

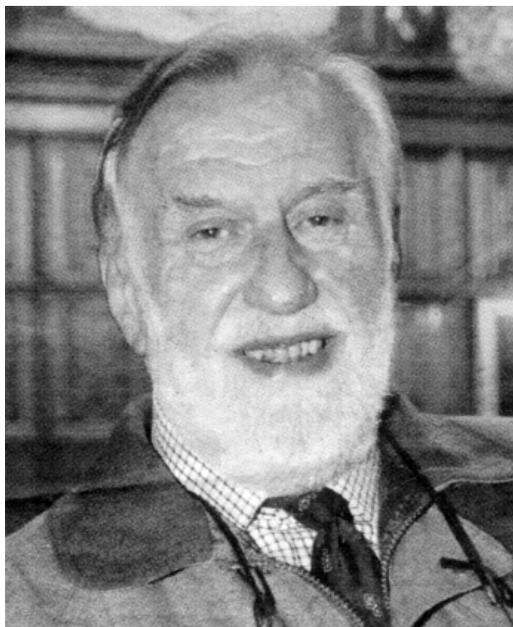
The Elsworth Chronicle



Holy Trinity Church

Issue No. 27

April 2010



SIR PAUL MELLARS

The news that Professor Paul Mellars of Brook Street was created a Knight Bachelor of the Realm in the New Year's Honours List has been reported widely and has elicited well-deserved congratulations. Paul becomes the first resident in the long history of Elsworth to be so honoured. An outstanding achievement bearing in mind written records on the village go back to the Domesday Book.

Sir Paul and Lady Anny have lived in the village since 1980, coming here from their home in Derbyshire and Paul's place of work at Sheffield, where he was a lecturer in the university. Throughout his time here Paul has been involved with work in the University of Cambridge in the Department of Archaeology, where he is now Professor of Prehistory and Human Evolution. As his professorial title denotes, his speciality is the evolution and behaviour of early human populations, and he has

made a particular study of the Neanderthal period. Doubtless many will have watched with great interest the BBC Apemen series of programmes screened in the year 2,000 in which Paul focused on Neanderthal Man. Recent work has been concerned with the movement of mankind from its place of origin in Africa to Asia and Europe.

Sir Paul is a Fellow of Corpus Christie College and for a while in 2007 was Acting Master. As he has also held the position of President of the Senior Combination Room it is clear that he has given much to his college as well as well as to his university faculty. In the social life of the college he has been actively supported by Anny, his wife of 40 years.

Paul and Anny were married in 1969 in Cambridge. They first met on an archaeological field trip in the Dordogne in 1964 when Paul was working for his doctorate and Anny - who at that time had recently been an airhostess - was living in the area. Anny came to Cambridge where Paul was a research student to study at a language school and was to obtain the post of Assistant Librarian in the Department of Archaeology. Marriage followed, as did a teaching post for Paul at Sheffield University, to which reference has been made above. When Paul led annual field trips to the Hebrides, Anny was at his side sorting and analysing materials procured, particularly evidence from discarded seashells. Then back to Cambridge where Paul was appointed first as a lecturer and subsequently professor.

Paul's knighthood has been conferred in recognition of his outstanding work in academia, the citation noting that the award was "for services to scholarship". The honour bestowed has been a source of pleasure to colleagues, friends and acquaintances alike. Most touching, though, must be the joy of Paul's father, now of 95 years of age, when he received the news; a fitting reward for all the support he gave to Paul in the early years.

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THOMAS THE TANK ENGINE, ELSWORTH, AND THE REV. W. AWDRY



Ten years ago when we were planning possible events for Elsworth's Millennium celebrations it was envisaged that a steaming Thomas engine would be a feature of the week, pulling children happily across the sports field. It seemed good publicity for the merchandise associated with Thomas and an ideal attraction for the village. However lengthy negotiations proved abortive, with Brit Allcroft, then the holders of the copyright, stating that Thomas should not be associated with a locality but rather dwell in the minds of children. This was a disappointment, but the Millennium celebrations were to prove an outstanding success with events taking place every day of the week, with the village coming together with laughter, good cheer and full support.

