.' As she says the oldest house that is still occupied must be the middle house in Albert Victor Row, which was built in 1671, and at one time in its life was the village workhouse. When I was a lad we always called this row of houses 'Wash-house Yard' as the lady in the first house was a washerwoman. The oldest structure I would think is the foundations of the old windmill in the grounds of Mill House, as there was a windmill on this site before 1780. The old moat down The Drift, which has now been filled in, was, at one time, the moat for a manor house that stood on this site and was owned by the Prior of Binham in 1244. There was also a very interesting letter in the same edition about the old school (now the Community Centre) at the bottom of Dodds Hill Road. One of the main features of this school was the huge horse-chestnut tree that grew in the playground. It had been there for many years when someone came up with the idea that it was dangerous and had it chopped down. The school was built in 1875, the old Wesleyan Methodist Chapel that was built in 1875 stood opposite the school gate, where it is today, and was used after 1950 as the school dining hall. In 1904 the school was enlarged to hold 326 children (the population of the village was 1,316 at that time). An old manor house stood in the school grounds, between the playground and the now fire-station, this was demolished after the First World War and the land on which it stood made into a garden for the children.

**Susanne Govan of 24 Great Northern Court, Grantham, Lincs NG31 6LN writes:** I am researching my family history and have discovered that my great grandfather was Henry Riches and he was born in Dersingham in 1861. Having found your website which is really lovely and informative I am hoping someone can tell me if they know of this name in the locality and if there are any Parish Records available for me to look at. Any information would be greatly appreciated. Thanking you in advance. (Susanne can be contacted by E-mail on susannemgovan@yahoo.com)

**Matthew Lindsay, aged 10, of Post Office Road writes:** Dear Parish Council, My name is Matthew Lindsay. I am 10 years old. I was really excited when I heard about the skateboarding ramp on the playing field. I have been there almost every day and I hope it will stay where it is.

**Philippa Lindsay, aged 7, of Post Office Road writes:** Dear Parish Council, My name is Philippa Lindsay. I am 7 years old. I was really excited when I heard about the

skateboarding ramp on the playing field. I have been there three times and it is very fun and I like it and I hope it is going to stay there.

**Dersingham Parish Councillor Valerie Brundle writes:** – End of an Era - In the previous issue of the Village Voice, a potted history of Alderman George Pratt was printed, covering the 'Life and Times of...' To celebrate his outstanding contribution to our village and West Norfolk, a Celebration Dinner was held on 3rd November. At the same time we also said a sad farewell to our Parish Clerk Kim Dunford and her assistant Clare Thomson both of whom retired from their respective positions. A semi informal gathering, with plenty of joviality and surprise guests the Mayor and Mayoress, Paul and Theresa Brandon. With past and present Councillors, we all celebrated with an excellent meal supplied by Priors of Kings Lynn. May I say a special thank you to Councillors, Tony Bubb, John Houston, Sue Payne and Betty Clerk for helping me make it a successful evening. The highlight of that night was a letter received from HRH Prince Charles thanking George for all his efforts over the past 42 years. During the evening, we presented Kim with a silver bracelet and matching earrings, and Clare received a beautiful cut glass fruit bowl. My sincere apologies to our current Parish Chairman, Malcolm Nurse, for not asking him to present any of these gifts. This was an oversight on my part, especially as he had worked along side George for the past 36 years. In Alderman Pratt's address he thanked everyone with his usual flair, and commented that he had not attended a function where the current Parish councillors had arranged a gathering for many years. Maybe a Christmas event could be arranged, with the Parish Councillors and Parishioners joining forces at a sit down dinner with accompanying Christmas Carols for all to enjoy. Let us know your thoughts for such an event. Feedback regarding the event held on 3 November has been very encouraging. Thank you everyone.

**Mrs Mollie Clayton of Bank Road writes:** We are so fortunate in Dersingham to have a family run Post Office - we must make sure we keep it by using it. The Royal Mail are talking about closing another 280 branches. The Post Office is a way of life for the elderly and disabled - we're not all banking by Internet or have home computers. We lost our village bank and railway in spite of protests years ago. If you're not mobile it's not always easy to travel to King's Lynn or Hunstanton. It's very difficult for some to get on the bus. Please print this, your voice is heard.



**Samantha Martin and Neil Balderson** were married at the Registry Office in King's Lynn on Saturday 18 September. The civil ceremony was followed by a service of blessing in the Pond Garden at the Feathers Hotel, and an afternoon and evening reception in St Nicholas Church Hall. The bride's parents are Tony and Maxine Martin, proprietors of the Feathers Hotel, and Neil's family are from Campbeltown in Scotland.

# Brian Poucher M.A.

## Will Consultant

**PERSONAL ESTATE PLANNING (Legal Services) Ltd**  
63 Station Road, Dersingham, King's Lynn, Norfolk PE31 6PR

Local Office: 01485 542888

Mobiles: 07803 924063

07769 713153

Head Office:

Crown House, 1 Stafford Place, Weston-super-Mare BS23 2QZ  
Telephone: 01934 622012

The West Norfolk Singers are presenting a  
**\*\* CONCERT OF CHRISTMAS MUSIC \*\***

at St Nicholas Church on Friday 10 December at 7.30 pm  
Admission by Programme £3 to include refreshments

## **GUY PLAYFORD'S SUPREME CARPETS**

THE HOME SELECTION SPECIALISTS

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*Hand Knotted Crafted Rugs  
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MON TO FRI 11 am - 5 pm, SAT 10 am - 2 pm

**FORESTER'S HALL, MANOR ROAD, DERSINGHAM**

For Home Selection phone 8 am - 8 pm

## Celebration Dinner



*Borough Mayor Paul Brandon with George Pratt and his daughter, Pauline*

A splendid time was had by all who attended the farewell dinner held for George Pratt, Kim Dunford and Clare Thomson in the Church Hall on 3 November. Nearly 40 friends and well wishers shared an evening that celebrated the work done for the village by the guests of honour. Borough Mayor Paul Brandon and County Councillor Janice Eells were amongst those present who praised their efforts.

After an excellent meal, presentations were made to all three of our guests. George was also presented with a framed letter of appreciation from the Prince of Wales. The Parish Council revealed that they were hoping to have the roundabout to the south of the village named in George's honour. TB



*The Borough Mayor Paul Brandon, George Pratt (obviously enjoying himself), Clare Thomson and Kim Dunford*

## **Sarah Bristow Joins Dersingham Parish Council**

### *The New Parish Clerk introduces herself*

My name is Sarah Bristow. I was born on 17 December 1967 in King's Lynn. Prior to my birth my mother worked as a Chemist Dispenser for Halls the Chemist in Norfolk Street and my father ran his own Coal Merchants business with my uncle.

I first went to school at Highgate Infants School, then on to St James Girls School. Following this I was one of the first girls to attend King Edwards VII High School. When leaving school I could not decide between staying in further education or finding a job. I opted to do both by doing a YTS course. I went to NORCAT and did a BTEC National Diploma in Business Studies for two days a week and worked as Secretary to the Purchasing Manager at Porvair for three days a week. I then after two or three temporary positions started as a Clerical Assistant with Hexagon Fastenings in May 1986. I stayed with them for 6½ years the last two years commuting to Peterborough daily, before being made redundant. I left there on Friday 30 October 1992 and took up a temporary position with Norfolk County Council Social Services on Monday 2 November. I worked at several different establishments doing administrative tasks within the Children and Families Division. I finished up after being with them for 12 years in Childcare Finance at Greyfriars House in King's Lynn, leaving there on Friday 29 October and officially started as Clerk to the Council on 1 November.



I have had and still do have several hobbies. I first started at the age of 2½ doing ballet and tap dancing, giving up with the starting of school. At the age of 9 I took up Ballroom and Latin American dancing. I used to compete at competitions and covered all the examinations finally becoming a qualified teacher in ballroom in 1990.

I was a Brownie, a Guide, a Ranger and finally a Young Leader within the guiding movement. I also helped out with cubs and scouts and attended several of their camps as a first-aider. I first started doing first aid at the age of 9. I was a cadet with the British Red Cross, then at the age of 17 I was poached and joined the St John Ambulance Brigade. It was due to St John that I met my husband, Kevin, a fellow member. Kevin and I started going out on the 15 June 1986 and married on 1 July 1989. In 1994 we moved from King's Lynn to Ingoldisthorpe as my husband had always lived in a village prior to moving to King's Lynn to nurse his Nan. We joined Hunstanton Division of St John and opened up Dersingham Badger Sett. Our first son, Samuel, came along on 9 November 1995 and due to this and Kevin's work commitments we had to close the Sett the following year. I remained Area Secretary

for St John and for the last four years have been Area Staff Officer Member Support. Our second son, Joshua, came along on 1 April 1999.

I used to belong to St Edmund's Church Choir as a child and now I am in the choir at Ingoldisthorpe. I have been Clerk to the Governors for an infant's school in King's Lynn for the last eight years and Governor at my son's school in Ingoldisthorpe for the last three years. I do not have much free time but my main hobby at present is making celebration cakes ranging from children's novelty cakes through to wedding cakes complete with sugar flowers if required. I achieved a City & Guilds qualification in sugar flowers three years ago and a Centra course in wired sugar flowers two years ago. I am Programme Secretary for King's Lynn Sugarcraft Guild. My house is usually very chaotic - there are three generations living there as my mum moved in with us after losing my dad about 20 months ago. Completing the household are tanks and a pond of fish and one large boisterous 10 month old boxer dog named Buster.

My first connection with Dersingham was when I was bridesmaid at St Nicholas Church when I was 2½. My parents had friends in the village that owned a garage and I was bridesmaid to their daughter. Then I moved to Ingoldisthorpe as my husband wanted to live in a village, and I now understand why. I now have completed my journey and have ended up working in Dersingham. I hope that by being Clerk I can help in providing services for this much loved village well into the future.

