

February 2007

Travellers are convicted of carrying out a series of armed robberies in Norfolk

Including two ram-raids in Dersingham

Masked and armed gangmen attacked the 'Dersingham News' shop at 11.20 pm on Tuesday 23 November 2004. Mike Rivers and his son (also called Mike) succeeded in interrupting the break-in, with the thieves leaving empty-handed. Although the younger Mike was attacked with an ice-pick handle during the incident he thankfully received only minor injuries. This particular offence has been linked by Police to others which have occurred within the county in the past few months. (A profile of the Rivers family is included in another part of this issue).

**Extract (left) from
'News in Brief'
Village Voice
January/February
2005**



**Article (above)
from Page 5 of the
Lynn News
Friday 15 December 2006**

Photo left:
This was the scene outside Thaxter's Supermarket after the ram-raid which was carried out on 4 April 2005

Parish Council Report

The Parish Council meeting held on 18 December heard that the Dersingham Community Centre was facing problems as the management committee had a number of vacancies and there would soon be no one to take bookings. The Council agreed to use the next issue of *Village Voice* to appeal for volunteers to enable the Centre to continue to offer a service that was important to the village.

Following a request from the Council, the police had carried out speed checks in Hunstanton Road and Lynn Road between 10-24 October. The result showed the overriding majority of drivers complying with the speed limit; the majority of infringements had been in Hunstanton Road with vehicles approaching from Ingoldisthorpe. Speed checks would be carried out in future in Dersingham with a view to prosecuting drivers going too fast.

The Council agreed to join the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) and to make a grant to the Heacham Community Car Scheme, which provides transport in the Dersingham and Heacham areas to enable people without cars to reach the hospital and Health Centre.

The Council was informed that a resident wished to be considered for co-option to fill one of the five current vacancies on the Council. This would be considered at the meeting on 15 January where the main business would be to set the budget and precept (the Parish Council's share of the Council Tax) for 2006/7.

A Truly Seasonal Evening

with Gerald Gifford and Friends

What could be more pleasant on a cold and wet December evening than to be in the warmth of Park House Hotel in Sandringham being entertained by internationally acclaimed musician Gerald Gifford on organ and harpsichord. Gerald, Keeper of Music at Burghley House in Stamford, recreated music of a far distant past, playing in the style of Handel amongst others, whilst the Very Reverend Alan Warren, our compere for the evening, encouraged the audience to sing in chorus.

With Amanda Anslow on recorder (proving that the recorder is not just an instrument designed to aggravate the parents of young children) and with the resonant voice of baritone Nigel Wickens adding to the festive air, a wonderful evening was enjoyed by a very appreciative audience, for whom, I believe, the highlight was an upbeat solo on the harpsichord of Gerald's own composition 'The Burghley House Christmas Rag' – I wonder if Handel would have approved of this very modern style? What a wonderful way to celebrate the season!

BT

~~Village Voice Live~~

As we get to the end of our second year one or two things are becoming apparent. The speaker is often a bigger draw than the subject and the events around the winter solstice are the least well attended.

The December meeting had Trevor Burlingham talking about and demonstrating that wonder of the 19th Century – The Magic Lantern. In the dimly lit Victorian days this must have been amazing. Bright pictures, coloured and moving up there in front of you. They were equally riveting last December and the audience were impressed by the workmanship that went into the production of the slides. With a good supply of mince pies the evening went off well. January had our local Strolling Players in festive mode with seasonal tales, poems and songs. They gave a really good account of themselves and it was a pity that there was not a bigger audience to see them and to mop up the buffet that was served afterwards.

Now, perhaps you out there can offer some suggestions as to what would tempt you out on a dark night. All ideas welcome.

Editor's Notes



I have been pleasantly surprised to see that my letterbox has been kept full over the last couple of weeks with contributions from so many people that I have been wondering whether we would have sufficient space to accommodate them all! Having said this, it causes absolute mayhem when requests are made after the deadline has passed and the layout is already in progress. The amount of time available to us to finalise the magazine for the printer once the deadline is reached is only four days (including the weekend!) which is why, although we have made allowances for people who have been late in the past, we can no longer accept any item which is submitted after mid-day on the date of deadline for each issue, whether the item is an article or an advertisement. This may seem to be a bit mean but it must be realised that we give you almost five weeks notice of the next

deadline date, which should allow ample time for the preparation of any article. To highlight the problem which is created by late submission, we had arrived at the point of finalising the first draft of this issue at 11 am on 11 January Thursday, when requests were made for two new advertisements, amounting to a requirement for half a page, and four new articles, needing a further page, which was space already allocated for other items. These required the re-organisation of much of the magazine layout in order to oblige the people concerned which entailed additional work for the volunteers in the team. Having had my little 'gripe' I hope that you will enjoy our latest offering in which we have managed to include every contribution received.

The copy of a page from the newspaper on the cover was reproduced by kind permission of The Lynn News

Bob Tipling

Dick Melton pays respects to former school teacher

Mr. Edward Gee

I thought that I would just write a small bit about a friend of mine and many other people in Dersingham, who has passed away at the ripe old age of ninety – Mr. Edward Gee.

Mr Gee came to teach Geography, Mathematics and Sports at Dersingham St. George's Secondary Modern School when the school was first opened in 1946. He lived in Hunstanton in a flat at the old Sandringham Hotel. He is well remembered by the way he came to work, he rode a 125cc B.S.A. Bantam two stroke motor bike. Mr. Gee was quite a big man and when he got on the bike, wearing his ex-R.A.F. overcoat, you could just see the two wheels sticking out from under him. He was a strict teacher and one of his favourite forms of punishment was to give you a bucket, and, at break time after school, you would have to collect stones from off the school playing field. Mr. Gee was a rugby man and he tried to introduce the sport to the school, but it came second best to football.

In 1954 Mr. Gee left St. George's and went to teach at the newly opened Smithdon School at Hunstanton. He taught there until he retired. He also moved out of his flat and bought a house and some other flats in Boston Square, Hunstanton, where, for many years, he and his wife ran a guest house and holiday flats business.

Mr. Gee was a very good sportsman and especially a very good tennis player, playing tennis at Hunstanton until he was over eighty. He was also a very good dancer – when I worked at the Kit-Kat he would come to all the dances there, and if he saw me in the street he would stop me and ask me when the next dance was going to be. Edward Gee was from the old school of teachers and they just don't come like him any more.



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Letters To The Editor

Alice Worth (Mrs), Hon Secretary; Dersingham Day Centre for the Elderly writes:

First let me thank you for including my letter asking for volunteers in your September edition. As a result we have acquired two new volunteers, one lady who comes for the whole day and a young Mum who comes for two hours each morning whilst her child is at nursery. Both these ladies have fitted in with everyone and they really are doing a fantastic job. Their joining us has made such a difference. Enclosed is a photo taken at our meeting today, showing some of our volunteers watching our Chairman, Mrs Ann Saunders, cutting our 25th Birthday Cake. The cake was made by our President, Mrs Rita Fowkes, and was delicious and very much appreciated by Members and Volunteers alike. Rita Fowkes and Ann Saunders were Volunteers right from the beginning and continue to be the backbone of the Centre 25 years on. The December Village Voice is yet another winner and such a good read. It just seems to get better and better. We enjoy reading the recollections of the late Alan Cresswell in particular. Alan and his wife were volunteers in the early days of the Day Centre and after she died he returned as a Member. We celebrated his 90th Birthday just two years ago and we all mourned his passing shortly after. Wishing you and the whole Village Voice team a Very Happy Christmas and may you continue your good work in 2007 and the years to come.



Joan Schorah writes:

Samaritan's Purse – Operation Christmas Child Shoe Box Appeal – Thank you very much to everyone who took part in our appeal this year either filling boxes, providing boxes, toothpaste, soap, crayons, pencils, rubbers, etc. to help fill boxes and to all those kind people who knitted hats, gloves, toys, etc. Very gratefully received. Neighbouring churches of all denominations, local schools, Guides, Rainbows, Beavers and W.I. members along with many friends dropped off their boxes at Church or at Joan's in response to the article put in the Village Voice and Church magazines, making it possible for us to send off in excess of 500 shoe boxes. This year they are heading off to Kiev in the Ukraine and to Serbia, hopefully in time for Christmas. All those lovely hand knitted hats, scarves and gloves will be much appreciated, along with the toys and sweets. It is a very sobering thought that in most cases this shoe-box may well be the only gift these children receive in their lifetime. Last year from the U.K. gift filled shoe-boxes were sent to 1.18 million children in Central and Eastern Europe, Mozambique, Swaziland and India. Over 800 Churches held a special Shoe-box Celebration Service



Helen Buckenham, Liz Smith and Anne Reynolds write:

When I read in Action for M.E.'s quarterly magazine early in 2006 of their fundraising campaign, the Grand Challenge, in which participants were asked, either individually or in groups, to pledge to raise £1,000 in any way chosen and over as long a period of time as it took, I discussed this with my fundraising partner, my sister Liz, and we decided to take up the challenge. We had been collecting celebrity memorabilia and clothes on and off over the past six years and decided to hold auctions on eBay. (Click on Community, enter 263 in the User ID). Our Mother was inspired to accept the challenge too and was soon writing to celebrities in her own right. In April, we put out a press release and the E.D.P. and Lynn News did us proud with their coverage. Within six weeks,

Liz and I completed our joint challenge by raising our £1,000. The following week, the trouser suit donated to us by one of our personal Patrons, Samantha Bond, (the actress famed for playing Miss Money Penny in 4 Bond movies) which is the suit she wore as Money Penny in the film "Die Another Day," raised a further one thousand pounds and since then, Mum has also raised her Challenge total. With a further thousand pounds which we had from previous stall sales/donations we are thrilled to have been able to send the charity just over £4,000 this year. In July, Liz, Mum and I were honoured and delighted to receive an invitation from The Lord Bragg of Wigton (known to most as Melvyn Bragg the presenter of the highly acclaimed South Bank Show) to attend a drinks party held to thank fundraisers. We did not have to think too long before writing our acceptances! So, September saw us head for London. The reception was held in the Cholmondeley Room which looks out across the Thames, diagonally opposite the London Eye. It was good to catch up with other fundraisers, some of whom we have met on previous occasions. (Liz and I have been to 4 such events though this was Mums first so it was even more special). Plus, we met Action for M.E. staff old and new. Guests also included television presenter, Esther Rantzen, Claire Francis and the actress, Jenny Seagrove who read a mothers moving account of her young son's battle with M.E. At 6, this boy had become paralysed; unable to eat so was tube fed into his stomach, spent every day in a darkened room unable to even bear to sit propped up. He can now manage pureed food in small quantities and is able to sit up very slightly. This sort of story is what spurs us on with our fundraising. Thankfully since I was diagnosed 15 years ago, M.E. is now classified as a Neurological condition and, for the most part, accepted as such by the medical profession. It takes campaigning, raising awareness and funds to get to where the status of M.E. is today. The next breakthrough we all want to see is what causes M.E. and how it can be treated. At present, all doctors can do is treat symptoms as they occur. Sadly, our supply of celebrity items is rapidly dwindling despite our still writing appeal letters but we shall continue on the eBay website as long as possible. Our thanks to all who have supported us and continue to do so in collecting boxes in Thaxter's Supermarket and Garden Centre which average out to around £180-£200 annually. In closing, we wish all readers a very Happy New Year and to Bob and the team at Dersingham Village Voice, continued success with your fantastic magazine which is going from strength to strength.



Anne Reynolds (left) with Lord (Melvyn) Bragg of Wigton) and daughters Liz (right) and Helen (author of this letter, seated front)

Howard Malleeson writes: (Howard can be contacted at: Howard.Malleeson@ukgateway.net)

I wonder whether you can help with my search for information. My great grandfather was Arthur Cross who was an organist and composer. During the 1880s and 90s, he was organist at Sandringham and West Newton. He lived at Cantelupe House in Dersingham. I am trying to discover more about him - what he did, the part he played in local life and where he lived. Is there any way you can help - local contacts who are 'historians', Dersingham records etc.?

A reader from 1 St. Mary's Close, Snettisham writes: I would like to comment on Ivan Green's letter in the December Village Voice. Mr Alex Fisher who formed the Scout Group and Cub Pack in Dersingham had nothing to do with the Fish and Chip Shop which was owned by his son Alex Fisher Junior.

Mr. Barry Griggs of Sculthorpe, Fakenham writes: I recently met a man from my past who I had not seen since we were at school. We talked for a bit about people we knew back then. The man's name was David Watts he gave me your Parish Council book, No. 43, which has photos of us when we were younger, it brought back so many memories I thought I would like to tell you of some of the things we did. My house backed onto the field they call the Emblems. I spent very many happy hours playing football and cricket with the boys. In the winter when we had snow and ice we would go and ride our sledges down the hills and skate on the pond when frozen. I spent a lot of time in

summer picking blackberries for mum. I do not know if he will remember, but one winter Allen Goff went down the hill on a sledge and ended up in the little river that runs through the field. On one other time we were coming through the wood with some of the Queen's flowers when the gamekeeper met us and took all the flowers away. I remember we used to play rounders on the grass near to where I lived, we played for hours, we were all very happy. I remember one football match when a Mrs. Gwen Asker shouted to George Axton to kill him - he was tackling the other players - it was fun to watch them play. In 1955 when the flood came we were able to see the water from our house up Dodds Hill. After that I went down to have a look at it. The night it happened my sister was in King's Lynn and she told us that the water was coming up the drains on the bus fleet. But of course we knew no more until the next day. These are just a few things that I remember and thought you may like to know about them. I am a Dersingham boy and lived up Dodds Hill for 26 years when we moved to Chapel Road, I left there in 1967 when I got married. Next year will be our 40th and we have two very good children. It was great to read your book and see the names come from the past on your pages.

A politician should have three hats: one for throwing in the ring, one for talking through, and one for pulling rabbits out of if elected.

Carl Sandberg

Nostradamus was an optimist.

Graffiti



**Mrs Stitch
and Things**

**Curtains, Blinds
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And any alternative ideas

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Children with Disabilities Outreach Project
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We are looking for volunteers to support and befriended children and young people who have a disability, in assisting them to access a variety of activities out in the community and develop their independence.

If you are interested please contact Lesley Gear at the above address.

Look forward to hearing from you.....



British Legion News *Dersingham and Sandringham Branch*

At the Annual General Meeting on 13 November 2006 the following officers were elected:

President: Norman Pemberton
Chairman: Ron Brackstone
Vice-Chairman: John Gilmour-Houston
Secretary: Clive Grimwood
Treasurer: Alan Cross
Service: Ron Haddow
Correspondent: Cliff Rose

To the outgoing officers our thanks and appreciation for their hard work and dedication over the past years. Vic Staples – the outgoing Secretary – is moving outside the area but will continue in office as long as possible.

A Service of Remembrance was held at the War Memorial on Saturday 11 November 2006, this was conducted by Rev. Kim Nally, the Methodist Minister. The service was well attended on a very cold morning. Many thanks to Mr and Mrs Green of The Tropics for providing hot refreshments after the service.

It is reported that the Poppy Appeal totalled £3,621.69. Many thanks to the collectors, without your help the British Legion would be unable to continue the vital welfare and benevolent work for our service personnel.

On the evening of 11 December 2006 the Branch held a social evening at the Albert Victor Bowls Club. Sandwiches, savouries and cakes were supplied by members, also numerous raffle prizes, the proceeds of which added to Branch funds. The meeting was well attended by members and wives and a good time was had by all.

Cliff Rose - Correspondent

The Royal British Legion - Women's Section ***Dersingham and Sandringham Branch***

Many thanks to everybody that supported us at our Coffee Morning on 9 November in aid of the Poppy Appeal - we managed to raise £100.06p.

For us the Festive season started well with our Christmas Party on 4 December. Mr. Clarke and his keyboard entertained us and a very good tea was enjoyed by members and their husbands. We also had a rather special raffle. Our next meeting is on 12 February at 2.15 pm in the Orchard Close Community Centre.

We do not meet in January so would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a Happy Healthy New Year.

Poppy Appeal 2006

Once again we have had a tremendous response to the Appeal. The band of volunteers who collect from house to house, on the streets and in the shops were joined this year by members of the Army Cadet Force who raised a considerable sum themselves. The final total for Dersingham, Sandringham, Wolferton and West Newton was an amazing £4116.43, every penny of which will be well spent caring for those members of the armed forces, ex-servicemen and/or their dependents, who find themselves in need. Thanks go to all those who helped in any way either by acting as collectors or giving much needed donations. As usual more volunteers are needed as collectors during the Remembrance period and anyone willing to give just two hours a year of their time would be very welcome. Please contact Mrs Dee Morris on 541450 for details.

Sale
at Dersingham Church Hall, Manor Road
Saturday, 28 April 2007, 9.00 am - 12 noon
In aid of St Nicholas Church

A grand sale of secondhand goods (no clothing). Now is the time to think about spring cleaning and de-cluttering of your home. Are you tidying your loft, garage, shed or spare room? If you have any household goods, curios, bygones, books, small items of furniture, garden equipment and tools etc that you are able to donate, we would be pleased to receive them.

You can deliver to the Church Hall on any Saturday, 10.00 am - 12 noon between 17 February to 21 April (*excluding* 31 March only).

Alternatively, if you need the goods to be collected, please telephone 540857 to arrange this.

Do make a note in your calendar, tell your friends, and come to the sale. Thank you.



Dersingham Open Gardens
27 and 28 May 2007 - 2.00 pm - 6.00 pm



This annual event will again coincide with the Methodist Flower Festival giving garden and flower enthusiasts plenty to enjoy. If you are able to open your garden - no matter how large or small it may be - we would like to hear from you. Please telephone me on 540857 if you would like to find out more.

Tickets for the gardens will be available at the Church Hall and at participating gardens. Cream teas will also be available at the Church Hall. Some participating gardens may also provide refreshments. Income from the event is to benefit the Parish Church. Please make a note to support the event at the Methodist Church also.

Neil Adams



Do you remember when we all used to have friends and neighbours to pop in for a cup of tea, bring a loaf of bread back from the shop etc? Sadly, it happens much less these days while unfortunately the elderly population increases. The Red Cross from Hospital Service is increasingly being called upon to support patients at home during the early days following discharge from hospital. Could you spare an hour or two during their first 3 or 4 weeks at home to visit and check how they are, maybe getting shopping etc? We are looking for reliable adults of all ages to support our work in the community - all expenses are paid and you don't even have to be able to drive!