Whether Brit Allcroft like it or not, Thomas is a son of Elsworth. He emerged in 1946 when the Rev. Awdry was Rector here, and all books of The Railway Series published in the following nine years relating to Thomas and company were from the Rev. Aw-

dry's pen in Elsworth. Strangely, although Thomas dominates the series, he didn't appear until the second book. Three other engines were on the scene before Thomas and although playing prominent roles in the subsequent books they have failed to capture the imagination as Thomas has done. Can you name them? Many would have difficulty.

The earlier three – Edward, Gordon and Henry - were conceived and born in King's Norton where Wilbert Awdry was curate. His infant son, Christopher was in bed suffering from measles and Wilbert made up stories of fictional railway engines which Christopher asked to hear evening after evening. As is commonplace, Christopher would correct his father if the tale deviated from the expected, and consequently father noted down the stories to aid his memory. Wilbert's wife, Margaret, thought the stories worthy of publication, and it was largely due to her persuasion that this occurred. Altogether, Wilbert wrote 26 tales, after which, with the passing of several years, Christopher his son took over the authorship.

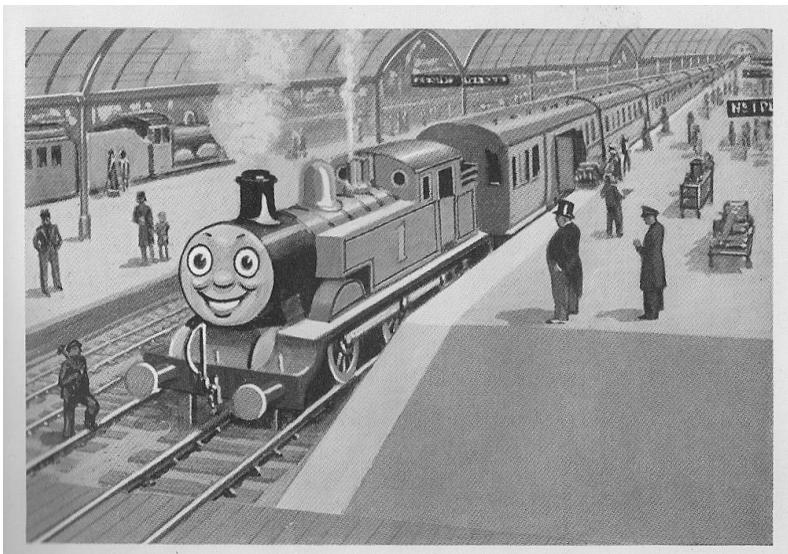
The superb illustrations clearly account in part for the attraction of the books. But the tales themselves have so much to offer. Apart from the story, the structured hierarchy is something readily understood by the young reader. Thomas, a small engine, is much like the young reader with the grander, larger express engines seeming like older boys or girls with superior ability and roles, with Edward and James being intermediate. Thomas, then, would readily be understood, and be a character with whom they could identify. For the adult reader old enough to remember steam trains in action, repeated phrases of the engines are almost onomatopoeic – "I will do it; I will do it; I will do it" when an engine is striving to pull a heavy load, perhaps up a gradient. Such repetition is also a delight to the young child.

From the simple beginning at Christopher's bedside, books have been sold throughout the world and subsequent copyright holders have created a merchandising business embracing t.v.

videos, clothing etc. etc., grossing some billion pounds [£] in a year. Popularity was greatly enhanced by Ringo Starr's television programmes, which proved an instant success in this country and in the United States and Japan. It would seem Wilbert liked the first two series as they stuck faithfully to his stories, but when the producers started writing their own, he was appalled. The stories have also been narrated on disc by Johnny Morris and William Rushton and recorded for radio by John Gielgood.

In 1953 Wilbert left Elsworth on appointment as Vicar of Emneth, a Fenland village near Wisbech, where the family – along with Thomas and company - established their home for the next thirteen years. Thomas and the other characters, though, are now known almost throughout the world. Among them could be Terry the tractor, named after Terry Stevens, a long-time resident remembered with affection by many in Elsworth, who used to play with Christopher when both were young.

