

Dersingham Village Voice



Six local community groups in Dersingham received funds from the James Graven Community Chest on November 27th. Jonathan James (left) awarded cheques to the representatives of Dersingham Seniors Club, Dersingham Day Centre for the Elderly, Flying Geese Patchwork and Quilting Group, Dersingham Cricket Club, 1st and 2nd Dersingham Brownie Guides and 1st Dersingham Scouts.

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Editor's Notes



Right that's Christmas and New Year done and dusted and we are all set for a wonderful 2009.

New for this year is a piece by Steve Nowell with the promise of more, a Grumpy Column for anyone to contribute to, local author Mary Mackie with news of a new book with local interest, Bryan Beers the garden farmer writes about things to do in the coming weeks on the vegetable plot and a good scattering of goodies from the regulars.

It's good to be already getting details of events coming in the spring. Do send in your plans and announcements so they can be publicised - there is a list of deadlines on page 72 - and don't forget to follow up with a report on how the event went preferably with pictures.

A rare word of praise now for the Borough Council. In November I put money in the Baker Lane car park ticket machine only to find the coins had jammed. I was able to winkle out the 2 smaller coins but the pound and fifty pence were stuck fast. A gentle thump to the device set off an alarm which went "wow wow wow" for some 5 minutes whilst I waited for an official to come and sort it or me out. Nobody came so I resigned myself to being out of pocket and went on my way.

However, a phone call to the council offices on my return home proved worthwhile and my details were taken together with the promise of a refund. The letter duly came, the payments office coughed up and I can now afford the cake that I had gone without a few weeks before. Well done!

When you get to read V V all the work has been done but the days between the deadline and getting the copy to the printer are quite hectic. Trying to squeeze those last minute quarts into the pint pot that is the allotted number of pages takes some ingenuity so please don't leave sending stuff in until the last minute. Happy reading.

Tony Bubb

Do watch the Parish Council noticeboards for details of a public meeting in February to hear about new policing arrangements for the area. Inspector David Buckley and Stephen Bett of the police authority will be present.

DIARY OF SPECIAL EVENTS*

Date	Time	Event	Organisation	Venue
Sat 14th Feb	10 am	Coffee morning	Methodist Church	Methodist Church
Sat 14th March	8 pm	Horse Race night	Dersingham Cricket Club	Feathers Hotel
Sat 14th March	10 am	Coffee morning	Methodist Church	Methodist Church
Sat 4th April	10 am	Coffee morning	Methodist Church	Methodist Church

* This information is listed in good faith & we cannot accept responsibility if an event does not take place.

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Dear Village Voice

Very many thanks to the numerous people who supported this appeal which resulted in 260 boxes wending their way to Eastem Europe and South Africa. Thanks also to those who knitted hats, scarves and gloves and gave extra gifts to include in the boxes. It's not too early to start collecting items for November 2009.

Joan Schorah



After seeing the coverpicture on Village Voice issue 55 I thought you might be interested in my enclosed 'shot' I took a couple of years ago coming down from the top end of Fern Hill.

On returning to take another picture, to my dismay, I found that the dead tree upon which the ivy was growing had just been 'grubbed' up, so this is the only picture in existence of the 'Devil of Fern Hill'.

J. D. Tomlinson

May I please add a few words to my cousin Pat Linford's article in the December Village Voice about Linford's shop or Glebe House as the family knows it.

According to my father, Clarence (younger brother of Roland), the house as shown in the photograph was built about 1902 by my grandfather Frederick. It was built of Heacham hand-made bricks, had 5 bedrooms and 2 staircases, and was the first house in the village to have either electricity or a bathroom - I'm not sure which. My grandfather was a builder, sign-writer, plumber and cabinet maker and was quite highly and multi-skilled; in fact he made the wooden memorial to the victims of WW1 in St Nicholas Church and also did the gold-leaf work. He built the shop for my grandmother to sell sweets, fancy goods, postcards and crested china etc and the story goes that King George's children with their governess would cycle from Sandringham to buy sweets there. On the lawn (Station Road side) grandmother would serve teas during the summer and years later when asked what he would like for his tea, my father would reply "plain tea sixpence". I imagine that this would have consisted of a pot of tea, a piece of cake and some bread and butter. Two bungalows now occupy this site.

There were 6 children. Grandmother died prematurely in 1920. Grandfather later married a local schoolteacher, Mabel Tombling, and they had a daughter, Edna. Edna married Alex Fisher from the fish shop (now the Chinese take-away). Incidentally, these premises used to be a bakery owned by Mr J (Jimmy) Jarvis and was one of 3 bakeries in the village then! His bakery was destroyed by fire.

Before the last war I remember travelling up from London by train once a year to visit grandfather, "Auntie" Mabel and Edna, usually on an excursion for the day, but sometimes to stay for a holiday. These were always very happy occasions. Perhaps some readers will remember Edna and Alex who were both active in the village. Edna, now a widow, lives in Snettisham.

Doreen Linford

In the December edition of V V Dick Melton referred to house names in the village and the one Sea View is actually now number 20 Pansey Drive. When my late father bought this house in 1937 it was Sea View, Glebe Road as Pansey Drive was then known and, yes, as a child I could see the sea from my bedroom window.

I still live in the house and only last year I put an old school friend correct as to the new address. I had never mentioned it before to her because the postman knew everyone regardless of their correct address, but not now, and of course post codes were not heard of in our youth.

Another coincidence, he also named 'Kia Ora' on Hunstanton Road. My mother was born in that house in 1895.

Doreen Wright ▶

I am a 23 year old living in the village and write to enquire if your readers can give me any help or advice regarding a project I am trying to set up in the village or the surrounding areas.

You may have heard of community garden projects as there are many dotted about the country and this is what I'm looking to create for our community. Firstly I need to find some land and I am aware of and in contact with many funding companies. I have contacted our mayor but thought you could assist me either with a small mention in our Village Voice or any other way you can.

The project will be much like our existing allotments with the difference being nobody has to pay and everyone is welcome - especially focusing on elderly members and young children from our surrounding schools.

I feel our village has lost its community spirit and especially our roots with agriculture that, I feel, being in Norfolk we need to celebrate and bring back.

I aim to support our local groups such as the camera club and art clubs so there is a place they can come and use for their creativity in beautiful surroundings and even have competitions where you can win a sack of our own grown potatoes etc.

I want somewhere our village can be proud of, can come together and get to know one another to bring back the forgotten times when you knew everyone who walked by you in your local streets.

If you feel this is something you would like to be a part of please contact me either by email - nikdorman@yahoo.co.uk or on 01485 541124 and I will greatly appreciate your time!

Nicola Dorman

Could the lady named Joyce who was interested in joining the village Task Force please get in touch again - 543870 - as your details have gone missing.

Suzanne

Please could I make an appeal to your readers for buttons. As a keen crafts person I use quite a lot of buttons and I wondered if any of your readers had "Granny's button tin" needing a good home. If they do perhaps they could drop them into Dersingham library, I really would be very grateful. I have toured local charity shops on the hunt already but to no avail.

Linda Beer

Live in hope © Hugh Mullarkey 06-01-09

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Carole Brown Health Centre Patients' Participation Group

Dr Goel.

After 3 years with the practice at the Carole Brown Health Centre (CBHC), Dr Anil Goel has departed for pastures new in Canberra, Australia. His caring attitude and kindness will be missed by his patients but he and his family leave with our best wishes. En route to Australia, he will stop off in Southern India to help with a clinic where he and five colleagues have been providing voluntary medical services for many years. A lady doctor has been selected to replace Dr Goel at the CBHC and she will take up her post in March. Pictured below is George Barton presenting Dr Goel with a farewell gift.



By petitioning the government, Patients from the CBHC have helped prevent the Department of Health implementing a proposal to no longer allow GP practices to dispense medicines at their surgeries and health centres. This would have limited the ability of the CBHC to dispense medicines to those who live more than a mile from their nearest pharmacy - a major reduction in service. It shows that 'Patient Power' does sometimes work and the PPG, the GPs and the practice management are grateful to those who made the effort to write to the Department of Health objecting to their proposals.

Once again, the Patient Survey has demonstrated an overall level of satisfaction with the level of service provided by our practice. Thank you to all who completed and returned the survey forms. They provide the practice and higher health authorities with a good indication of the strengths and weaknesses of health service provision. □

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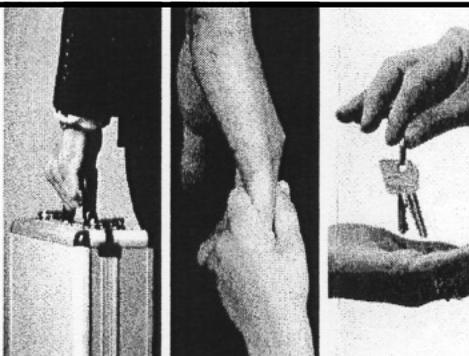
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DERSINGHAM WALKING GROUP

We are always looking for new leaders and new routes for walks so, if anyone would like to help, please let me know.

The programme for February and March is:

WEDNESDAY 11th FEBRUARY

Start at 2.00pm from Thornham Church (map ref.L132/734 435). A 4 miles circular walk around Thomham led by Lindsey and Steve Davis (543 138).

WEDNESDAY 11th MARCH

Start at 2.00pm from the lay-by on the A148 (opposite the junction with the road from Sandringham (B1440)) (map ref.L132/711 253). A 4 miles circular walk led by Pat Reed (540757).

SUNDAY 22nd MARCH

Start at 2.00pm from the Sandringham Visitor Centre (map ref.L132/689 287). A 4.5 miles circular walk around the Country Park led by Christine Taylor and Geoff Toop (542807). There is **NO CHARGE** for these walks: just turn up on the day (wearing suitable clothing and sturdy footwear).

WELL-BEHAVED dogs are welcome provided that they are kept at the rear of the group. The leaders are happy to organise and lead these walks but stress that each participant must appreciate that there are hazards associated with walking and take responsibility for their own safety.

If you would like any further information please contact me or the walk leader. □

Keith Starks (542268)



'Bob's Box Office' Creates Interest

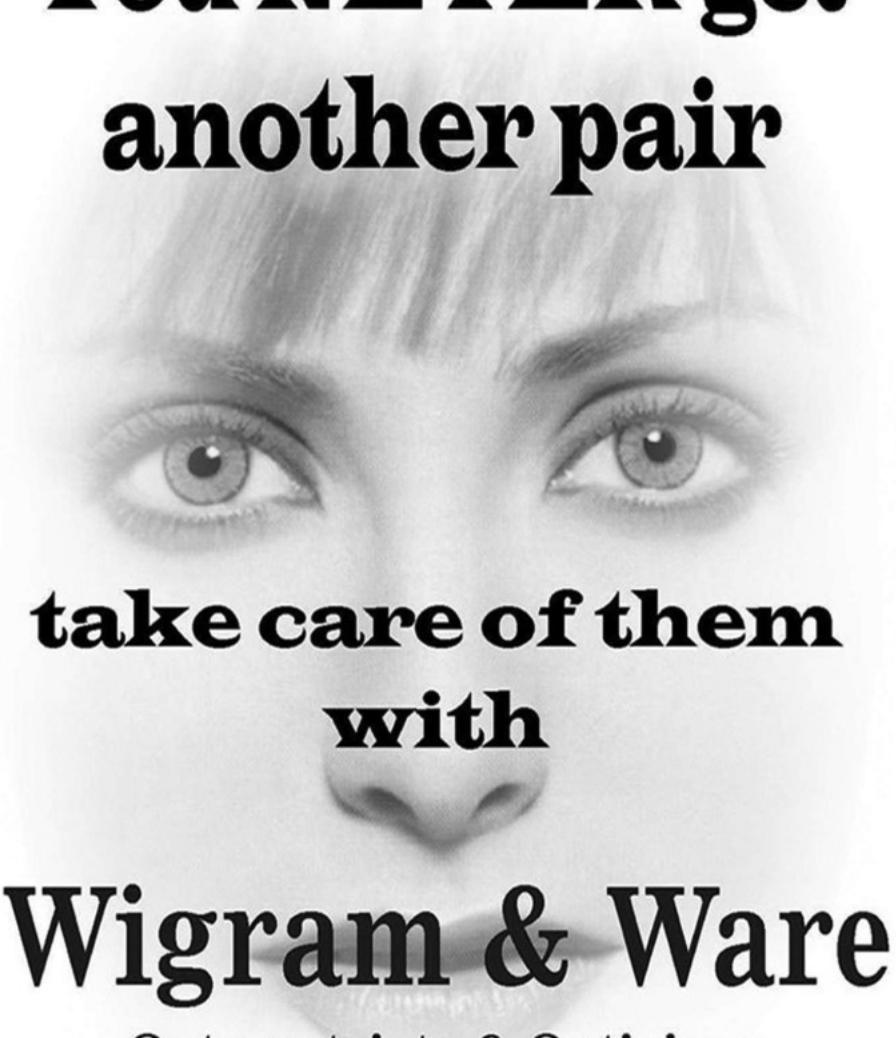
James Graven and Sons Ltd, the owners of Budgen's supermarket in Dersingham, are nothing if not innovative, their latest initiative being the introduction of a free community facility whereby members of a local organisation or charity can request the services of the local company representative, Bob Tipling, to promote and sell advance tickets for events being held, or to offer raffle tickets, etc. for sale. Bob intends to be available at the Dersingham store from 10am to 12noon on the second Friday of each month for this purpose. The next day of opening will be Friday 13 February 2008*, and items for sale must be supplied 48 hours in advance of this date.



The first opening of 'Bob's Box Office,' as it is to be known, was on the morning of Friday 28 November 2008, when tickets for events at Park House Hotel (A Leonard Cheshire Homes facility for disabled people) - lottery and raffle tickets on behalf of The Norfolk Hospice, Tapping House - season tickets for The Sandringham Estate and events tickets for EACH (The East Anglian Children's Hospice) were on offer to the public, creating a great deal of interest to users of the store.

Any club, organisation or charity may request Bob's assistance in selling tickets, etc. by completing a simple form which is available from the Customer Service Desk in store, or by e-mail from: bob@jamesgraven-retail.co.uk □

**Tickets for "Winston the singing farmer" at the April Village Voice Live will be available.*



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Parish Council Report



Dersingham made the media headlines in December with the anthrax scare, which luckily turned out to be a false alarm. This incident was mentioned in the Police Crime Statistics report to the Parish Council. As we now know it was all a hoax. It is sad that police time was wasted by such thoughtless action by someone, however the Council also learned at the November meeting that anti social behaviour concerning the cricket pitch, the sports pavilion and the Scout Hut had occurred. Attempts were made also, by a large group of youngsters, to damage the Recreation

Ground play equipment and individuals have been taking dog waste bags out of the dog bins in the Burma Close/Earl Close area and throwing them into gardens and onto roofs. A 'closed' dog bin has subsequently been erected by the Parish Council at Burma Close/Earl Close and the Recreation Ground is now locked at night. Perhaps this will stop some of the anti social behaviour incidents.

The matter of a Unitary Council for the whole of Norfolk is now the subject of a Judicial review. This was reported by one of our Borough Councillors and we should know the outcome in January. The wheels of democracy seem to turn very slowly.

The Parish Council now feel that they should become more involved with the new Village Hall project. To this end, a group of four councillors are to meet with the Village Hall working party, hopefully before the council meeting at the end of January. They will report back to the Council and then a decision will be made on how to progress. The Council felt that the project had been dragging its feet for too long. Watch this space.

Most of us will have noticed that work on the War Memorial garden is progressing well and that wooden sleepers have been put down to create raised planting beds. Councillor Houston, who is project managing the work, told the council that, weather permitting the job should be finished by the end of January after which a re-dedication ceremony of the Memorial was a possibility.

Our County Councillor was unable to attend the December Parish Council meeting, so there is no further news regarding the library sign or the County's Icelandic investments, we will have to wait for news in respect of these points. □



DERSINGHAM OPEN GARDENS

2.00p.m. to 6.00p.m., 24th and 25th May 2009



Come and be inspired by some fascinating, spectacular and varied gardens!

