

Challenge

The Parish Newsletter of St Mary's, Weston Colville and St Andrew's, West Wrating

The views expressed herein are those of the contributors.

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From West Wrating Vicarage

"It was the best of times. It was the worst of times."

When Charles Dickens penned these opening lines of 'A Tale of Two Cities', little did he think that he was providing a cliché for almost every retrospective farewell. But, even though expressed with typical Dickensian exuberance, it does point to a real truth, as every human life contains times of great joy and well-being, and times of great sadness and desolation. That's the human condition. And this letter is of course a farewell because, as I expect you all know by now, I will be retiring fully and finally this month, my last and farewell service being at West Wrating on 17th April at 10.00 am.

This means that West Wrating and Weston Colville will soon be promoted to the exalted status of 'my previous parish', though that does rather depend on my being asked to take services in my retirement. I think that they are so desperate in the part of East Anglia to which I am moving that I will be asked, if only on the basis that, as one churchwarden phrased it when the Bishop kindly stepped in at the last minute to take a service, "a worse preacher would have done but we couldn't find one".

And talking of my previous parish, when my successor in my previous parish was announced I wrote to her to offer her my congratulations and good wishes. I went on to write: "The normal thing is then to say that I hope that you will be as happy as I have been. I always find that sentiment deeply depressing. In my experience ministry is nearly always peaks and troughs. I was very happy there but I was also very unhappy. If someone has had a ministry of unalloyed happiness, well, good for them, but it has never been my experience and it makes me feel inadequate to be told of it." So it has not been unalloyed joy, of course it hasn't, and there have been some things which have

caused me much pain and sadness. But taken by and large it has been a pretty good four years. I can honestly say that I have greatly enjoyed my time here and am very grateful to so many of you for the support, kindness and generosity I have encountered.

In my letter to Caroline, I went on to quote Sherlock Holmes: "the lowest and vilest alleys in London do not present a more dreadful record of sin than does the smiling and beautiful countryside", words with which I used to greet every new incumbent when I was Rural Dean of the mainly rural Godalming Deanery. And I have to say that little in my four years here has caused me to doubt those words of wisdom. But then I wouldn't have expected or to be honest wanted it any other way. The church is not a sanctuary for saints, but a refuge for sinners. You know that and I know that. That's why we have got on.

With just one word of advice for whoever comes after – you don't have to gut a pheasant or eat a squirrel but it helps break the ice – for the last time from West Wrating Vicarage, with all good wishes,



From the Vicarage

Canon John Fellows, who has served this group of churches in recent years, is about to retire. John has taken services in all the churches in the group and his sermons, full of laughter and also serious reflection, have been greatly appreciated. He has also made his contribution through Bible Studies, Lent courses and discussions. He has made a significant contribution to the life of these parishes, particularly at West Wrating and Weston Colville. His last Sunday is 17th April at 10 am at St Andrew's, West Wrating. This is going to take place whilst I am away and I am grateful that the Archdeacon of Cambridge will preside. After the service there will be refreshments. If you would like

to contribute to a gift for John, Roger Whitehead at Weston Colville is organising this.

Teresa Letimier has been supporting people in all of the contributing villages. As well as visiting the different village groups, she has already had over 50 referrals. She is working well with the GPs, social services, and other care agencies and also linking up with the community Warden. She is also beginning to reflect on new ways to support people in the communities.

The Annual Church Meetings will take place on Monday 11th April at 7.30 pm at St Andrew's Church, West Wrating, and on Sunday 24th April at 6 pm at St Mary's Church, Weston Colville.

Rev Julie Norris

St Mary's Flower Festival

The **Flower Festival** will be on **Saturday 25th** and **Sunday 26th June**, and there will be a concert by the Temple Ensemble on **Saturday 25th June**, 7.30 pm

The Temple Ensemble is a young and vibrant chamber music ensemble based at the Royal Academy of Music. They perform regularly nationally and internationally and we are very fortunate that they are coming to Weston Colville. They will perform a classical programme of music by Haydn and Mozart, in St Mary's Church.

More details to follow in May. Please contact Gay Redman (290807) if you would like to help with flowers and/or teas.

Everyone is welcome at a **LUNCH PARTY**

to celebrate the Queen's 90th Birthday
on **Saturday 23rd April**, 12.30 - 2.30

being held at
St Mary's Church, Weston Colville,
as there is a big space, and the playground
for children.

There will be festivities with music, and lunch (including coronation chicken), followed by birthday cake and coffee. Soft drinks will be provided, but bring your own alcohol for the loyal toast.

Queen's 90th Birthday medallions for school children, and games and prizes.

Royal Memorabilia

Suggested donation: £5 for adults,
children (under 13) free

In order to know how many to cater for, please give your name and number of people
by Sunday 17th April to:

Perdita Swift (290207, pandp.swift42@gmail.com)

or Katie Pagoni (290556, katie@pagonis.gr)

or Christine Tilley in the Weston Colville Post Office



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MOPS HAIR SALON

The Queen's 90th Birthday Celebrations

Thursday 21st April: Beacon lighting on Honey Hill, West Wrating, 7.30 pm

Saturday 11th June: Street Party, The Causeway, West Wrating, 1 - 6 pm.

All welcome from both our villages, and guests. Commemorative mugs for children.

We will meet in The Chestnut Tree to discuss the celebrations on Sunday 17th April at 7 pm. Please join us.