If you think you may be able to help then please ring Sandy or Alison at the hospital for more information on 01553 613613 Ext 2721



Be Prepared

by Kathy Jordan © 7 January 2007



“Be prepared for anything” – my mother used to say,
Now filled with ‘dire essentials’ is my handbag every day,
Tape measure, tweezers, scissors, safety pins, needles and threads,
Inhaler, plasters, hand gel – pills for sick or aching heads.

Keys looped into elastic – to stop them going astray,

A mobile for emergencies – if help is far away.

Perfume, eye shadow and lipstick to brighten up my face,
A ‘brolly’, comb and hairbrush – keeps my ‘haystack’ firm in place.
Screwdrivers, string and torches – prevent problems growing worse,

I’d never go anywhere without my ‘specs’ and purse.

Diary, pens and folding ‘shopper’ – for when the sales are near,

Address book, stamps and tissues to wipe away a tear.

Plus a few unmentionables – I wouldn’t like to print –

People often joke and jest – “Where is the kitchen sink?”

I envy them for carrying their microscopic bag –

Just how they manage I don’t know – it makes me hopping mad –

But then they are the very folk who borrow things from mine –

Yet I’m more than happy to oblige at their needy time –

I’m even more delighted that my mother once declared –

“Where’ere you go – what’ere you do –

Always be prepared!!!”

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Sarah's Page

Hi - I hope that you all had a great Christmas and a Merry New Year. I also hope that not too many of you ended up at A & E after falling down skating at Sandringham. If you did I hope you are well on the mend.

I did not hear from anybody regarding green bags, bottle banks, office hours etc so I have to presume that you are all totally happy with the current situations.

The council are busy at the moment trying to make savings on the Precept but with Central Government putting more and more on local government it is making it extremely hard to keep cost down and still provide the services you are used to.

The council do not have much planned so far for this year. This could be down to elections taking place in May. Do you still wish to see the same Councillors, - are they doing what you require, would you like to see some new faces, new ideas, new challenges? This could be the chance to make a difference, could you bring new life to the village? If so get a couple of friends from the village to support you and stand as a candidate in the May elections.

The Web Site is up and running (www.dersingham.gov.uk). Can we have your comments, good and bad and suggestions always wanted. ,

I still have the diary of village events in the office but as yet I have received very little information from any of the village organisations etc. Please tell me what is happening as you may find it beneficial to your event. Put an A3 notice on the public notice board. This has now been placed outside Budgens, which we hope you will find a better place.

Well I think that is all from me. If there is something happening in the village that you wish to know more about, or not happy about, please do not hesitate to contact me at the office, and I will do my best to help.

Sarah



Village Voice Advertising Rates for the year 2007/8

Whole page £65.00 Half Page £35.00 Quarter Page £20.00 Eighth Page £12.50

Issues will be produced for April/June/September/November 2007 and February 2008 – Order space for all six issues now and receive **SIX FOR THE PRICE OF FIVE**

December Competition Winners

SANDRINGHAM WINDOWS

C H R I S T M A S C H A L L E N G E

Patricia Foster of Brooke Road, Dersingham received a Hamper

to the value of £75.00

VILLAGE VOICE CHRISTMAS TEASER

Ivan and Ann Coppin of Queen Elizabeth Drive, Dersingham identified 23 of the 27 differences in the sketches and will receive a bottle of Sparkling Wine

Welcome to Natural England!



On the 2nd October 2006, we said goodbye to English Nature and welcomed Natural England as the new non-departmental Government body that has been created to champion the natural environment. The new organisation was created by merging English Nature with Defra's Rural Development Service and the access, recreation and landscape functions of the Countryside Agency. Natural England will, for the first time, unite in a single

organisation responsibility for protecting and enhancing wildlife and landscapes, as well as promoting greater access and recreation – helping people to enjoy more green spaces both in the countryside and urban environments. Natural England will have wide-ranging responsibilities.

Natural England will provide incentives to farmers and land managers to manage their land in a more environmentally friendly way. It will also be a key regulator and the government's independent watchdog to advise on how policies affect the natural environment.

Natural England's Chair, Sir Martin Doughty stated the "The creation of Natural England is a landmark moment for the natural environment. No other organisation in Europe matches the breadth of our legislative remit, and the scale of our challenge. By uniting responsibility for landscapes and wildlife, Natural England will be working to build resilience into our natural systems in the face of climate change."

On a personal note, the experience of having gone through and survived the merger has been an interesting one, at times, resulting in frustration and a feeling of uncertainty. However, the benefits of the merger are already clear to me and it has provided a major boost on some of the areas which I am responsible for, promoting a more outward-looking approach, allowing us to begin to improve land surrounding designated conservation sites. It is a fact that without such a holistic approach to managing our environment, there will be major negative changes in the future.

It has, however, led to delays in some of our work. At Dersingham Bog National Nature Reserve, we were part way through an exercise to improve the signage and footpath network across the reserve when the news of the merger was released. In effect, this has meant that our plans to renew the signage across the reserve have been delayed until the new organisation's branding is completed. When completed, the new signs will provide an illustrated map of the entire site and information about the network of different routes available to visitors. Those of you who visit the reserve regularly will have noticed the route marker posts that have been springing up alongside the footpaths. These will provide a colour-coded series of routes across the site which will be linked to information on the entrance signs.

Apart from the ongoing management work at Dersingham Bog, we recently hosted a very successful joint volunteer day with Community Service Volunteers and the British Trust for Conservation Volunteer's Millenium Volunteers project. The day was attended by over 70 volunteers and provided the opportunity for young volunteers and volunteers with learning difficulties to meet up to work towards achieving three tasks on the reserve; making nest boxes, extending the hazel wattle fencing alongside the entrance path and pulling birch seedlings to maintain an area of restored dry heathland. It was particularly rewarding to see the pleasure that the volunteers gained from receiving their personal thank you awards from the Major for King's Lynn.

On the other side of the by-pass, Dersingham Fen has also received an award for its contribution to conservation in the environment: a Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) Norfolk Award. The CPRE Norfolk awards scheme was launched in 1980 to recognise "significant small scale achievements in the field of conservation" and was submitted by Norfolk Council Council's Environment Team.

The scheme is now very broad based with entries coming from a multitude of sources. Restoration projects, building conversions, innovative new building design, landscape management projects and school's environmental work, can all be considered. For those interested in finding out more about the award contact Steve Donoclift 01553 669242 or, for more general information about the CPRE Norfolk Awards visit www.cprenorfolk.org.uk/projects/norfolk-awards.htm . I apologise to those of you who do not have access to the internet, but unfortunately, I was unable to find an alternative contact route.

Ash Murray, Site Manager, Natural England

Bernie's Bytes



We have now been in Cyprus a year, where has the time gone? It has been interesting watching the seasons go round, and the way all the different festivals are celebrated. Early in December the builder who built our estate gave a party at the taverna in the village for all the estate residents, the meal was a meze, which is numerous small dishes of food, starting with dips and salad, cold meats, then hot food, pork chops, beef and chicken, done in different ways followed by savouries, usually over twenty dishes, these come at steady intervals and the meal can take two hours to get through. Free drink was provided all evening, with live music, the night



started at eight-o'-clock and finished when the last one went home about twelve thirty. English builders take note.

Christmas Day was spent on our own. Turkey dinner with all the trimmings. In the afternoon we went into Larnaca, all the sea front bars and restaurants were open, saw some people we knew and spent the afternoon sitting in the sun having a drink and chatting.

Family came over from England after Christmas to stay. New Year's Eve we all went with neighbours to one of the village tavernas. A hot buffet meal was laid on with live music. There was a good mix of English and locals, by midnight the locals were putting on local dancing and it was a good night.

The Christmas decorations here are very good in all the villages, coloured lights and displays are hung over the streets, Christmas trees, Father Christmas and reindeer and sledges are put on the pavements and street corners, and in the village centres there is a nativity scene. Nothing is vandalised or taken.

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News from Hunstanton Lifeboat Guild



Last November was a busy and successful month for Hunstanton Lifeboat Guild. On the 15th popular Christmas Fair at the Town Hall attracted 260 supporters – well up on last year – and raised the grand total of £1,750.

The bric-a-brac stall was particularly busy and for the first time ever had actually sold out by the end of the event. The produce stall and those selling RNLI gifts, cards and calendars also did a brisk trade.

The following week a Fisherman's Supper held at the Lifeboat Inn at Thornham was a sell-out. One hundred guests enjoyed a fine meal and a convivial atmosphere. This event made £1,217 bringing the total for November to nearly £3,000.

Guild chairman Margaret Bullen would like to thank all friends and local supporters who have contributed to the fund-raising efforts throughout the year and looks forward to welcoming you to events during 2007. A date for your diary is Friday 16 March, when a Fish and Chip Lunch at Snettisham is planned. More details nearer the date.

Donations towards the £125,000 target for a new inshore lifeboat have now reached £55,000 since the Lynn News backed appeal was launched in August.

The Hunstanton lifeboat crew, all volunteers, are hoping the state-of-the-art Atlantic 85 will be operational within the next three or four years.

IT'S GOD'S OWN COUNTRY

by Sylvia Steele



Blast, but it's grand to live in Norfolk
To walk the windswept shore
To espy the marshy birdland
With sandy dunes afore.



It's good to roam the forests
Home of the lissom muntjac deer
Where rabbit, squirrel, badger and hare,
At dusk, will all appear.



It's great to smell the hedgerow flowers
To see the ripening corn
Feel the coolness of the summer breeze
And wake to a vibrant dawn.



Blast, but Norfolk surely has it all
Whatever the time of year
Spring flowers, summer corn and autumn fruits
All of nature's store is here.

The Sixth of the Winter Ale

by Frank Nichols, Steve Nowell & Ian Stockwell

"You..are..a..mean..old..devil!" shouted Oliver to Larry as the latter scuttled off to chat to someone else when it was his turn to buy the ale.

"No I'm not - I'm just an average sort of chap".

"That's exactly what I mean; because in mathematical terms 'mean' means 'average', see what I mean?"

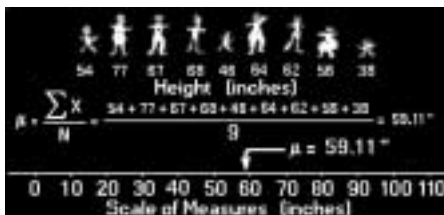
"*Clever Clogs* In other words, Larry is **AVERAGELY MEAN**

"Which is not such a terribly mean thing to say" chipped in Miley, keen to throw his six pennyworth into the conversation.

"You see," pronounced Oliver "very few mathematical books use the term 'average'. We know, for example that the average value of a set of numbers such as 1,2,5,6, and 6 again is the total of those numbers, i.e. 20; divided by the number of numbers, i.e. 5. Which gives us the average as 4." Miley withdrew his calculator from his pocket like a six-gun from it's holster; and twiddled. After a silence which lasted five times as long as it took Oliver to deliver his monologue, he finally proclaimed "I agree!"

Oliver ignored him, turned to Larry and continued. "So that's the 'average'. But some of those clever so-and-so's who can do add-ups and takeaways and possibly joined up writing as well, often show off outrageously by saying 'mean' instead of 'average' "

"But there's more than one type of 'mean' you know - and look at me when I'm talking to you, Oliver!" said Miley who hated talking to the back of someone's head "There's a thing called the 'mode'. That's the number which occurs most frequently in a set of numbers. It is 6 in the example which Oliver quoted."



"And from your reaction to Oliver just now I would say that you're in your 'Mean Mode' tonight". Larry rocked with laughter at his own joke and fell gently to the floor taking his half pint with him. He re-seated himself then asked, quite seriously "I think I've heard of something called the 'median'. Is that a 'mean' also?"

"Sort of". Oliver explained that the 'median' is the number with the same number of numbers above it

as below it in a set of numbers.

"Pardon?!" (Larry and Miley in unison).

"In our example, '5' is the 'median' because there are two numbers above it (6 and 6) and two numbers below it (2 and 1)".

"So what is 'deviation' asked Miley.

"I know, I know!" shouted Larry.

"Shut up you filthy little devil! You can read sex into anything!"

Oliver explained again. "The 'deviation' is the numerical distance of a number from the 'mean'. In our example the 'deviations are -3, -2, +1, +2 and +2".

"I bet that would confuse my friends" commented Miley.

"Maybe," replied Oliver "but if you want a real conversation stopper, throw the 'interquartile range' at them!"

I *knew* it was something to do with sex" - Larry.

"Go home and take a sedative!"

"I know about 'root mean square values' " piped up Miley, but nobody was prepared to listen to him.

"Go and get the halves in and give that brain cell a rest" said Larry.

"Yes, but 'root mean squares'...?"

"*Get us a half apiece!*"

Miley suddenly jumped up and down and stamped out of the room in a big huff. This was not

uncommon. There were occasions when Miley's suggestions were so weird that nobody listened to him and it upset him. He stormed back into the bar and blurted out "The... 'root...mean...square... value' is the-square-root-of-the-mean-of-the-squares-of-the-numbers. So there. Sort that one out you pair of eggheads!!"

"Fancy that!" said Larry and Oliver together. "So what is the 'root mean square' of 1, 1, 1, and 1?" - Oliver.

Miley whipped out his calculator again. "1".

"Isn't technology wonderful; especially in Miley's hands?" concluded Larry.

"But I know - and I bet you two don't - what the 'Golden Mean' is". Miley was on one of his favourite topics now.

"Go on?"

"It's a factor which occurs widely in nature and is often accepted as the mathematical definition of beauty. The design of the snail shell, and the positions of the branches on a tree are based upon it. The Parthenon in Athens was designed according to it and much of today's architecture likewise. Basically, if you have a rectangle and cut a square from one end such that the remaining rectangle has the same proportions as the initial rectangle, then you have a 'Golden Rectangle'. The ratio of the shorter side of the rectangle to its longer side is the 'Golden Mean'; and a genius like me can prove that its value is 0.618".

"Thankyou, and goodnight, 'Golden Boy!'"

Miley had proved the point that he could be taken seriously sometimes and settled back to enjoy the remains of his drink. Oliver, though, felt that they should if possible apply the results of their researches into 'means' and 'averages' to church matters. After all, they were bass singers in the choir and did as much as they could to support Humphrey the Vicar and Oswald the organist. Miley suddenly burst back to life with one of his 'lateral thinking' ideas.

"Got it! We could suggest to Humphrey that we calculate a 'Mean Hymn' each week. For example, the hymns last week were number 172 (Glorious things of Thee...); 156 (Come down O Love Divine); 464 (God is Here); and 122 (How sweet the Name...). Now the sum of those four numbers is 914. Divide that by the number of hymns (4) and we get 228 (Shepherd Divine...) to the nearest whole number. That is the 'Mean Hymn'. So, suppose the congregation comes to church just a few minutes early each week, they would have chance to scan the Hymn Board and calculate the Mean Hymn number for themselves. At the end of the service, Humphrey announces the right answer and Oswald plays it. I put the aforementioned proposal to the Three Not-So-Wise Men for a vote.... Thankyou, gentlemen. Carried; 3 votes to 0".

It was not unusual at these meetings for Larry to have the final word. "I suppose we must consider whether Oswald plays a really 'mean' hymn; or a pretty 'average' one!"

On this occasion, Miley was determined that he, not Larry, would make the last contribution. "I would like to point out something else" he said.

"Do we really have to stay and listen?" said Oliver, rather glumly. "I did mean to be home by 10 o'clock to see the news."

"*That's it! You've got it!*" exclaimed Miley. "'Mean' also means 'intend'. You could have said that you did *intend* to be home by 10 o'clock. And we can wrap the whole thing up by saying that 'mean' also means 'tight-fisted'; and 'is the equivalent of 'I rest my case.'"

It was Larry's turn to look hurt. Miley was undoubtedly the maestro with the pocket calculator, but he, Larry, was supposed to be the language wizard with the aid of his pocket dictionary. He looked up THAT WORD - which they were all heartily sick of by now - and found that Miley was correct on both counts.

Oliver took out his half-hunter from his waist coat; glanced at it, then walked out of the room grumbling that by now he had missed the news headlines. Larry muttered 'big head' and slouched out after Oliver. Miley skipped over to the bar, leaned across it, and gave Julie the Barmaid a great big kiss on the cheek.



Presentation - Tapping House

Representatives from The COGS of Dersingham recently presented a cheque for £500 to Tapping House Hospice. The COGS (Conservative Old Gentlemen's Society) are a group of 20 like-minded retired gentlemen who meet every other week at The Feathers Hotel to discuss anything and everything in an informal atmosphere. The society was founded in 1984 and rumour has it that it was formed (by a COG's wife) with the intention of giving members' wives some freedom from their husbands on a regular basis!

At their meetings, members make donations to cover the cost of refreshments and to contribute to the cost of outings for example. At the end of the year the accounts are reviewed and any surplus funds are donated to a charity. 2006 was an exceptional year with the result that The COGS were able to make the above gift.

Shown in the photograph at the presentation are, left to right, Marc Stowell (Tapping House Campaign and Fund Raising Director), Ivor Stuart, Steve Nowell (Chief COG 2006), George Barton, Norman Pemberton, Kim Bowett (Tapping House Hospice Administrator), Ted Hall, Alan Huns.

It was a coincidence that Marc Stowell should meet up with Ted Hall again after a period of 14 years. Both men used to live in Saltford, a village near Bristol, and Marc was a good friend of Ted and his family.



2007 Events for St Nicholas Church

1st Friday of the month - Coffee Mornings with fresh vegetables and cakes, pies, craft stalls, nearly-new clothes and second-hand books

January 14 - Church New Year Lunch in the Church Hall

February 21 onwards - Lent Lunches – Saturdays once a week over the six week period

March 31 - Children's Easter Activity Day in Church Hall

April 12 to 14 - Spring Arts & Crafts Festival - Painting Exhibition & Photographic Competition in Church, Craft Fair in the Church Hall with

refreshments.

April 22 - St George's Day Lunch in the Church Hall

April 28 - Mammoth Auction /Sale in the Church Hall

May 27/28 - Open Gardens lots of gardens open in the village with refreshments in the Church Hall

July 19-22 - Flower Festival over 60 arrangements in Church plus stalls in the Church Hall with refreshments

August 6, 7 & 8 - Children's Holiday Club in the Church Hall

September 27/28/29 - Autumn Arts & Crafts Festival - Painting Exhibition & Photographic Competition in Church, Craft Fair in the Church Hall with refreshments.