Tickets (£3.00 per adult. Children: free) will be available at the Church Hall and at participating gardens. Cream teas will be available at the Church Hall. Some of the gardens also provide refreshments. Income from the event is to benefit the parish church.

Have you ever thought of opening your garden for this event. As well as our regular gardens, which visitors appreciate seeing each year, we are always keen to add new hidden gems to our list. If you love your garden and like to show others what you have created, please contact me, Neil Adams on 540857 to discuss this.

Please also make a note to visit the Flower Festival at the Methodist Church which is taking place at the same time.

Once again we will be running the St Nicholas Gallery in the church hall displaying for sale the work of local artists. Do contact me if you might like to exhibit. □

Neil Adams

The Sandringham Newsletter

by kind permission of the Sandringham Estate



We have now finished another very busy visitor season for the House, Museum and Gardens which began with 400 intrepid visitors braving the snow on Easter Day last March. Visitor numbers were about on par with the previous season, though with less than glorious summers in both years.

The Visitor Centre remains open every day all the way through the winter. The House staff were busy getting ready for the arrival of The Queen and the Royal Family in December, taking down ropes and ramps and tuning the House back into a private residence for the winter. Sandringham has been a favourite Royal winter residence for almost 150 years, since it was bought in 1861 for the then Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII. Shooting at Sandringham has always been an important part of the Royal Family's calendar, and the Estate is managed to provide sustainable habitats for game, with hedgerows, wildlife strips and wetland areas. Nearly all the game shot these days is sent to the kitchens at Sandringham and at Buckingham Palace; it is, almost by definition, a free-range and sustainably reared food, and it tastes delicious, too.

Local residents may have seen that the Estate had applied for planning permission to provide two new classrooms for Sandringham & West Newton School by remodelling the former Headmaster's House next door. The School has almost 100 children on its roll and has struggled for some years to find space for all the activities they would like to offer, using portable buildings, summer houses and the village hall to keep going. We are delighted that planning permission has now been granted for this extension.

The sugar-beet harvest is nearly finished; 500 acres (200 hectares) are grown on the Estate's Farm and harvested in blocks between September and February to fit the times when the processing plant can accept the deliveries. After the sugar-beet is harvested, the tops are left in the fields, which attracts the pink-footed geese that fly in in their thousands from the coast to feed (and it also helps to divert them from the young shoots in the fields of autumn-sown cereals).

As well as welcoming the pink-footed geese back, we've been noticing flocks of curlews on meadows and permanent grassland this autumn. Curlews are of course wading birds usually found at the coast, but this year's wet weather means that they can search for worms and other small creatures in the very damp soil as easily as if they were beside the sea.

At the Fruit Farm, all the apples have now been picked and pressing is under way to turn them into juice, which is sold mainly at the Visitor Centre but also from Waitrose and from the Farm Shop and Savill Garden shop at Windsor; it is also served at Royal Garden Parties (there's a video about apple pressing on the Apple Juice page of the Sandringham web site (www.sandringhamestate.co.uk), listed under Estate Produce on the left). Estate land was also used this year to grow organic strawberries for a special version of Duchy Originals' Strawberry Preserve; you probably won't find it in the larger supermarkets, but it is available from the Gift Shop at the Visitor Centre.

Gardeners will know that this is a good time for planting bare-root trees and shrubs, and the Estate is about to begin planting 6,000 trees, forming 4 miles of hedges. At the same time, Norway Spruce trees have been cut down for Christmas trees for sale at the Sawmill; the Estate also donates dozens of Christmas trees to local schools, churches and community organisations.

The Forestry department are thinning out young trees at the moment as part of the Estate's policy of continuous cover by natural regeneration. Instead of clearing a whole section and then replanting with saplings, the maturer trees are left to keep growing and producing seed; periodically these younger trees are removed to give more light and air, and to make room for the next generation of small trees. Eventually the older trees will be felled for timber, but there will be a ready-made crop of replacement trees coming through. The smaller trees being harvested now are taken to the Sawmill to be processed into firewood logs, for which there is an

unprecedented demand this winter.

Finally, newsletter readers may already have noticed that the Great Bircham Village Shop has changed proprietors, and the Estate is pleased to welcome its new tenants there; and in Dersingham, Norfolk County Council have returned the Tithe Barn (next to St Nicholas Church) to the Estate's ownership and we will be embarking on a programme of repairs and conservation there at some point in the New Year. □

GRAND SALE

The annual sale will be held on Saturday 25th April, from 9.00 am. to 12.00 noon in Dersingham Church Hall. There will be a large selection of good secondhand books (plus jig-saw puzzles, videos and C.D.s.). There will also be a varied and interesting collection of bric-a-brac, plus a range of well-presented nearly new clothing.

We are not able to sell large pieces of furniture, or anything that is upholstered. Unfortunately we will not accept any electrical goods. All items for the bric-a-brac stall should be delivered to the Church Hall as early as possible on Friday, 24th April, from 9.00am. onwards, although Books and Clothing can be received at any time in the coming weeks. Books and Clothing can be delivered to the monthly Coffee Mornings, (on the first Friday of every month, from 10.00a.m. to 12.00 noon). Alternatively you can contact one of the people listed below.

If you have any items to donate for this sale, please contact Mary Sharp (Tel: 01485 540350) for clothing. Doreen Asker (Tel: 01485 540601) is the contact for the Bric-a-Brac. Neil Adams (Tel: 01485 540857) is the contact for Books and any general enquiries about the sale.

Please make a note of this date on your calendar and tell your friends.

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Old Picture Corner



February 11th 1952 and the funeral procession of King George the 6th starts out to Wolferton Station for the train to London and then on to Windsor. Were you in the crowd?

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Will the new roses ever get this big?





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Christmas Concerts at Park House

‘Since singing is so good a thing
I wish that all would learn to sing’

So wrote William Byrd, one of England’s greatest early (16th century) composers. And how right he was, especially when it comes to singing in a choir. Certainly, the two choirs who came to help in the days before Christmas gave much pleasure to their audiences in the Park House Conservatory.

First came Cantus, a ladies’ choir based in Wisbech with 16 voices under the direction of Val Lowe. They sang tasteful arrangements in 2 and 3 parts of a variety of Carols and Christmas music ranging from Shows and Films (‘Who Would Imagine a King’) through to a couple of delightful folksongs. I liked the clear tone and unfussy presentation of their singing, not over-sugaring the John Rutter Carols for example. The accompanist Janice Loose and the two gifted young soloists, Alice Wong and Nilushi Kaunaratne, added to the enjoyment of it all.



Val gets the choir going

There was also a welcome return visit from the Sandringham Church choir under Peter Hook’s always expert direction. Again we had a wide selection of Christmastide music such as ‘Silent Night’ and other traditional Carols, an unexpected and lively chorus from Handel’s Messiah (‘And the Glory of the Lord’), and even ‘I Saw Mummy Kissing Santa Claus’! There is clearly a warm team-spirit among these church choir members which came across in the conviction of all their singing together and in their response to Peter’s conducting. Let me add some special words of praise for the contraltos (so important in a 4-part choir) for John Jordan the accompanist, and for Bernice Allen and Pat Knights with their delightful Christmas readings.



Peter Hook directs the choir

Alan Warren

Old friends and some new faces entertained an audience of visitors, hotel guests, volunteers and friends once again in the Conservatory at Park House – an ideal venue for ‘Christmas Crackers’ the last of three very varied fund-raising musical events in the run-up to Christmas.

‘Clearer Productions’ were without their Music Director (Neil Cleary) through illness but the team of Nicky Reader, Drew Kidger, Jane Compton (piano) and Niall Webb (woodwind & bells!) took us through a lovely programme of songs, readings and stories to send us home humming all those familiar tunes – ‘Let it Snow’, ‘Sleigh Ride’, ‘Jingle Bells’, ‘Frosty the Snowman’, to name but a few. Nicky sang beautifully and moved as usual with charm among the audience, dazzling us with her rapid costume changes. Drew also sang but introduced us to seasonal stories and verses, such as Little Red Riding Hood in a Roald Dahl version from his collection of ‘Revoltin’ Rhymes’. And with skilful backing from the piano and woodwind, they coaxed the audience into some cheerful participation, especially from Eric Knighton and Ted Overall (both visitors but old friends of Park House) who were allocated special parts in the rendition of ‘The Twelve Days of Christmas’. □

Nigel Sisson



Drew & Nicky’s final duet



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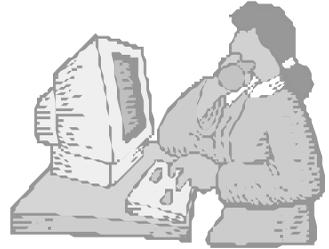
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From the parish office....

The start of a new year seems like the ideal time to appeal for new Parish Councillors. There are currently thirteen serving councillors, although Dersingham Parish Council should have eighteen members. In the spring of 2008, Jean Riches, who had served as a councillor for many years, decided the time had come to retire. During 2008 three parishioners, Doug McNeill, Chris Berry and Allan Maxwell came forward and were duly co-opted on to Council. So there are still five vacancies to be filled. If you



have considered becoming a Parish Councillor but was not sure what was involved why not come along to a Full Council meeting and see for yourself. You might even like to contribute, there is the opportunity for you to comment for 15 minutes at the start and end of each meeting. There is one Full Council meeting each month, held on the last Monday, plus usually one meeting of each of the four Parish Council Committees. The committees are Environment; Communications; Recreation Ground; and Finance, General Purposes and Administration. Between them the committees cover all aspects of the work of the Parish Council. The purpose of the committees is for a small group of councillors to carry out in depth research of their areas of responsibility and then take their recommendations to Full Council. I thought it might help if I outlined some of the activities of the committees during 2008.

The Environment Committee has responsibility for street lighting, bus shelters, footpaths, litter bins, dog waste bins, the provision of seats and benches, etc. During 2008 the Environment Committee was responsible for the two new bus shelters, outside the Recreation Ground and opposite Thaxters. No doubt several of you have been grateful for these new shelters during these wet winter months. The Environment Committee also organised the renovation of the village sign.

The Recreation Ground Committee has responsibility for the recreation ground and the area around the War Memorial. 2008 was a busy year for this committee, organising the work presently being carried out around the War Memorial and also researching the most suitable pieces of equipment for the play area on the recreation ground. Some of the present play equipment is coming to the end of its' life and needs to be replaced. New equipment is being ordered and should be erected soon. Hopefully the new equipment will be challenging and fun for the youngsters.

The Communications Committee organises the production of Dersingham DATA which is produced annually; the bi-monthly Village Voice; and Village Voice Live which is held on the first Tuesday of each month. DATA 2009 is currently being printed and should be ready for distribution mid-January. Cllr Tony Bubb, Chairman of Communications Committee, edits Village Voice and is chiefly responsible for the Village Voice Live evenings which in 2008 covered a wide range of subjects from bee keeping to chocolate tasting. There are several interesting evenings already booked for 2009.

The Finance, General Purposes and Administration Committee is predominantly responsible for the Council's finances but also any administrative matters that may arise. This Committee of five councillors consider financial and other matters and then, after making their decision, make their recommendations to Full Council. One of the main functions of this committee is to prepare the budget which will decide the level of the parish precept. The level of the precept affects how much council tax you will pay, as part of your council tax is used to provide services for Dersingham.

I hope this has given you an insight into the work of a Parish Councillor. If I have whetted your appetite do call into the Parish Office for a chat or speak to any Parish Councillor. Perhaps by the end of 2009 Dersingham Parish Council may have its' full complement of 18 councillors! □

Happy New Year

Irene

Edwina

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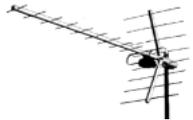
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SHORT STROLLS IN AND AROUND DERSINGHAM

3. The Hills to the North-east.

As footpaths are liable to be more muddy than usual at this time of year, the 2 miles circular walk outlined this time is all on surfaced roads and pavements (although there is a footpath short cut should you wish to use it). For your safety, remember to walk on the side of the road facing on-coming traffic and be aware of approaching vehicles so that you can step on to the grass verge if necessary.

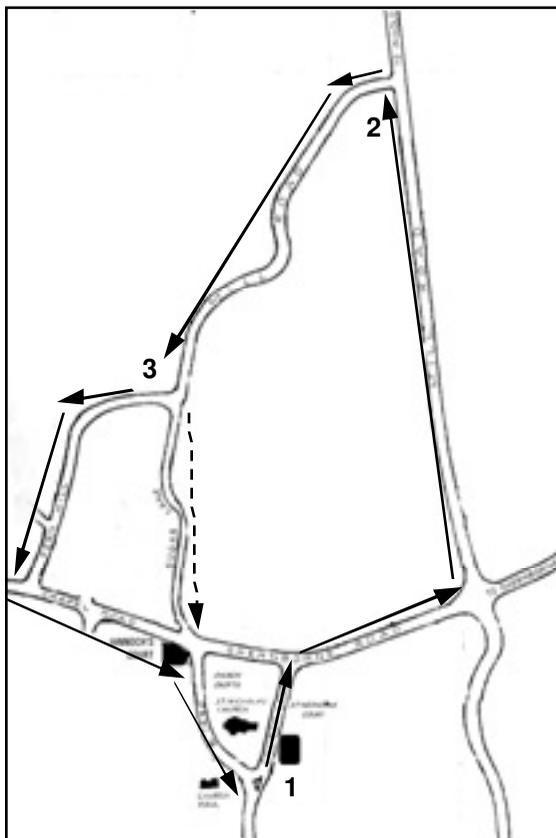
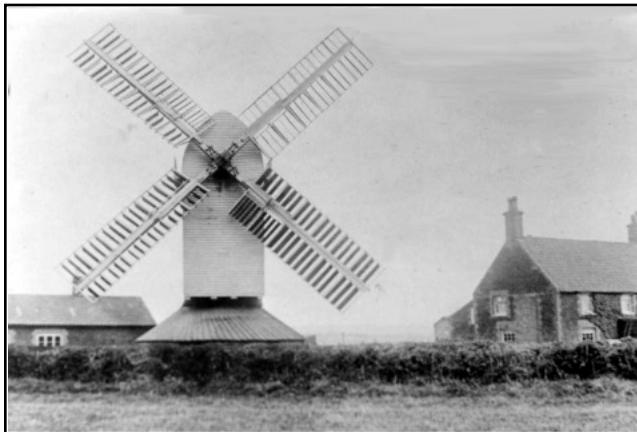
The walk starts from the entrance to St. Nicholas Court (1 on the sketch). Walk along Church Lane (passing St.

Nicholas Church on your left) until Shernbome Road is reached. Turn right and walk up the hill to the crossroads. Turn left into Mill Road and follow it until you reach some houses on your left with a road between them. This is where Dersingham's post-mill used to stand (2 on the sketch).

Turn left and follow what is still Mill Road round a left-hand bend and then on the long straight to another left-hand bend from where there are good views of the Wash. Shortly after this, the road bends to the right and becomes Fern Hill. On the bend (3 on the sketch) you have a choice. If you want to stay on the road, descend Fern Hill to Chapel Road. If you want to shorten the walk, turn left at the footpath sign and walk down Sugar Lane to come onto Chapel Road opposite Jannoch's Court.

In both cases, cross Chapel Road (with care) and turn left. Follow the pavement round the right-hand bend as the road becomes Manor Road and continue on it (passing the Tithe Barn and St. Nicholas Church on your left). Cross Manor Road at the end of the churchyard and the entrance to St. Nicholas Court is facing you.

Keith Starks



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Bobs Garden Service and Bobs Logs

Robert Kidman started working as an agricultural engineer and then progressed to general farm work before working for himself by starting Bobs Garden Service in April 2006.

He has lived in Dersingham for 10 years and with his partner Rumanah they have 2 children, 2 year old Sophie and 7 year old Henry.