Scilla (290199) Simon (291969) and Sherry (290070)

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Weston Colville-produced Hebridean LAMB
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The Queen's 90th Birthday Celebrations

This year we will be celebrating the Queen's 90th birthday with several events.

Our first event starts in the early evening of the Queen's actual birthday, Thursday 21st April, when at 7.30 pm (BST) beacons will be lit throughout the United Kingdom. Everyone from West Wrating and Weston Colville is invited to the lighting of our own traditional bonfire beacon, which will be in a field at the top of Honey Hill, at the edge of West Wrating on the road to Balsham. This is a great vantage point from which to see beacons in our neighbouring villages and far out to the north of Cambridge; however, please be aware that to get there you will need to walk for about 100 metres along the side of the road, with no footpath. Sunset will be at 8 pm so please bring a torch and wear clothing that will be clearly visible to drivers. Parents will be responsible for looking after their children. If you'd like to help build the bonfire (on the previous weekend) then please contact Simon Chandler on 291969.

Once the beacon has been lit, celebrations will continue at The Chestnut Tree pub, which will be hosting a British Cheese night. To start things off they will be providing six different cheeses, together with accompaniments. If you would like to take part, all you need do is take along a piece of cheese – British of course – and then enjoy tasting all of the other cheeses provided. There will be seven real ales on for the weekend, together with two real ciders, so a great weekend for ale lovers to visit our pub.

There will also be an all British quiz, with question sheets available throughout the evening. Just hand your completed sheet back in at the bar. If you

manage to answer all of the questions correctly you'll win a drink on the house.

The following evening, Friday 22nd April, the pub will be serving homemade pies from 7 to 9 pm. There are now limited spaces left, so if you would like pie and mash please give them a call soon to reserve a table. From 9 pm onwards a live band, 'The Dinosaurs', will be playing some great sing along classics, including plenty with a British flavour, to keep us all entertained.

On Saturday 23rd April we will be celebrating St George's Day when our very own Mummers, 'The Unrehearsed Taverners', will be performing 'The Slaying of the Dragon' at The Chestnut Tree. The first show will be at 1 pm, with a repeat performance at 4.30 pm. If you have seen them before then you will, I am sure, want to see them again. For those of you who haven't, you won't want to miss this traditional and very entertaining way of celebrating our National Day!

On Sunday 24th April at 4 pm there will be a darts knockout competition at The Chestnut Tree in memory of Les Moulton.

The Queen's official birthday on Saturday 11th June will be marked by a street party on The Causeway, from 1 pm until 6 pm. There will be hot food, tea, coffee and cakes, a live band, a beer tent, plus fun and games. We'll have more news about this event in next month's *Challenge*.

Simon Chandler (291969)

West Wrating Speedwatch

The team has been carrying out excellent work so far this year, but we are saying goodbye to one of our most enthusiastic and dedicated members, without whose influence we'd scarcely be a team at all, so 'thank you' to Louise Cook for her tireless campaigning to encourage safer driving on our roads.

If you find yourself enjoying the 'tail' of cars you've collected on your way down Honey Hill or up the High Street, you're probably just the person we need! You'll find a group of like-minded, public-spirited, cheerful types doing their best to remind drivers to slow down through our village for the safety of pedestrians, cyclists, drivers and pets. Do get in touch: csw.westwrating@gmail.com

Jayshree, Speedwatch co-ordinator

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West Wrattling Over 60s

The club will meet in the village hall on Wednesday 6th April at 2.30 pm, with a bring'n'buy and raffle.

The following meeting will be held on 4th May.

Wendy Halls

West Wrattling Oil Syndicate

March fill up results: 27 houses in West Wrattling participated in the order that was placed on March 9th, with deliveries being made on 17th to 19th March.

This time Shelford Energy won the WW Syndicate order, with a price of 28.10p per litre (for the record, 34.90p in July 2015, 31.65p in September 2015, 30.30p in October 2015 and 24.75p in January 2016), which was a saving of 0.60p against my benchmark Boilerjuice 'Bulk' price of 28.70p. All prices + VAT, of course. This order was the first time we've seen an increase for quite a time, with prices going up due to the £ falling against the \$ and the recent bout of cold weather.

Holness Towers didn't participate in the March fillup as we still haven't used the oil that we put in the bath last time.

The next fill up will be in May, with a delivery cutoff time and date of 6 pm on Monday 9th May. Please don't place your orders before 1st May as they may get written on pieces of scrap paper and then lost in the usual confusion that reigns at Holness Towers. A reminder will be in the May Challenge.

The village website (www.westwrattling.org.uk) has an explanatory page about how the oil syndicate works.

Richard Holness



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Ukulele Diary Date

We will be having a Ukulele Evening in West Wrattling Village Hall on Saturday 24th September. More details to follow.

Sherry (290070)

Saturday Morning Café, West Wrattling

The Saturday morning café will run as usual on Saturday 2nd April between 10.30 am and 12 noon in the Village Hall. The café works by different volunteers offering to serve and donate cakes every month (including at least one dairy and gluten-free offering). There is always a play corner set up for kids. Please come and join us for a catch up over tea/coffee and delicious cake!

The café is set up for the benefit of our local community and we are so pleased it is getting lots of support and proving a great way to catch up with so many people! We will be using proceeds from the café to contribute towards the upcoming West Wrattling street party for the Queen's birthday celebration, on Saturday 11th June. We look forward to seeing you there.

