

Letters, continued...

the 'Tennis Club has exclusive use of the tennis court' and that the 'tennis court is only available for use by the Tennis Club for the 2004 season'.

Despite this confusion, I would like to pursue the matter further.

Please forward any views that you may have on the matter to me or to the Village Life team.

To enable progress to be made with the Parish Council, an indication is necessary of the numbers of people interested and the sports that would be suitable for this facility. In the first instance, please contact me with your details and ideas so that such interest can be registered.

Martin Turver
Northwold Village Shop
28 High Street
Northwold, Thetford
Norfolk IP26 5LA
Phone 01366-728262

Thanks Martin, and "yes", when the answers were obtained, the statement was (along the lines of) "As the tennis court is owned by the Parish Council,

anyone could ask to use the court for other purposes - which would have to be approved by the Parish Council (and ought to be subject to a fee to assist with paying back the loan from the Sports & Social club)."

Definitely something that requires further investigation. Ed.

Dear Editor,

I feel that I must write to the Village Life and let everyone know that my grandson, Michael is not responsible for loud music at the Village Hall (band practice).

He was told that people complained, and has since practised in another Village Hall, and yet both him and his mates keep getting told about it - I don't know who is practising, but it is certainly not "The Vaults", Michael's band.

Margaret Osborne
Glebe Close

Thanks Margaret. Personally, I thought that's what the Village Hall was for, but I guess there are limits? Ed.

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Coal/Coke bin. Approx. 35" x 35"x 35". Free to collector. Alison Lynch, West End. 728850

Northwold Spiritualist Group

Meetings in Northwold Village Hall, alternate Fridays at 7.30pm:-

10th Sept, Sheila James
24th Sept, Peter Spillett
8th Oct, Paul Sayer

Enquiries to:
Eileen Cooper 01366 728289

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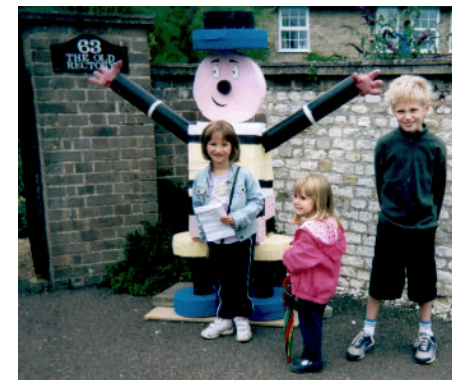
Nuts £1.20 kg Wild Bird Seed £0.75kg

Village Life

NORTHWOLD & WHITTINGTON

Gardens prepared, scarecrows at the ready...and the heavens open!

Once again scarecrows invaded Northwold to assist in raising money for the Village hall. Unfortunately the number of scarecrows was well down, though there were some excellent efforts including Mr Bassett, Del Boy and the Teletubbies. Several gardens were open, ploughman's lunch was available at the Pub, ices on Methwold Road and cream teas at the hall. The star turn was the display of projects on the buildings of the village in the hall produced by class 3 of the School, some of which were very good indeed. Poor weather reduced the number of visitors, but about £1000 was raised for the hall.



Beattie Bassett - and three other scarecrows!!

Norfolk Churches Trust Sponsored Bike Ride 11 September 2004



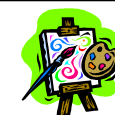
Now's your chance for a last minute entry to the sponsored bike ride - it's not too late to get some sponsorship and head out for a great day visiting churches, and getting fit!

For further information contact:

Mark Elwes: tel 728795
email melwes@care4free.net

Watch out! - Cyclists on the 11th Sept

Art Exhibition



Proceeds to Northwold Village Hall

Friday 10th to
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11 am to 7pm

Admission 50p

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Preview Evening:-
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7.30pm-9.30pm

Tickets £2 per person, available
from August 1st, phone 727425

Charity Notices

Northwold Education Foundation

Grants are available from the above Charity to students of further education up to the age of 21. Apply to Mrs. J. Norris 25 West End Northwold. Closing date October 10th.

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Rents are due on Saturday 9th October the clerk will be at the main gate between 2.00 and 2.30 pm.