October 14 - Harvest Lunch in the Church Hall

November 30 & December 1 & 2 - Christmas Tree Festival - a Church full of Christmas Trees

Christmas Carols at Park House

What a lovely way to spend a Sunday afternoon!



I was very fortunate to have the opportunity to attend a carol concert on the afternoon of Sunday 3 December, once again featuring the truly accomplished female choir from Wisbech who go by the name of 'Fentasia', whom I called fantastic when I reported their last concert at Park House Hotel in December of last year.

The conductor, Val Lowe, introduced the performance almost apologetically, saying that this was the first public performance that the choir had done this season, and that we should therefore be prepared for minor mishaps along the way – she needn't have bothered – for although she and the singers noticed occasions when slight deviations from the planned arrangements

occurred, they were not obvious to the very appreciative audience.

The 21 strong choir, accompanied by pianist Janice Loose (seen above with Val Lowe the conductor), were obviously enjoying every minute of their programme, which commenced with 'It's the most Wonderful Time of the Year' and 'Wind Through the Holly Trees', which caused Val to comment on the fact that the day's weather was very much in keeping with the second number.

Part way through these two numbers we could hear the chirping of birds, somewhere to the rear of the hall, much to the amusement of both the artistes and the audience. I was later to learn that the culprits were two budgerigars who go by the names of 'Parkie' and 'Sam' and who are permanent residents of the hotel.

I must say at this stage that the conservatory at Park House is the ideal setting for these concerts and has absolutely amazing acoustics which I am sure is greatly appreciated by every musician and speaker who attends on these occasions. I also heard comments on the fact that the Christmas decorations which were in place were of just sufficient quantity as to not make the area look overdressed.

The choir sang its way through 'Let it Snow' (complete with the accompaniment of sleigh bells) and 'Lullaby,' followed by a most emotional performance, by mezzo-soprano soloist June Killeley of 'O! Holy Night.' (June is seen in the photo right with pianist Janice Loose), June has one of the most powerful voices imaginable and, with intermittent harmony backing from the remainder of the choir, I cannot believe that any member of the audience could have failed to be moved by the passion of this piece.



We were then entertained with 'Chestnuts Roasting on an Open Fire' and 'Santa Claus is Coming to Town', the latter of which again featured a solo artist who, regretfully, I could not see from where I was seated, and whose name I have yet to discover.

After 'Hallelujah! A Child is born,' the arrangement of which had included a part of the classical 'Hallelujah Chorus,' we were introduced to Lindsay Aldrich, a teenager who is studying classical music at Leeds College of Music, and who had made a specific journey on the day previously to attend rehearsal, and who was returning to college after her performance, and what a performance! Having only been advised what she would be singing on her arrival in

Wisbech, Lindsay gave us the most wistful rendering of 'The Snowman' – beautifully carried out by a very talented young lady.

I will not list all of the carols which were sung but must mention Thelma Thorrington's solo contribution to 'Sweet Little Jesus Boy,' her plaintive voice had the audience leaning forward in their seats in order not to miss a note.

As we approached the end of our afternoon's entertainment the conductor had what she described as a 'Senior Moment' when introducing 'A Winter's Tale' as she could not remember the name of the singer whom she called the 'well-known person' whose song it was. The choir soon reminded her of the name 'David Essex' and demonstrated their combined talents by more than doing justice to the number. It was all too short a time before the performance was to end with the singing of 'Christmas Lullaby' and 'The First Noel,' and the 72 people in the audience showed their appreciation by a prolonged applause for what had been an almost magical afternoon. The choir will, they informed us, be performing outside the Hardwick Tesco at some time during the Christmas period so it is just possible that you too will have the experience that we had, although without the excellent afternoon tea which the hotel staff provided before our departure.

BT

Photographs courtesy of Nigel Sisson



Oh Sweet Valentine

by Judy Morgan

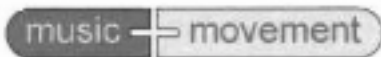
He sent a plastic flower way back in 1973
It still sits by my bedside, a lasting memory
Can't remember what the colour was
'Cos it's faded just like me
Oh sweet Valentine.

The last time I received a card was in 1982
'To the wife' it said & signed from 'you know who'
Then I had to ask in all seriousness
'Dear, is this card from you?'
Oh sweet Valentine.

He gave me a bag of chocolates in 1993
He ate more than half and then gave the rest to me
I said 'in future dearest could I
Just have some HRT'
Oh sweet Valentine.

Now we don't celebrate that day in February
I give him nothing and he sends nowt to me
Not that there's loss of affection, you understand
There's just a loss of memory.
Oh sweet Valentine.





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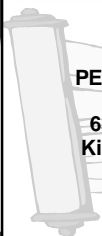
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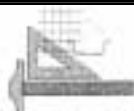
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“Sure, I’m fine, Thank you”

Contributed by Peggy Thornton of Perth, Australia, who found it printed on the back of a Christmas menu at a luncheon party which she and husband Ken attended on 13 December 2006.

There is nothing the matter with me,
I’m as healthy as can be,
I have Arthritis in my knees,
And when I talk, I talk with a wheeze,
My pulse is weak and my blood is thin,
But I’m awfully well for the shape I’m in!

The moral is this, as my tale I unfold,
That for you and for me who are growing old,
It’s better to say “I’m fine” with a grin,
Than to let folks know the shape we are in!

How do I know that my youth is all spent?
Well my ‘get up and go’ has ‘got up and went’!
But I really don’t mind, when I think with a grin,
Of all the grand places my ‘get up’ has been!

“Old age is golden” I’ve heard it said,
But sometimes I wonder as I get into bed,
With my ears in a drawer, my teeth in a cup,
My eyes on a table until I get up,
When sleep overcomes me I say to myself,
“Is there anything else I should leave on the shelf?”



Dersingham Playgroup to Close after 14 Years

Due to the lack of children, Dersingham Playgroup will, with sadness, close its doors for the final time on 31 March 2007. The village playgroup has suffered badly since the opening of the village nursery, but with money we had in reserve and fund-raising, the group has been able to keep its head above water, but now, with the nursery taking children in whatever spaces become available, the playgroup numbers have fallen rapidly to only four as from the January term. The playgroup was opened in September 1982 with 20+ children, I myself started at the playgroup in 1986 when we had 24 children and a 4+ group, but since the opening of the nursery school the numbers have dropped to now only

four. I would like to say a big thank you to all the people who have been involved with the playgroup over the past 24 years, especially Mrs. Linda Scott and Mrs. Debbie Nichol, who have made my job so much easier over the 12 years that they have worked at the group. It is with great sadness that this has happened.

Lynn Reeve – Supervisor for 21 years – contact phone number 01485 544789

Dick Melton's Column

Now then, where do I start? There was so much interesting stuff in the December issue of Village Voice, especially the photographs on pages 16 and 17. But first let's talk about the photograph on the front cover. This was of the TocH carol singers on their way to sing at Sandringham House. The photograph was taken outside the Jubilee Gates, which were then, and still are today, the tradesman's entrance to Sandringham House.

The man on the extreme left is Mr Bell who at the time was the teacher of carpentry up at St George's. His wife, who was the music teacher at the same school is also in the picture. The gentleman playing the violin is Mr Tuck who lived in Manor Road. Bernie Twite's mother and father are also in the picture.



It was nice to see a letter from Roger Dunger who lived with his father, mother and two brothers in the house right on the corner of Centre Vale and Post Office Road. His house and yard used to be a blacksmith's shop, and right outside there stood, for many years, a mounting stone to help people get on their horses. (Editor's note: I believe that the stone is still in place to the left of the entrance gate!

Roger's father, George Dunger, was a bricklayer for my great-uncle Tom Drew, who ran the Dersingham Building Company.

Next, a letter from Ivan Green, who lived in the row of cottages right opposite the Post Office. His brother, Melvyn, is in the picture of the cubs, and he had another brother, Owen. When we were all in the cubs together we used the scout hut for meetings, this hut was just inside the gates to the Old Hall. We would go camping for the weekend up to the campsite at Wolferton or on the Open near the sandpits.

Two other people that I would like to mention are David Cavey and Tony Borley (deceased). They lived next door to each other what were then called 'Sandpit Cottages'. That is the large house going out of Dersingham, near the roundabout. Next door to these cottages was a large picnic area, and in the summer, Tony's mother would sell tea and cakes from her cottage.

Now then, what's this? A letter from Mrs Roy in New Zealand! She is, I believe, a distant relative of mine. In her letter she says that her uncle William Melton was my father, in fact he was my grandfather, and Jim Melton was my father. But she is right in saying that he had a hardware van (horse and cart). He also had a hardware shop in a hut on the right hand side halfway down Manor Road.

This next story is about the policemen who were stationed at Dersingham Police Station. In the 50s, Dersingham Police Station came under what was called the 'Sandringham Division', and being right next to Sandringham, was one of the most important Police Stations in Norfolk. The Superintendent at this time was Superintendent Mitchell who lived in the red brick house next to the Police Station, with his wife and his son, John. He was a big man, over six feet tall, and he was very fit. Often, in the summertime, he would get up at 4 am, walk down to the shingle pits (3 miles) have a swim, and be home in time for his breakfast. He was quite a fair man and as long as you behaved yourself he left you alone, but if he saw you doing anything wrong he would soon give you a 'ding of the lug'. There were only two other Police houses in Dersingham and they were between the Police Station and the Foresters Hall. In one of these lived P.C. Barrett, he was a Police Patrolman (or speed cop) and he drove a large Wolseley car fitted in the front of which was a loudspeaker, and if he saw you doing anything wrong, he would shout through it. When P.C. Barrett retired he went to live at 'Double Lodges' as he wanted peace and quiet. Well he got it there as it is at the back of nowhere.

Another P.C. was P.C. Goldsmith who lived in the small bungalow on the right hand side at the top of The Drift. He moved away in the middle 50s and P.C. Finbow came in his place. He was quite stern and he used to keep a sharp eye on us lads. Now P.C. George Lines was a different kettle of fish. He was a local lad born and bred. He lived on Gelham Manor so he knew everyone in the village. I have heard it said that all the time that P.C. Lines was stationed in the village he never arrested anyone!

In a house on the right hands side of Dun Cow Lane (Lynn Road) lived D.C. Jack Watts. When the Royal Family were at Sandringham, D.C. Watts would be up at the house to keep an eye on them, and at one time he was personal bodyguard to King George VI. When D.C. Watts retired he went to work at Sandringham on security. D.C. Cooper took his place and lived in the same house until the Police houses were built up Dodds Hill, when he moved up there.

The only Police Sergeant that I can remember was Sergeant Howell who lived in the Police house at West Newton. When he retired he looked after the 'Highwayman' transport café outside the Royal Norfolk showground near Norwich.

As Dersingham was like a divisional headquarters, all of the P.Cs and Sergeants who lived in the villages used to have to bike into Dersingham once a week, usually on a Friday, to hand in their reports. Then they would all meet in the Albert Victor before they biked home. One PC, P C Booty, lived in the Police house at Onion Corner (Castle Rising). He liked his drink, and, more often than not, he would fall off his bike a time or two before he got back home

When Royalty were at Sandringham, like for Christmas, about another twenty policemen would be drafted in from all over the country to help out. These men would stay in the Section House which was half way up Sandringham Hill on the right hand side. That's just a little bit about the policemen of Dersingham in the fifties.

Reading the piece that Bernie Twite put in the Village Voice reminded me of a little incident that happened to Reg Houchen not long after the Castle Rising bypass had opened.

Reg was not the best of drivers and he also liked a drink. He was coming home with a load of passengers one night who he had taken to a darts match the other side of Lynn. When he got to the Knights Hill roundabout he did not go round it, he went straight over the top with the bus and down the other side. When some of the passengers told him what he had done, all he said was "I did not see that roundabout there when I came this way yesterday!"

Another little driving incident I can remember involved a lovely old chap called Mr Macgarigil (sic) or Mac as we all called him. Now, as you can tell by his name, Mac was a Scotsman, and, of course, he liked a drink. Mac lived in 'Nenedale', the house on the corner of Lynn Road and Manor Road. To get into Mac's garden to his garage he had to drive over a wooden bridge that went over the dyke in Manor Road.

Mac did a lot of driving as he was a representative for an oil company, and also he had a nice company car. One dark night Mac got home after having a few drinks on the way, when he went to drive across the bridge to put his car in the garage, he missed the bridge and put his car in the dyke. So he came into the Albert Victor to see if any of us could help him get the car out of the dyke. Well, someone got a tractor and about six of us went to help. We got the car out of the dyke and into the garage with very little damage. Then Mac took us all back to the Albert Victor, where we all got drunk, including Mac!

If drinking is interfering with your work, you're probably a heavy drinker. If work is interfering with your drinking, you're probably an alcoholic.

Dr Anthony Clare

The golden rule when reading a menu in a restaurant is, if you can't pronounce it, you can't afford it.

Frank Muir

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How safe is your home from fire?

Every year over 350 people die as a result of fires in their home, almost all of these are in homes that do not have smoke alarms. Sandringham Fire Station can help you identify risks from fire in your home and if you do not have a smoke alarm we can supply and fit one free of charge.

A scheme called "**Home Fire Risk Assessment**" enables you to ask for a safety check of your home, conducted by firefighters with the knowledge to assess and identify any areas which need advice, and to fit smoke alarms in the correct locations.

Our aim is to ensure that all homes in our area fully fitted with smoke alarms. It is a known fact that without one you stand very little chance of waking should a fire occur.

Additionally we are trying to reduce the most common causes of fires in the home. Fires from



cooking is at the top of the list, people becoming distracted by telephone calls, people knocking on the door or becoming engrossed in the TV gives fire a chance to start. Chip pan fires are also very common.

Smoking is still the number one cause of fire deaths; not putting cigarettes out properly or falling asleep while smoking kills many people each year.

Electrical fires are the third main cause of fires. We should all ensure that we turn off our televisions at night rather than relying on the stand-by facility and our plugs and sockets should be in good order and not overloaded.

Please don't be alarmed about fires in your home but you do need to be vigilant. We can offer free advice and also a Home Fire Safety Check and then fit smoke alarms where necessary. Please ring us on 0800 9178137 or call in any Tuesday night to our fire station on Dodds Hill.

Tim Edwards (Firefighter Sandringham)

Te-Dium

by A. Nonno (aged 90 – nearly!)

When they tap you on a bony shoulder and say you're good for your age,

When you peer at the television and curse the cataracts,

When you can't wear your denture without a fixative,

When your hair is so sparse it's like chaff,

Golly gosh – a ray of hope – your hearing aid has gone digital.

When all the knowledge you've mopped up in ninety years

Doesn't amount to a row of beans,

You have to take it with you, because nobody else wants it,

And you discover you're a cynic.

You think I'm joking don't you?

Well I am!

“SAM – Son of a Norfolk Warrener”

Part Three of a Series of Six



Formerly created in the form of a book written in 1998 to 1999 by Steve Nowell in conjunction with Sam Burlingham and now presented with their permission as a six part series in 'Dersingham Village Voice'

Editor's note: This article is presented in its original format with little or no alteration to its content. Some of the expressions used in the account may not be as politically correct today as some may wish, but my opinion is that updating it to meet current standards would actually detract from what is a fascinating tale of this Dersingham man's life. Sam is now aged 86 years and still lives in the village.

Chapter 4 - The Warrener

In the 1920s in Breckland the variety of employment for young people was very limited. There was no factory work, or similar, within miles so it was almost a matter of routine that girls who wanted work would go into house service, or maybe work with vegetables on the farms, and the boys invariably got jobs on the land. For this reason, boys used to spend much of their spare time

helping their fathers in agricultural work from quite an early age. But Sam Burlingham (Senior) was an agricultural labourer only from the end of March or early April to the end of September. During the rest of the year he was a Warrener with the objective of doing his best to keep the rabbit population in check. The young Sam spent a lot of time with his father catching rabbits and became well acquainted with the tricks and techniques of the trade. So much, in fact, that on leaving school he seriously considered taking up warrening. But he had another ambition in life (which is dealt with later) with the result that he did not follow his father's trade.

An agricultural labourer in the early 1930s in Breckland could expect to earn about 30 shillings a week. A Warrener could get 3 pence per rabbit; the farmer would also get 3 pence; and the butcher, who had the task of skinning them, would sell them for 1 shilling each. On a good day Sam (Senior) could rely on catching maybe 4 dozen rabbits, which would bring him 12 shillings. So provided that there weren't too many bad days in a week he could be better off during the rabbiting season than working on the land.

The methods by which rabbits were caught varied according to conditions. The first job of the day was to look round all of the traps, which had been set the previous day. These were gin traps and the reason they had to be attended to early in the day was that if any rabbits were caught and the traps had to be reset then the human scent would have a chance to disappear during the day. The base of each trap was covered with soil to hide it, but if that soil held any human smell it was almost a certainty that the rabbit would jump straight over it.

Having reset the traps, the Warrener would go back home to collect his ferrets. Attached to a collar round the ferret's neck was a thin cord some 12 yards long, and marked off in yards by short lengths of bootlace thong. To ensure that the cord did not get tangled round the ferret, it was attached to the collar by means of a swivel piece. The ferret was sent down the rabbit hole, and one of the skills of the Warrener was to detect, by movements on the cord, when the ferret had struck a rabbit. The amount of line which the ferret had taken down the hole gave the warrener a maximum radius of the circle which he had to work in. The next task was to locate the exact



position of the rabbit and ferret, and this was done simply by putting an ear to the ground, or by using an implement called a 'digging staff' as a sounding pole. He might be lucky and hear the rabbit thumping its back feet, but however it was done, when the spot was found he simply dug a hole down to the rabbit. But Sam recalls that his father seldom, if ever, dug more than one hole. "At 3d a bloomin' rabbit you can't mess about all day just looking for one, can you?"