*Sarah Bristow*

**DERSINGHAM SCHOOLS**  
invite you  
to a  
**CHILDREN'S CAROL AND CHRISTINGLE SERVICE**  
at 6.30 pm  
**16 December 2004**

**St Nicholas Church**





## Christmas at the Churches



### ST NICHOLAS PARISH CHURCH - DECEMBER

Wednesday 15th 2.30 pm	Mothers' Union Carol Service
Thursday 16th 6.30 pm	Dersingham Schools' Christingle Service
Sunday 19th 6.30 pm	Carol Service
Friday 24th 11.30 pm	Midnight Holy Communion
Saturday 25th 10.00 pm	Family Christmas Celebration



Please join us, if you can, for these special services, or for any other services as listed in the Parish News

### ST CECILIA'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH - DECEMBER



Sunday 19th  
Friday 24th  
Friday 24th  
Saturday 25th  
Sunday 26th

Holy Mass at 9.00 am  
Carol Service at 8.00 pm  
Nativity Mass at 9.00 pm  
Mass at 9.00 am  
Mass of the Holy Family at 9.00 am

### DERSINGHAM METHODIST CHURCH - DECEMBER

Saturday 11th	10.00 am onwards - Christmas Coffee Morning with Decorated Church
Sunday 19th	10.30 am - Family Carol Service
Sunday 19th	6.30 pm - Traditional Candelit Carol Service
Saturday 25th	10.30 am - Christmas Day Service
Sunday 26th	10.30 am - Preacher Rev Kim Nally No Evening Service



*Please come and join us to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ*

## Greetings from the Manse

In the city of Myra, in modern day Turkey, there were many Christians in the last years of the Roman Empire. Well, it so happened that the bishop there died, and so the people had to elect another. But it was an easy task for there was one name that surfaced above all others: Nicholas, for he was known to be kind and generous. So Nicholas was consecrated bishop. The first thing he did was to give away his wealth, for he was a rich man. Well, he gave away almost everything and was contemplating giving it all away when he had a dream.

An angel appeared to him in his dream and said, "Nicholas; you must not give everything away. Save some." "But the poor....," protested Nicholas. The angel interrupted, "Save some. Save three bags of gold until the time comes when I tell you what to do." Nicholas did what the angel said and hid three bags of gold under his bed. Every night he remembered they were there. Every night he awaited some message. He waited a long time. Then, one night the angel came in a dream and said, "Nicholas, tonight you must take one of your bags of gold and go to the Pawnbroker's, for he has three daughters. He is very poor and the daughters will not be able to wed unless they have a dowry. Otherwise, they will be sold into slavery."

Nicholas woke up from the dream, dressed, and took one bag of gold from under his bed. He went to the house where the Pawnbroker lived, and was about to knock on the door when he stopped. He decided he would just leave the bag there. He went around and peeked in the window. Inside he saw the Pawnbroker and his three daughters dejected and weeping. He quietly pushed the window open slowly and dropped the bag of gold inside and fled. There, in the bag, was enough gold for a dowry so that the eldest daughter could be wed. She was full of joy, as was her father - but her two sisters were not. The next night the angel came again in a dream and said, "Nicholas, take another bag of gold and bring it to the Pawnbroker for his other two daughters are in danger of being sold into slavery." So Nicholas went to the house. He did not knock on the door but went to the same window - but it was locked! So he went to another window, slowly and quietly opened it, dropped the bag of gold inside and fled. Now two girls were content. The youngest was not. The third night Nicholas had a dream, as he knew he would have, for all good things come in threes. And the angel did come and told him the same story. So Nicholas got up to go to the Pawnbroker's house. Meanwhile, the Pawnbroker was wondering: who was it? Who was leaving the gold? He too knew that good things happen in threes, so he locked the door and all the windows so he could force the mysterious stranger around the house where he could see him. The youngest daughter pleaded, "Please Papa, don't lock the windows!" Nicholas arrived. He did not try the door, but the window. It was locked. He tried another. Locked. All locked. So, instead of going around the front of the house where he could be seen, he went to the back of the house, climbed up the roof, and dropped the bag of gold down the chimney. The bag broke open and the coins dropped down into the fire. The Pawnbroker raked them out, cooled them, and found there was enough money for his youngest daughter's dowry. The Pawnbroker never knew it was Nicholas, but close friends knew and later they told the story of Nicholas. Years and centuries went by. Myra fell to the Turks, and so Nicholas's body and the stories about him were taken across the sea to Italy. There Nicholas was celebrated year after year and the stories reached to the ends of the earth. To this day, people remember the man who was to become known as Santa Claus, who gave gifts and who, after all, was only imitating God's gift of himself to the world.

*A very joyful Christmas and peaceful New Year to one and all,*

*Kim Nally*

## News from Dersingham Schools



Dersingham schools work closely together for the benefit of their pupils. We share some staff meetings, have a joint Governors' Committee and plan projects to involve pupils working and learning together. The staff are looking forward to a Creative Arts Professional Development Day in April on the theme of Water, which will lead to more joint projects in 2005.

The schools would like to thank parents and friends for all their support. It has enabled the Infant and Nursery School to have a new library with a stock of about 1,000 books. Funds raised to achieve this were from the Friends of the School and from a school non-uniform day and a book fair. This is a great asset to the school, and the junior school to resource new reading books and playground equipment, which have been really appreciated by the children.

At the moment both schools are busy planning for Christmas. On 16 December at 6.30 pm at St Nicholas Church there will be a Children's Carol and Christingle Service, organised as a joint venture by the schools and the church. Children will be able to hold and take home a Christingle candle, which will be lit with parents' supervision, during the service. These will cost £1 and proceeds will go to the Children's society, orders and money to the schools by 10 December. The service will feature the joint schools choir, who can also be heard at Thaxter's Coffee Shop and the schools' Christmas Fairs in December. We hope that this will be a family occasion and become part of Christmas Celebrations in Dersingham.

### School Christmas Fairs

**Dersingham Infant & Nursery**  
10 December 5.30pm

**St George's (CE) Junior**  
3 December 3.30pm

### Christmas Plays

**"A Present for the Baby"**  
8, 9 & 10 December  
9.00 – 9.30 am

**"Christmas Surprise"**  
7 & 9 December  
6.30 pm

**Last day of term Friday 17 December – schools reopen for pupils on  
5 January 2005**

**A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from  
Dersingham Schools**

Jackie Austin

Carol De Witt



## The Not-So-Nutty Christmas Cake

Hugh Mullarkey © 01-09-04

When the ghost of Christmas Pudding met the ghost of Christmas Cake

In the Scullery of Time where washed-up dishes take a break

He said 'Nutty me old Fruit-cake, what are you doing here?'

This is where the guzzled go before they disappear.'

'Oh Ectoplasmic Pudding, you find me out of sorts

For when I look at Christmas now I have depressing thoughts.

Everything is tawdry there's no pride in our creation

Where have all the hours gone of joyful preparation?'

Nutty me old Fruit-cake don't make your icing melt  
It wouldn't be the same without you underneath one's belt.

I'll help you find a Kitchen where you can safely rest

And watch a loving Mum prepare a culinary beau-geste.'

'Oh that would be so wonderful – a Happy-Christmas-Haunt!

Where I can watch a family with no fripperies to flaunt

Who take their share as they prepare and eagerly await

A simple Happy Christmas that they can all celebrate.

Where busy Children help to blend the 'goodies' for the mix

So their busy little tongues can have their gratifying licks

That dispose of any morsels of the Cake or Christmas Pud

And ensure that every mixture tastes as every mixture should.'

'Nutty me old Fruit-cake don't forget we end up cooked

Then taken to the Table where our one-way ticket's booked.

First they steam me in a saucepan then they cover me with brandy

Then they'll find a box of matches which they always have so handy!'

'Now who's being gloomy – that's the price of fickle fame.

Everything is swallowed in its transitory flame.

From the centre of attention to the Scullery of time

We have to act our hearts out in life's hectic pantomime.

The joy is in creation when ingredients are mixed

When appetites are whetted not intransigently fixed

So while we're on our journey from the kitchen to the table

Let us contemplate our purpose – find the Star above our stable.



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## A New Life

by Steve Cooper

“How are you?” How many times have you been greeted with “How are you?” but know that a truthful answer is not really wanted? Instead the seemingly correct response is “OK! Thanks!” when you would really like to tell the truth but don’t wish to appear boring or miserable. Well now, I tell it as it is, and sometimes I don’t get the first word out before they have moved on, but my attitude is that you asked, and if you can’t be bothered to wait for an answer then you didn’t want one, and shouldn’t have asked because you obviously don’t care.



Time for a little background about me. My name is Steve, I am 54 years young, and in October 2003, after nearly two years of knowing something was wrong, I was diagnosed as having Parkinson’s Disease. It was a bit of a bombshell, but it was also a relief to know what the problem was, I wasn’t going potty after all! The terrible walking, shaking, fatigue and stiffness were only some of the symptoms which led to me having to use a wheelchair, as I can’t walk much further than 20 or 30 yards,

and that’s on a good day. Parkinson’s affects us all differently, and is not helped by a recent diagnosis that I have Cervical Spondylosis (degenerative disease of the bones and joints) taking away my mobility, which all sounds very gloomy, but, in fact, besides the inconvenience, has opened up a whole new life. At least that’s my way of looking at it; I can still drive, and have permission from the DVLA to do so. I use my electric buggy to walk my dog ‘Charlie Bubbles’ and my wheelchair to do the distances I can’t walk; it all works quite well, most of the time. I am a lot more observant of the Great British Public, especially when I am in my wheelchair. However, I find that I am singled out; I stick out like a sore thumb and can easily become a target sometimes for unwanted attention, particularly when using the train from King’s Lynn to Ely and back twice a week. Alone in a wheelchair using the railways is a bit of a daunting experience at times, but I have met some really nice friendly helpful people, in particular the staff at King’s Lynn and Ely stations have been great, and they have demonstrated to me time and time again that they really do care, and that’s what it’s all about ‘CARING’. I have found that the attitude of people to me when I am in my wheelchair is totally different to when I was able to walk properly, they smile, they’re polite, they talk to me, the ladies even pat me on the head and if I look as though I need help it’s offered, and it’s sometimes offered even when I don’t need it, and on one occasion I didn’t need it, but he was drunk, and even then a little old lady came to the rescue in full head patting mode, but even though he was drunk and very persistent he still cared enough to want to help. One thing is for certain, I am never ignored and never far from somebody that CARES and that says a lot about the majority of the Great British Public. So why the hell go and spoil it all by asking, “How are you” when you don’t really want an answer? Just say “Hello” instead, that way, I, for one, will save myself a whole heap of embarrassment by launching into a lot of obviously unwanted verbal diarrhoea about how I really do feel. If, on the other hand, you do want to know, then I’m your man just ask away and you will get the truth with both barrels (politely) of course.