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The Night Sky April-June 2010

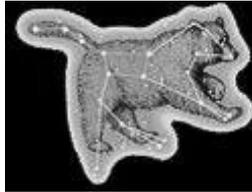
By Harry French

For years Elsworth has been a great place to view the stars and I really enjoy gazing into the heavens, especially in an area with basically no light pollution. I am Harry French and I will be your tour guide to the night sky. Here are the top three must-see events from April to June. Happy stargazing!

APRIL:

1: Use binoculars to find the Whirlpool Galaxy below The Great Bear's tail.

The Great Bear
Constellation



21-22: Lyrids Meteor Shower
28: full moon

MAY:

5-6: Eta Aquarids Meteor Shower
14: New Moon
27: Full Moon

JUNE:

12: New Moon
22: This evening, take a trip from north through west to south to spot Capella, Comet Mcnaught, Castor and Pollux, Venus, Regulus, Mars, Saturn, Spica, the Moon and Antares!
26: Full Moon



Harry French in action

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EVERY DAY IS AN OPEN DAY

A VIEW FROM THE PARISH COUNCIL BACK BEN CH

Matters of finance are for many tedious – except of course when our own money is concerned, when we wish to know that wise choices are being made if it relates to it being spent by others on our behalf. In January the parish council had to determine how much money to charge parishioners. The notes below endeavour to put the considerations councillors had to evaluate before setting the precept [the amount to be added to the Community Charge]. In the event, £20,000 was levied for the current financial year. Given the facts and the ensuing proposals noted below, it would be interesting to know how readers would have voted.

Background Facts

- [1] The parish council has £33,324 brought forward from the last financial year.
- [2] There are no outstanding projects for which large sums of money must be found.
- [3] The yearly average expenditure over the last five years, including money specifically raised for intended flood control measures and now spent, is £15,857 [maximum £18,027 in 2009/10].
- [4] Last year Elsworth parish council levied its parishioners at a rate higher than 83% of the other parishes in South Cambs.

The issue in Essence

Three proposals were considered by the council: [1] keep the precept the same as in the previous year - £21,000; [2] reduce the precept to £20,000; [3] reduce the precept to £15,000.

The case made for option [1] was that the parish council should have reserves in its account to pay for projects yet to be decided. Three possibilities were mentioned, namely: [a]

equipment for the play area in Grass Close; [b] re-activating a scheme for a drainage channel west of the school; [c] support for the community shop. With the money brought forward [£33,324], the parish council would thereby have some £54,000 In hand.

The difference between options [1] and [2] is so small that they are virtually indistinguishable. The case made for [2] was that it was a gesture at a time when some might be less well off than normal due to the economic downturn. The amount in hand would therefore be some £53,000.

Option [3] sought to reduce the precept [money charged to parishioners] to £15,000 based on the following considerations.

[a] As there is not an ongoing major project on hand, it would seem pointless to demand money from parishioners, merely for it to sit in the bank account of the parish council. Even so, with a £15,000 levy the parish council would still have £48,000 in hand.

[b] If an expensive project was to be identified, much preparatory work would have to be done so that appreciable sums of money would not be required before the next financial year, when an appropriate precept could be set. Even so, with such a large amount of money in hand, it is unlikely that such a demand would necessitate delay.

[c] The possible proposals noted under option [1] [precept of £21,000] could well be met from the money in hand. Grants would seem readily available for playground equipment, but application for support has to be made. Regarding the western drainage cut, it is estimated that the cost above those already incurred would only be in the region of £2,000. With regard to The Community Shop, this hopefully will be up and

running before long. Much effort has been made to procure the necessary funding. If additional support from the parish council is required, the necessary funds are clearly in hand. [d] A large amount of money in hand could possibly lead to less vigilance over expenditure – “the money is there”.