The Norman Almshouses Charity

We have available a property in School Lane for a person in need. Apply to Mrs. J. Norris, 25 West End, Northwold. Tel: 728296

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June 2004

July 2004

R. Eyles	£20	L. Eyles	£20
A. Maynard	£15	W. Ison	£15
I. McDowell	£10	S. Eyles	£10



Issue: September 2004

Copy date for the next issue is;

25th September

copy@northwold.net

Tel. 01366 728233

Church Diary

* marks Sunday school
at St. Andrew's, Northwold

September

5 th	13 th Sunday after Trinity
9.30am	Service of the Word at Christchurch
11am	Holy Communion at St Andrews
12 th	14 th Sunday after Trinity
9.30am	Service of The Word at All Saints
11am	Matins at St Andrews
19 th	15 th after Trinity
8am	Holy Communion at St Andrews
9.30am	Holy Communion by Extension at Christ Church

October

26 th	16 th after Trinity
9.30am	Benefice Holy Communion at St Andrews
3 rd	17 th after Trinity
9.30am	Service of The Word at All Saints
11am	Holy Communion at St Andrews

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Raffle, Win a car (may be)

All Welcome

Produce Show, Northwold Village Hall, Sat 4th Sept, 5.30pm (entries by 8pm Fri 3rd)

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The views expressed in submitted items are not necessarily endorsed by Northwold & Whittington Village Life. Whilst we endeavour to ensure that all information contained in the newsletter is correct, we cannot be held responsible for errors. The Editor reserves the right to refuse or omit items without explanation.

Editorial

Here we are again - did you miss us during August?

It has been a pleasure to have a month without the looming Village Life copy date to worry about - giving more time for gardening, DIY and holidays (not quite sure that's the right order).

It seems only a few weeks ago that the kids were breaking up from school and we were all planning activities for the endless summer holidays - and by the time you read this, they'll be back at school!

One plan that Joseph (aged 8) and I managed to fulfil was to go camping - we bought a 3-man tent and some basic provisions and headed off to East Runcton for a night under canvas.

We managed to assemble the tent (the right way around) on only the second attempt and cooked breakfast on our single camping stove.

What surprised both of us was just how many tents there were in the field - we quickly decided that a campsite was the best place to visit if we wanted to choose a bigger tent - there was every shape and size covering a whole field (a better selection than at Millets!).

We managed to visit Cromer Pier and Lifeboat station, had a go on the "slot machines" and visited the Muckleborough Collection. When you live in Norfolk, it's only too easy to forget what's on your doorstep!

Graeme

Ballet & tap exams

On Sunday 11th July, 13 pupils from Amanda's Dancing School took examinations in ballet and tap. The pupils achieved a 100% pass rate, many with the highest grades.

Congratulations to the following for such excellent results:-

Lorna Brett-Greenacre, Hannah Butters, Milly Coote, Kay Eyles, Chloe Giles, Ciona Giles, Emily Lavender, Madeline Rauch, Sapphire Stutchbury, Anna Warkentin, Abigail Whiting, Emily Young and Leah Zawiasa.

Lessons will begin again on Tuesday 14th September at Northwold Village Hall. There are places available in a beginners ballet class at 4pm, and a beginners tap class at 4.30pm. Each lesson is £1.80. For further details, please call Amanda on 07810 080751.

A few thoughts from the domestic front...



Recently, I mused on how our habits

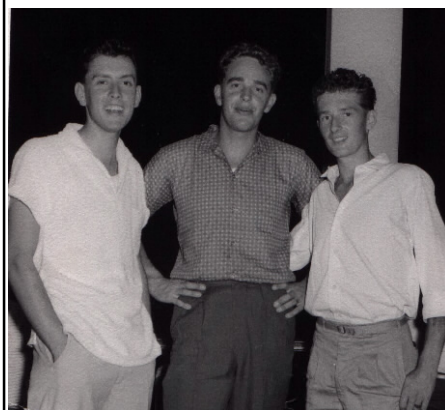
have changed over the years. It was whilst supervising my grand-daughter who was having a "dummy run" on making a few cookies for the Produce Show. At one time we piled the pots in the kitchen sink till we had finished baking. Then we would take the kettle of hot water and wash the tools and return them to their rightful places.

Next method came when we had constant hot water from the tap and we could clean as we progressed. Now I find it is usual again to keep all dirty dishes till the dishwasher is filled before we set the wheels in motion - not that this new method is my habit - it's just that not only did we need to learn a few hints on the baking side but we needed to find out how to sort and wash our implements.

Pam Eyles

Photo call

I wonder if anyone remembers these three young men (photo below), John, David and Pete, pictured here at the



N.A.A.F.I. club in Singapore in 1961? One of them, my brother, is dead. I wonder what has happened to the other two?

Mary Hull

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Letters..



A bumper bag of letters this month (and not one of them offering their services as an Editor!).