The digging staff mentioned above was simply a hole-spade on one end of a steel shaft with a steel hook on the other. It was about six feet long. The use of the hole-spade is obvious but the hook on the other end used to be hooked round a hind leg, pressing the creature against the side of the hole at the same time, then lifting it to the surface. In most cases the 'ear to the ground' method of location was used but in wet or snow, despite having leather kneelers, it was more practical not to kneel and use the digging staff as a sounding pole. During the day, the ferrets which had been working would be exchanged for a fresh squad. Surprising though it may seem, the ferrets actually got physically and mentally tired due to their labours. On a bad day it could be a long while before a rabbit was caught; and to add insult to injury, the butcher might not take it anyway!

Much of the secret of getting a good haul was to know the area of land one was working in. For this reason, Sam's father used to work the same area year after year so that he got to know the locations and habits of the rabbit population. One of the main methods of trapping rabbits, apart from the direct attack with a ferret as described above, was to flush them out into a 'Purse Net'. This was an 18 inch x 12 inch net laid at the entrance to the burrow, with a cord through the top of the net attached to sticks driven into the ground. In this method of trapping, the ferret was not wanted to attack the rabbit so it was muzzled with a harness made of string, then put down the hole. It would scare the rabbits out of the burrow straight into the Purse Net. The principle was that the rabbits would get entangled in the net, which was not secured at ground level. Some rabbits escaped the net but for those that thought they had reached freedom, the family Lurcher dog was standing by to do his 'mopping up' operation. On a larger scale, a 24 yd x 2 feet 6 inches net would be placed round a whole warren. The principle was much the same, frightening the rabbits out of their burrows with ferrets and catching them in the nets.

The use of snares might be thought of as giving the poor old rabbit more of a sporting chance inasmuch that the snare was set in the rabbit's run, not just outside his front door! It was just as efficient however. The snare was a loop of copper wire with a sliding eye, which tightened the loop when anything ran into it. Helping father to make these snares was one of the winter evening occupations of Sam and his brothers. Sam (Senior) would sit on a chair holding six strands of copper wire. Sam sat at his feet with a flat iron tied to the bottom of the wires. Sam would then 'swizzle' (which is believed to be a local derivation of 'twizzle') the flat iron until the resultant copper rope had just the right tension. Snares were never placed close to a hedgerow because rabbits only hop about there. So they were placed a good way into a field along a known run. Rabbits invariably run when away from the protective cover of the hedgerow so the snare in that position would be effective. They were set with sticks such that the bottom of the loop was four inches above the ground, i.e. just high enough for the rabbit to get its head into. Sam's father was never bothered much with catching hares. The snaring principle was much the same but the setting of the snares was different. Also, hares were not so plentiful so all in all it was not considered a worthwhile venture. Sam did learn from his father though how to snare rats. This was a different use of the snare in that the rat would not travel at any speed into the snare, so the wire loop was arranged to be snapped into tautness by a trigger mechanism. The net result was a strangled rat suspended in the air from a springy stick.

The Warrener's day of trapping ended at 3.00 pm. As a rabbit was caught it was killed and 'huddled'. This meant cutting a hole in the leg between the main tendon and the knee and passing the other leg through the hole. In this way the bodies could be slipped over the digging staff and

carried home over the shoulder. At the end of the day all the rabbits were gutted and the edible bits of the entrails given to the ferrets as their reward for their work. The remainder would be buried in a hole. But even these leftovers sometimes had their uses. Occasionally a ferret would go missing. Typically its line might be cut accidentally by the digging staff when it was in a burrow. In this case Sam's father would dig a straight-sided hole about 2 foot deep and leave some of the rabbit bits in the bottom. When the ferret was on its nighttime wanderings, it would smell the rabbit pieces, fall into the hole from which it could not get out, and be retrieved in the morning.

Sam sums up his years as the son of a Warrener as follows. "It's a wonder I 'int got rabbit ears with the number I've ate. I've had 'em all sizes. I can remember father bringing as many as twelve right litt' uns home at a time, when their eyes hadn't hardly been open. Mother used to skin 'em then put 'em in a steamed pudding. I've had 'em with onion and pastry round like a football, all ways. Little ol' rabbits sweet as a nut. Ill never get tired of 'em".

One particular incident, which demonstrates that a single mistake can have long lasting effects, was the case of the liberated rabbits. At one point not far from the Burlingham's home the Norwich to London railway crossed the Turnpike (All). This crossing was continuously manned by a gatekeeper who lived there. One Saturday afternoon, a lorry full of chickens and rabbits was coming home from the weekly Attleborough livestock sale. The gatekeeper had forgotten the imminent approach of the train from Norwich. By pure bad luck, the train and the lorry met on the crossing. No one was hurt but the lorry was almost demolished with the result that the chickens all flew to freedom, and the rabbits scampered away from their broken hutches into their new and unexpected environment. That would have been the end of the story but for the fact that Sam's father was catching multi-coloured rabbits for many years afterwards as a result of the rabbits which escaped from the crash getting on famously with the wild rabbits of the heathland.

NOTE To some readers this chapter may seem unnecessarily down to earth and it may offend wildlife protectionists for example. But apart from continuing Sam's story, it sets out to show how, in just one of several ways, families such as the Burlinghams had to depend largely on their wits and skills to support themselves. The Warrener's craft was not a pastime; it was a means of providing food and a little money for a large family. Sam Burlingham is definitely an animal lover.

Chapter 5 - Rural Life

It is probably not unreasonable to say that in the 1920s and '30s, life in Breckland was even further behind the times than in the rest of Norfolk. This meant that at the time the Burlingham family was living at Roudham, the necessity for survival by living off the land was still very strong, especially in the more remote parts of the area where transport and communications were, to say the least, rather basic. But although the family lived in the countryside, they were always able to make the most of what was available and led a happy and active life.

As may be expected, living conditions were rather Spartan by modern standards, and one basic facility was the toilet, which was twenty yards down the garden path. It consisted of a large wooden top with two holes cut in it, a big one for adults and older children, and a smaller one for the younger children. The wooden top straddled a sort of vault in the earth, which had to be emptied once a year (usually on a moonlight night!) by removing a slab at the back of the hole and using a long ladle. Sam says, "later on, modernisation took place. They filled the hole in; concreted over it; and gave us two buckets instead. Modernisation?" With the toilet being at the end of the garden it made things a bit difficult on dark windy nights. They had to find their way using a candle shielded by a jam jar. If it blew out, the cry of "Mu-u-u-um! Heeeelp!" could be heard throughout Roudham! After all the years that have passed since Sam lived there, he has finally confessed a guilty secret. If he got to the toilet without the candle blowing out, he considered that he deserved some reward and he tore off a square of toilet paper (it was actually one of a bundle of squares of newspaper), rolled it into a tube, and had a celebratory 'ciggy'!

Also at the bottom of the garden was a 'Gutter Hole'. This was the collection point for all the naturally self-rotting waste from the house. Peelings; bad vegetables; straw out of the rabbit and ferret boxes; anything which could rot down in fact, and that included the 'slops' from the

bedrooms when pots under the beds replaced the journey down the garden. Once a year the Gutter Hole would be emptied and the contents dug into the garden.

As mentioned previously, living off the land was a necessity of life especially as the wages of farm workers were so low (30/- a week). Sam and his brothers and sisters did all they could to help to feed the family.

For example in late September they would go to the meadows and collect mushrooms. There were two main types, named according to which animals grazed in the meadow apparently. They were 'Horse' and 'Cow' mushrooms. Very large, both of them: plentiful and delicious with a much better flavour than the forced mushrooms we get today according to Sam. Another delicacy was stinging nettles. These were collected as young plants before there were any vegetables in the garden. There was a springing in the next village, which supported a good crop of watercress, and this too was used to supplement the family's food.

In the spring when the birds were laying their clutches, it was an ideal time to collect wild duck and water hen eggs. A tablespoon was bound onto the end of a long stick and the eggs were gently lifted out of the nest one at a time. This was a slightly hazardous operation as the birds built their nests away from the bank side and the collection of a single egg required a long stretch and a

steady hand. Before taking them home, Sam would test the eggs. The simple rule of thumb was that if the egg floated in the water, then it had a young chick inside and was returned to the nest. Conversely if it sank it was a good one and finished up on the breakfast table. Wild fruits and plants were there for the taking. Blackberries, bilberries and crab apples for example were used to make jelly, jam or pies. Then there were sloes, elderberries and dandelion flowers to make into wine. Dandelions were a particularly useful plant. Apart from wine made from their flowers, young leaves made excellent greenery for a salad and could also be boiled to make a hot, tasty vegetable.

The fruits and the field and hedgerow were not confined to vegetable material however. Sparrows, starlings and blackbirds made very tasty pies. Also Sam (Senior) had to feed his ferrets and while they were breeding they were not catching rabbits for themselves. So in the ferret breeding season when the young birds had just learned to fly, Sam and a brother would comb a hedgerow, walking on either side with a pocket full of stones, with or without the aid of a catapult, and bring home some tasty morsels for the ferrets.

A litter of ferrets was usually six or seven and another treat for the animals was a hedgehog. Needless to say if a hedgehog was caught it had to be skinned. To take home an unskinned hedgehog to Sam's father brought no honour at all. Sam prides himself that he could skin a hedgehog with the best of 'em!

Looking back to his young days at Roudham Sam admits that by present day morals and standards the 'living off the fat of the land' philosophy may seem cruel and hard. But he isn't ashamed of it, despite the fact that he is by nature an animal lover and conservationist. He explains that they had little choice. He summed up that era as follows: "In them days, we collected more than the squirrels! Our parents didn't have much money coming in, so us boys made sure to go out and get something for the taking. We had a good diet all the year round. It was our father and grandfathers what taught us how to catch birds and the like. Then our grannies taught us how to make good, nourishing meals from birds. Even today I'm still very grateful for what my parents and grandparents passed on to me -" how to get the most out of the countryside, and the tricks of survival. I've tried passing it on to my children. They like to hear about it but that's as far as it goes. They would rather go for the tin opener, or the fridge, or a ready made meal; and they'd rather swallow pills to put the bellyache right".

Then there was the question of pocket money. This was rather difficult to come by unless it was earned. Once again, the 'fat of the land' came to the rescue of Sam and his brothers. Mole trapping was a good source of revenue so the boys frequently set mole traps. Each mole caught was skinned and the skin stretched and nailed to a board. When several had been collected, they were sent away for the princely sum of sixpence each. On winter nights a lucrative occupation was rat



catching. With the aid of carbide-fuelled lamps, the boys would approach a straw stack or corn stack and knock the rats down with a stick as they ran up the outside of the stack. They caught far more rats than moles, but a rat's tail was only worth one penny from the Farm Foreman.

On the theme of prices, Sam remembers when he started work at the age of 14 that his mother paid 2/6d (12.5p) for a hundredweight of coal; while his father paid the equivalent of 3p for an ounce of tobacco. Sweets were less than 1p for a quarter pound and a packet of Smiths Crisps was similarly priced. Now Sam's father smoked a pipe, and we have no evidence whatsoever that Mrs Burlingham smoked cigarettes. But Sam distinctly remembers that Woodbines were two pence for five, and Players were elevenpence-halfpenny for twenty. Could it be that young Samuel was an under-age smoker perchance?!

Any spare time which Sam and his brothers had was largely devoted to helping their father and mother. On moonlit evenings in March, they often used to go with their father and cut wool out of a nearby can (a small wood, often in low, wet land). Because of the sodden ground, brushwood was laid down to walk on but it would not support the weight of a cart. So the wood was stacked on high ground to prevent water collecting round it, then when they had stacked two tumbrel (horse cart) loads, they would borrow a horse and tumbrel from the local farmer and take the wood down to the cottage and stack it up for the following winter.

Saturday afternoons were often spent collecting thornbushes (thorn bush branches) from the hedgerows. They had to get a full pram load of dead, dry ones ready for Sam's mother to use on a Monday. They were used for heating the copper. Monday was a busy day for Mrs. Burlingham. There were none of the modern electrical aids of course, just a copper, and iron mangle and a scrubbing board. Two tin bath-fulls of soft water were brought in from the water butts to fill the copper for washing, then rinsing was done with hard water drawn from the well. There was plenty enough work for Mrs Burlingham if the weather was fine, but if it was wet it made things even more difficult and uncomfortable. But Jessie Burlingham was one of those traditional hard-working, never grumbling, country wives who took everything in her stride with cool, calm efficiency. Even in the evenings there was inevitably something which had to be done. As Sam says, with four country boys in the house who were forever climbing up trees or over barbed wire there was usually at least one pair of trousers requiring attention each night. Sometimes they were beyond repair and a new pair had to be put together on her hand turned sewing machine, ready for the next morning.

Mrs Burlingham insisted that all her children should learn to be at least a little bit useful when it came to matters concerning the running of the home. All the children, including Sam, learned to knit their own winter scarves for example. Very little material of any kind was wasted. Old knitted garments were pulled undone to be re-knitted, or, as with old material clothes, were used to make rugs - an art in which the children became adept.

On Saturday afternoons, Mr and Mrs Burlingham used to cycle 6 miles into Thetford to get the week's provisions. They used to belong to the Co-op and the famous 'Co-op divvy' kept the family in boots and shoes. A regular Saturday purchase was fish and chips for Sunday breakfast. Mrs Burlingham always did her main batch of cooking on a Sunday. While the Sunday lunch was cooking in the oven (also heated by burning wood) she would be working in her large pantry preparing cakes etc. which went into the oven when the meat came out. She never had a thermometer to gauge the temperature of the oven. This was done by putting her hand in the oven. The temperature was estimated with more than sufficient accuracy for various cooking requirements through years of experience.

As far as was practicable, the family followed the ethic 'and on the seventh day thou shalt rest'. But it was never possible to follow this to the letter. Mrs Burlingham did the cooking, but only the cooking, while Sam (Sen'r) chopped the wood for the week and repaired and polished the family's boots and shoes. Occasionally on a winter Sunday morning, he would look round his rabbit traps. After lunch on Sunday, the whole family would change into their Sunday clothes. In the evening, after church, the family would listen to the gramophone. But, in later years, Sam's grandfather

came to live with them and he would play the accordion. He also taught some of the children to play that instrument.

Eventually, when Sam left school and got a job at the age of 14, he purchased his own bicycle. It was a grand machine. Three speed, drop handlebar and with a dynamo on the front wheel. All for the princely sum of £5/19/6 which he paid as £1 down and sixpence a week. This gave him mobility and every Saturday evening he would cycle into Thetford to the only picture house (Culey's) in the area. In later years when he had only been married for a short while, he and his wife were cycling home from the pictures at Thetford and were on the 'Turnpike' (now known as the All Norwich - London) when a rabbit ran into Sam's front wheel and tipped him off his bike. His wife was naturally concerned at the vision of her Sam sprawled in the road and asked anxiously if he was alright. Sam replied, "If I can find that bloody rabbit - I'm fine. Else I aren't!"

Sam lived in one of a pair of chalk and plaster cottages. The other cottage of the pair was occupied by a succession of families, all of whom seemed to suffer gross misfortunes. One morning just as the Burlinghams were getting up, the 10 year old girl from next door came round very distressed that she could not find her mother who had gone out during the night. Everyone including the local policeman searched buildings, fields, and hedgerows, all to no avail. Then the Foreman's wife suggested that the well should be checked. The lid was in place but the girl's mother was seen, in her nightclothes, drowned in the bottom. Neither household could use the well until it had been emptied and allowed to fill up again naturally.

In about 1934, another family moved in. One of the sons was working on the farm cutting corn with a binder. Alongside him he carried a gun to shoot rabbits. He leaned over to pick up the gun to use it, but, the trigger caught on the binder and the gun went off removing a considerable amount of flesh from his arm.

After the war another family moved in. In this era, combine harvesters had come into use. The husband of the family was working on a combine when he tripped and fell into the auger resulting in the loss of his left arm. Mr and Mrs Burlingham lived the rest of their lives in the cottage at Roudham, after which it was demolished.

Hunstanton and District Lions Club.

The Lions are the largest service organisation in the world, with over 1.4 million members in over 135 countries around the world, who meet in Clubs to have some fun and help those less fortunate than themselves. They aim to serve the community in many ways by raising money or taking on working projects. The association is both non-political and non-sectarian.

Thanks to the generosity of the Saffron Building Society Hunstanton and District Lions were able to give a £100 cheque each to Hunstanton and Heacham Junior Schools for their help at the Lions Christmas Fayre and Grotto at Searles Holiday Centre.). The Hunstanton and Heacham Brownie Packs, who also helped at the event, and were given £100 each by the Lions.

The money we raise goes to many good causes. This month we have given £200 to a local Hostel and £200 for two Blind Charities. This is in addition to ongoing projects like the sponsorship of the education for a young Nepalese girl.

The next event we are organising will be a Race Night and the 200 Club draw. This will be held at the Birches CITB again, on Friday 23rd Feb, starting at 7.30 pm. The cost will be £16.50 to include food. If you would like tickets, they can be bought from Legges Menswear (532878) in Hunstanton or Suttons Estate Agents (570030) in Heacham.

200 Club January winners are £25 – M Philips £15 – V Rybak £12 – P Coules.

*The Lions can be contacted through the Secretary Adrian Hood on 01485 571529 or
adrian@hood.eclipse.co.uk.*

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News from ...

Dersingham Infant and Nursery School and Dersingham St George's Church of England Junior School

Our children had a lovely time leading up to Christmas with all our special events. Parents attended our Christmas plays and both schools had very good feedback saying how much they had been enjoyed. A special thank you to all the staff and friends of the school who helped to make these events so successful. The donations from the joint choir engagements in the village enabled us to 'buy' some farmyard animals through the Oxfam and Christian Aid Gift schemes. Our Christingle Service at St Nicholas Church was really lovely. Lots of people attended and children from both schools worked with ladies from the church to make the Christingles for the service. It was a very special moment when the lights were dimmed and all the candles were twinkling.

Looking ahead to this term each school has some special events

The Infant and Nursery School has a joint Multicultural Music Day with Heacham Infant School, a Book Fair and visits for the children to the local area connected to their topic work. Staff will also be enjoying African drumming, Yoga and relaxation as part of their well-being day in January.

The Junior School children have a busy term of work ahead of them. We too have the book fair visiting and Clifford Norgate will be reading from some of these books to entice children to enjoy reading. The staff will be learning about a new cross-curricular approach to the curriculum which we hope will be more appealing to the children and therefore improve standards.

Thank you for all the support you have given to our schools and we look forward to continuing to work with the community this coming year.