The precept has been set, but it would be interesting to know how you would have voted for the guidance of councillors in future years. In essence the question is whether you would prefer money to be in the parish council bank account or in your own when there is no immediate expensive project in hand, or projected. Or more simply, would you have voted for a levy of £21,000 or £20,000 or £15,000 or even a year when no parish tax is to be levied. Do let parish councillors know your view and contact the editor by e-mail on farrow16@googlemail.com or tel.267472

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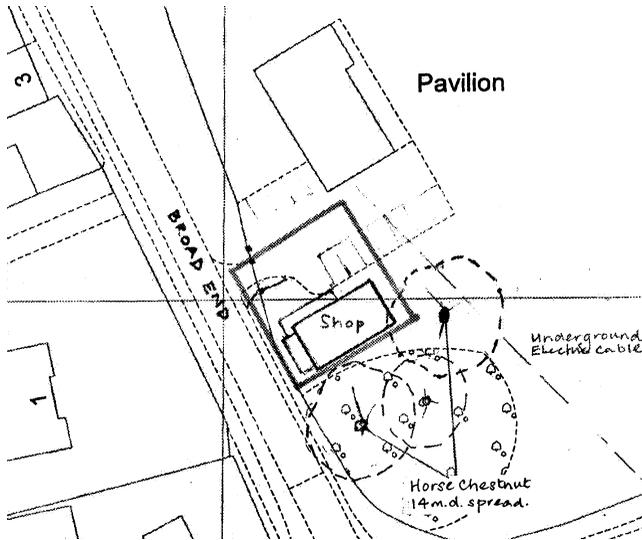
THE NEW ELSWORTH VILLAGE SHOP NEEDS YOUR HELP!

The new Village Shop is to be staffed by volunteers and we are hoping to sell local fruit and veg, cakes and crafts - anything you may produce that you wish to sell! If you can spare some time and would like to be involved in the biggest community project the village has seen for some time, please do let the shop committee know by calling Janet Bell, 267919.

We aim to have each volunteer working a four hour shift, the shop will be open 8am - 6pm Mon-Fri and 8am - 12 noon at the weekend. We hope to have sufficient volunteers always to have two people in at once, especially at peak times (lunchtime and school pick-up). If you are unable to commit to a four hour slot each week but would still like to help out please do let us know - anything is better than nothing!

Suppliers - We need to know what you want to supply, an idea of your prices and when you can supply it! (We are hoping for locally produced arts & crafts, eggs, cakes, preserves, fruit & veg, flowers etc etc...). Please call the number above if you can provide good quality supplies. Thank you very much in anticipation of your help.

Victoria Wrigley



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ELSWORTH LUNCH CLUB

Elsworth Lunch Club is to meet at The George and Dragon on 25th May at 12.30pm. We envisage a relaxed meal together in pleasant surroundings, enjoying the company of each other. It will be an informal occasion of good food, laughter and chat. As among friends there is no telling what might be said, but I know some are particularly keen to be joined by people who can provide memories of Elsworth of the past. There is a place, then, for those relatively new to the village as well as those with well established roots in the parish. Make of the occasion what you will - chat on any matter you wish, or sit quietly among friends and enjoy their company and the good food.

Karen of the George and Dragon has been most generous and will provide a two course meal for £7.50. Do join us if you can. To book a place or ask any questions, please contact either Mandy Smith or Alan Farrow. Mandy's telephone number is 01954 230253 and e-mail mandy.smith@cambridgeshire.gov.uk and Alan Farrow's telephone number is 267472 and e-mail: - farrow16@googlemail.com. **Firm orders must be in by 20th May.**

As mentioned in the last edition of The Chronicle, transport can be arranged for anyone with problems of mobility. We look forward to a happy time, with no washing-up to follow!

* PLANT SALE AND CREAM TEAS *

On Sunday 9th May, 2.00pm - 4.00pm, Elsworth School PTA will be holding its annual sale of local plants. Delicious cream teas will also be available - when the weather is kind to us this is a lovely day out, if not then we carry on but move inside to the school hall! Plants grown in local soil will thrive in your garden so please do come along and browse the lovely selections we have. We also request that if you are currently planting out your spring borders, please add a few extra for us to sell on the day - so you can bring and buy!