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## Sandringham Fire Service's Station Officer Dennis Wright

*Personality Profile - In his own words*

When I sat down to write this article I first started with jotting down dates and then realised that I have now spent over half my life with the Fire Service, 28 years out of my 50. A youngster I hear you all say! But the Fire Service is not my full time occupation, I also have my own garage in Docking, so life is busy, but I make time to socialise with my wife and daughter.

I was born in the village in 1954 the second son of Geoffrey and Doreen Wright, my mother still lives at Pansey Drive, the very house where I was born. This house originally belonged to my grandparents, I must ask why I was born there and not my parents' house at Centre Vale. Unfortunately my Father died in 1996, just six weeks before my own daughter was born, he would have been a great granddad. I went to school in the village and at this time the primary school was where the Community Centre now resides, then onto St George's which was a secondary school then. My daughter has just started here and it's now known as a Junior School. While at school I had a Saturday morning job delivering vegetables for my uncle who had a nursery on the green.

On leaving school I signed up for an apprenticeship in car body repairing in King's Lynn, the Company was called Sillett's, the garage closed down and all staff were offered jobs by Tricentrol another local garage. This garage is still there today on John Kennedy Road but has had many owners since, at the moment it's a car wash. While carrying out my apprenticeship I took up the sport of speedway racing. At sixteen I was racing all around the country for 'Boston Barracudas' - it was great fun until I had an accident and my employers told me that I needed to finish my apprenticeship, without any further arms in plasters and slings. Not the injuries you need when working with your hands. I gave up the racing and knuckled down and successfully completed my City & Guilds. With my qualifications under my belt and another owner about to take over the garage again, I decided to work for myself. I rented my first premises in the village at what was known as Nar Valley Garage, better known now as Sandringham Motors on Lynn Road.

It was at this time I joined the Fire Service, my intention was just to supplement my income, but I become hooked and if my business hadn't worked out I would have applied to be full time. Back in those days we had a pager and a siren went off in the village when we were called out, most of the firemen worked for Sandringham Estate, so being closer to the fire station I attended many incidents. I remember well the summer of 1976 - lots of heath fires - water shortages and many of my customers waiting for their vehicles to be completed! We were out for days. Now crews from



other stations in the area relieve us.

This year was also the year that I met my wife Denise, she is often left waiting for me to return from a fire call. More often than not it's when we are in the local pub having a meal or drink, if you see her in there on her own she's not an alcoholic just waiting for the fire engine to return, she's asked me to say a gin and tonic would be nice!

In 1978 I moved my body repair workshop from Dersingham to Docking as my workload grew, despite the late deliveries of vehicles. You will find me still down the High Street in Docking, I still have many customers from Dersingham. However, my customers come from as far as Wells-Next-The-Sea locally and I have lots of work from other garages, also London based customers who have holiday homes in the area. We are a busy garage with three of us working full time and two part-time members of staff. We have a mixture of trade, private and insurance work.

After fourteen years of marriage, holidays and fun we decided to go down the children route. In 1996 we celebrated the birth of our daughter Mesha, who is now 8 years old and a great character, I have found being a father very rewarding, it's like reliving your own childhood at times or is it my age! Does this happen once you go past 50! The only drawback in having a daughter is that she is very much a girlie girl at the moment and I had no idea that playing Barbies was part of the requirements of a father, I thought all girls of that age wanted to go fishing! They did when I was 8. Fishing is a hobby that I have had very little time for since the birth of Mesha, however, I am a keen Angler and like to spend time fishing at local waters. I find that sitting on a riverbank very relaxing and give me time to think about the busy schedule I have.

**What would I do differently if I could do it all again?** Not much would change - I would still live in Dersingham. - I think it's a great place to live and bring up children. I could not imagine life not being a fireman - but I would have liked to see how successful I could have been with the speedway racing. I feel I gave up before my time.

### **Message from Cllr Malcolm Nurse Chairman of The Parish Council**



As Chairman of the Dersingham Parish Council I would like to repeat that which was stated at our last Parish Council Meeting, namely that this Council neither has now or at any time had the wish or intention to demolish the Dersingham Scout Hut, Sports Pavilion or Community Centre. Indeed, even if this was our wish, we do not have the power to do so! No village community development would ever go ahead without a full and lengthy consultation with all interested parties and before any resultant plans were put to the whole village for their approval or rejection. I hope this will put an end to the rumour and speculation that is currently rife in Dersingham.

Park House Sandringham invites you to

**A Celebration of Christmas  
on Friday 17 December  
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Presented by Dr Gerald Gifford (Harpsichord and Piano), Amanda Anslow (Recorder  
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It is April 1957 and American Serviceman Captain Phil Tooley proudly displays his pride and joy, a Penny-Farthing bicycle to some Dersingham residents. Photo taken outside the White Horse Public House (what is now Jubilee Court). Captain Tooley was living in the village at the time whilst serving with the US forces at Sculthorpe.



**Christmas Carols Around The Tree**

*21 Hunstanton Road, Dersingham (Tropics)*



Keith and Sandie Green and family invite you to come and join us around the Christmas tree in our garden, on Monday 20 December at 7 pm when Neil Adams will be conducting an informal service. Wrap up well! Afterwards you can have a mince-pie or two with a hot drink (squash for the children). The garden is safe and enclosed for the little ones. Let this be a first for our community and maybe something to happen once a year. Please try to let us know if you can come by popping

in when you pass the shop, as that way we will know how many mince-pies we need to bake! Or you can phone us on 543842. We look forward to seeing you all there.

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## Don't Preach – laugh about it

by Len Matthews

When I was approached to pass on some thoughts and comments, in my own indomitable style, in this magazine I was warned not to preach. If I did attempt to preach the article wouldn't be published. Inevitably, because of the job I have, there is always an element of preaching within my writings. So I am going to ignore that warning and preach to you.

I have for a long time tempered my preaching with humour. I feel that one of the best ways to get people to listen is to treat most things in life with an element of light-heartedness. I am totally confident that Jesus had a sense of humour, otherwise he wouldn't have promoted St Paul to lead the Church. Jokes do not depend on the words but on the overall situation and the feelings of those who tell the jokes and more especially those who listen to them. Even the most awful of puns can be seen as good if they told in the right manner. (The old adage remains true; It's not the joke that is funny it's the way that you tell them!) Stories that are told in fun can change their message immediately if they are told *to* people but *at* them or if they publicly show up someone's shortcomings. Because they are told as 'fun' it's very difficult for the subject of that 'fun' to contradict or refute them. All of us bear the scars of jokes told against us.

I have, over the years, included much humour during the services at St Cecilia's. Most of them I distort to become 'religious' jokes, some of them are based around the Biblical readings for that particular Sunday. I include them, not to be flamboyant but because humour can help us laugh away the false gods we all worship at some time or other. When these are gone there is room for a true, a self-critical a kind persona to grow within us.

Many of the stories I use help us laugh away the false image we have of ourselves mocking the dishonesty and falsity we all resort to in the course of our lives. These stories are not to hurt. They are there to be laughed away freeing us to be ourselves, our super-natural as well as our natural selves. Criticism in the form of jokes isn't 'preachy'. The teller and the listener can decide themselves whether it is relevant to their situation. It is a good way to enjoy the truth about those parts of ourselves that respectable sermons cannot reach.

George Bush, senior, died and went to heaven. On arrival he saw a man he thought was Moses. He introduced himself and asked if the man was Moses. Moses looked at him and walked away without saying a word. This wasn't George's idea of heaven. The same thing happened a few more times, until in a desperate effort to find the truth George blocked the way so that Moses couldn't just walk past him. Then he said, "Look, I'm George Bush and I'm sure you are Moses." Moses looked straight into his eyes and replied, "I know you are George Bush and I am Moses. What you have to remember is that the last time I spoke to a bush I ended up in the wilderness for forty years!"

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## Goose News

*"We love having the geese on our farm and they are one of the great sights in the long, cold, wet winter months." Edward Cross, a farmer from Flitcham*

The first few pink-footed geese of the year trickled into the Snettisham RSPB Reserve in the second half of September. By late October, they were flooding back and you should have seen plenty by now flying between their safe roost site on the reserve and their feeding grounds on local farms - where they indulge in a high-carb diet of discarded sugar beet tops. Last year 100,920 pink-footed geese spent the winter in West and North Norfolk - over a third of the world population. This is an unusual situation where modern intensive agriculture and conservation work well together. A new information leaflet for farmers has been produced by British Sugar, RSPB and English Nature aimed at ensuring the geese continue to be welcomed on the farms without causing damage to crops.



Despite this good news, pink-footed geese are currently at the centre of both local and global green political controversies. Plans for a wind farm at Sedgeford have been shelved because the proposed site was close to one of their favoured feeding areas and there was a distinct possibility that the turbines would act as giant *pate de foie gras* makers! Protests against the construction of a massive hydroelectric scheme in Iceland, that will flood 56 km<sup>2</sup> of their breeding grounds in order to produce "green" power for an aluminium smelting plant, have so far been less successful. The geese would have looked down on the start of the construction of the first phase of this project as they flew over Iceland en-route for Norfolk. BirdLife International have estimated that as many as one in seven pink-footed geese that visit the UK in winter could be affected or displaced by this scheme.

As far as our continued enjoyment of the skeins of wild geese at dawn and dusk over Dersingham is concerned, the most significant recent development is the phased reduction of European subsidies for sugar beet production. This is being done under pressure from the World Trade Organisation to aid sugar cane growers in equatorial regions. At first sight, this would appear to be a very worthwhile thing to do because some of these regions are very poor. But, having visited sugar cane plantations in Central America and the Caribbean, I have seen the downside of this crop. Sugar cane monocultures are virtually lifeless (except for a few fat cane toads) and they encroach upon some incredibly species rich rainforests. Sadly, no one will pay to keep a rainforest in a country they will never visit - but we all buy sugar that makes us fat and rots our teeth.