Sherry (290070) and Catherine (291307)

Domestic Help for You

I have over 30 years of experience in domestic, personal and child care. If you need help with any of the following, please give me a call:

- House Keeping
- Light Gardening
- Shopping
- School Runs
- Pet Care/Dog Walking
- Personal Care

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Dianne on 01223 290527 or 07878 226910

Tea and Cakes, Weston Colville

Tea and Cakes in March felt like our busiest yet, and it was fantastic to see yet more new faces as well as regulars.

Thank you to everybody who helps out, makes cake and comes along. Our next gathering will be on Friday 1st April, 3.30 - 5 pm at the Reading Room. All are welcome. Come along for a cup of tea, cake and a chat. We look forward to seeing you.

Melanie (291319)

Weston Colville Circular Walk

In spite of Weston Colville waking up to falling snow on the first Saturday in March, the hardy souls you see in the photo came on our walk via Carlton, so well done all.



Our next circular walk will be on Saturday, 7th May; meet at the Reading Room at 10 am, BYO lunch, and maybe something to share. You can put your lunch in the fridge before we set off, if you'd like, and refreshments will be available.

***Jacqueline and Alastair Douglas
(291475, jacquelinetheteacher@hotmail.com)***

'Pub' Quiz

Following our enjoyable Wine Tasting in February – sipping, supping and generally communing – we're holding a 'Pub' Quiz in the Reading Room on Wednesday, 27th April at 8 pm. Up to four per team, prize for winners, entry £2 per person. All welcome. Wine, lager, cider and draft ale.

***Jacqueline Douglas
(291475, jacquelinetheteacher@hotmail.com)***

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West Wrattling Pavilion

All tickets are sold out for Saturday 16th April, 'A Night with Arsenal Legend Ray Parlour', 7 pm until 11.45.

New members are very welcome; please enquire within the club. £10 to join, which enables you to book functions for birthdays, baby showers, engagements, weddings and wakes, with a fully licensed bar.

Blanche Miller, Pavilion Secretary

d'Abo Tennis Club

Our new tennis season will start on 1st May.

The Annual Supper will be held on Friday 13th May at 7.30 pm in West Wrattling Village Hall.

If you are interested in receiving a new member's pack, please contact the treasurer, Mark Holme, on 07768 443223 or treasurer@westwrattlingtennis.co.uk

Kirsty Frost

Terracotta Pots Required

I am working on an Enterprise project with 6th Form students at Granta School in Linton. They are raising funds for an activities week in July, and also for their leavers' ball. We would like to decorate terracotta pots and saucers and fill them with plants the students have grown in the school polytunnel. We have a limited budget to buy the pots, so if you have any old pots and saucers in your garden or shed that you no longer need, and would like to donate them, please either leave them on my doorstep at 10 Six Mile Bottom Road or call me on 290220 and I will collect. Thanks for your support.

Kate Cleary

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Weston Colville Cinema Club

Our April film, on **Wednesday 6th April**, will be **‘The Third Man’**, a brilliant example of film noir made in Britain and set in Vienna, one of the first British films shot almost entirely on location. It stars Orson Welles as anti-hero Harry Lime, spellbinding as a classic combination of charisma and evil. It’s celebrated for its acting, musical score and atmospheric cinematography and if that’s not enough, it’s all based on the screenplay written by Graham Greene, one of our greatest novelists. If you’ve seen ‘The Third Man’ before, you’ll almost certainly notice something new, and if you’ve never seen it, you’re in for a treat.



For May, on **Wednesday 4th May**, we’ve chosen **‘West Side Story’**, a 1961 musical adapted from a Broadway show and inspired by Shakespeare’s ‘Romeo and Juliet’. Starring Natalie Wood and Richard Beymer, it won ten Oscars, a

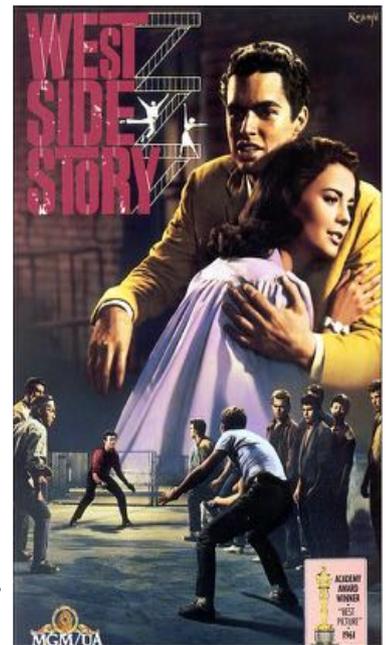
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record for any musical. The film was ground-breaking for many reasons – the exceptional music and lyrics of Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim, the use of the musical form to address social issues like gang warfare and racial prejudice, and the seamless blending of dance, song, story and music into a completely successful whole. Many of the songs have gone on to become standards, including ‘Maria’, ‘Tonight’, ‘I Feel Pretty’, and ‘America’.



Both films will be shown in the Reading Room and preceded by an introduction at 7.30 pm. Entry by donation, refreshments served, all welcome.