Victoria Wrigley

ELSWORTH SPORTS CLUB

With the coming of Spring the football and table tennis seasons are in their last few weeks, the club's AGM will be held shortly and the cricket season will start in May.

In football the first team have experienced a good first season in the Cambs Junior BIS League division 1B and are currently 9th of thirteen teams with 20 points. However at the time of writing they have lost only two matches [of 14] and have played fewer matches than all teams bar one, so potentially could finish the season a few places higher. Cup runs have meant fewer league matches, the team reaching the semi-final of the Junior Cup when there was defeat by Dullingham – the score being 1 – 1 after extra time, the match being lost 6 – 5 on penalties.

The reserve team is now establishing itself and is currently in 7th place [of 13] in Division 5C of the Cambs BIS League. The team is a mixture of youth and experience and is providing valuable support to the first team. Potential football players and anyone seeking information should contact Mark Brading on 01480 383303.

At table tennis the club has three teams in the Ely League. The season finishes at the end of April and currently the first team is 7th [out of 12] in Division I with six matches remaining. It is still involved in the League Handicap Plate competition, which is now at the semi-final stage. The second team also play in Division I and are finding life tough - they are in 12th position. The third team play in Division II and consists mainly of juniors. They are currently ninth [of 10] but with matches in hand could climb a few places. For further information on table tennis please contact Billy Knibbs on 267266.

Cricket fixtures commence on May 1st. After a rather disappointing season last summer the club will this year have two teams in the Cambs Junior League, in divisions 3 and 4. Net practice will be on Tuesday evenings. For further information on cricket please contact Billy Knibbs on 267266.

Carpet bowls is played in the pavilion throughout the year on Wednesday afternoons. New players will be welcomed. Whist drives and beginners bridge sessions are held throughout the year, alternating fortnightly on Friday evenings [7.30pm start].

Roger Fensom

ELSWORTH CRICKET CLUB – HOME FIXTURES

1 st May	2 nd team	v.	Cambourne 2 nd team
8 th May	1 st team	v.	Bassingbourn
15 th May	2 nd team	v.	Burrough Green 2 nd team
22 nd May	2 nd team	v.	Dullingham 2 nd team
29 th May	1 st team	v.	Royston 2 nd team
12 th June	1 st team	v.	Steeple Morden
26 th June	1 st team	v.	Barley 2 nd team
3 rd July	1 st team	v.	Harlton
10 th July	1 st team	v.	Comberton
17 th July	2 nd team	v.	Fenstanton
24 th July	2 nd team	v.	Milton 3 rd team
31 st July	1 st team	v.	Barrington 2 nd team
7 th August	1 st team	v.	Thriplow 2 nd team
21 st August	2 nd team	v.	Bar Hill 2 nd team
28 th August	2 nd team	v.	Needingworth 2 nd team
4 th September	1 st team	v.	Foxton 2 nd team

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THE JUBILEE CLUB

We meet on the first Thursday of most months in Elsworth School Hall from 2.30 to 4.30 pm and welcome people from all local villages.

We have a wide selection of speakers and will be looking forward to “Growing Old Disgracefully” in April, learning about the work of the mercy ships in May, and “Wildlife in the Garden” in July.

Our outings this year are: 3rd June – Oxford; 24th July – Aldeburgh. Come and join us – book your seat!

For more information please contact Betty – telephone 267470. We will really be pleased to welcome you any time you can join us.

Betty Simcock

ELSWORTH, KNAPWELL AND CONINGTON W.I.

In the last Chronicle there was good news of six new members joining us – that has now risen to eight and there is room for many more! Visitors are always welcome – just come along to Elsworth School on the second Wednesday of each month at 7.30 pm, but please check details on posters on the village notice board as very occasionally dates are changed.

Our “Around Alaska” talk had to be transferred to March 31st and we are looking forward to June when we will learn about French craft work and in July hear about the village of Lavenham.