We live in the best part of the country for sugar beet production so alternative uses for this produce are urgently needed to compensate for reduced subsidies and increased competition. One of the most promising possibilities is to turn sugar beet into a bio fuel. This is a very green thing to do. The growing beets take in carbon dioxide which is released when the fuel is burnt - net effect on the atmosphere - zero. Not only this but our cars could run on this fuel with only minor adjustments and plastic can be made as a by-product. We may see the day when we fill our cars with sugar beet fuel and pay with sugar beet plastic - while the skies are as full as ever with pink-footed geese. Before we get to this happy position, it may be wise to expect some downsizing of the wintering pink-footed goose population in Norfolk. This is perhaps no bad thing - something about eggs and baskets comes to mind. *David Bingham*

*Picture at top - Icelandic stamp showing pink-footed goose and goslings*

## **Carole Brown Health Centre Patients Participation Group (PPG)**

*by T G Morris - PPG Chairman*

Most readers will now be aware of the exciting plans to develop a new health centre in Dersingham. As part of a public consultation exercise, the PPG held an open meeting at St Cecilia's Church on 28 October to determine what patients registered at the CBHC wanted from the new health centre, to discuss any concerns about the proposed development and to suggest what kind of services and facilities would best serve the community. The PPG had been advised that those parties involved with the development were eager to seek the views of the community and that no limit should be placed, at this stage, on ideas and proposals for the centre. No doubt there some financial and planning limitations will appear in due course! Copies of the report produced following the meeting are available for reading at Dersingham Library and at the Carole Brown Health Centre. Those wishing additional copies may obtain one from the Chairman (01485 541450) on repayment of printing costs. (20p)

The "Flu' Jab Days" were a great success from both disease prevention and a fundraising viewpoint! It is hoped that some £800 will be raised through the Christmas Draw to fund additional facilities for patients and this, together with the Quiz Night on 12 November, should provide an essential boost to PPG funds. Readers may wish to note that, this month, the PPG has acquired an additional Aspirator and some Doppler equipment for the surgery. These will prove invaluable to the staff of the health centre as they deal with breathing and other emergencies and diagnose circulation problems. Because of severe cash constraints on the NHS locally, money for such equipment is not currently available from statutory sources and the support of the PPG and others is therefore much appreciated.

As the end of another year approaches, the Chairman and officers of the PPG would like to thank those who have done so much to support our fundraising and other efforts during 2004 and would like to wish you all a Very Happy Christmas and a Healthy New Year.

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## Dersingham Horticultural Society



**October Meeting** – Slides of high quality, an informative narrative, a large audience whose enthusiasm matched that of our speaker, Mr. Hannessay, for his talk on “Garden Birds”. After surveying the ten most common birds seen in our gardens according to the results of the RSPB’s annual survey for 2004, he went on to describe the large variety of bird foods which are commercially available, together with the equipment (e.g. bird tables, feeders, squirrel-proof cages, etc.)

Our speaker then emphasised the importance of water in a bird’s life, especially in winter when, besides the need to drink, water must be available for they need to keep their plumage in tip-top condition in order to keep warm. Next, the importance of hygiene. Bird tables, feeders and bird baths should be cleaned weekly without using disinfectants, while keeping a separate pair of rubber gloves for the purpose. Garden birds can carry e-coli and salmonella – so care must be taken. Insectivorous birds such as tits change their feeding habits in winter when insects and caterpillars are unavailable and, with the seed-eating finches, they should be fed from mid-November until the end of April. Seed spread for ground feeding birds such as hedge sparrows should not be confined to one area but should be scattered around the garden.

After a section on breeding boxes of various types to suit the differing requirements of our garden birds, our speaker illustrated some of the “villains” which we may see in our gardens – sparrow hawks, magpies, grey squirrels and herons. He finished with slides to illustrate the plants and shrubs whose seeds and berries can help to provide winter food for those delightful visitors to our gardens. In passing, our speaker also shared two slides with us, which he took during the winter of 1963, of the sea frozen around Hunstanton Pier. Let us hope that the current pessimistic predictions for the oncoming season prove to be inaccurate and a repeat of 1963 is avoided.

The large audience greatly appreciated Mr. Hannessay’s talk and I feel sure that our members’ garden birds will enjoy a good diet this winter.

*David Clark. 543182*

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### Correction

We have been asked by Mrs Dorothy Birkett of 35 Viceroy Close to make a correction to the text of last issue’s front page item regarding the terrorist scare at the local Post Office. The packet which was found to contain sand was, in fact, addressed by the member of armed forces in Basra to Mrs Birkett, who is a friend of the family, not to her parents. We apologise to Mrs Birkett for any upset the report may have caused, but would like to assure her that the information was printed in good faith following discussion with people who were close to the incident. It is also our intention in this to give assurance to Mrs Birkett’s neighbours that, despite the Police activity around her home, she was on holiday at the time, and totally innocent of any criminal activity.

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## Greenish Fingers' Garden Notebook September to Early November



A predominately warm and damp summer and autumn seem to have intensified the scents of the garden. Honeysuckles, not flowering in abundance, their blossoms half hidden in lush

foliage, have been delightfully fragrant. There was the lilac in early summer, and, to my surprise, the clematis Montana Rubens. I've always watched out for its first flowers, but have been too absorbed in sowing vegetable seeds in mid spring to notice the Montana's secretive fragrance. This year I happened to be peering cautiously into the shrub's stout, woven framework, where I guessed a blackbird was nest-building, and was assailed by a sweetish almond aroma.

Now, in early November, I stop a moment to enjoy the very last of the Late Dutch honeysuckle, still bravely flowering despite the wet, and of course the evergreen one (Japonica, I think), which flowers on and on. And then there's our large, elderly hebe ("Marjorie", I believe), which is spiked all over in lilac-blue and still drawing bumbles and a honeybee or two. The bees buzz crossly as you brush past.

So much is still blooming: Welsh poppies, geraniums, purple toadflax and crimson campion, bright sunshiny anemisis, and the last of the tallest hollyhocks this garden has produced in ten years. There are roses too, on a tall plant that braves November every year, its soft magnolia buds opening to creamy white. We have no idea what it is called. It is just "the white rose", accepted as part of our garden "family". Sometimes, I confess, I say "Hullo" to certain familiar shrubs and trees. I'm one of "those" who tend to talk to plants, birds, worms and beetles.....

Plants in this garden jostle for space, I suppose because we leave many seed heads at summer's end for the birds to feed on. Greenfinches, goldfinches, all the tits and of course the sparrows, will swing on plant stems to reach the seeds. Favourites are lavender flowers, most of which we don't remove until April, and the seedheads of opium poppies, beloved by bluetits. The opium poppy, that stately queen of annuals (in my opinion), has the most perfectly formed seedhead. A small marvel of nature. I don't cut flowers for the house, preferring to see them "a-blowing and a-growing", but the odd deadheading "mistake", or perhaps blooms from a marigold I've had to compost before its time, will find their way to the kitchen windowsill.

In November, a plain glass jar of poppy seedheads atop their minimalist stems, no leaves, no side-shoots, no frills, stands on the sill to gladden my eye. There are more elsewhere in the house, beautiful simplicity against cream walls. They, and the silhouettes of the garden, will see me through the winter.

**The men with the muck-rakes are often indispensable to the well-being of society; but only if they know when to stop raking the muck.**

*Theodore Roosevelt 1858-1919, 14 April 1906*

## Whispers from the Bog

8 December – 10 February

With the warm summer months now long gone, Dersingham Bog takes on a distinctly Scottish feel. The open, flat conditions of the bog offer little shelter against the prevailing northerly winds and only the hardiest of creatures remain throughout the winter. Looking out over the bog from the higher dry heath, the richly contrasting hues of mauves, browns and yellows hint at the wide variety of plants that live there, the majority of which have now 'closed down' for the winter to conserve energy. At first glance, the bog may appear deserted. However, on the right day and with a little patience, it is surprising how many species of bird can be seen. Meadow pipits are perhaps the most frequent species, flitting across the bog looking for food and seeking shelter from birds of prey such as the hen harrier, barn owl, short-eared owl and sparrowhawk. In the evenings, large numbers of wildfowl travel to the reserve from the Wash, preening and washing the salt from their feathers in the fresh water pools, before travelling inland to feed and/or roost. Crossbills are also reliant on the freshwater pools and can sometimes be seen as they fly to and from the bog to drink or, as they feed in the tops of the surrounding pine trees. Brambling, siskin and redpoll can also be abundant throughout the winter months and Wolferton cliff provides an excellent vantage point to see these species feeding in the pines below. Many species of bird gather in flocks throughout the winter months, increasing their chances of finding productive feeding sites and gaining safety in numbers. Large areas of the woodland can seem devoid of life at this time of year. However, finding one of these roving flocks of birds quickly dispels any such notion. These bustling flocks can include many hundreds of individuals of a wide-range of species, including; coal tit, great tit, marsh tit, willow tit, long-tailed tit, goldcrest, siskin, redpoll and if you are very lucky, lesser spotted woodpecker.

*A R Murray 4 November 2004*

### Have you Recently Retired to West Norfolk?

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**Then and Now**

**Portrait of a Village**

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*by Simon Massen & Walter Blaney*    *by Walter Blaney & Simon Massen*

These two books use photographs old and new, accompanied by full descriptions, to compare life in Dersingham and King's Lynn at the beginning and end of the twentieth century. All proceeds from the sales are donated to Campaign Care '94 for the benefit of Tapping House Hospice and The Bob Champion Cancer Trust. Both books cost £5.00. The King's Lynn book is available from **Ottakar's Bookshop** in Norfolk Street, King's Lynn, and the Dersingham book can be obtained by *phoning 01485 544 733*.

Both books make ideal Christmas Presents.

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## Ways With Sprouts

by June Stephenson

Brussels sprouts are plentiful in the shops now, so it is a pity not to make full use of them while they are in season. They are recommended, too, for their health-giving properties. The following tips for their use may be helpful:

### Basic Boiled Sprouts:

You need about 150g/6 oz sprouts per person. Wash, remove tough or old outer leaves and any corky stem. Cut each sprout in half, or quarter it if big. Cook in 1cm/1/4 inch boiling water for 3 to 5 minutes, no more, with lid on pan. Drain well. Add a knob of butter or margarine to the sprouts in the pan, and seasoning to taste. Celery salt may be a healthier alternative to salt. Add chopped parsley or chives. Serve at once and really hot. (Tip: Don't keep them in a steamy pan as they will overcook.)