Jeremy Newton (newtonjed@gmail.com)

Jacqueline Douglas

(291475, jacquelinetheteacher@hotmail.com)

**RICHARD KENYON
MASTER THATCHER
of Bluntisham, Cambridgeshire**



**Home: 01487 843377
Mobile: 07873 549872
email: richardkenyon_1@hotmail.com**

West Wrating Book Club

For the March book club meeting, we discussed ‘All the Light We Cannot See’ by Pulitzer Prize winner, Anthony Doerr. The story is set in the build-up to, then during and near the end of, the Second World War, tracing the lives of two children, a blind French girl and a poor German boy, as they grow up and become caught up in events. It shows how decent young boys were tempted into joining the Hitler Youth and associated organisations, and brutalised by the Nazi system into doing dreadful things through fear or inculcation, as well as what people can endure in horrifying circumstances.

Everyone thought the format of the book, which is broken into sections of different lengths and switches from one character and year to another, worked well. It was felt that the ending was well done and rounded, unlike some books which seem to end in a rush. Other comments were “very impressed”, “a fantastic and clever story”, “a real page-turner”. The only real criticism was that, although the author had a general grasp of the technology, some of the details were incorrect.

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There was curiosity over what might have happened to one of the characters but this was felt to be a reflection of what happened to many people in that period. Everyone agreed that it was an excellent book and one person considered it the best thing they had read in recent years. Scores ranged between 9 and 10 and all would recommend it.

We will next meet on Tuesday 19th April to talk about ‘The Five People You Meet in Heaven’ by Mitch Albom, and then on 17th May, ‘The Slap’ by Christos Tsiolkas.

Linda Gorman

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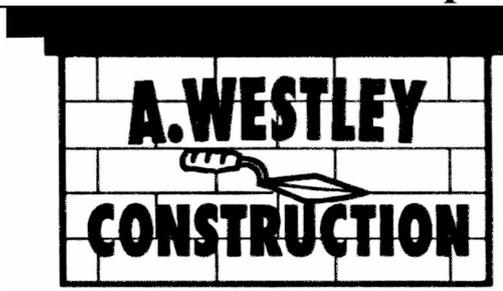
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Weston Colville Parish Council

The following items were discussed at the meeting held on 7th March:

County and District Matters

Cllr Hickford reported that there will be a 10% reduction in the number of county councillors following the recent review. The Abingtons will be added to our county council area as a result of this change.

The A1307 report has been published, and shows no requirement for road improvements or the provision of either a railway or a bus way to Haverhill. A challenge is being made to the road option, which will involve a year-long traffic survey on the A1307 for which funding is being sought mainly from the City Deal. A public consultation is to be held over improvements to the section from Four Wentways to Addenbrookes.

Cllr Turner reported for the district: the Boundary review consultation for the district council has been completed, and the number of councillors will be reduced from 57 to 45. The new ward boundaries are still to be finalised. A public consultation on this will be held between 10th May and 4th July. The final decision will be published on the 6th September. It looks like the Balsham ward will be split in two, with Weston Colville in the ward occupying the area to the north of the A1307.

No progress has been made on the Local Plan for the area.

South Cambridgeshire District Council has agreed a £5 per year increase in council tax for a band D property.

Parish Plan – Kathryn Hawkes of SCDC has asked if we need any help with our Parish plan actions. It

was agreed that a community-led parish plan group meeting would be arranged for April to discuss needs.

Highways, Grass Cutting and Hedge Trimming – Cllr Garrod reported that Trevor Potter has quoted for the verge cutting at £160 per cut, with four for the year. As we received no alternative quotes it was agreed to award this work to Trevor Potter. He also quoted £20 / cut with six cuts per year for the grass and embankment at the entrance of the Church End play area. It was agreed to award him this work as well.

Trevor Potter also quoted for the weed spraying work with a price of £45 for two applications per year, versus a quote from Simon Ratford of £120 for the same work. It was agreed to award this work to Trevor Potter.

Simon Ratford has increased his charge for cutting the Church End play area by £10 per cut due to the new play equipment making the job more difficult. It was agreed to accept this increase.

Nicola Burden of Cambridgeshire Country Council is to be contacted to arrange for the speed limit sign on Mill Hill to be re-erected.

Defibrillator – Cllr Pagonis reported that following significant research, the following two defibrillators were suggested:

- Power heart G5, which costs £925 to buy and £235 to run for five years;
- Zoll, which costs £975 to buy and £105 to run for five years.

It was agreed to purchase the Zoll machine.

The Reading Room committee are to be consulted regarding siting this unit in the porch of the Reading Room.

Speedwatch – the current organiser of the village Speedwatch is resigning, with none of the other group members prepared to take over. Cllr Durham agreed to put a notice in Challenge saying that Speedwatch in the village will be suspended unless a volunteer comes forward to organise it. All applications to the parish clerk.

River Maintenance and Verges – Cllr Durham reported that a meeting was held with Brian Heffernan (Senior Flood risk office CCC), Pat Matthews (Drainage Manager SCDC), Andrew Fraser (District Councillor SCDC) and Cllr Durham to review flooding issues in Weston Colville.

The following actions were agreed:

- i) Brian Heffernan to contact landowners to carry out maintenance work on the course of the river to clear banks and silt;
- ii) Cllr Fraser to contact Cllr Hickford re the blocked culvert under the road near 72 Common Road;
- iii) Cllr Durham to report all further incidences of flooding and keep the parish council up to date on progress.

Weston Colville Website – Cllr Pagonis volunteered to report back to the May meeting with options for setting up a village website, including specifying who can post notices on to it.

Planning Applications – three planning applications were considered at the meeting, all of which have already been approved:

- S/0351/16/PA – Conversion of Linnet Hall Barn to a dwelling
- S/0330/16/FL – Access to field south west of Mill Hill
- Two storey rear and side extensions to the Moat House, Brinkley Road.