I took a Bus Ride and saw this street sign, 'Longview Close', what a paradox. But it made me think that the people living down that street had hope and it was near-by. Paul in scripture says, 'Hope is things not seen'. Faith is like that.

The footballer David Beckham has a mansion and is trying to keep people out of it. God has a mansion and is trying to get people to come in. Jesus says, 'I go to prepare a place for you'.

Therefore what is your long view? My neighbour Mick Parfitt at his retirement party said he made a choice of Parson or Policeman. We know what choice he made. Now honestly can you see Mick in Clerical Collar? Both the law and religion are ignored at one's own peril.

I have this long view as has Keith McCloud that the parishes should come and inter-act in Faith and fellowship. And the Church is close by.

I have been promoting a different kind of service for some time. 90% had leaflets through your door. My next service is on the 25th July at 11 O'clock - refreshments at 10.30. The service takes the form of Songs of Praise. Janet on the organ and Mary on the accordion. Twice two of the congregation gave a sermon. So it's different from the Norm. Diversity is no bad thing.

Name & address withheld

Most can testify I am no Angel but I am evangelistic. Take a Broadview. Awake that dormant spirit and come along.

Brian Hull

Animal Charities Raffle:-

The winning ticket for the above Raffle was Pink. Number 445. (EGG. 76885) and has been claimed by the winner. Thank you for your support.

Maureen Maynard

Playing field

Myself and my partner moved to Northwold 2 years ago from Downham Market and we are totally disgusted by the amount of dog poo we see on the pathways and the poor up keeping of the playing field, particularly the play area. it is riddled with weeds and is in a general state of poor disrepair. I was down there last week with my 2 year old daughter when she came over to me holding a broken glass, there were no bins in sight so I left the item near the club door. we do understand that money is always tight but surely in a village of it's size it shouldn't be hard to organise some sort of 'clean up' morning to address these problems. with local companies sponsoring the event by donating money to buy paint for the climbing frame/swings/roundabout/slide & seesaw and building materials for a fence to block off the play area from dogs then other parents like myself won't have to worry about there children coming to any harm whilst they should be enjoying themselves!

Northwold "Common"

Is it free land for all or is it "owned" land - I thought it was free open land for all to use, now I hear to the contrary, so who cuts the grass on the foot paths? I now find great difficulty walking the short distance that I can (a problem for more than me I know! - especially if it's wet).

Jackie Hodges & "Ozzie"

That's a very good question Jackie - As I understand it, the footpaths are public access, but the agricultural land is owned. If a footpath goes across owned land then it's the landowners' responsibility to keep it clear. I will check this with the Parish Council at the next meeting and report back! Ed.

Northwold & Whittington 'Tennis Court Club'

Your 'Question & Answer' article in the June 2004 Issue refers.

In building a tennis court, it appears that the Parish Council has spent money that belongs to the whole of the community on a facility that can only be enjoyed by the small proportion of that community who enjoy that one particular sport.

If that facility could be made available for other 'court based sports' (e.g. Netball, Basketball, Volleyball, etc.) then perhaps a larger proportion of the community could benefit.

I've approached the Tennis Club and the Parish Council with a view to possibly extending the use of the tennis court.

In direct contrast to the comment in that June article, I have been told that

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Rita's Ramblings

Hello again. Summer is now almost over and what a month August has been! Wet, wet and really wet! Although we have had a lot of rain in this part of the country it was nothing compared to seeing the video recordings of the flash flood at Boscastle. It was almost unbelievable that, having seen cars being tossed around in the water, like plastic toys, there were no serious injuries to either the villagers or visitors.

The weeds certainly seem to have thrived on all the moisture in the ground and in my garden I have a nice crop of mushrooms growing in the middle of the grass as two "fairy rings". When I am down on my hands and knees picking them out one by one I wonder who on earth named them as such; I hardly consider them to be a gift from the fairies. I have read a number of articles and various books which tell you how to differentiate

between mushrooms which are edible and those which are poisonous but I am afraid I have never managed to be 100% sure and it's not a risk I am prepared to take. I also worry whether the dogs will eat them and make themselves ill.

A couple of weeks ago I was out buying a plant locally and was witness to an act that can only be described as quintessentially British! A small bee was obviously not in the best of health and had been caught in one of the heavy rain showers; it looked quite bedraggled as it attempted to recuperate in the weak sunshine. Unfortunately, the bee and I had similar taste in plants as it was sunning itself on the plant I wanted to buy. The scene was now set for two grown women trying to move this poor creature off one plant onto another, it must have slid back onto the plant half a dozen times before we achieved our aim - only then to fall right into the middle of the pot. Common sense prevailed at that point and we left the bee to its fate.