### Sprout Salad:

Allow 2 or 3 sprouts per person, depending on size. Wash the sprouts, dry in a clean teatowel, shred finely. Add a finely sliced, very fresh celery stalk, half a nice crisp apple, unpeeled, cored and roughly chopped, add a little finely chopped raw onion if you like. Mix all in a bowl with a sprinkling of lemon juice and a teaspoonful of olive oil. (Tip: Experiment with the proportion of ingredients added to the sprouts; you may like a predominately apple or oniony flavour, for instance.)

The following is a suggestion from an old cookery book I inherited many years ago:

You will need a quantity of Brussels sprouts and half their weight in sweet chestnuts. Cook the sprouts as above. Don't overcook. Make a cut in the pointed end of each chestnut and boil them for 12 minutes. Peel the outer and inner skins from the chestnuts, keeping the ones you aren't dealing with in hot water. Melt a knob of butter in a pan and shake the drained sprouts and chestnuts in this until well coated. Season to taste, and serve with the main course, be it roasted meat or a nice "veggie" nut roast.

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## Dersingham Infant and Nursery School

### Have you registered your child for school yet?

Just a reminder to parents that if your child will be five between 1 September 2005 and 31 August 2006 you need to register your child to start school as soon as you can. You can do this by popping into our school to complete a registration form. I am always happy to show parents around our school before you make your decision. Also, we do have a space or two in our nursery for January so if your child will be four before 31st December 2005 please contact us if you are interested. Look forward to hearing from you.

Jackie Austin – Headteacher

01485 540022

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## Dersingham in the 19th Century "The Carrier"

by Elizabeth Fiddick



Essential to the life of the Dersingham in the 19th century, especially before the advent of the railways, was the carrier and the coaches and wagons that provided transport to and from King's Lynn and neighbouring towns. Roads had been improved in the late 18th century and many toll roads had been constructed. The map of 1797 shows a substantial road from Lynn to Dersingham. From Dersingham onwards it became

smaller and narrower. On 4 April, 1811 in the reign of King George III an act was presented to parliament. *"For repairing the road from the East Gate of King's Lynn to the North End of Babingley Lane and to extend the road from thence to Dersingham in the County of Norfolk."* The Act continued that the *"road leading from the North End of Babingley Lane through the parishes of Babingley, Wolferton, and Sandringham to the sign of the Dun Cow in Dersingham is much out of repair, incommodious and dangerous for travellers and cannot be effectively amended and kept in repair by ordinary court of law."* It continues with a plea for an act to be put in place for the purpose of *"amending, widening, improving, and keeping in repair the road through the parishes of Babingley, Wolferton, Sandringham to the sign of The Dun Cow Dersingham."* However it continued that *"No turnpike or Tollgate shall be erected or set up, or toll collected....upon any part of the said road."*

Bryant's map of 1826 shows a substantial road from Dersingham into King's Lynn. Presumably a toll would only be paid on entering Lynn at Babingley. The carrier would transport goods and sometimes people. A Commercial Directory of 1830 records Abraham Gay's cart leaving from The Bushel in King's Street, Lynn for Dersingham every Tuesday and Saturday afternoon. Abraham Gay farmed arable land off Manor Road owned by John Motteux of Sandringham. Sometime before 1845 Abraham became Proprietor of the Cock Inn, now The Feathers. After Gay, John Atkins took over, leaving Dersingham for Lynn on market days every Tuesday and Saturday at 9 am. In 1845 Abraham Davis became the carrier. Abraham was born in 1813 in Dersingham. He appears on both the 1851 and 1881 census. He was unmarried and is still recorded as the carrier in 1883. He died on 14 January 1899 aged 86 years and his funeral is reported in the Parish Magazine. The vicar Edward Penney recalls the old man and brings him to life for us, *"The quiet voice of Abraham Davis (the obliging old carrier) was heard for many years on the Lynn Road on market days urging on his steady old horse. Did he ever use a whip?"* From the 1880's William Flegg is recorded as a carrier. The census of 1851 records five families called Flegg in the village. Four were wheelwrights. Robert Flegg had a

son William who was 7 in 1851. Could this be our carrier? By 1896 Thomas Rudd and George Mitchell travel to Lynn each Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, returning the same day. The Directories also record that there were other carriers passing through the village particularly on market days. From Snettisham came James Twiss' cart and a Sociable every morning at 6 (Sundays excepted) to the Star in Norfolk Street. Rawthorne's cart from Heacham travelled to and from The Black Horse in Chapel Street, Lynn. From Hunstanton came Wales' cart bound for The Plough in King Street, Lynn. There were also the Mail carts that travelled to the Lynn Post Office. The Commercial Directory records that "*Letters from Castle Rising, Heacham, and Snettisham arrive by Penny Post every afternoon at half past four, and are despatched every morning at half past nine.*" In 1836 the mail gig left Dersingham for Heacham at 11 am and for Lynn at 2 pm. In 1845 and 1854 the Post Office in Dersingham is at Isaac Bunn's. I believe this was the long cottage next to Red Pumps Garage. Letters arrive by 7 am and are despatched at 6.15. Isaac Bunn died in 1868, 17 years after his wife Judah. Enoch Beckett then took over the Post and he, followed by his daughter Alice Maud, ran the post well into the 20th century.



## THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT Music Hall a Nostalgic Triumph

### OUTRAGEOUS!

#### "The Dersingham Dollies"

(normally most respectable village ladies!) strutting their stuff on stage. From left, they are Jean Barber, Pat Moss, Dot Slade and Gilly Canny.

Photo: Brian Sherratt

A grand total of £1,310 was raised for funds to improve St Nicholas Church Hall, Dersingham, by an Old Time Music Hall on two evenings in early October. About 40 performers and helpers, ranging from teenagers to pensioners, from the village and surrounding area got together for two months of rehearsals, having never previously performed together as a troupe. It turned out to be just what they had hoped for - a feast of nostalgia filled with music, dance, comedy, magic and Victorian melodrama. And it was not merely a triumph of community spirit and involvement, but also great fun. It was the first such entertainment in Dersingham in many years and completely sold out - a total of 200 seats over the two nights. A ploughman's supper helped to keep the atmosphere going during the interval. The organisers wish to thank various local businesses for their generous sponsorship.

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## SOME MEMORIES OF THE VILLAGE IN WORLD WAR ONE

*Notes recorded by the late Mrs. Gladys Twite*

### Queen Alexandra's 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday – Dec 1914



In the Parish Magazine Jan 15<sup>th</sup>. Had it not been for the war, much more notice would have been taken of the fact that Her Majesty reached her 70<sup>th</sup> year on Dec 1st but it was her express wish that day should be kept quietly. However with her usual kindness she entertained the children on the estate on that day. Our children had their tea in the Institute (Church Hall), and before they left gave three hearty cheers for their Royal Hostess as well as for the friends who had prepared and served the tea. During the afternoon the following telegram was dispatched to Marlborough House. "230 Dersingham children having tea in the Institute offer their thanks to Her

Majesty for the same and send their congratulations and good wishes." The following reply was received. "Vicar. Please accept and convey my best thanks to the Dersingham children for their good wishes, and tell them how pleased I am they have enjoyed themselves. Alexandra."

### Local Air Raid – Jan 1915

In the magazine Feb 1915 it refers to the Air Raid. The night of Jan 19 will long be remembered by all in the village as the time when we had our first taste of actual warfare. If the cold blooded murder of women and children can be called warfare. It was at 10.45 pm that the bomb that damaged Snettisham church was seen by Mr Parker, and others, to fall and explode, and then came a loud report which shook all the houses in the village. A very few minutes later the airship passed over the village and across Sandringham Park to the Hillington Road and thence to Lynn where much damage was done. It was guided where to turn off from the Lynn Road for Sandringham by a motor car which flashed powerful lights skywards at Linfords corner and outside Dersingham Hall. We are thankful no damage was done in our village and no bombs dropped in the parish. The following Monday about 150 grenadiers arrived at the village and took up their quarters in the Institute and Foresters Hall but after two days they were all moved to Sandringham. The Institute had a very martial appearance with 70 men quartered in it and a sentry with fixed bayonet keeping guard. After that about 40 of the Royal Navy Aircraft Squadron have been billeted in the place.

### Dersingham in Khaki – Oct 1915

In a magazine Oct 1915 we read of Dersingham in Khaki. Seldom has there been greater anxiety in our village during the early part of last month, when we were waiting for news of our "terriers" who we heard had been in action at the Dardanelles. As far as could be ascertained they landed near Sulva Bay on Tues. Aug 10<sup>th</sup> and almost immediately came under shell fire. On the 12<sup>th</sup> the great battle began and the Sandringham Company on the right of the line, not having as many of the enemy in front of them as those on the left, keenly dashed forward ahead of the Brigade into difficult country. The intense heat and thirst caused many of them to become exhausted, and this exhaustion became acute. No doubt when the rest of the Company had to retire to their trenches some of the exhausted men were taken prisoners, and it was hoped to hear that they were safe in Asia Minor. Capt Beck and about thirteen other officers were missing. After the battle out of 91 men in the Sandringham Company 63 answered the Roll Call, 5 were wounded, 2 sick and 21 missing, this did not include officers.

His Majesty King George, with his usual consideration for others, had most graciously telegraphed to Sir Ian Hamilton for news of Capt Beck and the Sandringham Company. In a telegram that His Majesty sent to Mr Arthur Beck he said, I heartily sympathy (sic) with the families who are left in suspense, but I am proud that the battalion fought so splendidly. They had only been allowed one pint of water a day, but being near the sea they were able to bathe every day which compensated somewhat for the lack of soap and water.

#### **Agitated Pheasants – April 1916**

In a magazine in April 1916 we read "We have never heard the pheasants as agitated as they were between 3 and 4 on the morning of March 20<sup>th</sup>. It was just the time when 65 aeroplanes of the allies were dropping some five tons of bombs on Zeebrugge. Could the birds have heard the explosions, all that distance away.