Robert has recently added landscaping services to his list which also includes lawn mowing, hedge trimming, turfing and lawn feed application, tree pruning and lopping and general garden clean ups. On the hard landscaping side he can provide fencing, patios, paths, brickweave block paving and shingled areas.

During the winter season he has seasoned logs - Apple, Ash, Silver Birch and Alder which he delivers by the truck load to Dersingham and the surrounding villages. He has a 6 inch capacity shredder/ chipper for hire and can supply bark mulch and compost.

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Robert can be contacted on 01485 540812 or on mobile 07900 830715. □



Bringing the community together

Following on from a successful Community Lunch held at St George's Junior School last year, we would like to hold these events more regularly throughout 2009. The aim of the Community Lunch is for businesses, schools, churches and other local organisations in Dersingham to share news, information and discuss community issues over a light lunch. They provide an opportunity for the local community to get together on a regular basis, share best practice and address issues affecting Dersingham and the surrounding area.

The meetings are designed to fit into the working day, held usually at lunchtimes at a convenient location and last no more than one hour. For those individuals who represent organisations within Dersingham but work outside the area we are looking to hold Community Dinners as an alternative.

If you would like to be involved in setting these up, have any ideas to contribute or alternatively would like to attend the next event, please contact Bob Tipling at the Budgens store in Dersingham or email bob@jamesgraven-retail.co.uk. Alternatively, you can contact Community Manager, Sarah Stevens on 07884 282869 or sarahs@jamesgraven.com. The next event is likely to take place during February 2009. □



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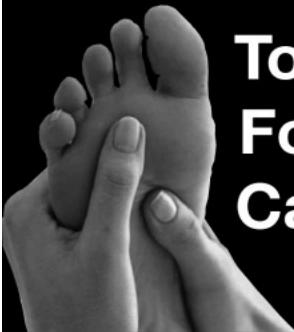
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It's a breeze

The local windsurfing, kitesurfing, and dinghy sailing scene

If you find yourself at Hunstanton on the prom or clifftop, and there is anything of a wind blowing, you will see wind surfers and kite surfers doing their thing. You may see the wind surfers pulling off jumps and loops and other acrobatics, often ending in a splash and abrupt stop from which they usually get going very quickly. The kites pull off even higher jumps, and can stay airborne for what seems like ages. The skill level needed to be able to pull off these tricks needs a lot of dedication, and most of the experts have got to their present level by lots of hard work and perseverance. The learning curve can be steep, and sometimes painful, not to mention expensive, but to have a good time on a board or under a kite one does not need to be a single-issue fanatic.

Any reader who would like to than talking to Tony Gostling at 01553 679090, www.surf55.co.uk in the spring and summer, and speed and adrenalin-rush with the Safety advice, to anyone taking knowing your limitations, own skill levels, know the strengths, sail with buddies and

There are several active area, the closest of which are Sailing Club, and Hunstanton sailing is great fun, and to learn contact club officers via their www.hunstantonsc.co.uk and www.sailingatsnettishambeach.org

have a go could do worse Surf55 in King's Lynn, He runs beginners courses will combine the search for need for safe survival. to the water, starts with always sail within your effects of tides and wind look out for each other. sailing clubs in our Snettisham Beach Sailing Club. Dinghy how to make a start, websites. □

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Monday 10.30 am to 2.00 pm Tuesday 10.30 am to 2.00 pm
 Wednesday 10.30 am to 12.30 pm Thursday 10.30 am to 12.30 pm

The Dersingham Parish Council Office is at
 The Police Station, Manor Road, Dersingham, Norfolk PE316LH
 Tel: 01485 541465 E-mail: dersinghampc@tiscali.co.uk

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The Dersingham Bridge Club



Thirteen years ago, following a very busy business and public life, I found myself, recently retired and widowed after almost 50 years of happy marriage, living alone in a modest bungalow at Bircham. The days were long. Then I met Joan Dixon of Lynn

Road, Dersingham. Joan had taught with my sister, Mary, for many years at Hunstanton's Modern Secondary School. She, assisted by Miniam Walpole, a former chairman of the Hunstanton Club, set about teaching me to play bridge. The only card games I had played previously were village whist drives when young and pontoon in the Army.

I immediately found the game so stimulating - it requires mental agility, practises the memory and powers of reasoning and, above all, gives one the company of so many others with a common interest. I was hooked.

The Dersingham Club, formerly the Ingoldisthorpe Club, was founded in 1956. It first met at the Ingoldisthorpe village hall. It then moved to Dersinghams St Nicholas Church Hall. I am told it was forced to leave there because at the time the roof leaked badly. It then moved to the 'Gamekeepers Lodge' Public House, where it prospered for several years under a popular chairman, the late Don Sadler, then of Silver Drive, Dersingham. My first event at the Club, twelve years ago, was a Christmas dinner followed by a bridge session. The attendance was huge. I was partnered by Joan. We played against the 'Two Ronnies', a duo with a formidable reputation. They thrashed us. I enjoyed every minute of it. When the 'Gamekeepers' finished the Club moved to the Community Centre. We played there for several years, but members found it rather sparse and very cold in mid-winter. Two years ago we moved to 'The Feathers', where we were given the exclusive use of the small bar, which we found pleasurable and warm - occasionally too warm. In addition to the coffee provided at half time, a pint of bitter can help those powers of concentration. At the same time I found myself elected to the office of Club Chairman which I accepted with some trepidation as I knew it required the same high standards as those set by my predecessors, Don Sadler and Jim Young. It came as a terrible shock when we learned just before the start of this season that the 'Feathers' had closed. Aply assisted by my Club Officers, we sought alternative venues. We found six possibilities. Just as we were about to put them to a member's vote, I received a phone call telling me the 'Feathers' had re-opened. What a relief.

I rushed down to Dersingham to be met by the same smiling faces as we had known before. I, and all the Club members, wish them well in their new management venture in the current difficult times.

The Club meets every Tuesday evening from 7 pm. to 10 pm., from nearly September to early May. At the end of season we hold a dinner for members and their spouses or friends. At the Dersingham Club we seek to enjoy our bridge. Whilst we strictly observe the Rules of Etiquette of the English Bridge Union we do not take the game as seriously as they do in some Clubs. We play rubber bridge, ACOL system, weak no trump. I am helped by the secretary, Jo Percival of Woodlands Avenue, whose late husband was a respected chairman of the Club in the '90s, and the treasurer, Brian Mott of Shouldham Close, who manages the finances so well that from the payment of an annual subscription of £3 and £1.50 fee each evening, coffee and biscuits are provided and members enjoy the annual dinner free. We gamble at the club - one can win or lose 1p. for each 100 points won or lost. The most I have ever won or lost in one evening is 50 pence.

Regrettably, several of our older members have had to leave us recently because of poor health associated with their age and we have vacancies for new members. We do not expect new members to be bridge geniuses, but to have a reasonable working knowledge of the game. To those who would like to start from scratch we may be able to recommend sources of tuition so they can reach the intermediate standard before joining us.

I will be pleased to discuss the possibilities with anyone interested. I am at Brecham Lodge, Church Lane, Bircham, e-mail : brechamlodge@tiscali.co.uk or 01485-578-424. □

John Howard, Club Chairman

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News from the RSPCA

The RSPCA is well known for its work with cats, dogs, horses and farm animals, but many people are less familiar with its work with wildlife. The RSPCA East Winch Wildlife Centre moved from Docking to East Winch in 1992, and its aim is to rehabilitate British wildlife for return to the wild.

Wildlife casualties are brought to us either via the RSPCA's system of Animal Collection Officers, or by the public.

Each year we see a number of casualties from Dersingham, and in 2008 we treated a number of collared doves, wood pigeons, gulls, deer and garden birds. As in previous years, hedgehogs top the list – these small creatures seem to find hazards in many different ways!

One of the more unusual casualties was a nuthatch – one of only two treated at the Centre in 2008 – admitted as a result of flying into a window. Fortunately after treatment for concussion, the bird was released the next day.

The staff at the Centre would like to thank the people of Dersingham for their support of our work, and also for the steady stream of towels brought to us – as we are sure you know by now, we need an endless supply of towels, tea towels, flannels and blankets. Thank you and a very happy new year to you all. □



Sue Levings, Supervisor

DERSINGHAM CRICKET CLUB

Dersingham Cricket Club recently held their AGM at The Feathers Hotel, the following members were appointed. Chairman Roger Poll, Richard Southgate reappointed Treasurer, Sid Dobing reappointed as Secretary. The club are looking forward to the 2009 season with the senior team playing in the Norfolk Alliance League 2 plus two junior teams. The club will be fund raising throughout the coming months with a Quiz Night already held on 23rd Jan and a Race Night at The Feathers Hotel on Saturday 14th March. Your support for the coming events would be much appreciated. The club is also looking for new players, please contact me, Roger Poll on 01485 542346 if you are interested in playing for the club or would like to become a Vice President or can help in any fund raising. Fixtures for the coming season will be published in the next issue. □

Roger Poll



Thursday 26 February - 7.30pm
The West Norfolk branch invites you to their
AGM followed by AN ATLANTIC ODYSSEY

An illustrated talk by *Geoff Randall*

Venue: Hunstanton Methodist Church hall, Austin Street
Cost: £1 members/£2 non-members, with refreshments





ONCE UPON A TIME..

Are you sitting comfortably? In this season of long dark evenings, ghost tales and hopes for a bright New Year, let me tell you a story. A true and sorry story, about a Victorian woman who lived here in West Norfolk and who liked to be known as 'the Lady Farmer of Sandringham'. Her name was Mrs Gerard Cresswell (known as Louise) and for eighteen years, 1862-80, she was resident lease-holder of Appleton Farm on Sandringham Estate.

In 1887, seven years after leaving Appleton, Louise Cresswell published a book, *Eighteen Years on Sandringham Estate*. It's an entertaining read, bringing aspects of rural Norfolk and life on the royal estate to vivid life, but it is also laced with bitter criticism of the Prince of Wales (later Edward VII) and especially of the lackeys who conspired with their royal master to evict a lonely, defenceless widow, and her young son, from their beloved home at Appleton Farm. Louise says that the depredations wrought by thousands of hares, which the Prince bred for his shooting pleasure, ruined her crops and drove her to bankruptcy and, eventually, into exile in America's Wild West.

You may have come across her in another book, *Whisper Louise*, written by David Duff and published in 1974. Or perhaps you have read my own fictionalized version, *Sandringham Rose*, published in 1992.

Despite these various renditions of her story, it occurred to me that we still knew very little about her. Her own book covers only the years 1862-80; she is vague about dates and time-scales; she portrays herself as a woman very much alone after her young husband died, except for a farming mentor 'Mr Broome', and the kindly Sandringham rector, Reverend William Lake Onslow (a memorial to him is fixed to the wall of the bell tower in Sandringham church). Other friends and relatives, when mentioned, remain shadowy, distant figures, referred to as 'the family dandy' or 'our worthy kinswoman', or 'dear old F-'. Such coy hints made me wonder, who were these people? And what of the woman Louise herself? She and her husband did not spring fully-grown from nowhere. What of her life before she became Mrs Gerard Cresswell? And what happened to her, and to her son, young 'G-', after she left Sandringham? The more I studied her writings, the more puzzles emerged.

So I set out to search for more facts. But the answers I found in old parish registers and near-illegible microfilm, in dusty papers and, most of all, in some startling letters hidden away in obscure corners of Bedfordshire and Luton Record Office, came as a surprise. Most exciting of all was the growing web of links and connections with the people and history of West Norfolk.

In fact, Louise's father, William Hogge, was a younger son of one of the wealthy merchant-mariner dynasties which in those days ruled the port-town of King's Lynn. William married Elizabeth Wells, daughter of a wealthy Bedfordshire brewer, and settled in her home town of Biggleswade, from where he traded by river and canal, in partnership with his older brothers, who ran the family businesses in Lynn.

Louise was the eighth of nine surviving children. She was almost thirty-two when, in April 1862, she married twenty-five-year-old Gerard Cresswell, fifth son of Alderman Francis Cresswell of the Bank House, King's Lynn. His mother was Rachel, daughter of Elizabeth Fry, and one of his brothers was the well-known local hero Captain Samuel Gumey Cresswell, RN.

Gerard Cresswell brought his bride home to the place he was renting - Sedgeford Hall. However, they stayed at Sedgeford only for six months. At Michaelmas that same year, when Sandringham became the official property of Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, the newly-wed Cresswells moved to Appleton Farm on the royal estate.

Sadly, Gerard Cresswell died three years later, leaving Louise alone to run the farm and raise their infant son. That was when her quarrels with the Prince, his comptrollers, agents and lawyers really began.

There's no room here to recount the whole fascinating story which emerged during a four-year-long detective journey amid archive centres and libraries across the country. The final enlightenment waited in the Royal Archives at Windsor Castle, where I was privileged to be granted the Queen's permission to study a collection of a hundred and one documents all relating to Louise Cresswell and her time at Appleton Farm, written to Louise and about Louise, and - most tellingly of all - by Louise. During the two enthralling days which I spent trawling this unexpected treasure, a whole new slant on the story emerged. Obviously, in compiling her book Louise left out a great deal. And even the things she did write are... what shall we say? - told in the wrong order, given a make-over, twisted to suit her own purposes...?

The Lady Farmer was evidently a complex human being, with virtues and faults, loves and hates, prey to both soaring hope and bitter disillusionment. Members of her family, too, sprang into focus like characters from a historical saga, each one with a fascinating story to tell, and all helping to shed new light on the extraordinary woman who, encouraged by a country neighbour to claim that she had been 'Rew-ined by Royalty!', did just that, in a book which Royalty tried hard to suppress.

Royalty chose to remain silent on the matter, as Royalty is wont to do. But, if you would like to know the full story of this controversial and extraordinary woman, it's told in my new book, *THE PRINCE'S THORN*, published in paperback by Pegasus Books of Cambridge and costing just £9.99 (with full Bibliography and Index). It is available now, from all bookshops and on the Internet. Watch out for local publicity and news of signing sessions.

Wishing all Village Voice readers all things good for the New Year. □

Mary Mackie
www.stillscribbling.co.uk

Mary Mackie will be our guestspeaker at the June 2nd Village Voice Live. Ed.

The Parrot

A young man named John received a parrot named 'Chief' as a gift. The parrot had a bad attitude and an even worse vocabulary. Every word out of the bird's mouth was rude, obnoxious and laced with profanity. John tried and tried to change the bird's attitude by consistently saying only polite words, playing soft music and anything else he could think of to 'clean up' the bird's vocabulary. Finally, John was fed up and he yelled at the parrot.

The parrot yelled back. John shook the parrot and the parrot got angrier and even ruder. John, in desperation, threw up his hand, grabbed the bird and put him in the freezer. For a few minutes the parrot squawked and kicked and screamed. Then suddenly there was total quiet. Not a peep was heard for over a minute. Fearing that he'd hurt the parrot, John quickly opened the door to the freezer. The parrot calmly stepped out onto John's outstretched arms and said, 'I believe I may have offended you with my rude language and actions. I'm sincerely remorseful for my inappropriate transgressions and I fully intend to do everything I can to correct my rude and unforgivable behaviour.'

John was stunned at the change in the bird's attitude. As he was about to ask the parrot what had made such a dramatic change in his behaviour, the bird continued, 'May I ask what the turkey did?' □



MORE 'POETRY AT THE PRINCESS'

This here's an invitation, a hard one to resist,
that any versifier won't want to say he's missed.
It's due on March 11, a Wednesday, when spring
will just about be springing, so come and 'do your thing'.
Called 'Poetry at the Princess' (the theatre in Hunny),
it's your chance to read a poem. It could be sad, or funny,
or lyrical, heroic, an epic, or an ode,
a couplet or a sonnet, or one that's rote in coad!,
a bit of Keats or Shelley, something ancient, something new
(we've even had a couple that were ever-so-slightly blue!).
Enjoy a cup of coffee and meet some other folk
who love fine words that, said aloud, have power to evoke
a memory, a passion, a smile, or maybe tears,
to tell a tale, or lift a heart, or say 'we share your fears'.
Well-known lines from Shakespeare, or some from your own pen,
just come along and join us, Wednesday morning, half past ten.
The 'Princess'; is our venue, in the bar we congregate,
And if you have enjoyed it, just put something in the plate.