In the garden I have had a rather more unwelcome summer resident this year - a wild rabbit! I have had to protect nearly all of the vegetable plants from its attentions by placing various coverings over and around them. I am surprised that I managed to get any French beans at all after it attempted to eat the growing tips out of all the plants. At least it seems to have left the courgettes alone, probably because of the prickly leaves. Somebody once told me that in certain areas courgettes are grown underneath sweet corn plants - apparently it stops unwelcome small animals climbing the plants and eating all the cobs. Perhaps I should try encircling the entire vegetable patch with courgettes to deter the rabbits next year; but then I'd probably disappear under a mountain of courgettes!

On that note I had better say cheerio for now and until next month, take care.

Rita Nickles

Northwold News

Reports on activities, news and events in and around Northwold

Village Hall

The Re-Slating of the main roof is going well and should be complete in about a fortnight. The timbers are in very good condition. The recent storm caused a leak in the kitchen. The W I hope to replace the curtains soon, and the Tots will replace the old, "Ladies" toilet. The Scarecrow weekend raised over £1000 but the number of scarecrows on display was very disappointing: bright ideas for next year urgently needed.

Arrangements for the Art Exhibition, Sept 10th - 12th are almost complete. Raffle prizes please.

Events:. Saturday 4th September. Village hall. Northwold Produce Show.

Friday.- Sunday Sept 10 - 12th. Village Hall. Art exhibition open all day.

Jim Booty

Riverside Group

Thursday 16th September, '04. Meet at the Village Hall for coffee at 10.30 am, to be followed by talk on THE HISTORY OF THE FENS by Mrs Margaret Walshe.

All welcome ; charge £2.00 per person.

As a follow-up we hope to be able to arrange a visit to Denver Sluice next year.

Care Group

Community Car Scheme: To all users - Please note, the Borough Council are to review all charges in September - it is therefore that likely a new list of prices will be in force as from 1st October.

Pam Eyles

St Andrew's Church Northwold



Meet the Ministers

For the last eighteen months, since the Rev. Nigel Tuffnell left, we have been without a Rector.

From now on St. Andrews, All Saints and Christchurch, as part of a new and larger deanery, will be looked after by a team of Clergy, and readers.

This is an invitation to you all to meet them socially at a Picnic in the Churchyard of St Andrews, Northwold, (Or in the Church if wet)

Sunday September 12th from 12.30 - 2.30pm (in the church if wet).

It is an informal occasion, so please bring a picnic .

Tea, coffee and light refreshments will also be provided

"Harvest Lunch"

The Harvest lunch will take place in the Village Hall at 12.30pm on October 10th

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There is no pain with NO HANDS® Massage. The massage can still be as deep, deeper even, but because the forearm is a much larger area to use than the thumb, which is normally used to release tension, a larger area of tension is released with a soft even pressure instead of the small pinpointed area of a thumb. This absence of pain also affects you psychologically allowing you to relax and enjoy the massage instead of causing you to tense up further due to the pain of conventional massage.

This relaxation allows your body and mind to let go of the tension you hold.

Everyday life can cause stress, tension and poor circulation in our muscles. Over time as this continues we can suffer with pain and discomfort. Stress, worry and emotional trauma drains our energy which can lead to muscular

fatigue and tension. Most of the time we are unaware of the condition of our muscles and how well they cope with the pressures we enforce upon ourselves, until the time in which the body gives us signals that we need to take action, e.g. localised pain, muscle soreness, reduced flexibility and mobility, frozen shoulders, tennis elbow, headaches etc. Massage is an excellent way to undo the stress our bodies hold. With NO HANDS® Massage remember tension is released without pain allowing you to let go of tension physically and mentally.

NO HANDS® Massage can be applied deeply or lightly depending on what your requirements are. It is an excellent massage for loosening up the lower back and hip area again with pain free movements.

Remember your muscles are affected by the things you do such as occupation, stress and worry, exercise, sports, weight training, posture, emotional stress etc.

So, if it's important to you to have a healthy body not just now, you may be coping fine now, but as you get older then massage can help to combat daily pressures preventing long term accumulated damage to your body. People often say, "I should have done this years ago" they've spent many years

suffering with various levels of pain until they cannot cope anymore, often job related like driving, computer work, or physical jobs.

