

The Elsworth Chronicle



Holy Trinity Church

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ELSWORTH CHRONICLE

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JUBILEE CLUB

The Jubilee Club is open to everybody in Elsworth and the surrounding villages. We meet once a month on the first Thursday at 2.30 pm in the School Hall. We have a speaker or entertainment, refreshments and a raffle.

The year started in January with our lunch at the George and Dragon. Our two trips this year will be to Bressingham, Norfolk, on Thursday the 29th May, and to Southwold on Thursday the 31st July.

In November we will be welcoming back Mr. Carter [the last eel man] - an opportunity to hear him again, or, if you missed him last time, why not make it a "first"?

For any further information, please contact Betty on 01954-267470

BETTY SIMCOCK

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OBITUARY

JANET HICKS



From the time Janet came to live in Elsworth she was keen to play an active part in village life. Probably the Church was to the fore as she was a faithful member not only of Holy Trinity, but she also gave active support to Conington and Knapwell. She was a P.C.C. member and Elsworth's representative at the Deanery Synod. Through the charity 'Cruse', Janet trained for her work as a bereavement councillor.

Janet joined the W.I. in 1983 and from the start was a lively and supportive member, always keen to take an active part with practical comments and suggestions. She went as Elsworth's delegate to Group and National meetings and was a great asset as she was very sociable.

In 1988 Janet was a founder member of the local National Women's Register and was an enthusiastic and committed member, always keen to contribute to activities. Other organisations also greatly benefited from her support - in the past she had been active in fundraising for the Friends of Elsworth School, was on the rota for the Surgery Run and more recently helping in the village shop.

Janet was born in 1946 at Sale in Victoria, Australia, qualifying as a nurse in Melbourne and then moving to Perth in Western Australia. In 1983 she married John and came to live in Elsworth, where Peter was born in 1985. She will be greatly missed as she was full of energy, out-going, caring and thoughtful, honest, kind and courageous. At her funeral the church was overflowing - a moving tribute to her life in Elsworth and elsewhere.

SAMUEL DISBROWE - ANOTHER ELSWORTH WORTHY

Earlier editions of the Elsworth Chronicle have focussed on two local clergymen who had a great influence on the Western World, namely Rev. Dr. John Watson and Rev. John Bois, particularly regarding language. Now, in the lines below, attention is to be drawn to another man of Elsworth who had a marked impact on affairs far beyond the borders of Cambridgeshire and England.

Samuel Disbrowe

An interesting question for a village quiz could well be “What is the link between Elsworth and Alex Salmond, the present Scottish First Minister?” [Answer: both are associated with The Great Seal of Scotland.]

The Elsworth connection is through Samuel Disbrowe [Desborough. Disbrow] who in the middle years of the 17th century was Lord of the Manor and held the prestigious office of Keeper of the Seal of Scotland. Samuel was born in Eltisley in 1619. When he was 20 years of age, in 1639, he sailed to the New World [only 19 years after the Mayflower] and helped to establish a colony at Guilford, in present day Connecticut. However in 1650 he returned to Cambridgeshire and in 1656 he purchased the Manor of Elsworth from the Wendy family and had the present Manor House built. His connection with Cromwell was clearly strong - his brother John, who had married Jane, Oliver Cromwell’s sister, was a Major General in Cromwell’s army and was to be responsible for affairs in the S.W. of England. Samuel, himself, was to become a member of Parliament and, as noted above, to hold the prestigious post of Keeper of the Great Seal of Scotland.

The Seal of Scotland allows the Monarch to authorise official documents without having to sign each individually. The earliest record dates back to the 11th century, and its transfer to Edinburgh

from London with the re-creation of the Scottish Parliament towards the close of the 20th century was regarded as an event of some consequence in the affairs of Scotland, as was witnessed by the celebratory press photographs of Donald Dewar - the first First Minister - holding up the Seal triumphantly above his head.



Both the present holder of the Seal, Alex Salmond [see photograph above holding the seal] and Elsworth's Samuel Disbrowe faced problems relating to the governance of Scotland, in particular who should rule. In Disbrowe's time the problems were more acute and military battles between the two countries were common. Salmond is engaged in a war of words which will continue, of course, until the referendum later this year.

It would seem Scotland was pacified during the Commonwealth/ Protectorate of Disbrowe's time, during which he was M.P. for Midlothian in the Parliament of 1656 and Member for Edinburgh in 1658-59, as well as Keeper of the Great Seal. However, problems in England were to assume greater significance, but at the Restoration of Charles II he obtained a full pardon with the restitution of goods and land. Unlike his brother John he didn't have to face imprisonment in The Tower of London. After his pardon, Samuel retired to Elsworth, where he died in 1690. He was buried here, and a tile on the floor of the Chancel of the Church commemorates his life. His Manor House is a more striking memorial, perhaps, and could it be that the Desboroughs of present day Elsworth are of his line?