Jackie Austin
Headteacher
Infant and Nursery School

Ann Pope
Headteacher
St George's Junior School

Fancy Dress at Dersingham Labour Fete 1950

Two more photographs from Bernie Twite's collection, this time of villagers in fancy dress at the Dersingham Labour Fete on 28 August 1950. Are you one of them?



Dersingham Horticultural Society



Another well attended and productive Annual General Meeting occupied the first part of our November evening.

All of our Management Committee's recommendations were agreed including the following donations to local good causes:
£200 to the Day Centre for the Elderly
£200 to the First Responders and
£200 to the Tapping House Hospice.

With these, our society's contributions to local organisations since 2000 total £4,500.

Later in the meeting Members voiced their concerns over the decline in the number of entries to our Annual Show, these will be discussed by our Show Committee and it is hoped that some who may be shy of exhibiting can be persuaded to that their plants and produce are worthy of entry, and indeed are the equal or possibly superior to those of other regular exhibitors. The latter part of the evening was devoted to a slide presentation given by a member, Steve Carden, entitled "A Photo Tour of N.T. Properties in Kent and Sussex."

Steve, a professional gardener, showed, by means of some excellent slides, both the architectural splendours of the properties and the beauty of their gardens, with emphasis of the Sackville-West's gardens at Sissinghurst and Christopher Lloyd's at Great Dixter. Supplemented by an interesting narration, Steve's presentation was enjoyed by all present.

Once again December saw our Christmas social evening, and, as usual thanks to the efforts of Fund Raising Committee ladies and the generosity of Members, the occasion had its usual mix of a superb buffet, fun in the form of a competition which demonstrated both the imagination and ingenuity of our members and provided much amusement to boot. With the general fell of good will and high spirits, and not forgetting the and the traditional exercise of the little grey cells in the form of a Christmas Quiz, we went homeward way well prepared for the festivities still to come.

David Clark (543182)

Editor's Note: *On receiving David Clark's report I was very sorry to hear that this may well be the last time that we hear from him on the subject of the Horticultural Society as he has plans to move nearer to his family in Wales. David has been one of our most consistent contributors over the years always having provided us with some very interesting reading. I would like to take this opportunity to wish him every best wish for the future from the Village Voice team, and hope that he may find the time to contact us with snippets of news from where he is.*

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Plug into your PC

What is the Parish Council?

Parish and Town Councils are the most local level of government in the England. They are independent bodies and have responsibility for:

- Representing all residents in the parish.
- Running local services that may include: allotments, cemeteries, community buildings, recreation and play areas, seating, bus shelters, litter bins and local transport schemes.
- Commenting on planning applications and long-term development issues.
- Collecting money for their budget through the 'precept' as part of council tax. Each parish council has the power to set it's own budget according to their plans for the year and therefore can decide what the precept level should be to provide the required funding.
- And also have wide-ranging powers to become involved in further activities that contribute towards the improvement of the environment and quality of life in the parish.

Who are the Parish Councillors?

All parish councillors are local residents who have volunteered; they have then either been elected by the public or the parish council; they are unpaid and serve a four year term. The parish clerk is a paid position that deals with the parish council's administration.

How can I get involved?

The next elections are being held on 3 May 2007, at the same time as the district council elections therefore any election costs will be less than a 'stand-alone' election. Any interested resident can decide to stand as a parish councillor, you do not need to have experience of local government and do not need to have or state a political allegiance. You do need to be nominated by two other parish residents and submit a nomination form to your district council by noon, 4 April 2007.

If you don't want to become a parish councillor but are still interested in what is going on in your local area - any member of the public can attend parish council meetings, including the parish council's annual meeting. Most parish councils provide an opportunity for members of the public to ask questions of the parish council or comment on parish matters.

How can I find out more?

- Have a look at the National Association of Local Councils website www.nalc.gov.uk
- Contact the Norfolk County Association of Parish and Town Councils on 01603 664869 or e-mail enquiries@ncaptc.gov.uk
- Contact your parish clerk: www.dersingham.gov.uk or e-mail Dersingham@wncb.net

Plug in next issue to find out more about your parish council and becoming a councillor.

**Antiques Road Show & Valuation Day
at the Sandringham Visitor Centre
Friday 16 March by
Keys Fine Art Auctioneers of Aylsham**

in support of the Friends of St. Nicholas' Church Dersingham



Experts from Keys will be available
from 11.00 am to 3.00 pm
to value your antiques and collectables
at £2 per item or 3 items for £3.
Refreshments will be available all day in the
restaurant.

Take the opportunity and turn up early!
Further information from Keith Blythe 01485 544866
or Nigel Sisson 01485 540081.

The Park House Spring Dinner

Thursday 22 March 7.00 pm for 7.30 pm

with Guest Speaker local historian Dr Paul Richards
who will give an illustrated talk entitled

***'Ships, Merchants and Towns 1271 - 2006.
The Story of King's Lynn and the Hanseatic League'***

Tickets in advance £25 (inc pre-dinner drinks)
from Park House Reception 01485 543000
or www.parkhousehotel.org.uk or Email: parkinfo@lc-uk-org

**'Theatre Supper' at the Sandringham Visitor Centre
Dinner and Live Theatre on Friday 16 March**

when West Acre River Studios support the
Friends of St Nicholas' Church Dersingham
with an after-dinner performance of
'Bed Among the Lentils'
from Alan Bennett's 'Talking Heads'

Reception 6.30 pm.

For further details and tickets to cover the Reception
Dinner and Theatre phone Keith Blythe 01485 544866
or Nigel Sisson 540081.



The Mann Family of Dersingham – c1895



Alice – Lydia – Annie – Grace – George
Mildred – Rachel Mann – Ruth – Henry Mann – Ruby

This photograph is a taster of a series to be published in this magazine in the future, when the history of the Dersingham families of Mann, Walker and Cross will be followed from the mid 19th Century to date (These families were residents of Heath House, at the front of which this photograph was taken, and the house features very strongly in this history.)

Henry Mann ran a small farm at Heath House and also owned land on the marshes., He and his wife , Rachel, had nine children of whom one died in infancy, all of these children being girls with the exception of one, George.

The eldest girl, Annie, was married to Ralph who was a photographer, and who took many pictures of the Royal Family. Lydia was a ladies' maid. Alice taught at the village school, and died at the age of 40,. There is a plaque in the Community Centre in her memory. Grace looked after her parents. George worked at Sandringham as a boilerman and died of pneumonia aged 36. Mildred worked in Hunstanton Post Office, her daughter still lives in the village. Ruby was a horseback messenger during the First World War.

Ruth was the mother to Dorothy, Sybil and Alan who are the only survivors of her family.

The basis of our proposed series, which is to be written by Elizabeth Fiddick, is a book written by Mr Don Mc Lean of Shipdham in Norfolk who has carried out a very thorough research into the family history and has published his findings as 'The Mann & Walker Families With Their Consorts.' Mr McLean has given permission for us to use his book, which is fully illustrated, and we are hoping that we may have access to some of the included photographs for our publication.

Norfolk's Natural Areas

6. Sea and Coast

by David Bingham

This final article in the series looks at the sea and coast that surrounds Norfolk. Few of us will get a chance to visit the underwater world of the marine 'Southern North Sea Natural Area'. Norfolk's coastal waters lie entirely within this nutrient rich zone that supports (or should support) a large number of creatures many of which are of commercial as well as ecological value. Undersea wildlife conservation is not very well advanced and it is often a case of 'out of sight and out of mind'. If we lived in a world where toxins, sewage and radioactive materials rained from the sky, giant ploughs indiscriminately gouged great furrows through the countryside and all the birds were scooped from the sky we would be concerned. The equivalent is happening under the sea and the waters off Norfolk have been hit harder than most. The 'coastal natural areas' that surround the Southern North Sea are more familiar to us and I will take you on a quick tour of the ones that make up Norfolk's coast.

The Wash is shared between Lincolnshire and Norfolk. From the Norfolk border to Snettisham saltmarsh dominates the coastal scenery. Saltmarsh is accreting in this area making it one of the few coastal strips that is actually bucking the trend and moving seawards. Saltmarsh is an important habitat and supports significant breeding populations of birds such as redshanks. It is also of great value as part of the flood defences. Beyond the saltmarsh are the mudflats of The Wash. The freshwater from the rivers that drain into The Wash mix with the seawater that twice-daily covers the vast area of mud – nourishing its myriad submerged invertebrates that in their turn support up to 300, 000 visiting waterbirds in the winter. The foreshore of The Wash between Wolferton and Heacham consists of shingle. Here the vivid blue of viper's bugloss grows alongside the vivid yellow of yellow-horned poppy – a colour combination that would be considered unnatural in a tasteful garden. The Wash terminates at the lighthouse in Hunstanton, which sits on top of the lovely layered cliffs. A small relative of the albatross, the fulmar, can be seen patrolling up and down the cliff face on stiff wings. These birds get their food out in the North Sea by following the fishing boats and raise their young on the cliff ledges.

The next 'natural coastal area' is Old Hunstanton to Sheringham. This is a very rich area both ecologically and scenically. Shifting sand forms the wonderful barrier island of Scolt Head and the shingle spit at Blakeney Point is another outstanding place that is constantly being remodelled by the action of the wind and tides. Sea level rise is likely to adversely impact this area and painful decisions will have to be made on what can be saved and where it will be more sensible to re-align the present coastline.

Finally, we have the area between Sheringham and Lowestoft. Soft cliffs dominate much of this stretch of coastline and important pre-historic remains are often uncovered as the cliffs crumble and slip. The eroding cliffs provide the raw material that make up the local beaches. One of the few areas of intertidal reef in East Anglia can be found at West Runton this includes a well-developed chalk reef. The cliffs give way to low lying sand dunes and the beach at Great Yarmouth hosts the largest colony of little terns in the country. They come to Yarmouth because of the sprats that spawn on Scroby Sands just offshore. Scroby Sands is where the windfarm can be seen.

Things to see around the coast

Snettisham RSPB Reserve – Best place to view The Wash and its birds. Mudflats, saltmarsh, shingle beach and saline lagoons can be seen and the wader high tide roost is one of this country's finest wildlife spectacles. Best time to visit is on high spring tides between late August and April. Summer is best for shingle flowers. **Hunstanton Cliffs** – Look out for the nesting fulmars. They can also be seen soaring along the cliff face (they look like gulls but have straight stiff wings and tubes on top of their beaks for excreting salt). **North Norfolk Coastal Path** – Use Coast Hopper

bus for easy access to sections of this linear path. All good but particularly impressive alongside Scolt Head Island and around Holkham Bay. **Blakeney Point** – Boat trips from Blakeney take visitors to view the seals and some land to see the tern colony in the summer. Otherwise, it is a hard, but enjoyable, walk from Cley. **Cley Marshes and Salthouse** – Important wildlife and scenic area with very little space to retreat from the advancing sea. **Sheringham and Cromer** – Relatively unspoilt seaside towns. **North Denes Beach (Great Yarmouth)** – Visit in spring and summer to see the RSPB protected little tern colony.

Goose Questions and Answers

From David Bingham

Q – What species of geese fly over Dersingham in the winter?

A - Pink-footed geese (*Anser brachyrhynchus*)

Q – Where do they come from?

A – They come to Britain in the winter from their breeding grounds in Iceland and Greenland

Q – Why do they come here?

A- They are looking for a safe roost site (which they find on the mudflats of the Snettisham RSPB Reserve) and food (which they find in the aftermath of the sugar-beet harvest)

Q – How many are there?

A – The Iceland and Greenland population numbers around 250, 000, all of which winter in the UK. A smaller population breed in Svalbard and winter on the northwest coast of Europe. Around half the UK population winter in Norfolk with roost sites at Snettisham, Scolt Head Island, Wells and a small but growing population in The Broads.

Q – What happens on days they don't appear?

A – On clear moonlit nights they may feel safe enough to stay out in the fields all night. At other times, their flight line may not pass over Dersingham as they fly to different farms. Later in the winter, the sugar beet is gone and they tend to feed on the grazing marshes (or cereal fields where they can be a nuisance). Right now, a good place to look for them would be Lady Anne's Drive, Holkham (opposite Victoria Hotel)

Q – What threats do they face?

A – Pink-footed geese are a favourite target species for wildfowlers but this is not currently having a significant effect on their population, which is growing. Loss of breeding habitat in Iceland, where land is earmarked for hydroelectric scheme dams, may have an impact. Locally the future of sugar beet production will have the most significant impact on goose numbers. Pink-footed geese do not come from the area currently affected by avian flu. However, they do mix with birds from this area and an outbreak could spread to the geese with devastating consequences because of the large percentage of the world population concentrated in such a small area. Migrating geese fly at altitude and will not be exposed to danger from windfarms. Local schemes near their feeding and roosting sites could be a problem and this is considered during planning applications.

Two kangaroos were talking to each other and one says, 'Gee, I hope it doesn't rain today. I hate it when the kids play inside.'

Henny Youngman

God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was, but the Electricity Board said he'd have to wait until Thursday to be connected.

Spike Milligan

SUZIE'S FITNESS CLASSES

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10.30 - 11.30 - 50's + £3.50

6.00 - 7.00 - Hi / Lo aerobics £3.75

7.00 - 8.00 - Hi / Lo aerobics £3.75

8.00 - 9.00 - Step & Condition £4.00
(ring to book step)

Wednesdays

INGOLDISTHORPE VILLAGE HALL, INGOLDISTHORPE

7.45 - 8.45 - Body Conditioning £3.75

Thursdays

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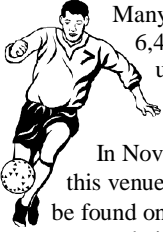
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Dersingham Minors F.C.



Many thanks to everyone who collected the Tesco vouchers, we have got a total of 6,448. We have put an order together and hopefully will have the goods of two pop-up goals, stirrup pump, space markers and ten mitre tactic footballs – also 3 cricket balls for the cricket club, as many of the minors play cricket in their season. These will be delivered in March to April. Again, thanks to everyone.

In November we had a Grand Draw and Disco – many thanks to all for their support in this venue, hopefully the children enjoyed themselves. A list of all of the prize-winners can be found on the public notice board at the pedestrian entrance to Budgen's Supermarket, congratulations to them all!

In December we had a Christmas Bingo, thanks to all who supported a successful evening.

On 31 December we had a 'Penalty Shoot-Out – Beat the Santa'. This was a great success. Many of the managers dressing up as Santas. An elf, a mad woodcutter and Mrs. Christmas also turned up! Trophies were handed out to the winners – Under 8s, Harry Carlton – Under 10s, Alex Kettle – Under 12s, Thomas Carlton – Over 14s, Tate Bailey.

The best fancy dress, Jonny Ward (sic) as an elf. We would like to say a big thank you for the raffle prizes which were donated from the Post Office, Dersingham Social Club, Thaxter's Garden Centre, Hills Cycles, Rossiters, Charlie's Salon, Pete's Pet Shop, Yvonne Flowers, Sandringham Fruit Farm, Mrs. T English, Mrs. Vanstone, Mr. and Mrs. M. Griffin and Mrs. M Jeavons. Hopefully the Santas lost a few pounds after the Xmas dinners. Getting ready for the rest of the football season, good luck to every team.



Once again, many thanks to everyone who has helped out, supported us, sponsored us in any way possible during the past 12 months, hopefully this will continue for the next 12 months.

6 January 2007 – we were awarded our charter standard plaque and certificate from Norfolk County Football Association.

Coming events – hopefully an Easter Bingo.

K. Bowman, 31 Lynn Road, Tel: 543228

Dersingham Community Centre

After March 2007 the Community Centre will have no officers and will no longer be able to run as it is. If you are a User/ Parishioner please help form another Management Committee so it can continue to run.

Any person willing to be part of the Committee
Please contact the Parish Clerk on 01485 541465

At Cecilia's Church

Fr James writes: I wish everyone a very happy and peaceful 2007.

Mass Times:

St Cecilia's Catholic Church has Sunday Mass at 9.00 am and Wednesday Mass at 10.15 am. Occasional vigil masses are held at 7.00 pm and are notified on the church notice board. The church is now usually locked except at these times, unless the rooms or halls are being hired by other users.



See key to photographs on facing page▶

Key to St Cecilia's Church Photographs on facing page

- 1 Deacon Len Matthews accepts a bouquet for his wife, Joan, from parishioner Pat Ransome at his leaving party in December. Len retired after 14 years at St Cecilia's.
- 2 Some of the parish ladies at their third Shared Lunch in November: Pat Maddox, Pat Whisker, Mary Grimley, Hanne MacMahon, Brenda Baird, Anne Brereton and Hilary Rhodes.
- 3 German Advent Evening: Terry and Sandra Finbow (left) with David and Julie Whight. Hanne MacMahon had imported wine and Advent delicacies from Germany.
- 4 The Rosary Group meets every Monday at 2 pm. L-R: Mary Grimley, Peter Munns, Brenda Baird, John Darby and Mary Mutton. Prayers are said for the sick of the parish and people's private intentions.
- 5 St Cecilia's ~Day Mass: Taking a turn on the kitchen after Mass are Pauline Kelly, Pat Ransome, Anne Brereton and Veronica, a young visitor from Hungary.
- 6 Decorating the church with beautiful flowers donated by the parish and a Christmas tree from Sandringham were Win Kerridge, Stuart Grant, May Davey, Mary Grimley, Brenda Baird and Hanne MacMahon. Others who helped were Tom and Carole Casey, Penny Downen and Chris Davey.
- 7 A parish carol service on 23 December was accompanied by an orchestra of eight children led by one of the mums, Judith France. James France (not in photo) played the organ and bassoon.

May Davey, Parish Communications Officer (01485 540737)

What's on at Dersingham Library

Happy New Year from all the library staff! We've got a lot of things planned for the coming months including a big promotion starting on Valentine's Day and running for six weeks when we'll be asking you all to think about the environment and going green. Did you know that borrowing books from the library is the ultimate in recycling? Every time you visit you are doing your bit for the planet - and remember every little bit makes a difference. During February and March we will be running special events with a green theme. Stuart Hall from Norfolk Museums service will be running a series of scrap-booking sessions where you'll be encouraged to make the most of family photos and memorabilia, and ultimately contribute to a big display to be held at Lynn Museum when it has its grand reopening later in the year. We'll have junk art sessions, jute bag decorating, 'how green are you?' family internet tasters and we'll be linking into the BBC Breathing Places promotion encouraging everyone to think more about the local environment.