Financial Matters – cheques were raised for:
Playsafety for the risk assessment, £261.60
Cambs CC for street lighting, £254.65
C King for expenses, £62.90.

The spread sheet was reconciled with the bank statement, showing a balance of £19245.53 mainly due to 106 payments.

LHI Application for Speed Limit Change – the Highways Improvement grant evaluation panel did not approve our application.

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It was ranked 12th, only two below the approval cut off, and as a result Cllr Hickford has asked for it to be reviewed every three months to see if funds become available from uncompleted approved projects. If this proves unsuccessful it was suggested we apply again next year.

Donation to the Linton Children's Book Festival – it was agreed not to support this application.

Queen's Birthday Lunch Event – it was agreed to support this by ordering 100 commemorative medals to be given to children in the village. The Chairman has placed the order for these medals. A list of children in the village is to be drawn up by Matt Jackson.

Police Presentations – Cllr Scott gave a report on these to the meeting.

RoSPA Report on Church End Playing Field – the report rated the play area a medium risk, which the council agreed to accept since it is largely due to the type of play equipment now fitted.

The new play area sign will say 'No Kite Flying' which will reduce one of the risks raised.

Cllr Scott agreed to get a quote for repair of the slide to reduce one of the other risks raised.

All other risks related to the adventurous nature of the equipment so the council agreed to accept these.

Election of Vice Chairman and New Councillor – Bridget Durham was elected as the new Vice Chairman of the council. Matt Jackson was elected as the new parish councillor, by a significant majority.

Date of next meetings – the next meeting will be on 9th May, starting at 7 pm, and is the Annual Parish Meeting – all welcome. Following meetings will be on 4th July, 5th September, and 7th November.



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Weston Colville Neighbourhood Watch (NHW)

I was very sorry to learn that Laurence's antique horse cart was stolen from their front garden in Chapel Road during the night of 4th March. This was a well known landmark, and if anyone has heard anything about this please call 101 (crime number: CF0093000316 refers). Alternatively call crime stoppers anonymously on 0800 555111.

From the Camps to Hilton and working towards Cambridge the following items have been stolen: hand garden tools, pedal cycles, a television, a satnav, a bag at a bus stop, jewellery and electronics, gardening equipment, power tools, front and rear number plates, sports equipment, fishing gear, and a brand new Harley Davidson motorcycle.

The security advice is: install security lighting positioned out of arms' reach. Deny easy access to your rear garden, mark your property, and include your postcode. For further advice visit Cambs Police website or call 101.

There have been reports of men flagging drivers down, claiming they have run out of petrol and asking for cash in exchange for an item of jewellery. They were seen near Fourwentways but move around. Don't stop, don't give money, report on 101 ASAP.

Action Fraud has received reports from businesses who have been sent online extortion demands from scammers calling themselves 'the RepKiller Team', threatening a cyber attack and demanding payment of £300 - £500. Do not pay. Call Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040. Retain all the original emails and keep a record. Follow the advice from Action Fraud.

Chelsea's Choice, raising awareness about child sexual exploitation, proved an interesting evening in Sawston with actors in a classroom environment

demonstrating how one teenage girl was led away from her friends and family into a very dangerous situation. Chelsea's Choice is still going round the schools where it is playing to one selected year group in each school. We learned that the story was real, that exploitation can be treated as a full time job, and that the reality applies to both sexes. Most important, anyone who is under 18 and becomes involved is treated as innocent by the police.

Finally, burglary fell by 18.8% in 2015 compared to 2014. The police have spent a lot of time working on catching burglars, helping people secure their homes, and promoting crime prevention.

Allen Scott (290837, allen.scott70@googlemail.com)



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Parish History	Local Sports	Village Hall Events
Church News	Parish Matters	Village Calendar

Please send us your contributions, events, notices, photos and comments.

The Marsh Tits of Lower Wood

Lower Wood has very good populations of Blue, Great, Coal, Long tailed and Marsh Tits. These five species make up a large proportion of the winter bird population. They often go around in little mixed flocks looking for food. In March they start to get ready for breeding by occupying territories and starting to build nests. The bird song during the spring is much louder than earlier in the year, and early in the morning it reaches its peak as individuals proclaim ownership of their home patch.

But throughout Britain, Marsh Tits have been declining, by as much as 50% in the last 20 years. This dramatic decrease has become the subject of so much concern that the species has been given a red designation in the JNCC threatened species list. This indicates great concern about the decline, so the fact that the Marsh Tit is doing very well in Lower Wood is surprising and has led us to investigate why this wood is different.

At the moment we are trying to work out just how large the population is. So we have joined up with the British Trust for Ornithology, and one of their licensed bird ringers is ringing the birds. We are still at an early stage, but the present results indicate that Lower Wood may well have as many as four pairs. It is likely that the tits are also including Great Covens Wood in part of their territories.

One of the theories about the decline of the Marsh Tits is that the superabundance of deer throughout British woodland has led to an overgrazing of the undergrowth. Marsh Tits depend on the undergrowth for much of their food. As local farmers are controlling the deer population in this area, the undergrowth in Lower Wood is in a much better state than many other woodlands. So this may be the reason for the good population of the tits.