Poetry at the Princess, Wednesday 11 March 2009, 10.30 a.m.
Meet in the bar at the Princess Theatre, Hunstanton. No entry fee
but, as usual, donations for Theatre Club funds will be appreciated.
See you then?

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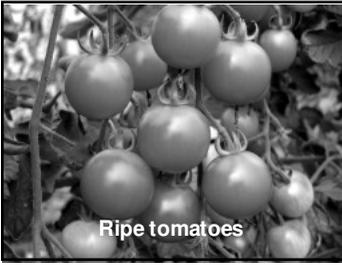
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Dig for the future



Ripe tomatoes

At this time of year those of us who like to grow our own fruit and vegetables are well into the planning of our veg gardens. Many will have already bought seeds for this year's growing and some will have already started raising plants in their greenhouses. More and more people are tuning to growing their own veg; indeed The Times recently reported that sales of vegetable seeds have outsold those of flower seeds for the first time since the second world war.

We are all seeing rises in oil and food prices and this trend looks set to continue. I believe that growing food locally is vitally important both environmentally and economically. It may in time become necessary, in order to ensure a reliable food supply, for all communities to produce a substantial amount of their own food. "Dig for the Future" rather than "Dig for Victory". For those without gardens or allotments, even window boxes and doorstep planters can supply a surprising amount of healthy and tasty produce. Also, of course, it is hugely enjoyable to produce your own food; to pull the first carrots of the season, pick the freshest, sweetest peas or pluck a juicy, ripe, red tomato from its vine.

If you are new to growing your own veg now is a very good time to start. First you need to consider the area you are going to grow in and then decide what to grow. Choose some things that you really like to eat and try to keep it simple to start with; lettuces, leafy salads and summer cabbages are all relatively easy to grow and spring sown broad beans, beetroot and radishes will all grow quickly once the weather starts to warm up.

The winter is the time of year for taking stock of the veg garden, for considering the successes and failures of the past growing year and working out what to change and what to do the same. It is the time to prepare your ground, spread any muck or compost on the soil and to dig in your green manures; these are plants grown, and then dug in, specifically to enrich the soil. For example a mix of grazing rye, which gives a good bulk of organic material to feed the soil, and winter beans which capture essential nitrogen from the air and fix it in the soil. It is also the time to plant any fruit bushes and trees while they are still dormant.

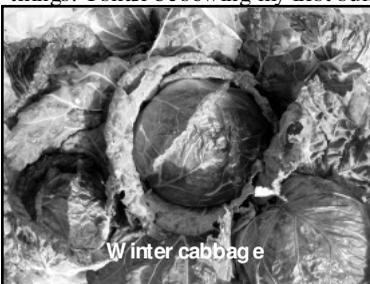
Early sowings can be made of a number of crops; onions and leeks in trays on the kitchen window sill, alongside early summer cabbages and, for the more adventurous, some summer cauliflowers. Caulis are a notoriously tricky crop but I think they can be grown successfully if you remember that they need a good feed at each stage of their lives; sowing, pricking out, transplanting and soon before the curd starts to form. As an organic grower I would use good rich compost or a feed made from comfrey leaves.

By late February the veg grower will be starting to become impatient to be getting on with things. I shall be sowing my first summer tomatoes and celery in a heated propagator in the spare room along with lettuces, spinach, chards and other leafy salads which will provide this year's earliest crops in April and May when other local produce is so scarce.

Of course the winter is also the time for one of my favourite garden activities; sitting by the fire-side with a glass or two of homemade wine or cider while perusing the seed catalogues and dreaming of all the wonderful crops to come this year. □



Leafy salads



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Elizabeth Fiddick

POOR RELIEF IN DERSINGHAM Part 1

When Robert Palette sat down in his Dersingham cottage to write, or perhaps dictate, the provisions of his will he had decided to leave 3s. 4d for the fabric of our church and a wax candle of a pound weight to burn before the image of St. John the Baptist. He also left money for a priest to celebrate the Divine Mysteries in Saint Nicholas for the benefit of his soul for half a year after his death. The rest of his estate was then left to his wife Matilda. This was of course in 1458 when Thomas Ingman was the vicar and the break with Rome was a long way in the future. In the mid fifteenth century Robert Warde, another Dersingham man, left 3s. 4d to the High Altar and a further 3s. 4d for the fabric of the church. Such bequests were quite common. In 1523 John Connell left 6s. 8d to the High Altar and 10s for the maintenance of the church which had been altered quite considerably during the preceding years.

Medieval churches were more colourful than they are today but much of their decoration, stained glass and statuary were destroyed during the Reformation in the 16th century. Before that



event brilliant paintings would have been found on the walls to instruct the largely illiterate people in the Bible stories and lives of the Saints. The pillars and ceilings were often highly decorated and we have just read in the wills of the High Altar, the burning of candles and the image of John the Baptist. So our church would have looked very different and it is likely that the "small studded clay" house that was the home of the vicar was standing somewhere in the churchyard.

At this time, in a custom dating back to Old Testament times, lay people contributed a tenth of their income, a tithe, for religious purposes. The money or its equivalent in crops or farm stock was used to support the clergy, maintain the churches and assist the poor. However from the evidence of the wills some villagers were either somewhat slack in the execution of this duty or feared they had been so. Villager John Connell left 3s. 4d for "*tithes forgotten*". In the same manner Thomas Goodman left 6d for "*tithes and obligations negligently forgotten*". Elizabeth Dannell left the High Altar of Dersingham 4d for the same purpose. Thus the wills that survive afford a fascinating glimpse into the ordinary life of the people who lived in this very village so many years ago. Their voices speak to us down the centuries. Robert Bylock made provision for his wife to remain in their house for her lifetime but stipulated sternly that "*my wife shall make no strip nor waste of the present house.*" Thomas Goodman left Robert Pennashe "*one kettell when*

he cometh to the age 20 years." although Elizabeth Pennashe, was bequeathed one little kettell when she was 16 years old. However he left his sons Robert and Jaffrey "all myhouses and lands within the town and fields of Dersingham."

In 1556 William Daynel left his son William, "one pewter dish with a red coverlet and a coffer and my plow with all my plow and cart gear." John Comell left his son Robert "all the tenements in the town and fields of Dersingham" with two horses and "my old cart horse." The other son had the other two horses, plus the bullocks, ewes, lambs and the coombs of barley. A man of some substance obviously. In 1607 John Kydd left his wife Elizabeth all his household goods except one great brassepot and a greate brasse pan which he gave to his daughter. However in addition to bequests such as these many villagers remembered those less fortunate.

In 1558 Thomas Goodman left 6d to the Poor Men's Box and Robert Bylock left 4d. In 1607 John Kydd, described as a yeoman, left 6s. 8d to 20 of the poorest people in the village. Numerous bequests of 6d or 4d to the poor were recorded.

Another way of helping the poor was to leave bequests to the Guilds of the Holy Trinity, Saint Anne, Saint James and Saint Thomas which operated in the village. In 1496 Henry Calver left 1 coomb of barley to each of the Guilds while John Cornell, already mentioned, left one coomb of malt to Saint Nicholas and Holy Trinity in 1523. This was quite a common practice. It is possible that the Guilds built the side aisles in our church as places where they could hold their meetings. A Guild was an association of craftsmen or merchants formed for mutual aid and protection and for the furtherance of their professional interests. The Medieval Guilds were of two types. Merchant Guilds were an association of all the merchants in a particular town or city and Craft Guilds were occupational Associations, weavers, dyers and so on. They performed an important function establishing a monopoly of trade in the locality and set and maintained standards and stable prices. In the 13th century the Merchant Guilds comprised the wealthiest and most influential citizens who came to dominate the town councils. In any Guild the top man was the Master followed by the Journeymen and finally the apprentices.

The Master took on apprentices who boarded and trained with the master. They were provided with food, clothing, shelter and education and in return they worked without payment for an agreed length of time. Journeymen were craftsmen who could work with the master and be paid. They could rise to become masters themselves. The Guilds performed much charitable work not only among its own members but also for the community at large. They were concerned with the prosecution of thieves and protection of property. They granted compensation to those who suffered from fire or flood and as there are frequent references to our village suffering flooding from the sea during severe storms this would have been a valued provision. The Guilds would advance loans in time of need and sometimes undertake the repair of roads and bridges. They granted aid to those who lost a limb, or became blind or suffered other damaging afflictions. They granted relief to those in poverty, sickness, or old age and would assist those out of work. Poor members could look to their Guild for help in legal matters, dowries for their daughters or a grant towards expenses if they wished to go on pilgrimage. Members were expected to visit the sick, attend funerals and if in a position to do so provide funds to the poor.

Each Guild had its own Chaplain and held an annual festival on the name day of the Saint they had chosen. This feast day was frequently an occasion for hospitality to the poor outside the Guild. There was usually a badge of membership perhaps a "livery hood". The bedel or bellman would summon the members to meetings and non attendance was punishable by a fine. Meetings began with a prayer and a candle would be kept burning before a picture of their Saint. On the Annual Feast Day they dined together, audited the accounts and chose officers. There was an entrance fee and a payment at each meeting.

It is fascinating to try to imagine the scene in our church and wonder where the pictures or statues of the Saints were placed. The names of our Guilds are interesting too. Saint Anne was the mother of the Blessed Mary and in the Middle Ages this was a popular feast day on July 26th. She was considered to represent the patten of perfect motherhood. Saint Nicholas was adopted as the

patron saint of sailors when he answered the prayers of some mariners lost in a storm, joining them in their sinking ship and bringing them safely to land. One of his attributes is an anchor. Saint James was one of the two sons of Zebedee, a Galilean fisherman, and with his brother John was among the first to be called as an apostle. During these years the influence of the church was all encompassing and religion played a huge part in the lives of the villagers. I have recently read that England was known as "*the ringing isle*" because of the constant pealing of the bells from parish churches. When Henry VIII ordered the dissolution of the monasteries he and some of his closes followers became very wealthy on the proceeds but the poorest in the land felt the loss of the monks' charitable work.

When Katherine Loundes of Dersingham made her will in the reign of Edward VI the King's advisers were still turning their eyes to the property of the Church and confiscating much of its wealth. Consequently she left no gifts to the church or the guilds. No doubt many others followed the same pattern. Other gifts to the poor were more substantial and long lasting. In his will of September 27th 1689 Jeffrey Bummer left 3 acres of land in Snettisham for the use of the poorest people in the parish of Dersingham. The Churchwardens and overseers were to let the land and use the rents to pay money to the poorest people yearly on Whitsunday. As a result of an Inclosure Act in 1762 this land was lost but another triangular piece of land was let out in lieu and was held by the Rev. John Coldham for £5 per year. The Churchwardens then gave tickets to the poor to receive clothing to the amount of money raised. (In 1692 a Bridgett Bummer appears on the list of villagers assessed in a Poll Bill passed by Act of Parliament to raise money "*for the carrying on a vigorous war against France.*" Her liability was assessed as 4 shillings, the greatest amount of £1 and 1 shilling was paid by John Pell, gent.) Added to Bummer's charity was rent of 10/- gathered from land given by Nicholas Ground out of the estate of a John Clark.

In 1839 rent was paid by Benjamin Petchey on a piece of land known as Clark's Pasture. This appears on the Tithe map to be the rising land between Church Farm cottages and Doddshill Road. Benjamin is listed in 1836 as a wheelwright. He died in 1838 but his wife Lydia was the licensee of The Coach and Horses for many years until her death in 1851. Elizabeth Pell in her will of 1730 left £100 to be disposed for the benefit of the poor. Samuel Kerrich, the vicar, used the money to purchase 23 acres of arable land in three pieces, and the rent was used for the benefit of the poor.

At the time of the enclosure acts other land was acquired in lieu. This was considered better, being nearer the town, of better quality and greater value. In 1826 it was let to John Mason for £17 per year for 8 years. The money raised bought 16 loaves given out each Sunday at the church for the poor persons attending. These became known as Thomas Loaves after Thomas Kerrich Samuel's son who also was a vicar here. (Village Voice Nos. 44 & 45) The residue was disposed of in coals and divided in the months of February chiefly 4 bushels to each family. However some who had larger families and were distinguished by their good character received a greater portion.

In 1779 much of the common land in Dersingham was subject to the Acts of Enclosure. The enclosure of open fields and common land left many villagers without the arable land, grazing meadows and common rights that had supported them. In mitigation the Charity Commissioners were directed to set aside several acres of land for the poor of the parish to gather fuel and cut turfs without restriction. The tithe map of 1839 shows that the present common then known as Rice's Common and Badger Fen the area opposite recently cleared, were administered by the Trustees of the Poor. When the adjacent area known as Cranberry Fen was to be enclosed so that the railway could be built through it the villagers forced a lively enquiry as they defended their right to gather fuel and cranberries on that land. (VV No. 35)

There were strict rules on how the income from the charities could be spent. Help could be given towards the cost of outfits for anyone entering a trade. Donations could be given towards the supply of clothes, linen, bedding, fuel, or tools. At a time of *sickness, unexpected loss, urgent distress or sudden destitution* help would be given. It was only any income derived from the land set aside for fuel allotment that had to be spent on coals for the poor. In the next part I will write of the Poor Law Acts and the setting up of the Workhouse in Dersingham and the Docking Union. □



Dick Melton

George Pratt

In the December issue of Dersingham Village Voice it was nice to see the tribute to George Pratt; he had always tried his best as a councillor to do what he thought was right for the village of Dersingham. As I was reading the tribute a story about George came to mind. In the middle 60's, about 1965, George took a job as manager of the Sunset Ballroom at Hunstanton, which was situated behind the Sandringham Hotel in Le-Strange Terrace; on a Saturday night they would put on some well-known groups. One Saturday night in particular, Jo Brown and the Bruvvers were top of the bill with a local band, the Tea Time Four. As the supporting band, the Tea Time Four had finished and it was all set for Jo Brown and the Bruvvers to take to the stage. The dressing rooms in the Sunset Ballroom were at the opposite end of the ballroom to the stage, so the band had to walk through all the people. Well, this night the place was really packed full, the band came out of the dressing rooms with George in the front leading them to the stage but, with George being on the short side you could not see him. All you could hear was George shouting in his sergeant major voice, 'make way' 'make way' for Jo Brown and the Bruvvers. Another Dersingham man, an ex policeman by the name of Les Cooper, worked there at the same time, so he went to help George make a way through the crowd to get Jo Brown and the Bruvvers on to the stage. I thought that it was quite amusing at the time, as you could not see George at all; you could only hear him shouting at the top of his voice 'make way', 'make way.' Between the two of them they got Jo Brown and the Bruvvers on to the stage and a good night was had by all.

New railway line?

Now then, what about this railway line that they want to rebuild from King's Lynn to Hunstanton. One of the most obvious routes for it to take would be alongside the old sea wall but this would mean that, if you were to have a station or halt at Dersingham, it would be about two miles away from the village. When we did have the old station it was right on the edge of the village and it was a long way to walk to, especially if you lived in the area of Dodds Hill, Fem Hill, or Manor Road. Mind you in them days we did have a taxi man, Mr Bunn, who lived at the top of Station Hill. It would certainly be a very good tourist attraction but I think it is a too big and expensive project. Maybe a monorail would be better, then this could be diverted around by Sandringham. The old railway closed down in May 1969, that is forty years ago. When the original line was built in 1861/62 it cost £80,000; what on earth would it cost now? But there are these enthusiasts who keep on trying to make it happen and now and again you do hear of miracles.