An hour session once a month is recommended to maintain a healthy body. If problems already exist treatment may need to be more frequent at first. Although with NO HANDS® Massage tension is released and results are obtain far quicker than with conventional massage. This regular undoing of tension actually helps you to cope with daily life with greater ease bringing stress levels down, lowering high blood pressure, easing aches and pains, letting you get on to enjoy your life doing the things you need and want to do.

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Nija Levis

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WHAT THE DOCTOR THINKS THIS MONTH...

Deannie and I recently enjoyed a wonderful holiday in Canada and Alaska with our friends Judith and Ken Griffen. We are still raving about it and we have absolutely wonderful memories of mountains, glaciers, glacier-fed turquoise lakes, whale-watching, all sorts of wild life and some splendid hospitality. I won't bore you with all that because, as they say, "You had to be there". However, I have several amusing memories which could well be shared with you all.

As part of the holiday, we took a week's cruise from Vancouver to Alaska. It was a "first" for all of us and we took the cruise with some worries about what it would be like. It was great! The liner was about the size of several blocks of flats and carried 2,000 passengers and 1,000 crew. The facilities were many and varied with seven restaurants, a theatre with wonderful shows, several lounges, each with entertainment such as a jazz band or pianist, gymnasiums, lecture rooms and so on.

Imagine yourself sailing the ocean in such a vessel, day and night, and enjoy some of the questions which had been asked of the entertainments director during the previous week or two (some of them need thinking about):

"Do the crew sleep on board?" Foolishly, the director facetiously responded "No, they are collected by helicopters every night and taken home". At this point, the lady asking the question rushed to Reception and complained that the noise of all the helicopters was keeping her awake at night!

"Does this ship generate its own electricity?" The alternative could be interesting.

"Is that island surrounded by water?"

"Is the swimming pool on the top deck filled with sea water?" Yes, it is pumped up from the sea. "Oh, that would explain why it is so rough"

During the cruise, lots of photographs of the passengers were taken by the ship's photographer and the prints were displayed along the walls of a corridor for purchase by the passengers. "How do I know which is mine?"

"Living at this high altitude in Alaska is making me feel unwell. There is less oxygen at this height" "Sir, you are floating on a ship at sea-level!"

In Canada and Alaska, they have Traffic Ambassadors, (traffic wardens

to us) and anybody parking in the wrong place is committing a violation and will usually be prosecuted. . I was very amused to see a sign outside a small restaurant and coffee-shop in Juneau, saying:

"This parking area is for customers only. Violators will be decaffeinated"

I would hate to depress you all by talking about medicine at the moment so I shall pass rapidly on to some of my motoring hobbyhorses:

THE CENTRE-LANE OWNERS' CLUB
I have been meaning to write about this phenomenon for months. You know the scenario – a three lane carriageway with nothing in the nearside lane and a member of the centre-lane owners' club poodling along in the middle lane, The centre lane owners' club has two rules. 1. Always travel in the centre lane, especially when the nearside lane is empty and 2, Never allow your speed to exceed 50mph.

I had been contemplating an article which suggested solving the problem by re-naming the inside lane "the centre lane", renaming the centre lane "the overtaking lane" and re-naming the outside lane "the fast lane". This would have ensured that the centre lane owners' club members moved over to the nearside lane in order to comply with the rules of their club.

However, I was delighted to read in the newspaper recently that the Roads Minister, David Jamieson, had acknowledged that this selfish practice causes congestion, accidents and road rage and that it also reduces the carrying-capacity of the road. A recent RAC report labelled hogging the centre lane as one of the top ten menaces on the road. The police are to be encouraged to crack down on the habit and motorway signs will warn against it. Brilliant! It will free up the outside lanes for me!

"Zip Merging". This is a sensible technique for dealing with three lanes reducing to two or two lanes reducing to one.

You know the British scenario: A road sign announces that, in two miles, the outside lane will be coned off. Everyone pulls into the left hand lane and forms a two mile queue, leaving two miles of the outside carriageway completely empty and, at a stroke, reducing the carrying capacity of the road by 50%. Occasionally, a sensible driver, such as me, ignoring the ear

bashing from the front passenger seat, will make maximum use of the empty road space, drive to the front of the empty outside carriageway and then meet the "I've queued for hours in this lane so I'm certainly not allowing you in" mentality.

For years, those of us who belong to The Institute of Advanced Motorists have advocated the most efficient way of dealing with lane-merging situations which is as follows: As the pinch point is approached, all lanes are used until the outside lane finishes. As that point is approached, everyone slows down and increases the distance from the car in front. Then, vehicles should merge in turn, one from the left, one from the right, and so on. In this way, traffic moves most efficiently through the pinch-point, maximum use is made of the available road space and the stupid situation of a long stretch of empty carriageway beside a massive queue is avoided. Don't let us forget the lorry driver who straddles both carriageways to "stop the queue jumpers"

The IAM managed to get the following paragraph into the draft version of the recent Highway Code.