#### **The Rood Screen - Dec 1917**

On Nov 11th at the Choral Eucharist, the Vicar dedicated a very notable and beautiful addition to the ornaments of the church. Several years ago an anonymous friend gave us the handsome oak cross that surmounts the screen, and now there have been added to it the figures of Our Lord, His Mother, and St John. These figures were always to be found on the screens in the days gone by, so we are only replacing what the builders of the church placed in it. We have to thank Mr Fred Rolfe for this splendid gift for it is he who has given them in memory of our Dersingham men who have been killed in the war. For centuries, in all probability they will stand there, not only to preach their silent sermon on the one great Atoning Sacrifice for sins, but also a testimony to our gratitude to the brave men who fought and died to save England, and to crush a gigantic and despotic power. The figures are very finely carved and are the work of Messrs Harry Hems and Sons the well known carvers of Exeter. A small brass plate is being engraved and will be fixed on the back of the screen bearing the inscription "To the glory of God and in memory of Dersingham men killed in the war, Frederick Rolfe placed the three figures on this screen. 1917."

## **Christmas**

*by Joan Adams*

We're going home for Christmas, I rang and said we'd come,  
I can hardly wait to hug and kiss my darling Dad and Mum,  
There'll be a welcome there, I know, and love, and smiling faces,  
And arms outstretched to greet us with so many fond embraces.

\*

In the hall hangs mistletoe, for all to kiss beneath,  
While outside on the cottage door there hangs a holly wreath,  
There'll be turkey in the oven, a pudding on the stove,  
With brandy sauce, and hot mince pies, and all the things we love.

\*

Young children round the Christmas tree all making lots of noise,  
So anxious to unwrap their gifts of books and sweets and toys,  
And in the evenings when it's dark, we'll turn the lights down low,  
And sit around to laugh and chat in the firelight's cosy glow.

**Two men look out through the same bars:**

**One sees mud, and one the stars.**

*Frederick Langbridge 1849-1923. 'A Cluster of Quiet thoughts (1896)'*

## ALEC LESLIE HOOKS - 100 years old on 12 March 2005

*As written by his son Peter J. Hooks*

*Tel: 01256 892511 E-mail: p.hooks@breathemail.net*



Alec Leslie Hooks was born at "Pleasant Place" in Dersingham, on 12 March 1905. The youngest and last survivor of a family of five girls and three boys, he attended the local school and left at 13 years to work as a woodman on the Royal Estate at Sandringham where his father and brother were also employed. His brother Bob Hooks working in the gardens and Alec in the saw mill. Alec recalls that during the 39 years he worked on the Sandringham Estate, starting in 1918, he served George V, Edward VIII, George VI, and

the present Queen until 1957 when he moved to Hampshire. Alec enjoyed his football, playing at inside right or centre forward, for the Dersingham first team and remembers scoring a goal in his first game. He played in many league and cup matches and holds medals to prove it. Others in the team at that time were Wallace Twite, Bob Hooks, Chedder Walker (Capt), Cyril Fitt, Stanley (sausage) Bird. Alec later became a referee reaching county status. Alec still supports Norwich City from his arm chair. Alec met Mary, who was to be his life-long partner in Thornham. Mary and Alec were married at Hunstanton Methodist Church on 24th September 1929 by the Rev. Percy Farrar. On getting married Alec and Mary settled in Dersingham (when they were married their income was 30/- (£1.50) per week and their rent was 5/- (25p) per week). They lived at No 3 Centre Vale for the first few years of their married life. Alec and Mary then bought a house in Dun Cow Lane (Lynn Road) named it "Holmfirth" and moved into this house before their son Peter was born on 21st May 1934. Mary played the Wesleyan Methodist church organ for 20 years and was very involved in church life. Alec was Society Steward, Circuit Steward and Local Preacher for 60 years. Others in the Methodist church at this time were Leslie Tuck, Charlie Rayner, Walter Senter (Senter's corner), Mr Chilvers (Station Master) Mr Harry Emmerson, John Emmerson father, Nurse Earle, Miss Wardale, Sally Blowers Margaret Senter, and Elizabeth Flegg. Alec was a member of the local Parish Council and also secretary of the Dersingham Branch of the Ancient Order of Oddfellows. He was a founder member of Toc H in Dersingham with Rolly Linford (Linford's corner) and Aubrey Bell. In 1937 Alec joined the Royal Observer Corps and served in this capacity until 1945. Spotting and reporting on friendly and enemy aeroplanes. Watching the lights go out on the doodle bugs and reporting on the bombers as they flew over the Norfolk coast to drop their bombs inland on the cities of England. Alec was on parade when King George VI inspected the local corps at York Cottage on the

Sandringham Estate when the King came from the church service at Sandringham. Also in the Corps at this time were John (Jack) Bunn, Edward Parker (Parkers corner) Archie Reid, Bob Hooks, and Charlie Wright. Alec has a photograph of this parade. Mary and Alec took in two evacuees, Joe, eventually to be adopted by Jimmy and become Joe Jackson and Pamela Bysouth. In 1957 Alec and Mary moved from Dersingham to Hampshire. 1979 was a special year for Mary and Alec. That year they celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary and their first Great-grandchild, Richard was born. In April of that year Alec received Royal Maundy Money from the Queen in Winchester Cathedral. This event was more than just a meeting with Her Majesty, it was a re-union with his former employer. Her Majesty must have recognised his name for at Winchester, Alec was contacted before the Maundy service and told that a message had come from Windsor that the Queen wanted Alec to make himself known to her at the presentation. The Queen at the presentation spoke to him and said "You were there a long time", and chatted about his time at Sandringham. Alec treasures his Maundy money but has other memorabilia from other Royal connections. He has letters from Princess Elizabeth. As one of the Estate Employees they bought her 21st Birthday and Wedding presents. He also possesses a "Thank you" letter for his part in the vigil maintained over the body of King George VI at Sandringham Church in 1952. He is also proud of a Royal Coat of Arms, a souvenir from the old steam tractor he used to drive on the Estate. On 7 December 1985, as Mary became more disabled with arthritis, they moved into a bungalow at 23 Bellevue, Whitchurch, RG28 7DA. There they spent three happy years. On 4 December 1988 Mary died. Alec continues to live in Bellevue and to maintain his independence, living on his own, though almost totally blind and quite frail, but he is very "with it", and vividly remembers events that took place in the village between 1905 and 1957. He is able to live on his own with much help from family and friends, who read the Village Voice to him.

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### **RAOB Presentation**

Members of the Sandringham Branch of the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes (RAOB/The Buffs) have raised £1,500 for the East Anglian Air Ambulance. The money was collected from the members of the lodge since 20 May 2004. Mr Peter Mendham, fundraising co-ordinator of the Air Ambulance was presented with the cheque by Ken Conley, a founder member of the lodge, along with the members of the lodge, on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> November. The lodge has only 10 members, so it was a very great effort. The donation brings the amount of money raised for the Air Ambulance to £3,100 in the last three years. A cheque for £620 was also presented to the Norfolk and Norwich Institute for the Blind (King's Lynn Branch) on 20 May 2004.

## SPITFIRE PILOT RETURNS TO THE SITE OF HIS WARTIME CRASH



*“On 22 May 1944, Flight Lieutenant Alex Vale was on his third flight of the day out of Cornwall and across to Brittany. As part of the lead up to D-Day the RAF was engaged in bombing railways and other strategic sites, and Alex had found a troop train which received his attention. Flying low to escape the German radar all had gone well until he turned ready to fly home. Mounted on the back of the train, manned by some understandably irate soldiers bent on revenge for the shooting up of their*

*train, was a machine gun. Alex only paused for a moment and lifted his plane, showing perhaps a little too much belly, while he tried to check on the rest of his squadron. This was enough to ensure that his spitfire was hit.”*

So commences a fascinating document by Sandy Brownjohn\*, recording the events that followed this incident and of a return to the site where Alex's Spitfire crashed, of his meeting with the French people who helped him at the time, and of a nostalgic visit to the graves of two of his colleagues who had been killed in action, one, Erik Jacobsen, whilst on the same mission as Alex, and the other, 'Pussy' Cattermoul, who was shot down only ten days later.

The local people who rescued Alex from his plane wished to save him from capture by the Germans, but, due to his injuries, had to take him to a nearby farmhouse where he could rest and recover, and where arrangements could be made for the local Resistance group to hide him. It was Alex's bad fortune that he was betrayed to the Germans by someone in the neighbourhood and was taken prisoner, moved to nearby La Martyre, then prison in Paris and two weeks later to Stalag Luft 3 on the Polish border.

*“After six months there he and the other prisoners were made to march 90 miles through the snow and cold of the winter of 1944/45 to a second prison camp at Luckenwald, south of Berlin, and it was another six months before they were finally released by American occupying forces.”*

Sandy's document gives a full account of their visit to France, during which she acted as *“driver and quasi-interpreter”* as well as recording the events which took place and the warm welcome given to them by the French people with whom they were in contact. Due to limitations on space it is impossible for me to reproduce the whole of her account here, but she puts into graphic detail the poignancy of the visits to the graves of Alex's former colleagues, of standing in the field where Alex came down, the sight of the farmhouse to which he was taken, and meeting the people who had been involved in rescuing him from his aircraft.

In a village called Lanvigneur they were fortunate enough to find a guide in the

person of Michel Baron, who had been 9 years old at the time of the crash, and who "knew all the people and places we needed to visit.... He took us... up a lane to a farm complex where Michel called out and an elderly man appeared. He was short and friendly and looked a little like a sprite with his alert, impish face and bright twinkling eyes. Dressed in comfortable brown farming clothes, his Wellingtons stuffed with straw, he came towards us eagerly. He sported a few days' growth of beard which had gone beyond the designer stubble and spoke mostly Breton which we found virtually impossible to understand.

But we learned that he had been the man who at 22 years of age had seen the crash and rushed to help Alex out of the cockpit and released him from his harness. He took us up the field by his house and showed us exactly where the plane had come down. His graphic "Boom! Boom! Boom!" indicated that the Spitfire had taken the tops off the trees as it crashed in the narrow hollow before us."

The couple were to return the following day and on arrival "We entered to find virtually the whole extended family assembled, right down to grandchildren, Nina the cat and sundry dogs...A reporter from Le Telegramme was also present, as was the old mayor of La Martyre...the reporter made copious notes...On being asked if the day of the crash had been his first mission, Alex replied that he had actually flown more like two hundred by then. Bill seemed a little incredulous so I judged that this was the time to go and fetch Alex's medals which we had brought in the glove pocket of the car. The DFC particularly took their attention, likened by them to the Legion d'Honneur, and it was passed around for all to see...There was a nice little touch of humour when the reporter asked Alex if he remembered how long the journey to Paris had taken. Alex replied that he thought it was about two days, at which one of the men...said in French, "That's because you'd bombed all our railways!"