Hard Winters in Dersingham

I know I have written about this subject before, but then I read in the paper the other day that, after a few hours fall of snow in Yorkshire, over one hundred schools were closed for the day; the snow had gone away by lunch time so they could have gone to school for half a day. Unfortunately things have changed a lot since I was at school sixty years ago.

The Winter of 1947 was the worst Winter for snow and ice that Norfolk and most of the rest of England had experienced for many years and it was the worst I can remember, but we all went to school and every one walked to school. No parents with cars then days. It started to snow on the 14th of January and it snowed on and off nearly every day until the 12th of March. The snow ploughs were a 'V' shaped contraption made of wood with a steel frame and they were pulled, not pushed, by a tractor or a horse; there was no grit or salt to put on the roads. When you got to school there was one or, if you were lucky, two old black coal-burning stoves in your classroom. If you lived a good way from home, say down by the station or at Sandpit Cottages, you did not have time to go home and back at lunch time so you had to take sandwiches, as there were no school dinners in 1947, well not at Dersingham school. One of the main reasons why the school remained open during that Winter was that all of the teachers also lived in the village; also every village had its own school, so no one had

any distance to travel. On the 11th of February 1947 the whole of Norfolk was crippled by the worst snow storm of the year; in some places the drifts were 12 feet high, so then we did have a couple of days off school as we just could not get there - a level foot of snow fell that day. A lot of people were marooned in trains and Hunstanton, Sheringham, Cromer and Walsingham were cut off for days. The war had only ended two years before, so most food and coal was on ration, but every one in the villages like Dersingham rallied round and helped their neighbours, so no one got cold or went without food. After such a terrible Winter, the Summer and Autumn of 1947 was one of the hottest on record.

Scissor grinders and tinkers

In the December issue of Dersingham Village Voice on page 57 there is a picture of a man outside the cottages near the Dun Cow with a type of handcat in 1906. The caption asks what is he vending. Well I think he could very well have been a scissor grinder. Two or three of these tradesmen would come around the village on a regular basis and they would sharpen most things, including shears, knives, choppers, axes, bill hooks and in later years lawnmowers. When I worked for the butcher Ken Milton in the fifties I can remember one still coming round the village and he would call in and sharpen the cutting knives for us. On the other hand, the man in the picture could have been a tinker; many of these would come round selling mostly pots and pans, but also they would patch up your old ones for you. The tinker was the olden day version of the mobile shop and, after the Second World War, many of these mobile shops plied their trade around Dersingham. The ones that I can remember best were Lamberts, Bradfields, Landy Daniels, and Blakes and no doubt the readers of the Village Voice can remember some others, **Sea**

Eagles

If you had been living in Dersingham 250 years ago and you had a walk on the heath, common or the fen, you would have no doubt seen a great bustard or a white tailed sea-eagle as they were very common in that area around that time. The last pair of great bustard to breed in West Norfolk was in 1838; it then disappeared from England along with the sea eagle at the same time.

The sea eagle has been reintroduced to Scotland and Ireland and now plans are a foot to bring it back to England, starting in West Norfolk. It is a very big bird with an eight-foot wingspan and is one of the most spectacular birds in the UK; if plans go ahead it will be reintroduced back to West Norfolk in the Summer of 2009. The sea eagle is a scavenger that also eats fish and other bird, but it is of no threat to pets or people. A lot of people are for it and some are against it; so what do you the people of Dersingham think. Would you like to be walking across the common with this great bird soaring above your head?

Well that's all for now, be with you all again in April. □



Clifford Riches 1913 - 2008



Cliff was a popular and well known figure around the village. He died, at the age of 96 on December 5th, after being involved in a car accident a few days earlier. His son, Trevor, has kindly allowed us to publish this piece that he read at his fathers funeral.

Cliff was the eldest boy in a family of nine children. His dad was Emie Riches the cobbler and his mum was Alice, a hard working housewife who helped to feed her nine children by selling cream teas and home-made ice cream from her front room. As they grew up, the boys helped out at Sandringham in various ways. Cliff often told of the day when he was a shot carrier with a royal shooting party, and sat on George the Fifth's lap, because

there was very little space in the shooting brake. One Christmas Day Cliff and three of his brothers caddied for the four princes, for which they were paid half-a-crown each, which seemed a princely sum in more ways than one.

Cliff left school at the age of fourteen in 1926 and worked for Jarvis the baker for a time. Then at the age of sixteen did a gardening apprenticeship at Sandringham (where he spent the first few months hand weeding driveways). His favourite memory of those times was being taught to tickle trout by the Duke of Windsor (to whom he was always fiercely loyal).

At the end of his apprenticeship, Cliff went into private gardening, and when working in Kent he first saw Bessie Mary picking primroses with her aunt and decided he would like to meet that pretty young woman. At the following Saturday's village dance he escorted his then girlfriend, saw Bessie Mary, abandoned his date, and that was the beginning of a lifelong partnership. He once showed me the spot on a quiet road near Hook Green where he knelt on a hankie and said "Bessie, will you marry me?", to which she replied "Yes please".

Cliff was a keen territorial soldier, and at the outbreak of war volunteered, and fairly quickly became a sergeant. He was very fit, and won prizes for running, his best distances being the quarter and half mile. In Northern Ireland he rescued a soldier from drowning and was commended by his C.O. Shortly after, when escorting convoys through London, he rescued a drowning boy from the Grand Union Canal and was awarded the Royal Humane Society's Testimonial in recognition. When Cliff returned to his unit he was sent for, and was relieved to hear that he was not in trouble but was to be congratulated.

His war experiences included taking part in the later D Day landings, where he experienced a great deal of hardship, made bearable by the friendship and loyalty of and to his comrades. He was a witness to the horrors of a Nazi concentration camp, being with the unit which liberated Bergen-Belsen. He was a simple, honest man, who on many occasions circumvented the "non-fraternisation" laws by feeding ordinary Germans who were on the edge of starvation.

After the war he ran a market garden in Desingham for a while - unfortunately it wasn't a success. He was utterly honest and refused to sell livestock on the black market. Quite a few did, and prospered, but Cliff hadn't gone through five years of war only to become a crook. He wasn't the best of businessmen, and trusted his fellow man, so the honesty box left on the produce stall when he and mum were working in the garden wasn't always full.

When the opportunity to become one of the village postmen presented itself, he took it, and over the next few years paid off every penny of his debts. No bankruptcy for him. After he retired he managed to draw his post office pension for more years than he had worked for them.

He and his beloved Bessie Mary brought up three sons, Bob, Trevor and Chris, who in their turn added five grand children and ten great grand children, of whom he was immensely proud.

Although money was often tight, they all shared an active outdoor orientated life.

When he was seventy, he and Bess took to their bikes and did a camping tour of Holland, Belgium and France, ending up visiting their nephew Mark in Paris. Cliff was always highly amused at Bessie's comment when cycling round the Place de la Concorde with cars coming from every direction - "They dasn't run you down". And they didn't.

Dad wasn't a drinking man, and the Royal Mail had, for many years, a post delivery on Christmas morning. Being popular with his customers, dad would be offered many a noggin on his way round, so by the time he arrived unsteadily at the door of "Timaru" with mum ready to dish up the Christmas lunch, he had rather lost his appetite. Bob and I can remember the "chink, chink" of the enamel bowl that mum had thrown at him as it quietly shed its paintwork. It missed, and dad was recovered by the evening. Ours wasn't so bad a story. They wheeled the Snettisham postman home in a wheelbarrow.

Bessie died at the age of seventy seven, and the family were doubtful that he'd cope, but he was a tough old boy, and lived independently at Orchard Close for many years. He was a well known figure round the village on his buggy. He liked to take Jessica's little dog Poppy on his many trips round Sandringham.

In October 2002 at the age of ninety Cliff had a triple heart by-pass and heart valve replacement operation, and moved in to The Close care home at Snettisham. He continued to enjoy trips to Sandringham, enjoying chats with the gardeners, often reminiscing how he nearly soaked the royal family and their guests when watering the flower beds.

The family would like to take this opportunity of thanking the staff at The Close for their care of dad, and to the British Legion for their support. □

Trevor Riches

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Dersingham Library

Happy New Year to you all!

Dersingham Library is celebrating Love your library Week from 9th-14th February, and we have some special events planned to get you thinking about your health and well being.

Monday 9th February

Relax! Join Katie from Time Out Beauty Salon in Dersingham between 10-11am to discover your skin type and learn what products are best for you. No need to book - just drop in.

Wednesday 11th February

Just sit! Exercises to music with Brigitte Bayley from 10.30-11.30. Find out how you can exercise and have fun while sitting in a chair.

Please book in advance by calling the library on 01485 540181.

Wednesday 11th February

Did you know that just as physical activity keeps your body strong, mental activity keeps your mind sharp and agile. One way to do this is to continually challenge yourself by learning new skills. So why not join us at the library for a Board Games Afternoon between 2 and 4pm. Whether you're a fan of sudoku or scrabble you'll be welcome. No need to book - just drop in. Bring along a game if you wish. Refreshments will be provided.

Thursday 12th February

Active rhymes and songs for under 5s and their parents or carers from 10.30-11.30am. No need to book - just drop in.

Friday 13th February

Join RSA qualified fitness instructor Suzie from 10.30-11.30 for an introduction to her exercise classes - everything from stretch and relaxation to legs, bums and tums. Please book in advance by calling the library on 01485 540181. □

Happy Reading,

Alison

Books on wheels



This free and friendly service is organised by members of the WRVS and is based at Dersingham Library. It is available to any housebound person living in Dersingham or the nearby villages.

We make fortnightly visits to your home with the books, tapes or CD's of your choice.

If you, or anyone you know, would like to receive this service please contact Dersingham Library on 01485 540181 and a volunteer will call to discuss your preferred reading material.

Alex Polaine, co-ordinator.



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Lifeboats

NEWS FROM HUNSTANTON LIFEBOAT GUILD

RNLI's SOS Day

(Sip Our Soups)

Friday 30th January

Hosted by The Old Coach House, Thornham

A range of soups and French bread available for just £5 a head

Come along and join us from 12 noon

Advance Notice

The popular Fish and Chip lunch will be on Friday 20th March at Sedgeford Village Hall. Guest speaker is Dr Paul Richards on East Anglia and the Hanseatic League.

Coffee available from 10.30am

Watch out for details of our exciting 2009 programme!

For more information on the above two events, telephone 535542

The Fishermans Supper, which was held at The Lifeboat Inn at Thornham on Thursday 27th November was a huge success! All together a record £1525.40 was raised!! This was made up as follows: Lifeboat Inn £1100.00 Raffle £425.40 Total £1525.40

Our thanks must go to everyone at 'The Lifeboat Inn', and of course to every one who attended.

What the lifeboat has been up to:-

Yarmouth Coastguard requested an immediate launch at 14:26hrs November 26th to go to the aid of a fishing vessel that had capsized on the Inner West Mark Knock, at the approaches to the river Nene. The three crew on board were reported to be in the water. The Lifeboat proceeded at full speed to the casualty search area. On arrival the three crew were reported to be on another fishing vessel and all were reported to be safe. The fishing vessel was submerged with just the bows showing, and it is understood that a salvage attempt will be made by the owners when the tide goes down. This operation will be carried out by other Lynn fishing vessels.

Sunday 14th December 2008

Yarmouth Coastguard requested the launch of four hovercraft at 14.50 hrs to assist in the search for a missing male person. His car had been parked at Brancaster since Friday and he had not been seen since. Our hovercraft, local CG units and RAF helicopter carried out a wide search of the area. Nothing was found and at 17.25 hrs all stations were stood down as the person had been found in Norwich. He had left his phone in his car and he had not informed anyone of his intentions. We understand he may have some explaining to do!

I thought that you would all like to know that Steve Stevens has been awarded a Gold Badge by the RNLI for all his dedicated work as Box Secretary over many years. Believe it or not, he has collected over £88,000!! Very many congratulations to Steve!!

David Jones

Why it's your job to reduce car accidents

Fact. Humans are prone to making mistakes.
Fact. *You* are prone to making mistakes.
Fact. *Others* are prone to making mistakes.
Fact. People don't mean to make mistakes.
Fact. You will not stop people making mistakes.
Fact. Mistakes kill.



Fool. "I'll never make a mistake."

So having established that we are all human and prone to that momentary error of judgement, here are a few tips on how to increase your chances of survival when behind the wheel of a car or on a motorcycle. Remember, this may be read by someone who will avoid your mistake as well as you avoiding theirs.

And this list is just a few of hundreds of examples which demonstrate that survival is *all* about observation and planning.

Always assume the following:

1. If the driver of a vehicle waiting to pull out of a junction has not looked your way yet, they're about to pull out. Ease off the throttle, be ready to brake.
2. If a vehicle driver waiting to pull out of a junction, *has* looked your way, they're still about to pull out. Check and double check until you are sure they have connected with you. Vehicles and people have blind spots.
3. A vehicle in a lay-by on the opposite side of the road is about to pull out. Don't overtake until you know it's staying put.
4. All vehicles in lay-bys on your side of the road are about to do a 'U'-turn.
5. Always look left and right as you take advantage of your green traffic light. Never assume the red light has been spotted or not jumped.
6. All tractors are about to turn right. That's your starting point. Upon establishing that there is no concealed farm track or turning to the right, plan your overtake. (See point 1 in next section)
7. A vehicle that is slowing is going to do something. Find out what before passing.

Create your safety bubble:

1. Sit further back from the vehicle in front. You'll see more, particularly if it's a lorry or larger vehicle in front. And you will probably spot hazards before the drivers ahead of you. So often, you will then get a view across the inside when the road is gently going left. You must have seen those drivers straining to see around the outside when, from a few cars back, you can see it's perfectly clear. You'll also be able to overtake easier by planning the manoeuvre and building up speed in advance.

2. If someone sits too close to you, ease up a little to increase your gap to the car in front. Whilst they are on your rear bumper, you have to allow a braking distance/reaction time for them too. If they become aggressive, just let them pass at the first opportunity and let them harass someone else. They are the idiot, you are not. No gestures, no rage, just give them room and know that you are now safer and have done your bit for road safety.
3. When you approach red traffic lights, never pull up tight to the car in front. Where will you go when the driver behind hasn't seen the stationary traffic in time? You are a sitting duck. Ease up a long way back until you see in your mirror that all behind are under control.
4. The same applies on Motorway tailbacks. The nearside lane can a good choice initially as the hard shoulder gives you an escape route if a truck is all locked up behind. Nevertheless, create your deceleration safety bubble, and make it a big one due to the dramatic "shock wave" effect of fast cars reacting late back down the line. Be ready to accelerate into your safety zone. Live in your mirror.

Zero road deaths is, I'm afraid a pipe dream. Higher driver standards are not. We will never stop drivers making mistakes but we can become better at avoiding them. If only the government would plough money into incentive schemes to encourage drivers to attend advanced courses. It doesn't matter if 95% of that course is a waste of time, the 5% that isn't could be instrumental in avoiding a tragedy. Think you don't need that? Pride comes before a fall my friend. □

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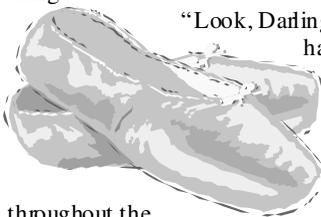
'T WAS THE SEASON TO BE JOLLY.

That's a laugh for a start. Jolly? Merry? Happy? Forget it! Sorry folks, but I am *not* one of those 'christmassy' people. Don't get me wrong; I believe the story of the Nativity and on occasions I have honestly tried to be 'good' – although Norma, my wife, says those occasions are extremely rare. I believe that JC would be much happier if we all made appropriate donations to our respective churches than spend mega-bucks on presents that are going to be a) kept and passed on to an unsuspecting relative next year, or b) given to Tapping House Charity Shop.