But once the Marsh Tits die out in a woodland, they have great difficulty in recolonising. It seems that they simply refuse to cross open countryside. So we are trying to see just how far from Lower Wood they will venture. I have this morning seen a Marsh Tit fly up the hedge from the wood, and it went behind the houses in Mill Hill. I am pretty sure that it was going to feed on bird tables in that part of the village. So we would like to find out how far the Marsh Tits are prepared to venture.

At the moment the food supply in the wood is fairly low, and the tits are waiting for the leaves to burst for the caterpillars to become available. So it is likely if you are going to have them feeding in your garden it will be in winter and early spring. We would love to know if you have seen any at your bird table. This will help us to understand how big a gap they will cross, and to understand how the hedgerows may be helping them to get about. If you see a metal ring on the bird's leg, then we would like to know that too; if you have binoculars you may be able to spot them. Any photos of the tits at your feeders would be the very best evidence of all.

Mel Stammers has agreed to collect the information and pass it on to us. To contact Melanie with information of any sightings, please email m_stammers@btinternet.com or telephone 291319.

They may go anywhere in Weston Colville or Weston Green. So if you have got Marsh Tits on your feeders, we would love to know about each one you see. It would be very interesting to see if they continued to use the feeders throughout the year.



Photo by Steffen Hannert, via Wikimedia Commons

Marsh Tits are beige coloured with a black cap. You can see a description and photo in wikipedia or the RSPB website. They have a very distinctive call that sounds as if they are sneezing. So if you hear a bird going Achoooo ... it might very well be a Marsh Tit.

Duncan Mackay

Wildlife Trust voluntary warden for Lower Wood

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Balsham Singers Spring Concert

The spring concert will be on Saturday 14th May, in Holy Trinity Church, Balsham, at 7.30 pm.

The programme will include works by Poulenc, Elgar, Haydn and Rutter, and will also feature familiar hits from Frank Sinatra, The Beach Boys, Eva Cassidy and others.

Tickets may be obtained from Balsham Post Office or from a member of the choir. Prices: £8 in advance, £10 on the door, 18s and under free (but will still need to have a ticket).

Rosemary Gray, Balsham Singers Committee



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Balsham Youth Club

It is with a heavy heart we must announce that due to a number of different circumstances, Balsham Youth Club will close; our last club night was 23rd March.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has helped, supported and contributed to the club over the past 9^{1/2} years. It has been greatly appreciated.

We would also like to thank all the young people who have attended the club over the years. It has been a privilege to work with so many individuals and to watch as they have grown and matured into young adults. We wish them all the very best for the future.

Nicky, Malcolm and Jennie

1st Horseheath Brownies

We all enjoyed a great afternoon of games and activities at our annual District Thinking Day celebrations held on Sunday 28th February at Linton Village College. It was made extra special as we were joined by some US Girl Scouts from RAF Mildenhall. We hope to link up with them again during the summer.

We have just returned from our weekend away at the Jarman Centre. Our theme this year was ‘Rabbits’, as we completed the Bunny Challenge. The activities were all rabbit inspired and included eating carrots or celery like a rabbit (ie no hands); bunny cluedo (like ordinary Cluedo but you had to hop between the clues); a rabbit masked party; bunny lollipops, and the girls all got to experience archery too.

If you don’t have anywhere to donate your Sainsbury’s Active Kids Vouchers then please place them in the box in Horseheath Post Office for the Brownies, or post them through Barney’s door.

Pauline, Katie and Hera (brownies@horseheath.info)

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The Meadow School



Happy Easter from everyone at The Meadow. For many people Easter symbolises new life, lighter evenings and the start of spring. Easter for

The Meadow symbolises the start of the final term of this academic year which is strangely called summer term!

As well as being a time of new things, this term also brings some traditions with it, one being swimming season. You may have heard that last year our swimming pool developed a serious structural fault which despite Herculean efforts severely compromised our swimming timetable. Over the winter months we have desperately been trying to find a solution to an incredibly expensive problem. With the cost of fixing the pool predicted to run into thousands of pounds and the significant cut to our school budget for 2016/17 of even more thousands of pounds, we have been in a real quandary. Swimming is an essential life skill, one that saves lives, increases health and offers children an opportunity to shine in a non-academic way, but at the same time the cost of fixing the pool compared to what we need to provide a good education to every child was just too high. At a recent Parent Voice meeting in school we took the difficult decision to close the pool this year and spend the next year fundraising to re-open it, as we urgently needed to fund new interactive whiteboards and basic curriculum items such as pens and glue in school this year instead. However, we received a lifeline and some funding became available at the eleventh hour.

This still isn't quite enough but we are determined to get our pool open again this year. A group of parents have formed a 'Save the Swimming Pool Group' and are actively looking for sponsors, local businesses,

parish groups or kind hearted people to help fund the remaining amount and to run the pool over the summer term. To ensure we can gather as much support as is possible, we are also looking for a way to offer something back to the community through offering community use of the pool outside school hours. If you can help in anyway, please contact the school office. We will keep you updated in the coming months!

We recently held our first ever French day. The whole school embraced the day, by dressing in red, white and blue.

Different activities took place throughout the day, with food tasting, artwork, conversation, maths in French, and reading familiar



stories in French. The day was a huge success and is one that we will certainly be repeating!