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no fault of yours, something has gone wrong,
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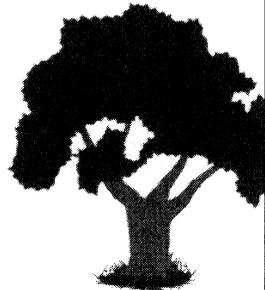
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FROM THE BACK BENCH

Many in this western part of Cambridgeshire have expressed marked concern at the mass of new buildings proposed for this area, even though the considerable development of Papworth, St. Neots and the creation of Cambourne have been a feature of recent years. In contrast, no large settlements are proposed for the south of Cambridge, nor to the east of the City. Only Waterbeach to the north is an exception.

The rationale for this swamping of the west with bricks and mortar would seem puzzling, but reasons there must be. The older this seasoned parish councillor gets the more often he sees truths in the tales of his childhood apparent in life of to-day. The White Knight's floored thinking in Alice Through the Looking Glass might seem risible, but even so may be observed in local government thinking. *[You may recall the knight was so proud of his 'invention' of a shoulder box which would not only take his clothes when riding in armour, but also when inverted would provide protection from the rain. Regretfully he hadn't thought the matter through, and the open upside-down box was soon empty!]*

The White Knight was brought to mind by an oral presentation at a parish council meeting by South Cambs senior spokesmen in support of the proposal to build 3,500 new homes at Bourn Airfield plus 1,500 homes at West Cambourne. In spite of the present traffic congestion even now at rush hours, we were assured that the road system could cope. But when I asked about yet more additional traffic arising from housing development proposed for St. Neots converging on the A428, we were told they couldn't state the number of houses proposed as that area was outside the South Cambs area! In point of fact Hunts District Council had proposed 4,000 new homes at St. Neots, in addition to the mass of building which has already taken place between the town and the A428. As in the case of the White Knight it seemed a vital factor had been overlooked! Could it be, though, that unbeknown to me money had been allocated for the improvement of the A428? Not so, according to a spokesman for the Highways Agency. Surely marked additional traffic problems are now inevitable? It seems unbelievable

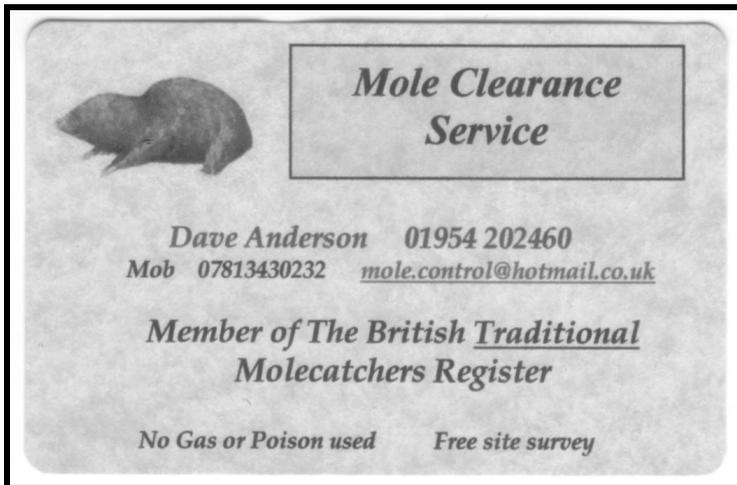
that such a basic and vital consideration should have been ignored or overlooked.

To use a variation of an overworked cliché, is there any use in crying over spilt milk? Perhaps not, but it would seem important to press South Cambs [councillors and officers] as to what is planned to meet this major increase in the amount of traffic on the A428. Otherwise it could become as notorious as the present A14.

Footnote

With the development also of Northstowe near the A14, we, in the West Cambridge Corridor, are destined to receive some 24,000 new homes if the St Neots development is included, that is a population growth of some 50,000 to 60,000. This is clearly disproportionate compared with what is planned elsewhere around Cambridge, even though there were alternatives put forward, e.g. south of Sawston with adjacent rail and motorway links.

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ELSWORTH, KNAPWELL & CONINGTON W.I.

The Annual Council Meeting of the Cambridge Federation was held on the 29th April at Comberton Leisure Centre. Four of our members attended and heard an overview of the previous year's business and activities. It was announced that five new W.Is have opened in the last twelve months in Cambridgeshire. Plans are in hand to celebrate 100 years of the W.I. in 2015.

After all business had been completed the guest speaker took the floor and we were highly entertained by Bunny Campione, an expert from Sothebys and the Antiques Road Show. The evening finished with a very lively performance by the Elsworth and Papworth Choir.

On now to our own news. In November we learned of the Herbal Medicine Heritage from Dr. Koenig, and in December our Christmas Party was, as always, most enjoyable - cold buffet, delicious desserts and entertainment. January's speaker, Geoff Green, lives locally and his talk 'The Book is Dead, Long Live the Book' left us in no doubt that the kindle would ever take over. He produces beautifully bound books of quality paper. He also showed us images and examples ranging from 6th century manuscripts to the works of William Morris.

In February, Rose Bowen, a retired actress, entertained us and in April Philip Whaites - Head Gardener at Wimpole Hall - led us through his work in re-creating the gardens of the estate.