This is a touching story about one Dersingham resident who 'did his bit' during the war, and I would like to thank Sandy for permitting me to use extracts from her document.

\* "Return to Brittany: 22 September – 27 September 2004  
(A record of Alex Vale's journey back after 60 years)" ©Sandy Brownjohn 2004



Photo left: Alex meets his rescuer for the first time since his crash 60 years ago.

Picture right: the story about Alex's return visit which was carried by French newspaper 'Le Telegramme'

#### 22 mai 1944 à La Martyre : crash d'un Spitfire

The newspaper clipping contains the following text (transcribed from the image):

**22 mai 1944 à La Martyre : crash d'un Spitfire**

Un avion de chasse britannique s'est écrasé hier à La Martyre, dans le département de la Morbihan. L'appareil, un Spitfire, appartenait à la 12<sup>e</sup> escadre de chasse de la RAF. Le pilote, un jeune homme de 22 ans, a été blessé et a été évacué vers un hôpital de la région. Les secours ont été envoyés immédiatement sur les lieux. L'aviation française a été alertée et a effectué une recherche intensive. Le pilote a été retrouvé par un cultivateur local, qui l'a aidé à descendre de l'appareil. Les blessures ne paraissent pas graves. L'aviation française a récupéré l'appareil et l'a ramené à base. Les autorités locales ont organisé une réception pour le pilote et son équipage. Le pilote a été décoré de la Légion d'honneur pour ses services pendant la guerre.

**A part**

Le Telegramme

## Dersingham Station and the King's Lynn to Hunstanton Line

by Dick Melton of Sunny Hunny

The King's Lynn to Hunstanton being opened in 1862 at a cost of 1969. Before the line was built two Hunstanton to King's Lynn by way Dersingham and Castle Rising,



railway line was built in 1860, £80,000, it closed down in May horse-drawn omnibuses went from of Heacham, Snettisham, every day except Sundays. At this

time Dersingham Station was built, with the stationmaster's house right next to the East platform, and a waiting room on the West platform. Next to the crossing gates there was an iron footbridge so that passengers could cross over the line safely from one platform to the other. Right at the bottom of Station Hill, next to the track, was the Station Hotel, and next door were six cottages that were built for the railway workers such as signalmen and porters. There was a goods yard to the village side of the station where the coal would come in from the midlands to be collected by the three coal merchants in the village - the Nurse brothers, Mr Bird and Fyffe Wilson - also, all the farmers from the surrounding area would take their sugar beet and corn to the station and load it onto trucks to go to the factory and silos in King's Lynn. Until about 1956 all the trains were steam, but after that they started to change to diesel railcars, except for the excursions which had up to ten carriages pulled by large diesels. In the summer you would get ten to twelve of these go through Dersingham every day, and on Sunday you would get as many as twenty, all going through to Hunstanton. In 1953, when we had the great flood, the water came to within twenty yards of the line and the station, but between Heacham and Hunstanton part of the line was washed away and was closed for about two weeks. Heacham station was classed as a junction, because you could change there to go along the branch line to Wells-next-the-Sea. In those days there were not many houses down by the station and it was about a mile to the middle of the village, but, until the middle of the 1950s, Dersingham station was quite busy, with the first train in the morning (The Fenman) from Hunstanton to Liverpool Street (London) coming through at about 6.45 am and the last train in the evenings from King's Lynn to Hunstanton at about 10.30 pm. It was a sad day on a Saturday in May 1969 when the last train went through Dersingham after 107 years. A lot of people have had ideas about getting the line open again, the best idea being to open it with steam trains like those at the North Norfolk Railway, but I am afraid that, up to now, that has not come about. We used to get a lot of fires on the Fen, on the Shut Up Common and on the Heath (Open Common). A lot of these fires were started by the steam trains as the railway line ran along the edge of the Fen, and, as the trains left Dersingham, the stoker would rake out the bottom ashes and throw them out onto the side of the line, before he put fresh coal on to get up steam, these ashes would set the grass alight beside the track and the fire would spread to the Fen. Most of the time they were only small fires and the Fire Brigade would put them out in no time, but I well remember one fire, in the September of 1954, that spread right across the Fen and to the Eight Mile Stone Corner. The flames jumped the road (old A149) and spread to the Shut Up Common as far as the allotments gate. Until 1950 the Parish rubbish tip was just to the right inside the Shut Up Common gate, and this would often get on fire by means of the sun shining on broken glass. This would then spread to the grass and bushes on the Common. After 1950 when the rubbish tip was moved up to the sandpits, the same thing would happen there. There were, at that time, so many fires on the Fen that a fire break and track was made from the sand pit right around the Fen as far as Wolferton Cut. The fire engines were then able to get to the fires much more quickly to put them out.

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## Dersingham Youth Group

The Parish Council has instigated the setting up of this group with two main aims-

- 1 To start a Senior Youth Club/Drop in for young people aged twelve years and over.
- 2 To set up a Youth Council, which will represent the views of young people to the Parish Council.

Two meetings have been held so far, which have been attended by Parish Councillors and Ady Chaplin, Community Safety Project Development Officer with the Borough Council. You can contact Mr Chaplin at BCKLWN, King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn, PE30 1EX, Tel: (01553) 692722.

The youngsters who attended both meetings have been willing participants and have come up with lots of ideas on how a Senior Youth Club should be run.

At the last meeting, held on 10 November, it was agreed that membership should be open to anyone living in the Smithdon High School catchment area, with a weekly subscription of between 75p and £1. Activities should include discos, sports and games, competitions, crafts, karaoke, trips out, with refreshments and a quiet area. There will also be fundraising activities, which will help the Club purchase equipment.

There will be a need for adult helpers, three people have already volunteered but more would be welcome, of course. Training for volunteers will be provided who would also have to undertake a full CRB check.

The Parish Council, with some financial assistance from the Safer West Norfolk Steering Group, is arranging trips to Bowlers in Hunstanton, and to the pantomime being put on by the Pocohontas Players in Heacham. (Some of the young people are taking part in the show.) In return, the youngsters will complete a survey on the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour.

Further meetings will look at a constitution and ground rules for the Youth Club, and developing the Youth Council. The next meeting will take place on 24 November, (7:00 to 8:00 pm) at the Community Centre. Anyone who is interested in the two projects is welcome to attend. For further details contact the Parish Clerk, Sarah Bristow, on 01485 541465.

*Sue Payne*

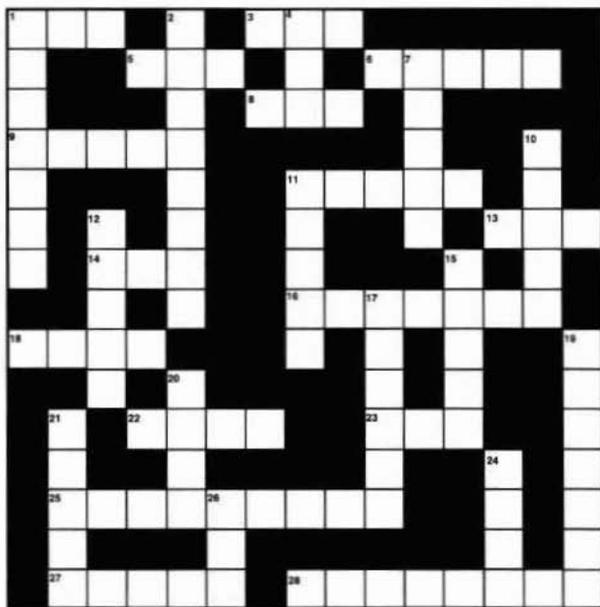
### **MANOR ROAD STORES OPEN FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE**

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## Dersingham Teaser 3

*Compiled by Tony Bubb*

All the answers to these questions have some connection, albeit tenuous, to the village. To win a prize send your completed crossword (a photocopy will do) to the Parish Council Office by 6 January 2005. All correct entries will be put into the Editor's flat cap and a winner will be pulled out. Don't forget to put your name and address on the entry.



### Across

- |            |   |         |
|------------|---|---------|
| 1          | Rise and fall of the editor's diminutive (3)                |         |
| 3          | See 5 across  | 1       |
| 5 & 3a     | How now? (3,3)  | 2       |
| 6,7d & 10d | Whisky tour? (5,5,5)  | 4 & 20d |
| 8          | Kind of numbers on the east side of Lynn Rd? (3)            | 7       |
| 9 & 2d     | In 1803 there was a flock of 11 of these on the heath (5,8) | 10      |
| 11         | See 11 down   | 11      |
| 13         | Later use for the sandpit? (3)                              | 12      |
| 14 & 21d   | Crimson plimsolls (3,5)                                     | 15      |
| 16         | Good carpets? (7)   | 17      |
| 18         | ---- ringham (4)  | 19      |
| 22         | Rank between marquis and viscount? (4)                      | 20      |
| 23         | Risque cheek from house of sports cars (3)                  | 21      |
| 24         | A right old game at the pottery (9)                         | 24      |
| 27 & 28    | Santa's Church (5,8)  | 26      |

### Down

- |         |  |
|---------|--|
| 1       | Store opposite the Parish Council notice board |
| 2       | See 9 across                                   |
| 4 & 20d | Aged sort of medieval mansion (3,4)            |
| 7       | See 6 across                                   |
| 10      | See 6 across                                   |
| 11      | Popular snack nearby (5)                       |
| 12      | Lifting device for heavy sheds (5)             |
| 15      | Lure for Donald (5)                            |
| 17      | Big floral violin (6)                          |
| 19      | Latitude for green fish? (7)                   |
| 20      | See 4 Down                                     |
| 21      | See 14 across                                  |
| 24      | A road to knowledge                            |
| 26      | You can do this in a pantomime (3)             |

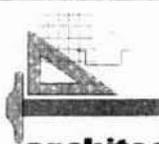
## Coming Soon At Dersingham Library

We have a Christmas Storytime on Monday 20 December from 2.30 to 3.30 pm.  
Under 7s must be accompanied by an adult

**Fiction promotion – ‘Oriental Journeys’ – novels about China and Japan, at the library until the end of December.**

Family History display of books on starting out researching – ties in with the BBC2 series ‘Who Do You Think You Are’, and coincides with our adult education evenings. Another class will be running in the New Year, and a more advanced course in the summer term.