Internet Taster Sessions

How to use Ancestry Library to find your ancestors - on Friday 19 January from 10-11.30 am, Friday 9 February from 2-3.30 pm or Tuesday 20 February from 2-3.30 pm.

Each session is limited to 4 people so please reserve your place. The sessions will not be suitable for complete internet beginners, so it is recommended that you attend one of our beginners' internet tasters first.

Internet beginners sessions

for those with no previous computer experience - Tuesday 16 January from 10-11.30 am, Tuesday 30 January from 10-11.30 am, Friday 16 March from 10-11.30 am, Friday 20 April from 10-11.30 am or Tuesday 8 May from 2-3.30 pm. Each session is limited to 4 people so please reserve your place by calling the library on 01485 540181.

Preschool storytime

Enjoy stories, join in with songs and finger rhymes, and take part in a simple craft activity, at these special sessions for 2-4 year-olds and their carers. From 10.30-11 am on Thursday mornings on 11 & 25 January, 8 & 22 February, 8 March & 22 March, 19 April, 3 & 17 May, 7 & 21 June.

The Son of a Railway Clerk

*A delightful recollection by the late Alan Cresswell
Reproduced by kind permission of the Webmaster of Dersingham.com*

The 6th and final Part

Our next move was to a suburb of Antwerp where we set up a "Line of communication workshop" repairing equipment and vehicles for units of the allied forces passing through on their way to Germany. This was my final move.

Demobilisation was now being organised, we were given Demob numbers based on length of service, mine was 21, several members of our unit had this number, like me they were Territorials pre-war and had served throughout the war, the date for release was not immediately announced but we felt we had done our bit and lost all interest in the workshop.

We were given the opportunity to take a driving test, Army style which if successful would be accepted in civvy street, I took mine in a three ton lorry, the tester being a transport sergeant who had been with us through the rough and tumble of the campaigns of the last few years "I couldn't possibly fail". The weather was warm and sunny and the civilian population entertained us in many ways.

Owners of a café took me swimming in a canal where I met a few pals including officers who were being similarly entertained; in the evenings they took us into the city to theatres and restaurants, I spent a considerable amount of time with these people, returning to the unit only to check for letters from home, bath and change clothing and collect pay, making sure to read the daily orders to take note of current order of demob dates. Paying more frequent visits as the numbers approached "21".

On one visit I noted the men were now having to knuckle down to peacetime army discipline, scrubbing floors and cleaning windows of the commandeered houses they were living in and laying out kit for inspection on their bed spaces; reminiscent of the days early in the war in Aldershot when the R S M took us in hand. I, like several others stuffed our kit into kitbags and took them to the people who were helping us enjoy our final months of army service.

These people were saying a fond farewell to their liberators and we were enjoying every moment of it. This situation lasted for several months and not once was I questioned as to my absence from the workshop. One sad incident occurred when one of our corporals; who had been with us through thick and thin, was thrown from a motorbike pillion seat and killed, He was given a military burial.

Some of our Officers, Warrant Officers, N C Os and men had been members of the Territorial Army before the war started and were not in the least interested in regular army service and had no desire to impose the strict military discipline now required, we had endured some tough and often very frightening times during recent years, we were all in it together irrespective of rank.

Then came the day in November 1945 when about a half-a-dozen of us said goodbye to the Belgian people who had befriended us and to the men some of whom had travelled from Northern Ireland round the Cape to Egypt, Sicily, Italy, through the Med, back to Blighty and through the Normandy campaign as far as the banks of the Rhine. (The field workshop that was formed in



Egypt left Antwerp after I was released, went to Hamburg and having completed its work liberating the countries of Europe; was disbanded).

We began our journey by train at Antwerp, by which route we crossed the channel I cannot recall, a train took us to a demobilisation centre in Northampton where we were fitted out with civilian clothing; every item of army issue had to be accounted for and handed in under penalty of payment for any item missing, and soon we were on our way home!!

The remainder of my story tells of my experiences during the aftermath of the war.

During the weeks that we had been counting the days to our release the army had issued some advice as to what to expect on returning to "civvy-street" i.e: not to expect our women to be quite the same as when we left home six years ago, they had been through tough times just as we had and were still having to cope with shortages, rationing and the frustrations of trying to feed and cloth themselves as well as the children, many items required to keep a clean and tidy home were either in short supply or non-existent.

Likewise radio and newspapers for indulgence by our womenfolk had published advice, not to expect their men to be quite like they were when they left home. Many problems had to be resolved in order to keep families together, we did not easily split partnerships in those days, there were mental as well as physical scars to be healed. I had been very fortunate in that I had been home on leave on many occasions so that despite some lengthy periods when communication had been disrupted my wife and I had not completely lost touch, and the children did know me.

In many instances men had been away for years, prisoners of war, service in the middle-east desert conflict and the Far East where they had suffered disease and brutality by their Japanese captors, all of these had made harsh impacts on men's mentality and physique. Many men had given up hope of ever seeing home again and in sheer frustration gave up writing home. There were many acts of infidelity on both sides making it difficult to renew relationships, however, there was much forgiveness and families gradually settled down.

On being discharged I was given two months paid leave and during that time if I wished I could apply to rejoin the army with the same rank, trade qualifications and pay as before discharge. I settled for staying in civvy-street!! My old job was waiting for me, and I spent Christmas and the New Year in the cottage with my family, also enjoying the company of the villagers.

This all passed much too quickly; I soon had to begin thinking about starting work, this is where post-war troubles began for me and I relate to them here as I am sure many thousands of families suffered similarly and it was all part of circumstances brought about by the war. My job was in King's Lynn and my family in the village 20 miles distant. The government had promised, "Homes fit for Heroes" so I immediately applied for a council house in Lynn; not that I considered myself to be a hero; far from it!

Fortunately I was able to start work at the end of January, living with my mother in town from Mondays to Fridays and making my way to be with my family on Saturdays and Sundays; not so very simple! Buses ran about twice a week to the village. A carriers cart owner very kindly offered lifts mid-afternoon on Fridays but owing to work commitments this was not always convenient, and so I waited for a bus on Saturday evenings and back to town Sunday afternoons; not giving me much time with my family; not at all satisfactory and quite depressing for all of us.

Very few people had cars on the road in those days; petrol was rationed and coupons to purchase were only given for business purposes, doctors or those on work of national importance and if stopped and questioned were obliged to prove they were on a journey for which the coupons were issued which meant there was not the slightest chance of anyone giving me a lift.

After several months I was offered a two-stroke motor cycle which I purchased and applied for petrol coupons which allowed me to buy sufficient petrol to travel between Lynn and the cottage two or three times a week; this was an improvement, if stopped on any other route and questioned

by the police I could be fined and have my coupons withdrawn.

This was fine during the summer months, but come the winter, not so pleasant, particularly after Christmas and into 1947 when there were heavy falls and drifting of snow. At one time part of the road was impassable to motorists; I was just able to make my way slowly through gullies using my feet to keep upright.

However; through all of these problems a brighter side to life was emerging, I was able to spend more time with my wife and the children, going for bike rides and walks whenever the weather permitted. Family and friends provided baby sitters so that the wife and I could join in events in the village hall.

A village dance band was formed and somehow despite rationing refreshments was always available. Birthdays, weddings and homecomings were often celebrated and on these occasions a bar was set up by one of the local licensees.

The local postmaster was a retired army bandsman and on Saturday evenings my father-in-law and I and two or three others were invited to his workshop at the back of the post office to have a "Blow" for a couple of hours and thence to the local for a refresher as is generally the custom among bandmen! Sunday evenings at one of the "locals" was good for a good old-fashioned "Sing-Song" a local lady played the ever popular music-hall numbers on the piano for soloists to sing; the assembled company joining in the choruses; Happy memories!!

All of this passed without having received any reply to my application to the council for housing, in desperation I wrote a strongly worded letter to the housing manager, sending a copy to the local press; which was published, this got things moving, and I received a reassuring reply. In about six weeks I was offered a house, albeit not in a very pleasant part of town but it did give me one foot in the door at the housing department.

I was now able to get our furniture out of store and give it a good clean and polish, added to this we obtained a quota of furniture tokens enabling us to purchase "Utility" furniture, this was made to a design approved by the government and stamped with a "utility" mark, something similar to a Trade mark.

The furniture could only be purchased on production of the required number of tokens, curtain material and household linen we were also able to obtain on production of tokens we had been allocated; added to this the pieces of second-hand furniture the wife had accrued while living in the cottage we now had a comfortable home. Electricity, gas, water and an indoor toilet were luxuries we had not enjoyed at the cottage.

Our daughter was allocated a place in the school my sister had attended some years previously, and our son to a school that I had attended as an infant close to where we were now living.

Despite all of these improvements I was not entirely happy with the surrounding environment and soon approached the council and people I knew in the right places as to the possibility of getting us moved to a more pleasant part of the town. Some eighteen months later we were on the move again where our children enjoyed playing outdoors with neighbour's children.

We now had a large well stocked garden and a garage where I was able to set up a small workshop as well as garaging the ex-WD motor cycle to which I had attached a sidecar, there had been some relaxation on petrol rationing, though not total abolition so that we could enjoy holidays

and days out, visiting family and friends in "The Village" which had been our home for the war years. The wife enjoyed gardening and was now much happier. Petrol and food rationing was carried on for a number of years as was the allocation of tokens for household items and clothing.

At this point I reckoned that at long last we were a whole family, living in comfortable surroundings. And so my story ends. Bye now

Footnote

Upon reflection I consider myself to be a very fortunate man in that I was given the opportunity to leave the front line area in 1940 and travelled to Nantes thus avoiding capture and imprisonment for the duration of the war. During the blitz on London I was fortunate not to be injured by falling bombs and shrapnel. The spell of duty in Northern Ireland was fairly tough but peaceful. I was then fortunate to have had the opportunity to have medical training on board ship and to be able to make use of this training during the remainder of the war. And above all I enjoyed several opportunities to come home to my family who supported me through thick and thin all of those years. And finally, in the year 2002 at the age of 87 years I have been able to put together this composition of my memoirs using this modern sophisticated piece of equipment "The Computer"

Aren't I just one very fortunate old fella'

Dersingham Evening W.I.



November 2006 is our Annual General Meeting. This is the evening when yearly reports are read. The presentation of the committee report was compiled and given by our secretary Lesley, this was detailed and concise. Betty, our treasurer, informed us of the good health, or bad, of the accounts, a task few of us envy.

The A.G.M. is also a time of change for the committee and the president, this year everyone stayed with Dianne as president.

Formalities over a chance to relax – well, maybe not – “Grim Tales and Dark Deeds” our speaker, Neil Storey’s, subject for the evening – sounds gruesome – well it was!

Neil, a historian and lecturer, told in great detail of the seamier side of Norfolk’s past – of public hangings at Norwich, with as many as 40,000 people turning up, especially if it was a double execution. This was their entertainment, no television in the early 18th century, and, to illustrate, Neil produced a noose and proceeded to relate how the perpetrators of various crimes were punished, some of which he would consider very petty, and all the time showing us such grisly objects as a cut-throat razor, a skull, the dreaded birch and a Scolds’ bride.

A sad footnote – unfortunates who committed suicide would be buried at the crossroads in deep graves.

Though some of us were squirming in our seats no-one could fail to have been fascinated by this glimpse into the shadier side of Norfolk’s Social History, so brilliantly told by Neil.

December 2006 – with our December meeting always a festive and social evening we were already entering into the Christmas spirit as we arrived, armed with our own refreshments to be shared during the evening.

Thus the scene was set for a lively, humorous, and, at times, “a bit naughty” entertainment by guest speaker Jacqueline Tevlin.

Jacqueline, who teaches acting skills, used her unique talent through music, acting and poetry, and, with quick-fire costume changes, to give us her interpretation of the customs and meaning of Christmas. With the title “A Bit of a Cracker” this could certainly describe our speaker.

As we said our farewells we looked forward to 2007 and what it might hold for us.

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Tuesday February 6th

David Grimes

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Old Postcards

with the Focus on
Sandringham

&
King's Lynn

VILLAGE VOICE LIVE

Ash Murray

Tuesday March 6th

Ash is the site manager for Dersingham Bog and will be talking and showing pictures about his work there and on other Natural England activities in the area

St Nicholas Church Hall, Manor Road, Dersingham
7.30 pm Admission £2.00 including refreshments. Raffle

Carole Brown Health Centre Patients' Participation Group

A Happy New Year from the PPG Committee to all patients of the Carole Brown Health Centre:

Chairman – Mrs Vanessa Blythe (01485 544866)
Secretary and Treasurer – Mrs Dee Morris (01485 541450)
Mr Terry Finbow, Mrs Sandy Hyams, Mr Tom Morris, Mrs Jackie Sisson



CHRISTMAS DRAW RESULTS – 15 DECEMBER 2006

The winning numbers of the Christmas Draw and the prizes allocated were:

Child's Clock & Frame	3105
Food Storage Set	3370
Celebration Chocolates	3145
Toiletries	1795
Crackers and Gift Labels	3470
Knitting Toy	2795
Thaxters Spa Voucher	2611
Feathers Meal Voucher	2546
Thaxters Garden Centre Voucher	2476
Scoles Butchers Voucher	1256
Ferrero Rocher Chocolates	1196
Electric Grill	2551
3 Bottles of Wine	4146
Electric Toothbrush	1181
Garden Ornament	2931
Bird Table	2936
Duvet Set	1636
Christmas Cake	1846
First Prize of £100	3471



Our sincere thanks to all who contributed to the PPG funds by over £600 by purchasing draw tickets, to those who helped sell them and to the generous contributors of the variety of prizes. Patients will benefit from the additional equipment, facilities and services that the PPG will be able to acquire for the Carole Brown Health Centre. With Primary Care Trusts restricting the funding to General Practices, our support is more important than ever.

Note: Please note that the contact number for the Health Visitor is now 543184.

PRACTICE BOOKLET Because of all the changes that have occurred in recent times with the provision of medical and nursing services, especially locally, it has been proposed that a new Patient's Booklet be produced and issued to all patients. The aim would be to provide patients with current and comprehensive information that would help them make the best use of local health services. The PPG could provide a useful coordinated input to such a document, so if you have any particular suggestions about what it should contain, please forward them to the PPG secretary at 24 Tudor Way, Dersingham PE31 6LX.

APPRECIATION. THANK YOU to all those kind individuals who have made donations to help finance improvements in, or additions to, the equipment available to staff at the Carole Brown Health Centre. These help provide services that would not otherwise be available locally and often

save journeys to other medical and surgical centres. THANK YOU also to the management of Thaxters Garden Centre for so generously allowing the PPG to hold Bric a Brac sales on their premises. We are always looking for help to man these stalls so, if you can spare an hour or so, usually on a Saturday morning, please contact the Secretary on the number above.

THE NEW CAROLE BROWN HEALTH CENTRE

THE GOOD NEWS

Below is an extract from an e-mail received in December by the PPG from Graham Dickerson, executive partner in the practice that includes the Carole Brown Health Centre.

"I just wanted to thank you for all the work you have done to get the new CBHC approved and designed. Everything is now signed and sealed. Building work will start next year (around spring) and completion should be in the summer of 2008. I think the design we have agreed will serve patients well and should suffice for many years to come. Indeed the building is only about 15% smaller than the Gayton Road Health Centre." (The GRHC has more than twice the number of Dersingham & Ingoldsthorpe patients).

This indeed is good news despite the fact that the new facility will not meet all the aspirations of the practice partners or of the PPG. This is due to constraints imposed by those who determine the funding for our health facilities and not for the lack of effort and pleading by our health professionals and practice management.

VIDA HEALTHCARE

Vida Healthcare Partners provide NHS medical care from Gayton Road Health Centre and ***Carole Brown Health Centre***. Private healthcare is provided via DermaVida (skin and laser clinics) and in association with Cavell and Lind (occupational health specialists). Vida Healthcare is also part of Norfolk Surgical and Diagnostic Centres, providing both NHS and private care.

Dersingham Walking Group

Reminder!

Wednesday 21 February start 2.00 pm from lay-by on A148 opposite junction with road from Sandringham (B1440) map ref L.132/711 253). A 4.5 miles circular walk around Hillington and Congham led by Elizabeth Fiddick (540940)

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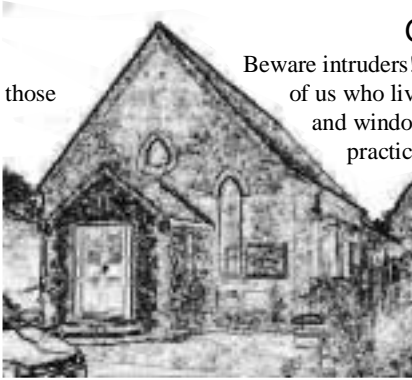
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Greetings From The Manse



Greetings in the New Year

those

Beware intruders! Normally this is a piece of sound advice, especially to of us who live alone. We should be vigilant and make sure that doors and windows are locked and secure, and we should make it our practice to ask callers to identify themselves. You can never be too careful. January is in the spiritual life January is the month of intruders, or to give it its technical title 'the month of epiphany.' In it we seek signs of God's presence and purpose among us in this mortal life. The key sign is the naming of Jesus as son of Mary, Son of God. But what are the signs of God's presence and purpose among us today especially in a world of so much conflict and confusion?

We might point to powerful signs or epiphanies: things like Christmas Day, family and friends gathered round the table or the tree: everyone on their best behaviour: sign of the possibility of goodness and grace among us. That Christmas scene is an important sign, but a dangerous one!

In the biblical account, soon after the birth of Jesus, the Magi, the three wise men who were like intruders, visit the family. They crash into this scene of harmony and happiness, unannounced and unknown: people of a different race, a different faith, and a different culture. They push their way into this happy, settled grouping, and by words and deeds proclaim a whole new agenda for the family and their child, responsibilities that include all that the Magi represent: other races, other faiths, other cultures. Here is an intrusion guaranteed to disturb and disrupt everything that the happy family of David's pure and nationalist line had wanted and hoped for.

This was an epiphany, the presence and purpose of God made much more explicit and challenging amidst the cosiness of a securely gathered group. Intruders held the key to this making of epiphany, and there is a clue for us today.