Rule 262: "Drivers should fill all approach lanes up to a restriction/closure and then merge alternately at the lane restriction".

However, when the new Highway Code was published, this advice was left out!



Zip merging works very well in other countries, where road signs show how vehicles should merge alternately. Happily, our Highways Agency Chief Executive has responded to Bryan Lunn's (IAM Chief Examiner) comments and "Merge in turn" signs have started appearing at roadworks in this country.

I invite you to join me in making maximum use of road space in such situations, ignore the comments from the left seat and let's see if we can change the habits of a nation.

Remember, "Behind every successful man is a surprised woman" and "Women can never be as successful as men because they don't have a wife to advise them".

Best wishes to you all,

Ian G. Nisbet



Northwold Tots & Co. For those of you

Well, it's the start of the new term, time to get back to normal at last!!! I would just like to take this time to introduce myself as the new Chairperson of



who don't know me, my name is Theresa Ramshaw (formally Jenkinson if that's any help!). I've lived in Northwold most of my life and thought it was about time that I did my little bit for the village. I have two children, Harry who attends Pre-School and Archie who comes along to Tots with me. And of course my husband Craig who I'm sure you'll get to know as I've got lot's of



jobs for him regarding Tots & Co!

I take over from Caroline Whiting who has done an excellent job of running Tots, and has also done so much for the group taking it to where we are now. So a big Thank you to Caroline for all your hard work.

We look forward to seeing you all back at Tots for the new term and would love for new members to come and join us. For those of you who already come we are always on the look out for new committee members. We meet regularly to discuss group matters, fundraising etc and its nice to get together as well.

For any information on Tots & Co please contact myself on 07952 271550.

Theresa Ramshaw

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Wanted:-

Editor for Village Life

Unfortunately, due to work and home commitments, I feel that it's time to hand over to someone else as Editor.

Of course I'm happy to continue to assist on an "ad-hoc" basis. If you're interested in the position, just call for a chat! 01366 727425

Homewatch

homewatch@northwold.net

General Warning

This is a message to all Home Watch coordinators reminding you about the dangers of dealing with companies who contact you by telephone offering to carry out a free safety check of your electrical wiring, a free security check or other such services. As a rule it tends to result in that you will require major (and expensive) remedial work to be carried out and they are more than happy to carry it out for you.

Remember, once you have signed an agreement for them to carry out the work you are obliged to pay. Before you sign anything, seek further confirmation that the work is required by obtaining quotes from other reputable contractors.

If you feel that you are being pressurised into agreeing that they carry out the work, ask them to leave and if they don't, inform them that you will contact the police.

Try and record their vehicle registration number and the name of the company they work for as they are



helpful to the police and trading standards.

Always remember that salesmen who try to convince you that they are doing you a favour, invariably are only doing themselves a favour.

Location of vehicle

The police are asking for assistance in locating a Red Ford Orion reg. no G418 FVG. The vehicle may contain two people; the driver is described as a white male, in his mid 20's with blonde hair. The passenger is a white male, aged about 40, very thin, wearing a flat cap and sunglasses.

The vehicle was involved in an incident on a farm in Brettenham (between Diss & Thetford) on the 21/07/04 and it may have been involved in a burglary in Shouldham on the 8th of July.

The vehicle may be driving around your area looking for likely burglary

targets, if you or any of your members see the vehicle please contact the police immediately on 01553 691211. Inform them that you are a Home Watch coordinator/member and have seen the vehicle that DC 1250 Young of Downham Market Police Station is looking for.

Record the time you saw the vehicle, the location or direction of travel of the vehicle, the number of occupants of the vehicle and a description of the occupants.

Michael Parfitt
Homewatch Co-ordinator
Email: homewatch@northwold.net

R.J.FENDICK

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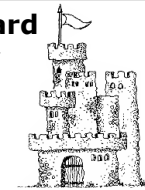
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Keith MacLeod’s monthly report

August 2004
THE GOOD SAMARITAN

One of the readings used throughout the world by Churches using the Common Lectionary on Sunday 8th July was the story of The Good Samaritan. 50 years ago I could have expected that most people would have known the story, but that would be a dangerous assumption nowadays, when schools do not as a matter of course teach the Christian Bible stories. However, the story is as valuable to non Christians as Christians, so here goes with a very brief summary (with more modern reference points).