Then there are the cards. I like them. They're colourful and cheer the place up a bit. But there is a downside. In an attempt to assist Norma with doing the cleaning every week, I once volunteered to dust the lounge. So 47 Christmas cards have to be taken down from all horizontal surfaces, all of which are completely dust-free because the circulating currents of air between the cards have prevented the dust from settling, and reinstated, exactly where they were before, she decrees, when the cleaning operation is completed. Note:- That bit about circulating currents of air around the cards is probably a load of twaddle but that's my story and I'm sticking to it. I remember one year when 'cleaning day' fell on Christmas Eve. I suggested, quite logically I thought, that instead of putting the cards up again we could simply put them in a plastic bag and keep them until next year; as we always do. I lost a couple of Brownie points with that idea.

In our house Christmas starts on Boxing Day of the year before. To give you some idea of what I mean, I'll run through the major events of the year starting on December 26th, 2007.

"Yeeee-haaaa! It's Boxing Day and the sales start today!" Norma doesn't actually speak these words but her ecstatic, radiant face says them for her. It's the first opportunity to thrash her shoe-box sized car into Lynn and dive headlong into the shops to spend as much of my pension as she can. We don't need, or even want, the things she buys. But that's not the point. Any item that has been reduced in price by 0.01% or more is classed as 'a bargain' and bargains *must* be bought. 'Management', bless her, says we are saving money that way. I suspect I must be one can short of a six-pack because I still cannot fathom out the logic of that theory. It must be one of those 'woman' things'.



"Look, Darling. Those heated slippers that were marked up at £24.99 last week have been reduced to £24.49. They would be absolutely ideal for Auntie Beattie next Christmas." The fact that the old girl has been given only six months to live is neither here nor there it seems.

At this stage it is worth pointing out that the 'MBB' (Must buy Bargains) principle applies to all those massive Discount Sales throughout the year.

"I say, Darling. Look at that golf ball autographed by Tiger Woods. I'm sure it would be a 'wow' with your Uncle Lancelot; and they're only £14.95 each." I feel obliged to point out that Tiger Woods probably has N million golf balls stamped, not autographed, for some extortionate fee and that Uncle Lancelot has the regrettable habit of driving off the first tee straight into deep water; the ball never to be seen again.

On July 1st we made a New Year Resolution. A bit late perhaps but better than never. We solemnly make the same promise to ourselves every year. 'We'll really make an effort now and get the Christmas shopping done early.' The same thing has been said at the same time of year for the past 43 years. We never attack the 'monstrous task' early and every Christmas Eve is the same demented scramble to buy 'surprise prezzy's' for her cousin (in Argentina or somewhere) and the kids next door. If it were left to me I definitely would *not* give anything to those hooligans. I do not bear grudges but reckon that pouring five litres of dirty engine oil through our letter box just because I refused to part with 5p last Hallowe'en is taking things a tad too far.

October the 3rd was a date to remember. It was a Wednesday. Norma got up at 7.30, bright and breezy as usual, and set the table for breakfast. She took the toaster down from its shelf and

removed two slices of bread from their packet, while I, still in my dressing gown, took my seat at the table. Then it happened. At the same moment as she put the slices of bread into the toaster she screamed. I *knew* she was being electrocuted. So I leapt up and tugged manically at the toaster lead, leaving the plug in the socket and the lead with its bare wires in my hand.

“Sweetheart, my love. Are you OK?!”

“No, I’m not. It’s October the 3rd, we should have bought all the Christmas cards two days ago according to the calendar.”

I tried to point out to Norma that we still had a respectable pile of Christmas cards left over from last year – and the year before, and the year before that. But my appeal for monetary restraint had little effect.

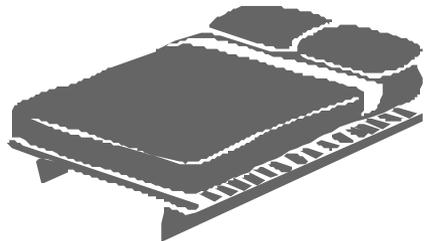
“Those cards are very basic and do not convey the true spirit of Christmas at all. They’re only suitable for your drinking pals. No, I want nice, religious, and happy ones. We must remember it’s a cheerful, Holy festival. And this year we’ll send them early, just to get everyone into the Christmas mood in good time.” “Fine” I replied. “But isn’t October the 3rd just a teensy bit early to start pushing the season of goodwill?”

Then there was the problem of who to send them to this year, and who should be struck off ‘The List’. We always keep the cards that we receive so that we know who to send them to next year. But that system isn’t foolproof. The old school friend who sent you sent you that rather risqué card last year could have a) moved house, b) emigrated under suspicious circumstances, c) died from alcoholic poisoning (the most likely event, from what you could remember of him), or d) fallen down a lift shaft – it does happen. I decided this year that I would definitely *not* send a card to my Reverend cousin Hugo in Manor Road until I had received one from him. I reckoned it was an odds-on bet that he would have been de-frocked and/or deported sometime during the year and Christmas cards are too expensive to distribute willy-nilly. I never got on with him anyway.

So, by October the 31st all the cards had been bought; written – including a note about how brilliantly our children, son aged 41 and daughter aged 38, are doing (nothing more humble than Directorships of course) in their respective careers - and put away until December the 1st when I would be detailed to deliver them en masse to Fraser at Dersingham Post Office for him to push, one by one, through a funny piece of plastic with a slot in it. I had wondered in the past why posting the cards was always my job. This year I found the answer. It seems it is an unwritten law in our house that postage costs cannot be re-couped from ‘housekeeping’.

‘Presents – taken care of.’ ‘Cards – taken care of.’ Next? ‘Accommodation’ *WHAT?* The sudden realization that we were going to put up ten guests and had not organized anything in that respect hit Norma head on like an express train “*What are we going to do with them?*” “Tell them all to find their own food and shelter” I ventured. “As long as we know how many there will be for Christmas lunch I think that’s all we need.” “You’re serious, aren’t you? You selfish beast! Where’s the spirit of Christmas and the season of goodwill?” “As far as I’m concerned, down at the Feathers.” I tried to be light-hearted to relieve some of Norma’s anxiety. “Hang on, though. That does give me an idea. If we book Aunt Getrude and Uncle Arnold in there for three days B&B they’d be as happy as pigs in the proverbial. With their fantastic affinity for alcohol they could drink ‘firkins’ – or is it ‘hogsheads’, I never did know? - of ‘Broadside’ quicker than Adams could produce them, and The Feathers would pay us for sending them there. Yes, I think I’ll pursue that line of thought.”

“If I’d supposed to take your suggestion seriously, and I don’t, that still leaves eight persons to put up. We have three bedrooms, one of which is ours and I think that even you would not want to share that with anyone else. That leaves two bedrooms, with a double bed in each, and eight bodies to distribute between them. Any inspiration, Mastermind?”



“Actually yes; I have” I replied making large, slow strides across the lounge with my thumbs behind my jacket lapels. “I’ll ring the Sally Army in Wellesley Street, Lynn, to see if they can lend us four folding canvas camp beds. If I put our plight to them with sufficient passion they might even let us have them free of charge.”

“You would, too. Wouldn’t you? If it wasn’t for the fact that Dickens is with us no more, I’d say he based his Scrooge character on you!”

Presents – OK; cards – OK; and now accommodation – OK. Surely there couldn’t be much more to put Norma into orbit before she converted the turkey into charcoal on ‘The Day’. But yes; there was. Oh silly me, how could I forget; there was the turkey itself. Would it really, truthfully, and honestly be absolutely dead when she put it into the oven? Norma is a sensitive soul and worries about such things. I consoled her with the thought that although it still had its giblets, entrails and the like, they were in a plastic bag, totally separated from the bird itself. But what if it had died of bird flu? Could it poison our guests? I gave some inane reply to this one, staring into space and smiling to myself whilst thinking that a bit of thinning out of her tribe might not be a bad thing. It was the turn of her lot to come to us this year and I never liked any of them that much, except perhaps Norma’s nephew’s fiancée but I’ll not say more about that.



It is now early December, 2008, and surely we must be on the final run in to Christmas. We have had massive shopping expeditions to Lynn, Norwich, Cambridge, Ingoldisthorpe and Peterborough. Not to mention Budgens, Thaxters, Scoles, Alliance Pharmacy and the Post Office (for some second class stamps that Fraser, rather ungraciously I thought, refused to give me with discount for bulk purchase). But we are *not* on the last lap apparently. I wouldn’t have believed it but it seems we still have time for a final blitz on all the shopping malls within a radius of 50 miles – or so she has worked out. Despite rumours put about by Norma, I *am* basically a peace loving man. So I put on a clenched-teeth, forced smile and push self-willed trolleys round superstores.

By December the 15th we both felt that we were definitely heading for the line and could coast comfortably towards the big event. It was time to relax. But the tree! What about the Christmas Tree?! We had to have one to remind ourselves of the time when the children were at home, she says. But they are *not* at home; the last one flew the nest about 25 years ago. So why on earth do we have to put up with an ever-thickening mat of dead pine needles on the carpet for eighteen days or more? And if we are going to have a tree, we might as well have bundles of cheap, crappy decorations bought at three for the price of two, as well; even round the toilet seat in the upstairs loo. And still we’re not finished. That ‘smoothie’ Bing Crosby and his White Christmas could be heard throughout the house for something like fifteen hours a day. It was all too much. A few world-wide catastrophies on Radio 4 might have relieved the situation possibly.

By now you are thinking that I am just a ‘Gumpy Old Man’. That is not true. I really enjoyed Christmas Day. It gave me great pleasure to think I will be helping a family in Ghana by sending them a heap of presents that I don’t want, don’t like, nor will use. I mean, who wants another six handkerchiefs (bringing the total in my top drawer to 78) which I am not allowed to use anyway because they are ‘unhygienic’, even for cleaning car headlamps? But wouldn’t they be useful for a family in Africa who could knot them at the corners and use as sun hats? An essential for anyone living in a hot, sunny climate I would have thought. And I had ten pairs of gaudy socks from the same source this year as last year, and the year before that if I remember correctly. Is someone trying to tell me something I ask myself? But in any event I’m quite sure that ten Africans would make better use of them than I could. Nearly all the scenes I have seen on TV show the natives running around barefoot; presumably because socks are in short supply out there.

Christmas 2008 was much the same as previous Christmases have been. Norma got up bright and early, full of joy, and rung all her relatives including those in more distant parts of the globe. Calls from Dersingham to South Africa, for example, are not cheap and her sister in Jo' burg got her yearly 45 minutes worth at peak rate. Fortunately for my bank account, Norma's brother, Jed, in New Zealand is still out of favour with the rest of the family since he was reported in The Wellington Times for doing strange things with a sheep; so he only got 10 minutes.

I have to admit that Norma really excelled herself this year with the Christmas lunch. True, the turkey still came out of the oven with a crispy, black skin but that's par for the course now. It wouldn't be Christmas if it was any other way. No, it was the trimmings and vegetables that took everybody by surprise. Not only were they edible but Norma's brother asked for a second helping. It could have been something to do with the fact that he couldn't swallow his portion of turkey I suppose, but let's give credit where it's deserved I say.

After lunch I declined an offer to go for a brisk walk along Dersingham beach to the Coal Staithe and back. It's not that I was being unusually lazy but I do know just how close to the Coal Staithe it is possible to drive a car. The answer, I'm afraid, is 'not very'. As well as that I really couldn't agree with Norma's brother that I would shed pounds and pounds of weight. I opted for a snooze instead.

But I didn't waste all my time. I took notes of just how boring the TV programmes are on a Christmas afternoon. This was all good material for my regular, abusive Christmas letter of complaint to the DG of the BBC. These letters never change anything, and they don't even stimulate a reply of thanks for the interest I have shown. But I feel better for having sent them. Better than walking along a shingle bank any day.

Tea was, as usual, a non-event. Everyone was still too full to eat any more and Norma got upset because there were no takers for her 50 mince pies. The official Christmas festivities ended at 7.00 pm when the last guest departed carrying, like the others, five mince pies.

Peace. We watched TV for a while. I congratulated Norma on the way everything had gone so smoothly then she went to bed. It had been a tiring day, for her in particular. I put my feet up on the arm of the settee and ...

"WAKE UP! It's 6.0 o'clock!"

"A.M. or P.M.?"

"A.M. you idiot! It's Boxing Day. You know, the day after Christmas Day."

"So?"

"So the Sales start in three hours!"

"Is there no end to this reckless, carefree frivolity?! □"

Steve Nowell

Sudoku No 3 solution								
8	4	9	6	2	5	1	7	3
1	5	7	4	3	8	9	6	2
6	2	3	1	7	9	5	8	4
9	7	4	2	8	6	3	5	1
5	6	1	3	9	4	8	2	7
2	3	8	5	1	7	6	4	9
4	8	2	9	6	1	7	3	5
3	9	6	7	5	2	4	1	8
7	1	5	8	4	3	2	9	6

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The Safer Neighbourhood Team Dersingham and Gayton Neighbourhood

I would like to say something to reassure the residents of Dersingham following the “Anthrax” scare that we experienced just before Christmas?

As you know the incident caused a great deal of alarm and distress particularly for the recipients. Fortunately, the powder involved turned out to be totally harmless but had to be treated as a potentially toxic substance until it was established

exactly what we were dealing with.

Naturally, it appeared on the Anglia News and I am conscious of the manner in which it was broadcast i.e. it appeared that we were being very secretive about it. Well, that was for a very good reason. We simply didn't want to cause an over reaction and mass panic. The incident was dealt with most professionally and I am proud to have played a part in that investigation.

Enquiries are being conducted by CID in relation to three such letters that were believed sent by the same offender to other locations within Norfolk.

On a more cheery note, overall crime in Dersingham is currently at an all time low. I would like to publicly thank the community of Dersingham and my team for the joint interest and in achieving such a great result. Well done all of you.

Remember, we are here to support you the residents. If you see or know of an issue that is affecting your quality of life drop us a line via the Dersingham and Gayton e-mail address.

(sntdersinghamgayton@norfolk.pnn.police.uk)

To further improve the flow of information and to brief you of what is going on in your Neighbourhood we will be setting our stall up near Budgens twice a month. We are grateful for the use of St Cecilia's Church rooms for the last twelve months but recognise that it means making a special effort for the public to attend. I believe that this new facility will greatly improve the interaction between us and the community by capturing passing trade.

And Finally (I sound like Sir Trevor McDonald) may I take this opportunity to wish you all a Happy New Year from my team and I for 2009. Keep talking to us..... □

Andy

Andrew J Crown,
Sergeant 3123,
SNT Supervisor of
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Dersingham Police
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Norfolk
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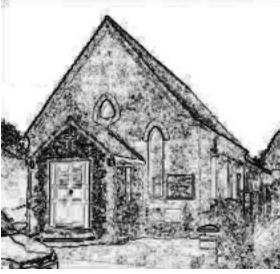
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Greetings from the Manse



One day a while back, a man, his heart heavy with grief, was walking in the woods. As he thought about his life this day, he knew many things were not right. He thought about those who had lied about him back when he had a job. His thoughts turned to those who had stolen his things and cheated him. He remembered family that had passed on. His mind turned to the illness he had that no one could cure. His very soul was filled with anger, resentment and frustration.

Standing there this day, searching for answers he could not find, knowing all else had failed him, he knelt at the base of an old oak tree to seek the One he knew would always be there. And with tears in his eyes, he prayed: "Lord- you have done wonderful things for me in this life. You have told me to do many things for you, and I happily obeyed. Today.....You have told me to forgive. I am sad, Lord, because I cannot. I do not know how! It is not fair Lord! I didn't deserve these wrongs that were done against me! I shouldn't have to forgive! As perfect as your way is Lord, this one thing I cannot do, for I do not know how to forgive. My anger is so deep Lord, I fear I may not hear You, but I pray that You teach me to do this one thing I cannot do - Teach me To Forgive."