As we seek to know something of our Maker and His purposes for us in our groups and churches and communities, we need to be open to intruders: people who want to introduce a much wider and more inclusive agenda. That has been the pattern of epiphany and intrusion since Adam and Eve were suddenly confronted in the Garden, or Moses was startled by the burning bush. Christmas, as a sign of God's presence and purpose among us, was only made complete by the visit of the Magi.

In January, take some time to consider your own blessings, and ask for wisdom to be open to the intrusions of outsiders, in relationship to our family and friends, in our community and church. Then we may be able to model something precious, and desperately needed, about God's presence and purpose in our struggling world.

Beware! Intruders... don't lock up the wrong things for safekeeping you might miss a life-giving epiphany.

Health and peace to you for 2007 - Kim Nally.

If drinking is interfering with your work, you're probably a heavy drinker. If work is interfering with your drinking, you're probably an alcoholic.

Dr. Anthony Clare

The golden rule when reading a menu in a restaurant is, if you can't pronounce it, you can't afford it.

Frank Muir

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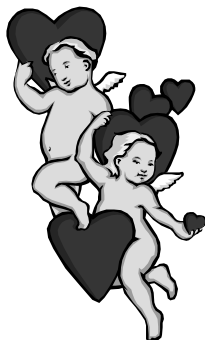
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Samuel and Barbara Kerrich Dersingham in the 18th Century

by Elizabeth Fiddick

In the Chancel of our church are numerous memorials to people who were once important members of the community. Not only are there some dedicated to the Pells about whom I have written before but also several to the Kerrich family. In the next few articles I hope to breathe some life into these quiet stones and let this family who served our village for over eighty years live again. The two families of Pell and Kerrich although unrelated and from different eras are linked by the old Tudor house that once stood in the pastures by the Institute.

Samuel Kerrich was born in 1696 two years into the reign of William III. Samuel was the oldest son of Thomas Kerrich who is described as a “druggist”. His mother Rebecca (Kidman) came from Diss but at the time of Samuel’s birth the family were living in Harleston a small village just off the Diss to Bungay road. He had one brother, Charles. In 1705 his mother died and when his father remarried Samuel was taken into the care of his maternal bachelor uncle, Charles Kidman. He was educated at St. Paul’s School. Apparently he was a lonely boy and seldom came home for the holidays, staying at school to pursue his studies. He went to Cambridge where he proved a popular student and eventually became a fellow of Corpus Christi College Cambridge. During his schooldays he became friends with Matthew Postlethwaite, a friendship that was to prove significant in the future. After graduation he met and fell in love with Sarah Newton a lady of great beauty and property. Sadly during their engagement Sarah fell ill and died in 1724. She was buried near Cambridge and Samuel made it known that on his death he wished to be buried with her. There were many efforts to find Samuel a country living particularly after he became engaged to Jane Kitchingham. In 1729 Samuel married Jane, who was always referred to as “gentle Jane.” Later the same year the rector of Sandringham wrote to say that Mr. Gill, the vicar of Dersingham was “in articulo mortis”. Colonel Hoste of Sandringham and his son James undertook to write to Sir Robert Walpole of Houghton Hall to secure the living for Samuel. Subsequently he was instituted in Dersingham on August 25 1729. At first he stayed with the Hostes at Sandringham Hall. At this time there had not been an official vicarage house in the village for many years. One used to stand where the memorial cross in the churchyard can now be seen. An inventory taken in 1709 describes, “*the ruin of one vicarage house long since dilapidated with some old walls remaining with barn containing two golfsteads with a yard containing 30 perches of land.*” In 1726 Thomas Gill, Samuel’s predecessor as vicar was concerned that he or his successors would be required to renovate or replace this building. The cost of which he was unable to bear. The reply from the Bishop once again described, “*a small studded clay house belonging to the said vicarage situate before the gate of the Capitate Mansion of one John Pell Esq. which vicarage house being then in a ruinous condition was by the said John Pell’s direction pulled down many years before.*” This happened in about 1656. The Bishop’s letter valued the present vicarage at £40 and he estimated that to “*newbuild a decent substantial house fit for a minister and his family will cost £200.*” It was agreed such a sum could not be afforded by Gill or his successors so a dispensation was granted. So the house that Samuel and Jane were to live in was the old Pell house built in 1553 that stood in the Pastures by our present Institute. Samuel himself wrote, “*I dwell in a house of Lord Orford’s near the church in which my predecessor lived for many years.*” Lord Orford was Sir Robert Walpole of Houghton a man high in government circles and due to become England’s first Prime Minister.

Much land in the parish had been part of the Pell estate that had been bought in 1697 by Colonel Walpole and inherited by his son Robert. Samuel spent much time preparing the old house for Jane but in 1730 Jane had suffered a miscarriage and was too ill to travel. Samuel continued to

work on the house but again in 1731 Jane had a further miscarriage and this time failed to recover her strength. She died on August 22 and was buried in Cambridge. She never saw the old house that was to have been her future home. Samuel must have been devastated. However the following year 1732 Samuel married Barbara Postlethwaite. She was eleven years his junior having been born at Shotesham on May 19th 1707. She was described as a charming girl, a beautiful singer and brilliant performer on the organ and spinet. Finally Samuel's luck had turned and the marriage was a long and happy one. Barbara arrived to begin her married life in John Pell's old house, the "enchanted mansion".

The description of Pell's house conjures up a very romantic picture and a plan of it that appears on a small map of the time shows a substantial property with sizeable gardens. But the house was now 180 years old and although repairs and renovations had been attempted it was not a very satisfactory place to live. The pastures in which it stood were crossed by many streams and in bad weather the whole area was subject to flooding.

When I first came to the village I remember many a wet winter when Wellington boots were essential if you wished to use the footpath there that crosses from Centre Vale. The remains of the old sheep washpit fed by one of the streams still remain visible. In one letter Barbara wrote, *"I am washed out of all ye rooms below stairs. The springs have risen very much in ye garden this week and run in ye little alleys in streams. I mostly sit in ye little parlour and yesterday as I sat there ye water rise under my chair before I saw it and we looked into ye Great Parlour it began to come out at ye door into ye kitchen and was near a quarter of a yard deep and this morning it was all over ye hall. William and Martin and all ye servants are trying to get it out but ye springs bubble and run sadly in ye garden still."*

Shortly after taking up his position Samuel made some notes about our village. At this time the population was probably less than 500. He wrote that the parish of Dersingham consisted of a heath, a warren, and a pretty large cornfield on a long easy descent to the town. The soil was light and sandy with some enclosures of richer land lying about the village. White's Directory some years later in 1836 also describes, a sandy heath and rabbit warren of 1900 acres. Rabbit warrens were a common feature of Norfolk partly owing to the sandy soil. The warrener was an important member of the community and it was his duty to keep the rabbits from straying as well as to kill them in the proper season. A silver grey breed was kept and in 1790 £10,000 worth were sent to London alone. Samuel wrote that the houses, which numbered 66, were pretty near together except one farm house called Lyng House which was about two miles from the rest toward Great Bircham. These homes would have been around Manor Road, Chapel Road, Doddshill and Fern Hill. However an old man had assured him that there had been 30 other houses that had been taken down or suffered to fall. It has been suggested that the houses were pulled down to combat an outbreak of smallpox. This disease was a continual danger during this century and Barbara mentions it many times in her letters to her sister. In 1741 she wrote that a girl living near the common had been diagnosed with it and she was very fearful. In another letter in 1751 she wrote that smallpox had broken out in the house nearest to them where she had been taking cream and butter during the winter. She mentions that their stables adjoined so it is intriguing to speculate which house this was.

Dr. Kerrich goes on to write that below the village towards the coast was a, pretty, large common and between it and the coast several large marshes that had been gained from the sea about the time that the borough of Castle Rising fell into decay when of the sea retreated. Dr. Kerrich's notes now confirm for us that the weather during this part of the century was very unsettled. He wrote that the sea seemed to be pressing upon the coast with much more strength and causing inundations to the great damage of the land and loss of cattle. He describes a strong bank that James Hoste of Sandringham had constructed but which had been frequently broken through at great cost to Mr. Hoste. During a storm in 1703 we know that seven ships had been lost in the Wash with the loss of

20 lives. There was a flood recorded here in 1735 and in 1757 a herd of cattle was swept away by a high tide at Ingoldisthorpe. Samuel writes that the villagers were farmers, and labourers except a William Grigson Esq. who had lately sold his estate to Richard Hammond and intended to leave at Michelmas

Richard Hammond is shown on Faden's map of 1797 as the owner of Dersingham Hall and according to the small map mentioned earlier considerable land close to the Hall. Samuel notes that the other large landowners are Lord Orford, the Hoste's and intriguingly one R. G. a minor. Samuel informs us that he was very seldom absent from the Parish, perhaps once in 3 or 4 years when he took care of some affairs and gave myself the pleasure of conversing a little with old friends. He comments that there were, no papists in the Parish, no Dissenters of any denomination and no Quakers. He notes that none totally absent themselves from church but there are 3 or 4 who do it too often. He describes one as being born of parents that were Quakers. This man had not been in the village long but did attend the public baptism of his children. Unfortunately for us Samuel does not name him. He tells us that Public Service is performed morning and afternoon alternately at Dersingham and Wolferton. A sermon is preached in both churches and Prayers are read in Dersingham on Wednesday and Friday during Lent and every day in Passion Week. He comments, with a faint touch of pride, that although there were no prayers read on Saints' Days when he arrived he has by proceeding slowly and introducing them gradually obtained a small congregation on each occasion. The children are catechised during Lent and instructed in the meaning by questions and answers. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper is administered 4 times a year when the number of communicants varies from 15 to 30.

While Samuel busied himself with Parish affairs Barbara as well as carrying out the duties expected of the Minister's wife saw to the smooth running of the rambling old house in the Pastures. She was responsible for hiring and dismissing the servants and dealing with their duties. She complains many times to her sister about the difficulties in finding good help. Many servants made such a fuss about fetching wood and coals to bring upstairs for the fires so she would not pay them above £3 a year. Martin, the coachman served them for several years and was married to Sarah who became almost like one of the Kerrich family. She was Barbara's wet nurse and a constant feature of life in the old house. Sarah and Martin had six children, Betsy, Billy, Jenny, Johnny, Little Martin, and Tommy. It must have been a lively household with so many children about. Tragically in 1748 Sarah died in childbirth and the family were split up. Little Martin was sent to an uncle to learn to be a brick maker. Billy went to his Grandfather while Sarah's sister Elizabeth took in Tommy. A Mr. Phillips took in Betsy and Jenny. Barbara and Samuel kept Johnny. It must have been a dreadful blow to Martin. A few years later in 1751 there was a serious dispute of some kind and Martin had to leave. It was a most distressing time for all. Barbara admits to shedding tears but Martin had left such "an infamous character behind him" that it would be "a scandalous thing ever to take him on again". Another servant Sukey Brady was dismissed for cheating and deception. Other servants included Molly Barbara's personal maid. Mr. Phillips is mentioned many times and we know that in 1740 Robert Walpole gave £5 a year to an Elizabeth Phillips to teach eight poor children to read. Sadly Barbara suffered several miscarriages and in 1740 her first baby did not survive. Samuel must have been deeply worried after what had happened to his first wife. Barbara writes movingly to her sister of her despair at the loss of the child and how she was unable to bear the sight of Sarah's young baby. Samuel was a tower of strength at this time and she admits she could not have borne the pain but for his loving attention. Happily two years later in 1742 she gave birth to a healthy girl who was christened Matilda, (Tilly). Her letters to her sister are then full of their delight in the child. We learn how she amuses all their friends with her childish prattle. On February 4 1748 a son, Thomas, (Tommy) was born. He was not a particularly healthy child at first and did cause some concern. He was inoculated against smallpox in 1749 but overcame these initial childhood setbacks to become a fine young man.

Barbara also loved her garden. The small map of the time shows the gardens at the side of the house. If you walk across the pastures today and look across to the site of the old house the uneven nature of the ground, the humps and hillocks suggest where the gardens and outbuildings may have been. From her letters we know Barbara kept turkeys and bees. She writes to her sister of the newborn calf she is rearing and how the ducks had to be removed from the garden as they were eating all the lettuces. There was a “very pretty” knot garden that Martin and Samuel had worked hard on. Apart from gardening Barbara writes of practising on her piano and her latest efforts at sewing. She undertook the early education of both the children. There are many references to the children’s progress in spelling and reading. The old house was always full of friends and visitors. Her sister came many times to stay and there were frequent visits and invitations to dinner for the Hostes of Sandringham. She was great friends with the Styleman’s of Snettisham Hall and once recounted how they had all gone to see a troupe of visiting actors perform a play there. I have already mentioned that Sir Robert Walpole of Houghton was Samuel’s benefactor and there were numerous visits to the great House. On one occasion Tilly delighted the company so much that she was hugged and kissed by everyone. It is likely that Sir Robert was also no stranger to Dersingham. There were visits to the Assemblies at King’s Lynn during the Mart and Barbara often mentions what a fine company they had at church on a Sunday. The impression one gets is that it was a lively entertaining household and that the Kerrich’s were very active about our village. National events sometimes intruded. On July 23 1745 the Young Pretender Charles Stuart landed in the Outer Hebrides to stake his claim to the Throne. By October he had crossed the border into England and by December the Jacobite rebels were in Derby only 130 miles from London. Barbara wrote to her sister that the rebels were expected in Lynn and that they were arming to defend themselves. If the rebels did come then there were plans to cut down all the bridges and sink ships in the shallows. As for Barbara and Samuel they had packed up all their valuables to hide but had no idea where they would they go. The panic was short lived as the rebels did not advance on London but returned to Scotland and ultimately defeat at Culloden. In one letter of 1747 Barbara recounts how Samuel was busy stopping up the windows in the rambling old house in response to the Window Tax. This tax was frequently revised and very much resented by those living in large properties. Barbara complains that they will have to pay tax on more than forty windows in spite of Samuel’s efforts. Not everything in the area was calm as Barbara tells her sister of numerous robberies taking place in 1748 and one dreadful incident near Snettisham when a servant was set upon, stripped of all her clothes and left in a ditch. In 1751 Barbara’s sister Elizabeth (Postlethwaite) left Norwich and came to live them in the old house. In 1753 Samuel wrote to Lord Orford’s agent saying that he would gladly stay where he was if repairs could be carried out as some parts of the old house were “untenantable”. Nothing was done so the family left and moved into Dersingham Hall. The old house was abandoned and a few years later pulled down. In 1756 came the first signs that Barbara was not well. It becomes clear that she has developed cancer and on August 22 1762 she died and was buried in the chancel. After her death Samuel seldom travelled away. Barbara did not live to see Matilda marry her half cousin John Kerrich, a surgeon, in 1767. They went to live in Burnham Market. Thomas by this time had taken up residence at Magdalene College Cambridge. On returning home for Christmas in 1767 he found his father in failing health and was obliged to get assistance for Sunday duty at Wolferton. In 1768 Elizabeth wrote to him that Samuel was poorly and apt to fret about every little matter. Writing had become very troublesome for him but in his last letter to his son he asked that Thomas should check on the condition of the tomb of Sarah Newton, his first love, and see that it was cared for. On March 7 1768 Thomas rode through the night from Cambridge to see his father but sadly arrived too late. Samuel had died a few hours before. He was buried in the Chancel. Elizabeth left Dersingham and went to live with Matilda in Burnham Market. It would be nearly twenty years before a Kerrich lived in the village once more.

Recommended reading: “Your affectionate and loving sister”. Correspondence of Barbara Kerrich and Elizabeth Postlethwaite 1733 to 1751. Edited by Nigel Slurry. Paperback

Life Wood Certainly Has A Considerable Amount of Life *From a nearby resident to Life Wood*

Life Wood certainly has a considerable amount of life within, especially in the early morning and late at night, for that is when the deer are about. Although, having said that, on one Sunday, mid-day, while viewing off-road vehicles roaring and racing round the track and pits, I looked down at my dog to see her reaction to it all and, to my surprise, she had her back to it all. She was looking at a muntjak, chewing away in the undergrowth. They just stared at each other so peacefully despite all the noise.



Then, once again to my amazement, there was a quiet chirping, and what at first glance looked like brown butterflies turned out to be baby wrens. No mistaking those little flipped up tails, thriving in the sunshine.

I have also seen baby rabbits being chased by a stoat or weasel, and I love the sound of owls and bats at night, the rustling of all the creatures in the undergrowth, and the early morning tapping of the green woodpeckers, and their laughing call as if saying "I know you can hear me, however, you can't see me!" When spring comes, the early morning chorus.

As you can guess, I am a dog lover, and as I walk through Life Wood, I feel the spirit of all my past four-legged friends, around me, goading me on to enjoy it all.

Yes, there is life in Life Wood, so the name is most appropriate. How it was named will remain a puzzle to those of the name of Life in old English.

When Minds Are Shut

by Hugh Mullarkey Copyright 12-07-06

Spare me a moment
And listen
... no please don't interrupt
Just listen
That's all I ask
It won't take long
And then when you've heard my words
And sought
To understand
My thoughts

'Sorry ...
Did you say something?'

I told my psychiatrist that everyone hates me. He said I was being ridiculous - everyone hasn't met me yet.

Rodney Dangerfield

An apology is the only thing that will enable you to have the last word with a woman.

Peter Cagney

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My Patch

by Gardenwatcher



Sat. At last the leaves are falling from the trees - something to rummage through. The flowering cherry hung onto its yellow clothes for some time and let them go all at once unlike the birches which keep up a slow, steady supply for several weeks.

Tue. A neighbour has come to cut down one of our trees that has been dying over the last couple of years. Now I am a fair climber but this bloke is giving me something to think about. He is like a bloody monkey.

Fri. The tree has now gone completely leaving a big, bright hole. The garden, or that bit of it, is now teeming with birds. I haven't seen many around here for a while but from my position in the bay window over the radiator I can now see Robin, Wren, Blue Tits and

one I have never seen here before, a Long Tailed Tit. Not a bad breakfast menu.

Mon. Wet and windy today with little reason for me to go out. He hasn't put all his pot plants away yet and the tubs and pots are blowing over. I bet I could improve on the designs, now how do you hold a pencil? The grass is still growing and he had the mower out yesterday, well that's what it sounded like from my warm cavity on the bed. I was well out of it.