An Israeli was walking along a country road and was set upon by robbers who beat him up and stole everything from him. A priest walked up, but crossed over to the other side and continued on his way. Then a professor of religious law came by – he also crossed over the road and passed by. Then a Palestinian happened along. He went over to the wounded man and gave first aid medication and bandaged what he could. He then took the man on his donkey to the nearest inn, where he asked the innkeeper to look after the man. He gave him some money and promised to pay whatever else was due when he returned in a few days time.

The question the story addressed was ‘**Who is my neighbour?**’ I have told the story a little dramatically, identifying the main protagonists as Israeli and Palestinian. This is not really stretching the circumstances very much, as the Samaritans of 2000 years ago were looked down upon by the Jews of the day, partly because they only regarded as Holy Scripture the first 5 books of the Old Testament. Nowadays, Islam also treats the first five books of the Torah and of the Bible as valid tradition, but then deviate – the Jews and Christians

following the history of Abraham’s son Israel, while Islam follows the history of Abraham’s son Ishmael.

So what is the relevance of the story of The Good Samaritan today – to us – whether we are Jewish, Moslem, Christian, devout sceptics or non-devout sceptics. Well the moral seems to be universal. The vast majority would believe that the ‘neighbour’ to the beaten man was the man who looked after him. On the way, there is the implied rebuke to those who follow rules and traditions narrowly – correctly but wrongly. The rules may be good, especially for the time when they were set up, but, in the end, no rule is greater than the conscience of a good man.

Most of the rules and laws that we are bound by do not pose moral problems. We may not like speed limits, but most of us accept that the law needs to be obeyed, in order that a complex democratic society can continue to operate. But there comes a point at which we have to question the law and our readiness to be bound by it. Christians need to be cognisant of Jesus’ injunction that we should ‘**render unto Caesar that which is Caesar’s and to God that which is God’s**’. But the two are not necessarily always mutually exclusive. Caesar may demand of us what is actually God’s. So the conscientious objector needs to be respected – he could be right!

But the other moral of the tale is that if we are to be good neighbours, we have to go out of our way to help (as Christians would have it – to love) those who are disadvantaged. What an inadequate word! As we enjoy ourselves watching marathon TV programmes and sending cheques and Credit Card commitments to Sport Relief, or Band Aid or whatever, we are barely salving our consciences.

Such giving is immensely valuable to those who benefit and so I do not decry those who organise and commit themselves to such activities, but I do ask how sacrificial is the giving of those who are effectively putting a price on their enjoyment and paying for it – albeit voluntarily.

We cannot all go out to Sudan and try to aid the starving millions driven from their land. We cannot all go to southern Iraq and try to help the Marsh Arabs to get their wetlands back. We cannot all go to Albania and try to lift this desperately demoralised country back to the civilisation from which they have lapsed. We cannot all be Mother Theresa’s

But we can all try to learn more about that 95% of the world which is poorer and unhappier than we are. We can all try to make a difference. We can only make a difference if we make a difference to our own lives. If our lives change by what we give (not just money, but time, commitment, interest . . .) then it is certain that we are making a difference to the area of that commitment and interest.

I write as a Christian, but I know that I can witness to that faith far more effectively by doing than by preaching or proselytising. I also believe that many Christians (which is an actively proselytising faith, unlike, for example, the Jews) need to remember that their main commitment is to their own salvation. The **only** way to achieve that is to witness to their faith by loving their God and by loving their neighbour – that is the commandment of the founder of our faith. If in the process of loving their neighbour they bring people to love the same God, through Jesus, as they do, then that is a consequence of their love for their

neighbour – it should not be the consequence of some abstract or theological discourse or sermon. In that way they may be able to lead others to the path in which they can find their own salvation.

We need not look for opportunities to be Good Samaritans – unhappily they surround us all the time. But, if we are not awake, we will pass by on the other side with our noses buried in our own small concerns, content that we are doing nothing wrong, not harming anyone and thinking that that is sufficient. Here I am doing what I regard as quite inadequate – preaching. I only hope that I am conscious enough of what I have said to you, the reader, as being a message to me also.

September 2004 - **THE OLYMPICS**

As an avid TV sportsman, I could not but refer to The Olympics, which I am taking time out from in order to write this. However, we should all think about what it means, even if we are bored to tears (or worse, as my wife is) by sport. Is it actually immoral to have Greece spending over \$3 billion on setting it up? With the money spent by the competing nations, the total must be way over £4billion. What could have been done with that money in that continent in agony – Africa? What about our own local needs – in every country? These are terrible questions, to which there are NO satisfactory short term answers. Could any one raise a moral objection to spending all of that money on just saving one identifiable life, let alone countless thousands?