Please ask at the library if you would like to know more



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## Norfolk Carers' Voice

- Do you provide unpaid care or support for someone?
- What help could you have?
- Fed up and don't know what's happening in Norfolk?
- Have you got something to say and want to make a difference?

### What is the Norfolk Carers' Voice?

The Norfolk Carers' Voice is a register of carers who want to hear what is going on and perhaps to have a say in improving the help that is available. If you are **18 or over** and one of the 81,000 people in Norfolk who provide unpaid help and support to an **adult** relative, friend or partner who cannot manage because of illness, age or a disability, this could be for you.

### What happens if I want to join?

The Norfolk Carers' Voice questionnaire can be obtained from the Crossroads Norfolk Carers' Helpline by telephoning 0808 808 9876 or email [norfolkcarers@hotmail.com](mailto:norfolkcarers@hotmail.com). If you are happy to give us your contact details, we will be able to give you information about support for carers in Norfolk. And if you want more involvement, we can also ask what you think about support for carers and whether you would like to work with us to improve services. Your details would be held on the Norfolk Carers' Voice Register.

This Register is managed by the Health Information Team, Eastern Support Services that works with other organisations to improve the quality and availability of information for people using GP surgeries and has been funded by the Norfolk Carers' Grant.

*Your information will only be accessed by named Social Services, Healthcare staff and the Manager of the Crossroads Norfolk Carers Helpline, who distributes 'The Norfolk Carer' magazine, and be protected by the Data Protection Act 1998.*

## BMX/Skateboard Ramp is a Hit with the Village Youth

*This photograph taken by Tony Bubb shows youngsters enjoying the temporary BMX/Skateboard facility which was set up for their use by the Parish Council's Recreation and Environment Committee during the recent half-term holiday*



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## News in Brief

**Congratulations go to Amanda Field of Tudor Way**, who, having only just learned to swim, has now achieved a swim of 1,048 lengths of the 25 metre pool (equivalent to swimming the English Channel) at Bircham's National Construction College over a period of four weeks, and has raised £300 money for national spinal cord injury charity ASPIRE.

**Brownies have a Knees-up to Celebrate their 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday** – The 1st and 2nd Dersingham Brownies got together with the 1st Snettisham Brownies at the Dersingham Scout and Guide Hut on Thursday 28 October in order to celebrate the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Brownie Guide movement. They enjoyed various activities and games, had a picnic and a singsong, and then planted 90 yellow daffodil bulbs around the Scout and Guide Headquarters.

**Village Parish Councillor Represents West Norfolk on the East of England Development Agency (EEDA)** – Borough and Parish Councillor Paul Burall is to become one of 15 board members of the EEDA in December, having been appointed by Government minister Ms Jacqui Smith. The EEDA is one of 9 regional development agencies in England, being the driving force behind economic regeneration in the 6 counties of Norfolk, Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire, Essex, Suffolk and Hertfordshire, and Paul will be working with the agency for two days a month for three years.

**Green Garden Sacks are still to cost 50p** – A proposal that green garden sacks should be provided free of charge to pensioners was rejected by West Norfolk Council's committee at a meeting on 2 November. The idea was that these sacks should be available to pensioners free of charge during the period from April to September, but was turned down on the basis of forecast loss of income and additional costs due to an anticipated increase in usage and potential abuse of the system.

**Local Business Develops New Technology With World-Wide Potential** - Dark Side Technologies, a company which operates from Fern Hill in Dersingham, has developed new technology which is forecast to lower costs of telecom users. The wireless telecommunications system would increase the operational distances available to telecom companies from 7 km to 25 km in radius, reducing the need for the laying of landlines. The company is already well known in the area for its introduction of broadband to the area, currently serving some 150 customers in the area that includes Dersingham, Heacham, Hunstanton, Old Hunstanton and Holme.

**The owners of the former Filling Station in Hunstanton Road have been granted Planning Permission** to build homes on the site despite objections having been raised by the Parish Council. Planning Officers recommended approval in order to 'prevent this centrally located and highly visible site becoming derelict and falling into disrepair'

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## DIARY OF NOTIFIED EVENTS

Full details of some of these events will be found inside this magazine

Day	Date	Month	Time	Organisation	Event	Venue
Wed	8	Dec	9-9.30 am	Infant & Nursery School	Christmas Play 2A Present for the Baby	Infant & Nursery School
Thur	9	Dec	9-9.30 am	Infant & Nursery School	Christmas Play 2A Present for the Baby	Infant & Nursery School
Thur	9	Dec	6.30 pm	St George's (CE) School	Christmas Play Christmas Surprise	St George's (CE) School
Fri	10	Dec	9-9.30 am	Infant & Nursery School	Christmas Play 2A A Present for the Baby	Infant & Nursery School
Fri	10	Dec	5.30 pm	Infant & Nursery School	Christmas Fair	Infant & Nursery School
Fri	10	Dec	7.30 pm	West Norfolk Singers	Christmas Concert	St Nicholas Church
Sat	11	Dec	10.00 am onwards	Methodist church	Christmas Coffee Morning	Methodist Church
Mon	13	Dec	7.15 pm	Dersingham Parish Council	Full Council Meeting	Infant & Nursery School
Wed	15	Dec	2.30 pm	Mothers' Union	Carol Service	St Nicholas Church
Thur	16	Dec	6.30 pm	Dersingham Schools	Christingle Service	St Nicholas Church
Fri	17	Dec		Dersingham Schools	End of Term - Start of Christmas Holidays	
Fri	17	Dec	7.30 pm	Park House Hotel	Celebration of Christmas	Park House
Sun	19	Dec	9.00 am	St Cecilia's Church	Holy Mass	St Cecilia's Church
Sun	19	Dec	10.30 am	Methodist Church	Family Carol Service	Methodist church
Sun	19	Dec	6.30 pm	Methodist Church	Traditional Candlelit Carol Service	Methodist Church
Sun	19	Dec	6.30 pm	St Nicholas Church	Carol Service	St Nicholas Church
Mon	20	Dec	2.30-3.30	Dersingham Library	Christmas Storytime	Dersingham Library
Mon	20	Dec	7 pm	Keith & Sandie Green	Carols around the Tree	21 Hunstanton Rd
Thur	23	Dec	12.30 pm	Dersingham Parish Council	Office closes for Christmas	
Fri	24	Dec	8 pm	St Cecilia's Church	Carol Service	St Cecilia's Church
Fri	24	Dec	9 pm	St Cecilia's Church	Nativity Mass	St Cecilia's Church
Fri	24	Dec	11.30 pm	St Nicholas Church	Midnight Carol Service	St Nicholas Church
Sat	25	Dec	9 am	St Cecilia's Church	Mass	St Cecilia's Church
Sat	25	Dec	10.30 am	Methodist church	Christmas Day Service	Methodist Church
Sat	25	Dec	11.00 am	St Nicholas Church	Family Christmas Celebration	St Nicholas Church
Sun	26	Dec	9.00 am	St Cecilia's Church	Mass of the Holy Family	St Cecilia's Church
Sun	26	Dec	10.30 am	Methodist Church	Preacher Kim Nally (no evening service)	Methodist Church
Mon	3	Jan	10.30 am	Dersingham Parish Council	Parish Council Office re-opens	
Wed	5	Jan		Dersingham Schools	Spring Term starts	
Wed	12	Jan	Village Voice		Deadline for Copy and advertisements for February edition	
Mon	24	Jan	7.15 pm	Dersingham Parish Council	Full Council Meeting	Infant & Nursery School
Wed	9	Feb		Village Voice	Date of publication	Citizen Newspaper
Mon	14	Feb		Dersingham Schools	Half Term starts	
Mon	21	Feb		Dersingham Schools	Schools re-open	



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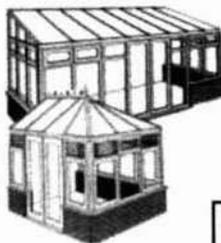
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## Norfolk Constabulary Western Mobile Police Station

Public Enquiry Officers Linda Forder and Pete Shaw advise us that the Mobile Police Station will not be available in the month of December due to the Christmas holiday. Services which include: Advice, Crime recording, Information, Lost and found property, Crime prevention advice and literature and liaison with community groups will resume in January.

Useful contact telephone numbers are;

**Crimestoppers: 0800 555 111** and Norfolk Constabulary: **01953 424242**

## Advertising in Village Voice

The Editorial Team would like to thank all of those who so generously support our magazine by placing advertisements in it, for without the income so generated there would be a possibility of the publication ceasing to exist.

With this in mind it would be helpful if you were to support those who do advertise, and to then let them know that you used their services because you saw their promotion in our magazine.

For those readers who perhaps provide a local service but who do not currently advertise with us, you may consider a fee of £12 for a sixth of a page (up to £50 for a full page) per issue, to be very cost effective.

**Advertisements for inclusion** in the next newsletter should be in the hands of Sarah Bristow, Parish Clerk, Dersingham Parish Council, The Police Station, Manor Road, Dersingham PE31 6LH **by Wednesday 12 January 2005** Enquiries regarding advertisements may be made by calling 01485 541465.

**Articles for publication in the January/February edition of Village Voice** must reach the editor at 45 Queen Elizabeth Drive, Dersingham, before the **deadline date of Wednesday 12 January 2005 for publication on Wednesday 9 February 2005**. (Contributors who are promoting events should take note of this earliest date of publication).

It must be pointed out that the editor encourages contributions but reserves the right to amend and edit as necessary. Any contributions received will be accepted on the understanding that, unless a specific request is made that names, addresses, etc are not used, these may be included in the publication and may be maintained on the Parish Council's database.

Due to limitations on space it is possible that some items received may not be published, or may be held for publication at a later date. Contributors should also be aware that published material might appear on the Parish Council's Internet web site. The editor does not necessarily agree with opinions that are expressed, or the accuracy of statements made, by contributors to the Village Voice.

### **Village Voice is the bi-monthly Magazine of Dersingham Parish Council**

*The Production Team consists of Editor: Bob Tipling*

*'In-house' Photographer and Illustrations Editor: Tony Bubb*

*Layout Artist and IT Technical Consultant: Stella Caunt*



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