As the new topics for the summer term start, the old topics have drawn to a close. Each year group in school celebrated all of their work by holding their exit points. Year 5/6 shared all of their upcycled clothing by holding a fashion show, Year 3/4/5 held an engineering afternoon looking at programming and inventions, and the Infants made modroc dinosaurs and sabre-toothed tigers and then were very brave and held their 'Night at The Museum', culminating in a

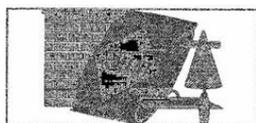
sleepover in the school hall! The topics have once again inspired and enthused. The summer term is all about different countries, with a focus on Rio and of course the Olympics!



Finally, I have a message from the forty children in our school running club, which uses the recreation ground every Friday lunchtime for training. They have requested I ask everyone who uses the field for walking their dog to clean up after them. In the past few months we have had lots of children return after lunch with their shoes covered in dog mess. They are busy training for another cross country event and are working really hard on their stamina and speed, but tell me they get distracted having to watch where they are running so they can

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jump over any mess. We are trying to train flat distance runners, not steeple chasers, so if you do walk your dogs on the field, they would be very grateful if you could clean up any mess they make. We of course will let you know how they get on at their next event, which is a cross country relay race in St Neots in just over a month's time.

We share photos and news of everything that happens at The Meadow on our twitter page, @Meadow_Balsham. Take a peek!

Nichola Connor, Headteacher

Marsh Mail (news from Linton Village College)

The relative status of subjects taught in schools has become an increasingly politicised issue, not least because of recent government changes to accountability measures that inherently place different levels of importance on them.

The new Progress 8 measure gives a double weighting to maths and English, and expects students to take three English Baccalaureate subjects (including languages, sciences, geography and history). The emphasis on this kind of traditional curriculum has led to rhetoric about the sidelining of the Arts in schools. Some institutions are making significant changes to timetabling and option choices to reflect this new emphasis.

While I welcome a commitment to an inclusive and challenging curriculum and the focus on science and technology, this should not be at the expense of a broad and balanced education. Neither should there be an assumption that it is only STEM education (science, technology, engineering and maths) that will open doors for future employment opportunities, or that the Arts provide a softer, less rigorous option or a light relief or distraction from academic achievement.



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At Linton we strive for all students to have access to a holistic education that enables them to be innovative, creative and passionate across disciplines. An enriching and varied education should complement the three Rs, not undermine them.

I am saddened when I hear of schools that have removed arts experiences from their curriculum or sidelined enrichment to focus on their core subjects. Anyone who visited our school show last month will have appreciated the sheer talent and culmination of skill that makes the involvement in such a performance an incredible achievement. Many will also appreciate how the determination, grit, resilience and relationships developed through this kind of experience will complement and support other studies.

We need to celebrate and protect the importance that sport and the Arts have in comprehensive education and recognise how such subjects enable and enrich students' personal development and success, regardless of the current political agenda.

Helena Marsh, Principal

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Leanne Ehren (01480 444599, www.cambsfire.gov.uk)

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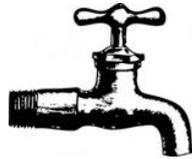
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Balsham Gardening Club

‘Greenhouse Gardening’ was the title of our talk by Geoff Hodge, who has been a freelance garden writer for over 28 years, and proved to be an accomplished authority on horticultural matters. He explained that there are three types of greenhouses:



Cold, useful for alpiners that can tolerate low temperatures;

Cool, heated to 4 - 5 degrees Celsius so we can over-winter our tender plants and cuttings, such as pelargoniums and fuchsias;

Hot, heated to 13 degrees Celsius to care for any plants and some exotic species. He joked that it can also provide a place for father to escape the family!

Geoff discussed the ways of heating, insulating, shading and ventilating a greenhouse, and brought with him various greenhouse sundries to make our gardening more successful and easier, including supports for tomato plants, and simple bottle top water sprays to fit on old lemonade bottles. He showed us capillary matting, and different slow drip watering regimes, extolled the virtues of automatic opening windows, and harangued the use of seed

trays, explaining that cell trays are the better way to grow our plants, protecting the roots and making transfer of the plant easier. He answered our many queries, and the use of nematodes could have been a talk in its own right.

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday 5th April in the school hall at 7.30, with a talk on ‘Begonias’ by Dave Staine. All welcome; guests £3.

Hazel Leeson

West Wickham & District Gardening Club

There was a very good attendance on Monday 21st March from our members who were hoping to hear a talk on sweet peas and dwarf pinks.

Unfortunately our speaker found his satnav took him to Huntington and since his mobile was at home we had no chance of correcting him. It says much for the camaraderie, inventiveness and expertise within the club that we were able to set up a questions and answers session. This actually proved to be most enjoyable.

Next month's talk, on 18th April, is on an unusual subject: ‘Darwin the Gardener’. Shelly Innes from Cambridge's Darwin Project will explain Darwin's

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ideas and the experiments he undertook at Down House in Kent. This is the last talk of our gardening year, but please make a note in red pen that our Plant Sale will be on 21st May at 10.30 am in West Wickham Village Hall. As many of you will know, this is a fantastic opportunity to buy all your vegetable and flowering plants at prices that will not hurt your pocket, and to enjoy a coffee and slice of cake.

Rosemary Yallop, (01799 584262)

The Ellesmere Centre, Stetchworth

On Friday 1st April there will be a Fun Day & Egg Hunt, and a Fun Day on Friday 8th April; both running from 9.30 am until 3.30 pm, open to children aged 4 to 11 years, and costing £15 for the day, or £8 for half a day (please note that children aged under 5 years can only attend for a half day). Contact the Ellesmere Centre to book. The website has a full list of activities.