Visitors are always welcome at our meetings - usually a poster gives details of date and topic.

ISOBEL FARROW [telephone 267472]

THIS BUSINESS OF SPECTACLES

Not so long ago, I made my alternate-yearly trip to the oculist, a trusted practitioner whom I must have visited almost a dozen times in the past quarter century. He operates from the upper floor of a shop in Cambridge that's now part of a large nationwide chain. This time, however, after the eye tests, I decided to consider the possibility of buying new lenses from somewhere other than the establishment on the ground floor. To make it fair, or so I thought, I asked the young man at the computer screen downstairs for his best price to fulfil my new prescription, but also told him that I would be looking elsewhere too. He did not like this, as Corporal Jones would say, "He did not like it" and stomped off to fetch a standard frame. Now, as it happens, I do a lot of close electronic work, so I prefer to have my varifocals in a fairly large ten year old frame [which I may add I had bought at full price from this same outlet]; the fashionable letter-box styles of spectacles are simply unsuitable, at least for me. When I told him I wanted my existing frames 're-glazed', he did not like it, he did not like it at all. He off-handedly tapped away on his keyboard for what seemed less than a blink of an eye, and without turning to me snapped, 'Four hundred and four pounds'. No ifs and buts, no courtesies offered in exchange for this eye-watering sum. I was half expecting a large figure, but this was staggering, more than £200 per eye, for plastic lenses, and not even a frame. I made my excuses and left, though not before asking him for a print-out of my prescription - as of right. He thrust the oculist's scrawled note at me, with, as even my fading eyes could detect, a hint of an exasperated snarl.

Talk about doctors' handwriting but pharmacists seem to manage somehow, so I took a gamble that my alternative supplier of lenses would have someone able to interpret all the dots, dashes and rough numerals. After the weekend, I drove across the flyover to an industrial estate in Swavesey - Over. I guess this is the future. [I shall not advertise, but the establishment is easy enough to find on Google.] An obliging individual there took my details and told me he would be delighted to re-glaze my large windows. He had no problem reading the prescription either. I should mention that I actually run two pairs of identical frames, the spare pair having the previous gen-

eration of lenses. So I left the spare with him, to have the new lenses fitted. A week later, and only £234 poorer, he handed me the finished specs. A quick check: excellent. Also, no traffic, no parking problems, i.e. the future. They sell new frames too, but alas cannot offer eye tests. Anyway, I shall probably stick with my trusted old practitioner in Cambridge for another few years, unless the whizz kids downstairs prevent me. Yes, I'd love to support the shop in the high street with my custom for the whole deal, but they really do not want outliers like me. The figures say it all, a saving of almost £1,000 over ten years. And don't be blinded by science: the computer-controlled machine to cut a lens from a plastic 'blank' is no big deal nowadays.

JOHN CATTO

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ELSWORTH SPORTS CLUB

Now as we go into the month of May the football and table tennis seasons have recently been completed and the cricket season is just getting under way.

The football team has enjoyed success again. Having been promoted last season to Junior League Division 2B, yet further promotion has been won, this time to Division 1 in the Junior League. Although the first four matches were lost, matters were turned around and the team didn't taste another defeat in the league, finishing in runners-up position.

The team also enjoyed success in cup competitions, reaching the quarter final of the Cambs Junior Cup, but losing 4-2 to Thorney, and the final in the Creake Shield which was played at Histon under floodlights and won by 3-1 by Fulbourn S & S. Anyone interested in playing or seeking more information on football should contact David Triggs on 0789 1011055.

With regard to table-tennis, Elsworth has, for the first time, teams in both the Cambridge and Ely leagues. In the Cambridge League, the first team finished 5th of 12 teams in the Second Division, whilst the second team, newly promoted this season, maintained its position in this division by finishing ninth. The third team finished 6th of the 12 teams in the Third Division.

In the Ely table-tennis league, our first team finished 5th of the 10 teams in the First Division, and also won the Handicap Competition, open to all teams in the three divisions, in which players are individually handicapped. The final was a close, keenly contested match, with our team winning 5-3 against Fulbourn 4, finishing just before midnight! The second team, after being promoted last season to the Second Division, found the going tougher this season and finished 10th out of 10 teams and will be relegated back to the Third Division.

Social or club table-tennis is also played, usually on Friday evenings. Anyone interested in table-tennis should contact Bill Knibbs 01954 267266.

The cricket season is just getting underway. Following the re-organisation of the divisions in the Cambridge League, Elsworth is to play in the Junior League 4 South. Anyone interested in cricket should contact Bill Knibbs on 01954 267266, or Anthony Taylor on 01954 268042, or Craig Mills on 07764 479486.

Carpet Bowls has been played for the last few years on Wednesday afternoons in the pavilion but is currently suspended through lack of support. It is hoped to resume later in the year. Snooker is played on Monday mornings and whist drives are held monthly on Friday evenings commencing at 7.30p.m.

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