As he knelt there in the quiet shade of that old oak tree, he felt something fall onto his shoulder. He opened his eyes. Out of the corner of one eye, he saw something red on his shirt. He could not turn to see what it was because where the oak tree had been was a large square piece of wood in the ground. He raised his head and saw two feet held to the wood with a large spike through them. He raised his head more, and tears came to his eyes as he saw Jesus hanging on a cross. He saw spikes in His hands, a gash in His side, His torn and battered body, deep thorns sunk into His head. Finally he saw the suffering and pain on His precious face.

As their eyes met, the man's tears turned to sobbing, and Jesus began to speak. "Have you ever told a lie?", he asked. The man answered - "Yes, Lord. ""Have you ever been given to much change and kept it?" The man answered, "Yes, Lord. "And the man sobbed more and more..... "Have you ever taken something from work that wasn't yours?" And the man answered "Yes, Lord. "Have you ever sworn, using my Father's name in vain?" The man, crying now, answered, "Yes, Lord. "As Jesus asked many more times, "Have you ever"? The man's crying became uncontrollable, for he could only answer, "Yes, Lord. "Then Jesus turned His head from one side to the other, and the man felt something fall on his other shoulder. He looked and saw that it was the blood of Jesus. When he looked back up, his eyes met those of Jesus, and saw a look of love the man had never seen or known before. Jesus said, "I didn't deserve this either, but I forgive you."

It may be hard to see how you're going to get through something, but when you look back in life, you realize how true this statement is.... Read the following thought for the New Year and slowly and let it sink in! If GOD brings you to it - HE will bring you through it!

Peace and grace to you in the New Year, with all good wishes, ☐

Kim



Many thanks to all who attended our events during 2008 and helped us raise funds for a number of causes including WaterAid, The Futures Orphanage Cambodia, East Anglian Air Ambulance and Church funds.

We look forward to seeing you at our events during 2009. Coffee mornings will be held on the following Saturdays – 14th February, 14th March, 4th April.

The annual flower festival will be from 21st to 25th May. A warm welcome awaits you at our services, coffee mornings and weekly events.

Further information from Elizabeth Batstone, 01485 541068.

David Bingham Winter thrushes



During the winter months, our resident song and mistle thrushes are joined by thousands of redwings and fieldfares – cousins from the far north and east. This year they arrived en masse in mid October. I saw a first mixed flock in The Broads on the 17th of October. The next day they were streaming through Snettisham Coastal Park in incredible numbers. They stopped off to feed on the hawthorn berries but were soon on their way again – to be immediately replaced by more birds flying in from the north. Some of these birds will have stayed in the area but the majority spread out across the country to wherever berries were plentiful. I saw large numbers feeding in the hedgerows next to a huge coal powered power station in South Wales during November.

Redwings and fieldfares are (relatively) easy to tell apart. They both have the general appearance of a thrush but redwings are smaller and of a warmer brown with a cream coloured stripe over their eyes. The ‘red wing’ is actually a clearly visible splash of colour on their flanks that is more chestnutty or orange than hot red. Fieldfares are large handsome birds with slate grey heads and rumps. Their call is a harsh ‘chacker, chack, chack’, unlike the soft flight call of the redwing which sounds something like a repeated ‘seep, seep’. Redwings and fieldfares do visit gardens to feed on berries but are rather wary and easily disturbed.

Small numbers of redwings and fieldfares breed in northern Scotland but these are getting very scarce nowadays and this is thought to be due to global warming as their ranges shrink back to their core territory in Scandinavia and further east.

Redwings are classic night migrants and their arrival is often given away by their nocturnal high-pitched calls as they fly overhead. I felt privileged one clear frosty night earlier in the winter when I was accompanied on my cycle ride home by the characteristic ‘seep, seep’ sound. This stopped the moment I got home – I really must oil my pedals! □



Goose News

The Snettisham RSPB Reserve has hosted record numbers of pink-footed geese this year with a peak count of 51,950. Their flight line at this time was more often over Snettisham than Dersingham. On one memorable occasion they flew over the village at dusk in one vast flock like a black tide spreading across the sky.

I didn't make this record count but did do a count on the 29th of December and I thought you may like to know how this was done. I got into position long before dawn by driving along the sea bank without any lights on. This is done to avoid disturbing the geese and is not a job for the faint hearted (it's not a job for the intelligent either if the truth be known). The geese roost out on the mudflats and they start to fly at dawn but the timings can vary. I use my binoculars to watch the geese take off but then wait for the formations to form before I start to count and I do this without binoculars to get the maximum field of view. At first, I count in fifties and note the score during lulls in activity. When big numbers take off, I count in hundreds and again note the score. My final tally was 33,750. A count that was done a week later by somebody else who recorded 31,500 geese. Numbers do tend to steadily fall away at this time of year as the geese move to new feeding and roosting grounds so I feel reasonably confident that my count was accurate. I'm never completely confident in my ability to count in thousands, which is probably a good thing having seen Dustin Hoffman's character in Rain Man. □

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News from St Cecilia's Catholic Church

The Priest, the Sisters and parishioners of St Cecilia's in Dersingham send you their best wishes for a Happy and Peaceful New Year.



Fr James Fyfe left for his "summer holiday" as usual in January, but his place was taken by Fr Marion Juszczyk, a Polish priest, who has retired to Wigan. Fr Marion is also leading a pilgrimage to Poland in May to celebrate 50 years as a priest and about 14 members of our parish are eagerly looking forward to joining him.

2008 saw our many shared parish activities growing in



popularity. We welcomed members of other churches to a Ladies Shared Lunch on Saturday 29 November and were delighted to see the Rev. Alison Davis and members of St Mary's in Heacham, several good friends from St Nicholas, four ladies from the Methodist Church in Dersingham and other guests from Hunstanton and King's Lynn's churches.

Fr James, the only man at the feast, took the group photograph. And in another photo, Alison and members of St Cecilia's, Cindy Bell and Sue Payne, are waiting to tuck into a splendid feast.



A great highlight of our year was the Parish Confirmation conducted by Bishop Michael Evans from Norwich, Bishop of East Anglia, when six teenagers and two young adults received the Sacrament of Confirmation in Hunstanton.

The flower team did a magnificent job as usual



decorating the church for Christmas. There were 11 ladies and four men helping to trim the Christmas tree, hang garlands and arrange the flowers. Not everyone is in this photograph, but everyone's help was very much appreciated.

Just after Christmas we recorded with sadness the deaths of two members. Mary Mutton, was a great supporter of our Church here and in spite of increasing ill health, a regular attendee of the Mass on Sundays and Wednesdays. Also Liz Salt, formerly of Hanover Court in Dersingham, but because of a stroke, she was living in care at King's Lynn. When she was well she often, with Frances Dodd her sister, helped to clean St Cecilia's. Both will be greatly missed and we send our condolences to their families. Their funeral Masses were held at St Cecilia's Church in January. □

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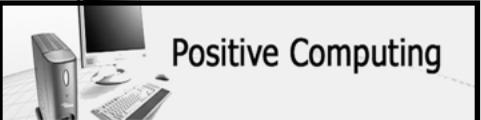
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THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION - WOMEN'S SECTION DERSINGHAM AND SANDRINGHAM BRANCH

Many thanks to everyone who attended our coffee morning on 6th November at the Methodist Church Hall in Post Office Road, we managed to raise £103.41p for the Poppy Appeal.

Everything went smoothly at the Remembrance Service in St Nicholas church on Sunday the 9th of November and at the Monument on the 11th of November, our Standard was displayed on both occasions.

We took part in the annual Christmas Tree Festival at St. Nicholas Church again this year with the Branch contributing half of the cost and the Women's Section providing the decorating.

December 1st. was our Christmas Party, Mr Clarke entertained us with his repertoire of poetry and carols, followed by our party tea and a big raffle. It was a very enjoyable afternoon which finished all too soon. Our next outing was to Docking for the Group Meeting on 15th December, seven of our members attended and three of them won prizes in the raffle.

The next time we meet will be at 2.15 p.m. on 2nd February 2009 in the Orchard Close Community Room.

On behalf of all the members of our Group, we wish you Good Luck, Good Health and Happiness for 2009. □

The Grumpy Bit

Well that's the end of Christmas and New Year, bah humbug to it all. Now when I was a child we never had all this excess: a simple meal at Christmas, with a stocking containing a few sweets, an orange and an apple, perhaps a sugar mouse, but that was your lot. New Year consisted of watching Andy Stewart on the television doing his bit from Scotland to herald the New Year in, that's if you were lucky enough to afford one. And that was it. Didn't have any of these noisy fireworks as now, they belonged to November 5th, ban them for the rest of the year I say.

They were good old days, the 40's and 50's people were much happier, weren't so materialistic as they are now, what they had, they appreciated and enjoyed simple pleasures. But now its buy, buy, buy, spend, spend, spend and gimme, gimme, gimme, no true festive spirit, the festive season is one big consumer orgy, the true spirit of celebration has been lost. Times have changed and not for the better.

I noticed that shops in Kings Lynn had started to strip Christmas out before Christmas Eve, suppose they had to because they introduce Christmas in August, shouldn't be allowed, couldn't see any Easter Eggs on sale yet though, bloomin' marvellous that.

What intrigues me though is, we are all feeling the pinch, we have to watch our pennies, but what does the government want us to do, why, spend like crazy in order to help the economy recover. What a check! Why should we?

Sad though that Woolworth's has shut, they have been trading for donkey's years, part of our heritage. No Government help for them, but then billions of our money, taxpayer's money, has been spent by the Government in order to bail out Northern Rock and the rest of the banks. Do the banks really deserve it, no I don't think so, after all if I was irresponsible with my finances, I wouldn't get Government help to make me solvent. Still we, the taxpayer now part own the banks in question, we might even be able to speak to a bank manager now.

Now a message to all canines, please insist your owners clean up your deposits from public walk ways and verges. I know it takes time, but I am getting a little tired of putting my feet in your mess, I do try and avoid it, but it is nigh impossible when it gets dark. Point out to your owner that they wouldn't like dog mess on their shoes and neither do I. □

If you feel grumpy and would like a rant in this space please write it down and send it in. Ed.

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Dersingham Evening W.I.

In November we held our A.G.M. when a new committee was formed. As Diane Neeve was standing down, nominations were taken and as a result we welcomed Lesley Geer as our new president.

Speaker for the evening was Janet Rose who explained the work done by the Association for Countrywomen of the World, their aim being to raise the standard of living for women everywhere.

Some members agreed to decorate a Christmas Tree for the St. Nicholas Church Festival, using a green and gold colour scheme.

In December the committee were given a break as the meeting was arranged by members. After the usual delicious refreshments the 'Strolling Players' of Dersingham entertained us with songs and readings with a Christmas theme, interspersed with some amusing sketches with half a dozen 'Roman Soldiers' travelling - and losing their way on occasions - along the road from Rome to Bethlehem.

To round off the evening Phyl Jones read one of her stories about 'A Christmas Fairy.' □

Phyl Jones

Sudoku No 4								
7			1	9			8	
		4		7		3	6	
	8						5	
		7		2			4	
			3		8	1	7	
3		5			9			
1		9		8				
	3				7	6		
4							1	5

Answers to Xmas Word Chain

1 Sandringham, 2 Mistletoe, 3 Enigma, 4 Afghanistan, 5 Noggin, 6 Natter, 7 Rosemary, 8 Yeoman, 9 Nobble, 10 Esteem, 11 Mineral, 12 Lawrence, 13 Eskimo, 14 Optimum, 15 Mishap, 16 Pompeii, 17 Impala, 18 Apricot, 19 Terror, 20 Rubbish, 21 Hogmanay, 22 Yeti, 23 Insider, 24 Riesling, 25 Gallop, 26 Pyrenees, 27 Syllabub, 28 Broccoli, 29 Iguana, 30 Arthritis, 31 Salop, 32 Pirouette, 33 Escapism, 34 Midship, 35 Prague, 36 Everglades, 37 Surface, 38 Everlasting, 39 Genius, 40 Suede, 41 Eider, 42 Rhodes, 43 Slang, 44 Generous

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My Patch

By Gardenwatcher

Fri. Unaccountably found myself in the kitchen when the staff returned with the weeks supplies. I seldom enter the servants domain when they are there but as I was there I checked out their purchases of my food and was not impressed that all the bags said Tesco and Sainsbury. Now I am prepared to tolerate Waitrose if Fortnums can't make, it but really!

Sun. It's cold, very cold, colder than I can remember for many years. The garden looks damp and dead - Brrrr! However, I have been out and can report that there are some signs of bulbs coming through. Little green points poking up. Actually the Grape Hyacinths, that he curses for most of the year, have full size leaves and occupy ever increasing areas despite his pulling at them.

Mon. The PC brigade will not shame me. I don't give a fig, I hate figs - so that is inaccurate, I don't give a meatball and I will continue to wear fur as long as it suits me! The screeching woman on breakfast TV knows what she can go and do.

Tue. It's official. The coldest start to December for 30 years and they have been putting me out in it! Death and decay all round the garden but his Pelargoniums, the ones that are still left out, are still flowering, well, sort of. Othertender plants that are too big for him to shift into the greenhouse - Fuschias, Abutilons, Olive etc., are stubbornly surviving as am I. At least I have a flap and can slip back into the warm so I am glad I'm not a plant. Hmmm. Idea - invent a plant flap!

Sun. Shortest day apparently but if you sleep a lot they all seem the same length. It's also the first day of winter but I think we have had plenty of winter already. Sunny and mild today - first sight of the fish since a heron was spotted 2 weeks ago on the sacred turf. I wonder if I could manage one?

Heron should taste good - fish and meat in one mouthful. Just add rice for Paella a la Hamser.

Tue. Judging by the amount of tinsel and cards around the place Christmas must be close. It's the same old story - they get a good time and I get told off. Keep out of that! Down! OOUUUUTTT!!!!

Thur. I was right its Christmas. Why do they think I want to fight the spent wrapping paper? There won't be anything to eat in there. They just apply their feeble intellects to me and assume that I am easily pleased, and I am not even an American. Cold and frosty out so I shall stay in. Humbug!

Sat. The usual dull time, no turkey yet for me although they have not gone short. Huge numbers of geese flying over - not a one dropping towards me. Ah well, soon be spring. On a brighter note the traps have been empty for some time although the bait seems to go slowly. Slug may be the culprit.

Wed. New Years Eve. I shall not be watching Jools Holland tonight as we found out last year it's recorded. Hopefully midnight will pass with me slumped in front of the fire. Set out on a tour of inspection this am, to sum up the year on the patch. Bulbs are showing up everywhere, Clematis has green shoots as have the Hydrangeas but he still has a lot of dead stuff to clear. He was eyeing the mower fondly the other day - spare us! The Beech hedge is rather more bare than usual, but then, like me, it's getting on a bit and needs rejuvenating, something else for him to do.

Mon. Found a dusting of snow on venturing out this morning. trouble with snow is that it tells of where you've been. In my case that was around the bird feeders to see who was there. Nobody, my cloak of invisibility must have failed. Beamed back indoors to gripe for breakfast.

Tue. Felt a bit low today, sort of in need of little liver pills - are they still made? Threw up over one of those round robin Xmas newsletters and felt much better afterwards. Staff seemed to approve of my choice of receptacle. Very tiring, slept for rest of day.

Wed. Happened to be near the porch when the post arrived. Spotted a postcard from India which landed shiny side down and was delighted to see stamps bearing the picture of a cat. Vastly superior to ours, we only get a queen.

Fri. A quick (and it was never going to be anything other than quick with these temperatures) tour of the estate today found the following in bloom: Hebe, Vinca Major, Lewissia, Viburnum, Fever Few and a gaudy Polyanthus. Not bad I suppose for early January. Discovered a freshly dug area where there used to be a short Apple tree. Made good use of it which will benefit any new planting.



Bog News

As I write this on a bitter January morning, there is a medley of bird song outside. The lively, jangling song of the Dunnock ebbs and flows in the foreground, whilst the collard doves keep time with their repetitive, melancholy cooing. Robins occasionally break in with a free-style solo, every so often stopping, as if to give others a chance to join in. Often these sounds tend to just wash over us and it is easy to take for granted the sheer variety of bird life that surrounds us.