Looking beyond our village institute, this month we are particularly thinking of the Associated Countrywomen of the World, an organisation affiliated to the W.I. Money is donated by members in all institutes to help alleviate poverty among women in the poorer areas of the world by developing small scale projects. This year’s money will go to training women in The Cameroons to make soaps and lotions etc to be sold in local markets. There is great demand for these products. The long term aim is for the women to be self-sufficient.

At our recent Annual Meeting, Lyn Hogan was elected as our new president and two new members joined the committee.

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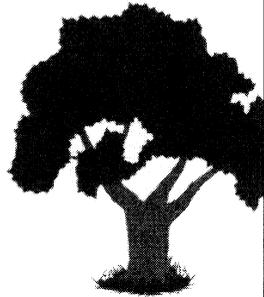
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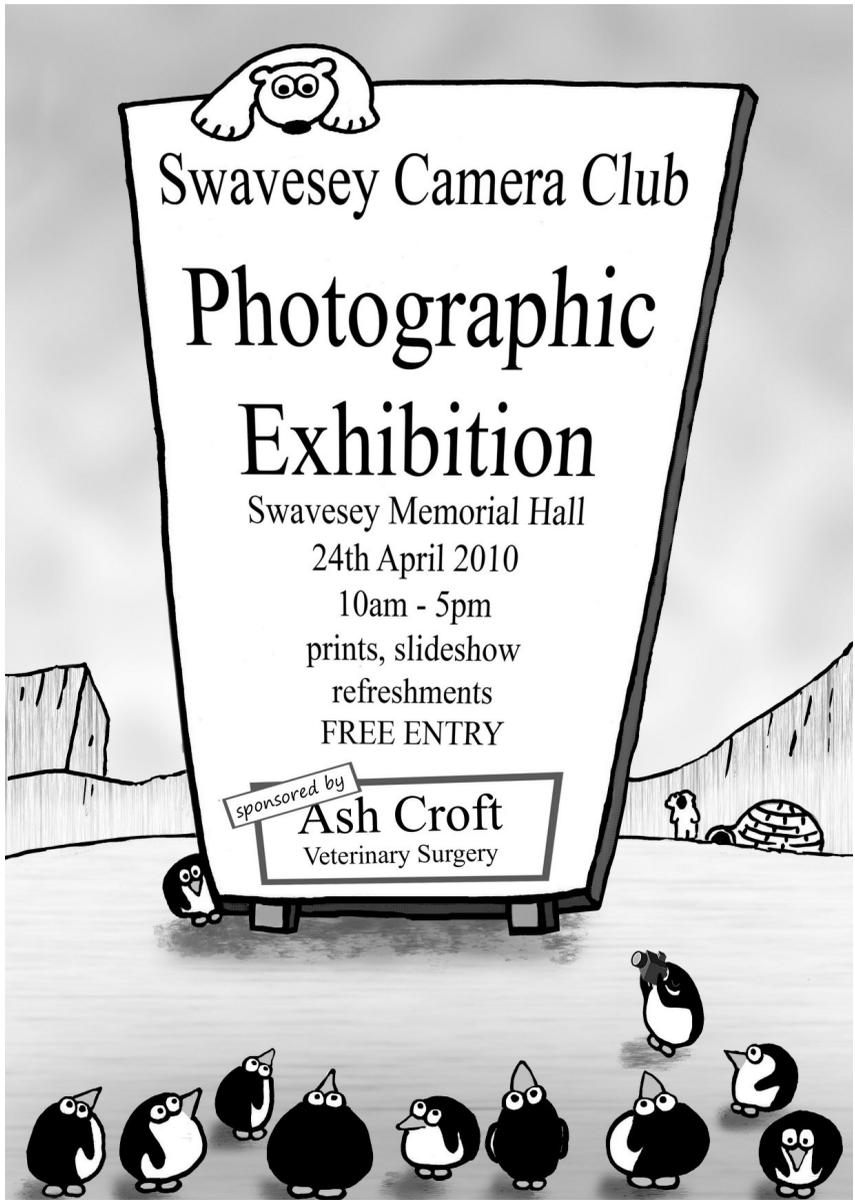
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