The only answer is to stand back and not look at the individuals. We all have to live two lives – our minute by minute life, where we do have to pay attention to those we can affect – and our lives as part of a larger whole. Mankind is enough for many of us – for humanists for example. The whole of Nature is the frame for others – environmentalists. Creation in a more special sense for Christians, Jews and Muslims. I do not know enough about Sikhs, Buddhists, Hindus, Confucianists and so on to extend the examples – but you will see what I mean. Christians are taught that they are part of the Body, the Church – all with their own small but essential part in that larger whole.

Look at it another way. Animals do very little planning – they live for the

minute and have no choice. Even when they do have strategies for combating the forces opposed to them or to take advantage of opportunities available to them, it is an unthinking reaction that is at work. But we, human beings do think and invent and change our strategies for success all the time. One of the continuing tragedies of the droughts and wars of Africa in the past half century has been the need for people to consume their seed corn and their breeding cattle. To save lives now, it is necessary to condemn the people of next year and years to come to starvation. Breaking that downward heart-breaking spiral depends on the intervention of the outside world.

What has this to do with the Olympics? Well, I like to think that we have a similar example in microcosm in England. We used to have the Wars of the Roses, when Lancastrians killed and were killed by Yorkists. Now we have the Roses match – a game of cricket over a few days in gentle sunshine, with the spectators reclining in deckchairs sipping Pimms. Is there any chance that the Olympics may really emulate that answer to international war? This year, over 200 nations have sent teams to Athens – the largest number ever. They all swore to play the game by the rules and fairly. Serbs, Croats and Bosnians compete together and accept coming second with a good grace, determined to win (within the rules) next time. This year, the Iraqi team is competing with joy, knowing that they do not have to win – it is enough to be there. They are competing with the Iranians and the Americans with good humour.

Back to the money. Does it have to be so much, does it make sense? Well, think of it as the seed corn or the breeding cattle. If we spend it all now (as we so equally can) on causes, which it makes you cry not to be responding to, does it actually give the possibility of a harvest next year which will feed so many more than it can simply consumed now? I believe that is the justification – just as it is important to build the new football stadium or concert hall in the town where there is serious poverty and deprivation.

We repair roads when they deteriorate to a standard, which is still vastly superior to the roads in many (most) parts of the world. That expenditure is

an insignificant but vital part of the maintenance of a level of civilised behaviour, which reduces conflict and increases social cohesion so that we minimise (not good enough yet to completely outlaw) deprivation in our midst.

The playing out of The Olympics on the world stage is part of that same process, but on a world society level. The effort is worth it, regardless of the many examples you may find of inefficiency or ineffectiveness in the detailed process, even regardless of the few deaths in the construction (tragic as they were for them and their immediate families). Matters can be handled so badly that they negate the benefits, but that is the exception and has to be avoided. Hitler’s Olympics were an example of an effort in that direction, but he did not succeed.

It is interesting to look at the metaphors of the Christian Bible. In the older books, the language is that of war – the story of David and Goliath being the supreme example. In the later books, the metaphor is that of running races.

I must get back to see how the British Olympians are getting on – I am fiercely nationalistic in sport – but I do not hate the Australians for always beating us at cricket or the French for beating us at football or the Americans for being so supreme at Track & Field. My anger at the referees and umpires for finding the faults in **our** sports guys but not seeing the terrible failings in everyone else is skin deep and a source of amusement to my family. All these negative feelings are not really negative – they are strategies for maintaining a high pitch of interest, when excellence by my own favourites is not sufficiently evident.

Yes, I will pray for the African disaster; Yes I will put my money into the African disaster relief buckets; But Yes, also I will subscribe to the TV extravaganza, which is necessary for the financial success of modern Olympics. As ever, I have a problem with organising my priorities and disappoint myself often, but overall I know that I have to look to myself, I have to look to others and I have to look towards the continuing development of mankind to a greater and wider sense of society, of comradeship, eventually of love and finally of Godliness.

Keith Macleod, Reader

Sunday School – All Welcome!

There is a Sunday School during the main 11am Sunday services at St. Andrew’s Church, Northwold (except for Sunday’s with All Age Worship). This is open to any school age child living in the villages of Northwold, Wretton, Stoke Ferry, Whittington and Brookville. If you are not able to stay with your child please drop them off by 10.50 am and collect them by 12.15pm

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