As the year progresses one almost becomes numbed to the sound of bird song. As the orchestra builds, individual songs become obscured and it is easy to walk around the reserve and, having seen few birds, leave thinking that there is little around.

Since becoming involved in carrying out breeding bird surveys, I have come to realise just how much I used to miss by purely relying on seeing birds, rather than listening, and the pleasure one can gain from focussing on bird songs and calls. I would estimate that I tend to hear approximately 75% of what I record and see the remaining 25% - although this may just be an indication of how poor my eye sight is!

Dersingham Bog provides the opportunity to hear birds that were once far more widespread but have been lost from the surrounding countryside. Some of these are quite extraordinary and are real highlights of our countryside. The woodlark is one of the earliest birds to start singing out on the open heath and greets visitors with its beautiful, fluid song. The singing males hang in the air, hovering to keep their position as though suspended on some invisible thread. Unlike their cousin the skylark, woodlarks have short stumpy wings and tail, giving them a bat-like appearance. When not singing, they are very unobtrusive, scurrying around over the ground looking for spiders and other insects on which to feed.

Like several of the species that nest on the open heath, woodlarks are ground nesting birds and require relatively undisturbed areas to successfully rear their young. To help to ensure that these species are given the best chance of survival on the National Nature Reserve, we ask that dogs be kept on a short lead during the breeding season (February to September).

Stonechats are another heathland speciality that have taken advantage of the restored heathland habitats at Dersingham Bog. These bold little birds can often be seen as they flit between the young birch and pine trees on the heath, on top of which they perch to look for their insect prey as well as any potential predators approaching. The song of the male stonechat is easily missed, but it is worth stopping a while as you pass along the edge of the bog to listen for the high pitched, slightly 'scratchy' song and the dry clicks (from which it gets its name) that they make. The male stonechats are strikingly marked little birds with a black head, white collar and warm, buff breast. The stonechat is just one species that has benefited from the run of milder winters that we have experienced in recent years. Being a small species, the stonechat has a large surface area compared to its volume and, therefore, tends to be vulnerable in cold weather due to the amount of energy it expends just staying alive. Hopefully the cold snap we experienced over the Christmas period did not have too great an impact on them. □



Photo: Tony Richards

Ash Murray

Janet Pitkin

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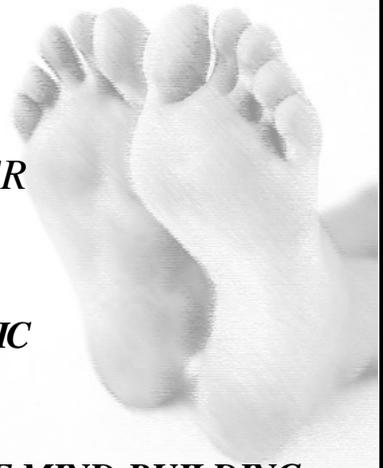
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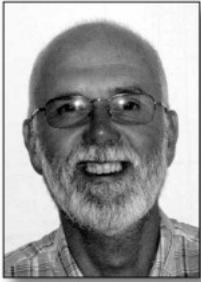
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Steve Davis

Doing a Spot of Armchair Twitching

What, if anything, holds you to your computer screen? Email, chat forums, digital photography or a favourite game perhaps? Although I am no big computer game enthusiast, I have found that just about whatever I get involved with, sooner or later will lead to great chunks of my time being swallowed up staring into the dreaded screen; I just cannot seem to help it! But life in Dersingham is certainly curing me! You see, really at heart I am a people person, an outdoor person and a nature lover. I happen to think that we are really blessed living in this village with its friendly community and ease of access to wonderful countryside and coastline. One of my joys is involvement with the RSPB and I spend many happy hours at our local Snettisham Reserve, and have recently had the pleasure of leading others down on early morning walks to see the Pink-Footed Geese take off from the Wash. Now I know many around the village share a love of birds, whether out and about or in their back gardens, and of course Village Voice is not short of contributors on the subject, so I thought I would look at some of the websites and software that might enhance the experience still further.



Perhaps the obvious place to start is by visiting the RSPB website at: www.rspb.org.uk Now be warned, this is no quick trip as it is absolutely packed with up to date articles and advice with stunning photographs and video clips at national and local level. It really is a flagship amongst professionally produced websites that can be enjoyed just for its own sake or you may be inspired to join the RSPB, offer help or make purchases from its online store. Try looking up details of our local reserves at Snettisham and Titchwell as well as seeing what you might do to attract birds to your garden.

For identifying birds and looking up details of all British species, I have often referred to the following site that has been around for some years now and is very easy: www.garden-birds.co.uk It gives a simple list of British birds down the left hand side of the screen that can each be clicked on for further details, including *mp3* sound clips of their calls.

A similar easy to use reference list can be found at: www.birdsofbritain.co.uk

For the more serious bird enthusiast though there is the *BTO (British Trust for Ornithology)* website at: www.bto.org Here, as well as studying interesting facts and figures, you can get involved with bird counts and monitoring even in your back garden.

Along similar lines is our own more local *Norfolk Ornithologists' Association*, who carry out

extensive research and surveys involving ringing and recording of bird sightings; they have a website at: www.noa.org.uk This includes an extensive photo gallery from local contributors.

Many of you will be familiar with the immensity of the BBC's website with its extensive news coverage, its *iPlayer* for catching up on all the TV and Radio programmes that you might have missed (www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer), and of course its encyclopaedic reports covering just about every world topic, birds being no exception at: www.bbc.co.uk/nature/animals/birds

Many of the above sites have their own *search* facility and will include sound and video clips, and some even link to *Live Webcams* that are focused on bird feeding stations that either update with a still snapshot every minute or so, or even transmit video as it happens. Such services will invariably make use of *add-ons* to your Internet Browser such as *Adobe Flash Player*, *Real Player* or *Quick Time* and if you do not have them installed, you may be prompted to download and install them as they are required. They are safe to download and will generally install fairly painlessly, though you may have to respond to your *computer virus checker* as it seeks your approval before proceeding.

If you want to be independent of the Internet then there are some good CD and DVD-ROMs that can be purchased from the RSPB Visitor Centre at Titchwell, they start at around £20 though the best by far is the DVD-ROM Guide to British Birds (Version 9) from *Birdguides*. Amongst the pages and pages of stunning pictures and information about our birds are included some 1000 video clips lasting a total of five hours. However, it will set you back around £58, but you do get what you pay for! *Birdguides* also have their own extensive website at: www.birdguides.com

Of course with the Internet you are not just limited to British Birds and a simple Google search on "*birds*" will take you to links worldwide, but the site that for me really seems to come up trumps every time on just about any topic is my often quoted favourite: www.youtube.com *YouTube* has thousands of wonderful video clips of just about any bird you care to search for (and if you include *RSPB Snettisham* in your search you will come up with several of my own). Back this time last year when bird enthusiasts were getting excited by the visit of the single *White Crowned Sparrow* to Cley-next-the-Sea I did a *YouTube* search and was amazed to see what they looked like in huge flocks in their native USA.

Well by the time you get to read this, St Valentine's Day will be around the corner when once again nature will start following more amorous pursuits and this winter's record numbers of "Pinkies" will be packing their bags for their return flight to Iceland and East Greenland. But in case you missed or needed one more glimpse at the *BBC Look East* report shown just before Christmas (and again after Christmas on *Look North*) here, provided it is still up and running, is the website link: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/puffbox/hyperpuff/audiovideo/england/norfolk/7792971.stm>

But really I have to leave the last word to Chris Packham, a wildlife presenter I admire, who at the end of each of his *Nature's Calendar* programmes would urge: "*Don't just sit in front of your screen watching it;*" if you are able, "*get out there and see it for yourself!*" □

Have a Happy 2009.

Email: steve@davista.co.uk or visit:
www.davista.co.uk
www.picasaweb.google.com/ukuleleboy,
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Village Voice publication dates

We love getting your reports of events and meetings, advertisements and advance details of forthcoming attractions. To make sure you hit your targets please note the publication dates of this magazine:-

No	Copy deadline	Publication date
Issue 57	Wednesday 4th March 2009	Thursday 29th March
Issue 58	Wednesday 29th April 2009	Thursday 21st May
Issue 59	Wednesday 8th July 2009	Thursday 30th July
Issue 60	Wednesday 2nd Sept 2009	Thursday 24th Sept
Issue 61	Wednesday 4th Nov 2009	Thursday 26th Nov

The earlier you get your copy to us the more we like it and the better position it gets.

DIARY OF REGULAR EVENTS

Date	Time	Organisation	Event	Venue
Every Monday	2.00 pm	St. Cecilia's Church	Rosary Group	St. Cecilia's Church
3rd Monday of month	6 pm	Dersingham Library	Dersingham Reading Group	Library
Every Mon, Tues, Thur & Fri	9.00 to 11.30 am	Dersingham Playgroup	Playgroup Meeting	Dersingham Community Centre, Manor Road
Every Mon & Fri in Term Time	9.30 to 11.00 am	Puddleducks Toddler Group	Toddler Group Meeting	Dersingham Methodist Church Hall
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 Guide Group	Meeting for girls aged 7 – 10 years	Scout & Guide HQ Manor Road
Every Tuesday	7 pm	Dersingham Bridge Club	Bridge Evening	The Feathers Hotel
Every Tuesday in Term Time	8.30 to 11.15 am	St Nicholas Parent & Toddler Group	Parent & Toddler Group Meeting	St Nicholas Church Hall
Every Tuesday	8 pm	Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes	Sandringham Lodge Meeting	Dersingham Community Centre, Manor Road
1st or 2nd Monday in the Month	2.15 pm	Royal British Legion Women's Section	Dersingham & Sandringham Branch Meeting	Orchard Close Community Room
1st Tuesday of the Month	7.30 pm	Village Voice 'Live'	Presentations by Guest Speakers	St Nicholas Church Hall
1st Tuesday of the Month	7.30 pm	Dersingham Methodist Church	Art Club	Dersingham Methodist Church Hall
2nd Tuesday in Month	7.30 pm	Royal British Legion	Branch Meeting	Feathers Hotel
Every Wednesday	10.00 am to 4.00 pm	Dersingham Day Centre for the Elderly	Recreation & Leisure and Mid-day Meal	Dersingham Community Centre, Manor Road
Every Wednesday	10.00 to 11.00 am	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 7.15 pm	Beavers	Meeting for children aged 6 - 8	Scout & Guide HQ Manor Road
Every 2nd Weds of the Month	10.30 am	St Nicholas Men's Group	Men's Group Meeting	St Nicholas Church Hall
Every 2nd Weds of the month		Dersingham Walking Group	Circular walk	See programme for details or contact Keith Starks 542268
Every 2nd Weds of the Month Sept to April	7.30 pm	Albert Victor Bowls Club	Prize Bingo	Albert Victor Bowls Club, Manor Road
3rd Wednesday of the Month	7.15 to 10.00 pm	Dersingham Evening Women's Institute	Meeting	St Cecilia's Church Hall
Every Thursday	10.3 am to 3.00 pm	North West Norfolk Phobbies Club	Meeting	St. Nicholas Church Hall
Every Thursday	4.00 to 5.15 pm	1st Dersingham Rainbow Guide Group	Meeting for girls aged 5-7 years	Scout & Guide HQ Manor Road
Every Thursday	5.30 to 7.00 pm	1st Dersingham Brownie Guide Group	Meeting for girls aged 7-10 years	Scout & Guide HQ Manor Road
Every Thursday	7.00 to 8.30 pm	1st Sandringham Guides	Unit Meeting	Dersingham Community Centre., Manor Road
Every Thursday	7.00 to 9.00 pm	1st Dersingham Scouts	Group Meeting	Scout & Guide HQ
Every Thursday	7.00 to 9.30 pm	Norfolk Army Cadet Force	Sandringham Detachment Meeting	The Drill Hall, Dodds Hill
Every Thursday	7.30 pm	St Nicholas Church	Badminton Club	St Nicholas Church Hall
Every Thurs Sept - June	2 pm	Park House Hotel	Rubber Bridge	Park House Hotel
Every Thursday	7.30 pm	Hunstanton and District Camera Club	Meeting	St Nicholas Church Hall
1st Thursday of Month		Dersingham Flower Club	Meeting	St Nicholas Church Hall
2nd Thursday of 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
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 Outings for the over-60s	St Nicholas Church Hall
1st Friday of month	10.00 am to 12 noon	St Nicholas Church	Coffee Morning	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; 11th Feb, 11th March - when Public Enquiry Officers Linda Forder and Pete Shaw will be in attendance along with P.C. 240 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 any 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 Anita Moore, Dersingham Parish Council, The Police Station, Manor Road, Dersingham PE31 6LH **by Wednesday 4th March 2009** Enquiries regarding advertisements may be made by calling 01485 541465. E-mail — anitadersinghampc@tiscali.co.uk

Articles for publication in the December edition of Village Voice must reach The Editor c/o Dersingham Parish Council, The Police Station, Manor Road, Dersingham PE31 6LH or e-mail; anita.dersinghampc@tiscali.co.uk before the **deadline date of mid-day on Wednesday 4th March 2009 for publication on Thursday 29th March**. (Contributors who are promoting events should take note of this earliest date of publication). Should you be providing graphics to accompany advertisements or articles, it would be appreciated if these could be in JPEG format.

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 Production Team for this edition consists of
Editor: - Tony Bubb. Editorial assistant - Rob Smyth
In the office - Anita Moore

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VILLAGE VOICE LIVE

Tuesday February 3rd

PENSTHORPE

Past, Present & Future

Your guide - Thomas Spencer



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

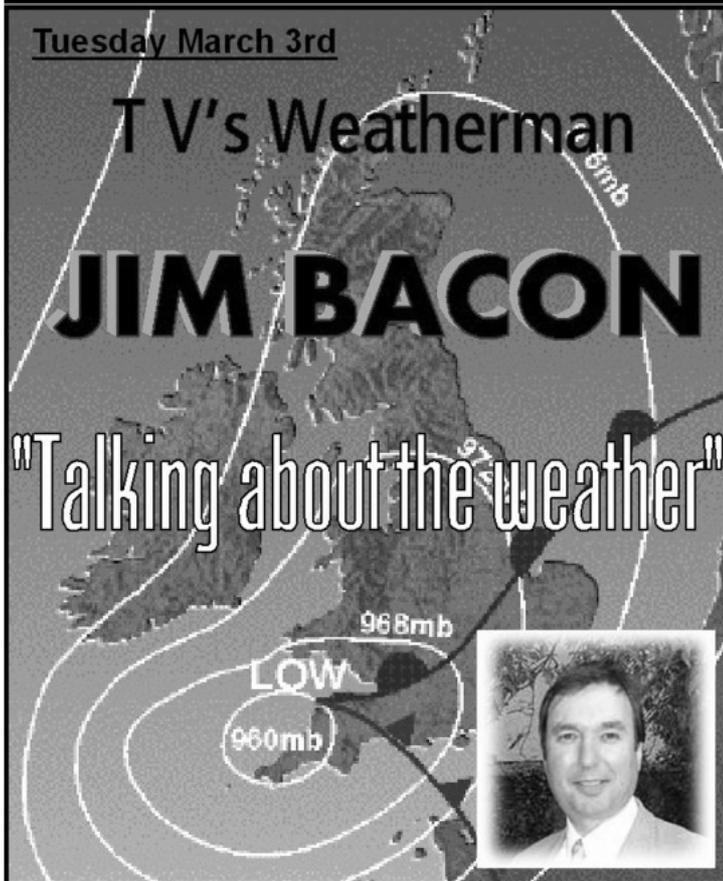
VILLAGE VOICE LIVE

Tuesday March 3rd

TV's Weatherman

JIM BACON

"Talking about the weather"



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