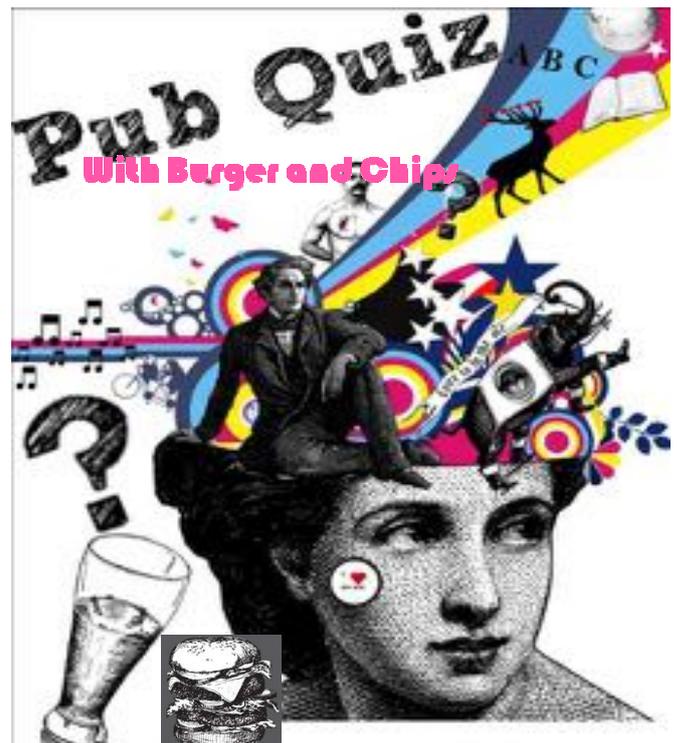


FitSteps – due to the popularity of this class a new class will now be starting on Thursday 14th April in addition to the Wednesday morning class. This will be a low-impact, low intensity dance fitness class for those who prefer a more gentle pace.

 The Garden Club Plant Sale will be on 7th May. Come and get all your bedding plants here. Many stalls to choose from, and refreshments served. The Summer Show will be on 16th July this year, so start nurturing your entries now.

The Carpet Bowls Club meets on Monday evenings and would welcome new members. If you are interested in playing please contact John Puddick (01638 507636).

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Burger me, it's quiz night!

The Bull, Burrough Green

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Contact Roger Whitehead (290524)

St Andrew's Church, West Wrating

Holy Communion at 10.45 am each Sunday (except on fifth Sunday of the month).

Contact Sebastian Bain (882960)

There will be a celebration of Holy Communion in **Balsham Church** at 10.30 am on the first Wednesday of each month, and at 9.15 am on subsequent Mondays.

Methodist Chapel, Weston Colville

Minister: Rev Nigel Bishop (01440 702422)

Roman Catholic Mass

Every Saturday at 5.30 pm, Sundays at 10 am and noon, at St Philip Howard Church, Cherry Hinton.

Every Saturday at 6.30 pm, Sundays at 10 am, Haverhill (St Felix Roman Catholic Church)

DIARY

April 2016

- Fri 1 Tea and Cakes, Weston Colville
First Friday Bridge, West Wrating
- Sat 2 Saturday Morning Cafe, West Wrating
Farmers' Market, Linton Village College
- Tues 5 Balsham Gardening Club meeting
- Wed 6 West Wrating Over 60s, Village Hall
Weston Colville Cinema Club, 'The Third Man'
- Mon 11 Annual Church Meeting, West Wrating
- Sun 17 John Fellows' Farewell Service, St Andrew's
Discussion, Birthday Celebrations, Chestnut Tree
- Mon 18 West Wickham & District Gardening Club
- Tues 19 West Wrating Book Club
- Thur 21 Lunch Club, The Chestnut Tree
Beacon lighting, Cheese Night at Chestnut Tree
- Fri 22 Pies and live music, The Chestnut Tree
- Sat 23 Lunch Party, Weston Colville
St George's Day Mummings, Chestnut Tree
- Sun 24 Darts Knockout Competition, Chestnut Tree
Annual Church Meeting, Weston Colville
- Wed 27 'Pub' Quiz, Weston Colville Reading Room
- Fri 29 Pub Quiz, Burrough Green

May 2016

- Wed 4 West Wrating Over 60s
Weston Colville Cinema Club, 'West Side Story'
- Fri 13 Tennis Club Annual Supper
- Sat 14 Balsham Singers Spring Concert
- Tue 17 West Wrating Book Club
- Sat 21 Plant Sale, West Wickham

Revd Dr Julie Norris, Priest-in-Charge
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May	Katie	Gay

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Blue & green bins:	Tuesday 12 th & 26 th April, Tuesday 10 th & 24 th May

Mobile library: fourth Wednesdays (27 th Apr, 25 th May)	
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West Wrating – Jenny Richards, jrichards007@talktalk.net , 01223 665260
Administrator: Caroline (Cazzy) Walshe, 7churches.seven@gmail.com , 01223 891350

Editor: Anne Bragg (290550) or email:
editor@challengemag.co.uk

Thank you for all your articles, news, etc. If these are sent by email, they are always acknowledged; if you don't get a reply, your items haven't been received. Contributions can also be left at Weston Colville Post Office. Some may have to be edited, to fit the space available, and are published at the discretion of the editor.

May issue's copy date: Wednesday 20th April.