Thur. A big fuss today as he put some bubble wrap up in the greenhouse. I was on patrol at the time and as I pushed through the hedge back into my garden there it was, a big pile of plastic, which needed rummaging through. I was convinced that there just might be a mouse in the middle of it, but he wasn't grateful for my efforts and chased me off muttering something about violin strings.

Sat. It's that time of year again when I get to play "Lets trash the Christmas Tree". Great fun! They also put out lots of bait for the birds so I have entertainment inside and out. He has, at last, chopped off all the plants in pots and put them away in the greenhouse, to await the spring, now we are getting some frosty mornings. This gives me less places to lurk when I want to do a bit of hunting. Grrrr.

Christmas Day. One of the most annoying things about living here is the thousands of geese that fly over every night and not one of them obliges me by dropping into the garden dead. So imagine my surprise when I was out on a routine patrol round the garage and found one in a bag, plucked and ready for me. Suddenly there was a lot of noise and in storms the master aiming his size 11s at me. From my fresh vantage point at the top of the stairs, I saw him cramming my find into the oven. Swine! I shall keep my eye on it in case it is unattended at any time.

Boxing Day. Mild today and he was out there in the garden pulling up dead plants and sticking wallflowers in their places. Then, horror of horrors, the mower came out and made so much noise that sleep was almost impossible. Still it looks better out side now.

New Years Day. Nice bright day so I took a stroll around the patch. I was trying to dig in a little organic matter but found it difficult to find somewhere that didn't have bulbs coming up. They are quite well advanced and other things are still growing. Bamboo is pushing up new shoots, the odd rose is still flowering and the viburnum has been at it for weeks. Global warming or a tilt of the earth's axis? Perhaps I'll sleep on it.

Saturday. Some of my favourite resting places have been denied to me. Well I was sick and didn't clean it up so I am not popular and have been encouraged to spend more time outside. After a tour of inspection and a wash under the hedge it started raining so I was forced to return indoors but I was met with a frosty reception.

Sunday. Cruel, heartless people live here. I have been shown the door again and all because I found a drowned rat in the dyke last night and thought they would like it. Ingrates!!

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I Remember

by Len Westlove



So, February is here again. That miserable month when Christmas and the New Year celebrations have come and gone, but it is still a bit too early to say 'spring is just around the corner'. But take heart, there are two big 'plus' points. Firstly we have St Valentine's Day mid month and secondly The Mart arrives in Kings Lynn on the same day.

During my early/mid teens years I lived in Dersingham, and February the fourteenth was always special for me.

At that time of life, 'the sap was rising' as my Form Master put it; or 'the hormones were stirring' as my Biology Master preferred to say.

Consequently it was important to me as to what the postman

delivered. It was definitely not on for a macho teenager (as I always liked to think of myself) to send Valentine cards, but it would have been quite permissible for a bevy of High School girls to send them to me. They never did though. Never mind, there was always The Mart where my friends and I could waste our money throwing wooden balls at coconuts that were firmly anchored to their seats; and firing .22 rifles (with bent sights) at moving targets with about one chance in a thousand of winning a prize.

I remember one particular St Valentine's Day when I almost gave up hope of even getting a date, let alone a steady girl friend. As usual there was nothing in the post for me. Something had to be done. I would go to The Mart and find myself a really, *really* nice girl who I could take for rides on the waltzers and dodgems, and hold tenderly in the Haunted House of Horrors when she squealed with fear. If absolutely necessary I might be prepared to show her my prowess as a fighter by having a go in the Boxing Booth – having slipped the boss man a week's pocket money to let me win!

It didn't work out like that. True, I found the really, *really* nice girl but she had three really, *really* awful giggling companions with her. Somehow I had to prise her away from the others, but that was going to be difficult. Every time I got close enough to talk to her on her own the tittering trio would return and burst out in a fit of giggles. I came close to giving up but she was such a very nice girl that I found myself genuinely attracted to her. I had to turn on the charm.

"Say, honey child chick. Howsabout we give the waltzers a whirl?" (It was perhaps a tad unfortunate that we had United States Air Force neighbours at the time!) The foursome giggled to the point of laughing out loud. I tried again.

"C'mon there sweetie pie. Let's share some corn (a bag of popcorn). More loud, girlish laughter. But I felt that I was gaining ground. The young lady, whose name was Eileen I discovered, finally agreed to a ride on the waltzers. I had it all planned. We would have a chair to ourselves, then, as the ride increased in speed I would place a reassuring arm round her shoulders. When the ride stopped, I would lift the handle of the chair with my left hand whilst inviting her to hold my right hand as she got out. The plan worked to a tee! And what was more she smiled up at me – I was a tall, gangling youth – and said 'thankyou' quite genuinely. Suddenly I was walking on air. She explained that she would have to go and find her friends. I was disappointed; but she told me which class she was in at High School and how I could contact her by messenger. Success! But I was impatient. Could she perhaps meet me, same place and time on, say, Saturday? It seemed like an eternity before she answered, but the reply was worth waiting for. She said 'yes'!

On Saturday afternoon I was waiting at the appointed time and place. Eileen and, unfortunately, her three giggling girl friends arrived dead on time. I went through some mental notes that I had made. Firstly, don't be *too* keen – she might be put off. Secondly, don't over do the 'rough and tough' image – most girls liked their boy friends to show some degree of care and understanding, according to my older sister, and I felt that Eileen was one of them. Thirdly, I must

be reasonably presentable; but definitely not like some of those 'smoothies' in my class at the Grammar School with their slick, greasy hair cuts and drain pipe trousers.

Eileen and I went right round the Mart, enjoying every minute of our time together. There was a downside however; namely those silly and noisy friends of hers who seemed to be following us everywhere. I had had enough.

"*Get lost!*" I shouted.

"Please leave us alone" pleaded Eileen. Our joint effort had the desired effect.

"Why do those friends of your always burst into fits of laughter when they see me?" I enquired.

"You must admit that you do present a rather unusual image."

"Pardon?" I was taken aback

"Well, that full length, brown leather coat for instance. Circa 1920 I would guess."

"1928 actually. It was my grandfather's. He used to cover the engine of his lorry with it in very cold weather. There's nothing wrong with it is there?"

"No, nothing at all. I suppose it could come back into fashion one day. But I really think you should clean some of the bird stains and oil marks off it. Then there's the trilby hat. Your Dad's I would guess?"

"Spot on. I rescued it from the dustbin when he threw it away. Rather smart don't you think?"

"Oh yes; quite. But I'm sure that if you repaired that hole at the front it would look better."

"Are there any more insults you would like to make about my clothing?" I said, rather testily.

"Look, I'm really sorry. I didn't mean to upset you. But I have to say that I've never been on a date with anyone wearing highly polished hobnail boots. And before you ask; yes, I think they look good and certainly go with the overall image."

"OK; you say I look a bit unusual. If you find that so funny then why did you come on this date with me?"

"Because I admire a chap who is his own man and sticks to his principles, regardless of the opinions of others. You do have eccentricities but underneath those outer layers there's a strong character and a very caring person. And, dare I say it, I love you for it."

We kissed ...and that was the start of my first romance!

Mobility Problems? Find it Difficult Getting into King's Lynn?

The West Norfolk Community Transport Project operates the Dial-a-bus service and the Shopmobility Scheme in West Norfolk. The Dial-a-bus operation involves easily accessible minibuses providing door-to-door rural and urban bus services answering the transport needs of those people who have mobility problems and those who have difficulty accessing public transport. At this present time we operate a weekly Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday service into King's Lynn. We also bring people into Hunstanton from the Docking area on a Wednesday. The Shopmobility Scheme is specifically for those people who have difficulty accessing shops and services because of long term or short term limited mobility. Members have free use of powered scooters, wheelchairs, walking frames and self-propelled wheelchairs. This scheme is now available 5 days a week in King's Lynn. The project is always looking for volunteers to help in the provision and expansion of its current services.

If you have mobility problems and cannot access public transport then please let us know.

If you would like to help or obtain information on the above services please telephon WNCTP on 01553 770310

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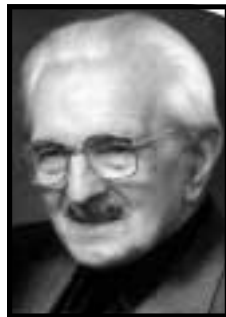
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News in Brief

It was with great sorrow that we heard that Evan Harold Blackmore had died at the age of 101 – Readers may recall that the Village Voice were pleased to report his 100th birthday in Issue 35. Having originally come from Chard in Somerset where his ancestors include the author of 'Lorna Doone', RD Blackmore, Mr Blackmore was employed by Maypole Dairies until a change in career led him to become a Master Plumber. During the Second World War he was to move to Derby where he was a fire fighter, having charge of four of the local fire stations. Mr Blackmore, who used to have a caravan at Snettisham, moved to Norfolk when he retired, and following the death of his first wife, married Doreen thirteen years ago. Our sincere thoughts go out to Mrs. Blackmore and family.



Sandringham's 125th Flower Show in July resulted in the magnificent sum of £27,000 being raised for charity and the organisers are to be congratulated for being in a position where they can contribute to the funds of nearly 40 groups in Norfolk, including East Anglian Air Ambulance, Tapping House Hospice, and Dersingham Day Centre for the Elderly. The show was visited by 17,500 people and was attended by His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales and his wife the Duchess of Cornwall.

Apologies are offered to Mr Norman Pemberton for not having corrected an error which appeared in Issue 42 of the magazine, when we inadvertently renamed him Nicholas when reporting his and his wife Catrin's 65th Wedding Anniversary. Please forgive us Norman!

Dersingham Scout and Guide Fundraising Committee would like to thank the people who supported their Grand Quiz on 2 December which resulted in £80 being put towards HQ maintenance.

Dersingham Guide Groups (Rainbows, Brownies and Guides) wish to thank all those who supported their Christmas Coffee Morning on 2 December, at which £200 was raised which will be equally divided between the 4 groups.

Two Members of Dersingham Parish Council are to face a disciplinary hearing by the Code of Conduct Panel following allegations that one of them made insulting remarks against the County Councillor who represents the village, and that they both failed to make Declarations of Interest at meetings arranged by the Parish Council. West Norfolk Standards Board had, at a previous hearing, rejected other allegations made against one of the two Members.

Thirteen-year-old Charlotte Dady has again been entertaining customers at Thaxter's Garden Centre when, for the fourth year running, she played the flute in order to encourage visitors to contribute to a charitable collection, this time in aid of the Haematology Unit at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Charlotte, of Park Hill in Dersingham, has previously raised funds on behalf of the RSPCA.

Further to our report on the imprisonment of the ram-raiders in our last issue and on the front cover of this edition it is now apparent that although some £830,000 was stolen, only £9,300 has actually been recovered at this time.

Paula and Jackie Jeffrey of Dersingham are to be congratulated for their efforts in raising the sum of £385 which has gone to providing a breathing monitor which will assist in preventing cot deaths in West Norfolk. The couple experienced such a catastrophe three years ago, and were put in contact with support scheme CONI (Care of Next Infant) to whom they presented the equipment.

DIARY OF REGULAR EVENTS				
Day	Time	Organisation	Event	Venue
Every Monday	2.00 pm	St. Cecilia's Church	Rosary Group	St. Cecilia's Church
Every Mon, Tues, Thur &	9.00 to 11.30	Dersingham Playgroup	Playgroup Meeting	Dersingham Community Centre, Manor Road
Every Mon & Fri in Term	9.30 to 11.00	Puddleducks Toddler Group	Toddler Group Meeting	Dersingham Methodist Church Hall
1st Monday in the	2.15 pm	Royal British Legion	Dersingham & Sandringham Branch Meeting	Orchard Close Community Room
2nd Monday in the Month	7.30 pm	Royal British Legion	Meeting	Albert Victor Bowls Club,
Last Monday in the Month	7.15 pm	Dersingham Parish Council	Full Council Meeting	Infant and Nursery School, Saxon Way
Every Tuesday	5.30 to 7 pm	2nd Dersingham Brownie	Meeting for girls aged 7 – 10 years	Scout & Guide HQ Manor Road
Every Tuesday in Term Time	8.30 to 11.15	Parent & Toddler Group Meeting	St Nicholas Church hall	St Nicholas Parent & Toddler Group
Every Tuesday	8 pm	Royal Antediluvian Order of	Sandringham Lodge Meeting	Dersingham Community Centre, Manor Road
1st Tuesday of the Month	7.30 pm	Village Voice 'Live'	Presentations by Guest Speakers/Groups	St Nicholas Church Hall
1st Tuesday of the Month	7.30 pm	Dersingham Methodist Church	Meeting	Dersingham Methodist Church Hall
Every Wednesday	10.00 am to	Dersingham Day Centre for	Recreation & Leisure Activities	Dersingham Community Centre, Manor Road
Every Wednesday	10.00 to 11.00	Music+Movement	Pre-school Music, Dance & Drama	Dersingham Scout & Guide HQ
Every Wednesday	2.00 to 4.00 pm	Dersingham Methodist Church	Carpet Bowls	Dersingham Methodist Church Hall
Every Wednesday	6.00 to	Beavers	Meeting for children	Scout & Guide HQ Dersingham Sports Ground
Every 2ndWeds of	5.30 to 7.00 pm	Dersingham Junior Flower	Meeting of Children aged 8+	St Nicholas Church Hall
Every 2ndWeds of	10.30 am	St Nicholas Men's Group	Men's Group Meeting	St Nicholas Church Hall
Every 2ndWeds of	7.30 pm	Albert Victor Bowls	Prize Bingo	Albert Victor Bowls Club,
2nd & 4th Weds of every	7.30 to 9.00 pm	Dersingham Fellowship	Prayer and Praise and Bible Study	Dersingham Community Centre, Manor Road
Every Thursday	10.30 am to	North West Norfolk Phobbies	Meeting	St. Nicholas Church Hall
Every Thursday	4.00 to 5.15 pm	1st Dersingham Rainbow Guide	Meeting for girls aged 5-7 years	Scout & Guide HQ Manor Road

Every Thursday	7.00 to 9.30 pm	Norfolk Army Cadet Force	Sandringham Detachment Meeting	The Drill Hall, Dodds Hill
Every Thursday	7.00 to 9.00 pm	1st Sandringham Guide Unit	Unit Meeting	Dersingham Community Centre, Manor Road
Every Thursday	7.00 to 9.00 pm	1st Dersingham Scout Group	Group Meeting	Scout & Guide HQ Dersingham Sports Ground
Every Thursday	7.00 to 9.30 pm	Norfolk Army Cadet Force	Sandringham Detachment Meeting	The Drill Hall, Dodds Hill
1st Thursday of the Month		Dersingham Flower Club	Meeting	St Nicholas Church Hall
1st Thursday of the Month	7.15 to 10.00 pm	Dersingham Evening Women's Institute	Meeting	St Cecilia's Church Hall
2nd Thursday of the Month	7.30 pm	Dersingham Horticultural Society	Meeting	St Cecilia's Church Hall
3rd Thursday of the Month	9.30 to 10.30 am	Dersingham Methodist Church Jigsaw Club	Meeting	Dersingham Methodist Church Hall
Every Friday	6.30 to 8 pm	1st Dersingham Guide Unit	Unit Meeting	Scout & Guide HQ Dersingham Sports Ground
Every Friday	6.45 to 9.15 pm	Dersingham Carpet Bowls Club	Club Meeting	St George's Middle School
Alternate Fridays	2.15 to 4.30 pm	Dersingham Seniors Club	Entertainment and Out-ings for the over-60s	St Nicholas Church Hall
1st Friday of the month	10.00 am to 12 noon	St Nicholas Church	Coffee Morning	St Nicholas Church Hall

DIARY OF SPECIAL EVENTS

Thu 8 Feb	10.30 to 11 am	Dersingham Library	Pre-school Storytime	Dersingham Library
Fri 9 Feb	2 to 3.30 pm	Dersingham Library	Internet Taster Session	Dersingham Library
Tues 20 Feb	2 to 3.30 pm	Dersingham Library	Internet Taster Session	Dersingham Library
Wed 21 for 6 wks Feb		St Nicholas Church	Lent Lunches	St Nicholas Church Hall
Fri 16 Feb	2 - 3.30 pm	Dersingham Library	Internet Beginners Session	Dersingham Library
Fri 16 Mar	11 am to 3 pm	Friends of St Nicholas Church	Antiques Road Show and Valuation Day	Sandringham Visitor Centre
Thu 22 Feb	10.30 to 11 am	Dersingham Library	Pre-school Storytime	Dersingham Library
Thu 8 Mar	10.30 to 11 am	Dersingham Library	Pre-school Storytime	Dersingham Library
Fri 16 Mar		Hunstanton Lifeboat Guild	Fish & Chip Supper	Snettisham
Fri 16 Mar	6.30 pm	Friends of St Nicholas Church	Theatre Supper with West Acres Studios	Sandringham Visitor Centre
Thu 22 Mar	10.30 am to 11 am	Dersingham Library	Pre-school Storytime	Dersingham Library
Thu 22 Mar	7 for 7.30 pm	Park House Hotel Sandringham	Spring Dinner with Guest Speaker Dr Paul Richards	Park House Hotel Sandringham
Sat 31 Mar		St Nicholas Church	Children's Easter Activity Day	St Nicholas Church Hall

Norfolk Constabulary Western Mobile Police Station

West Norfolk Constabulary advise us that the Mobile Police Station will be open in Budgen's car park as follows; Wednesdays – 14 February and 14 March 2007 when Public Enquiry Officers Linda Forder and Pete Shaw will be in attendance along with P.C.Stan Cobon. Services which include; Advice, Crime recording, Information, Lost and found property, Crime prevention advice and literature. Useful contact telephone numbers are; Crimestoppers: 0800 555 111 and Norfolk Constabulary: 01953 424242

Please also note a new number on which to report crime which does not require the urgency of 999, this being 0845 456 4567

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 from £12.50 for an eighth of a 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 **14 March 2007**. Enquiries regarding advertisements may be made by calling 01485 541465.

Articles for publication in the April 2007 edition of Village Voice must reach the editor at 45 Queen Elizabeth Drive, Dersingham, email: dersinghamvillagevoice@yahoo.co.uk before the **deadline date of Wednesday 14 March 2007 for publication on Wednesday 5 April 2007**. (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 Newsletter of Dersingham Parish Council

The Village Voice Production

Team consists of

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