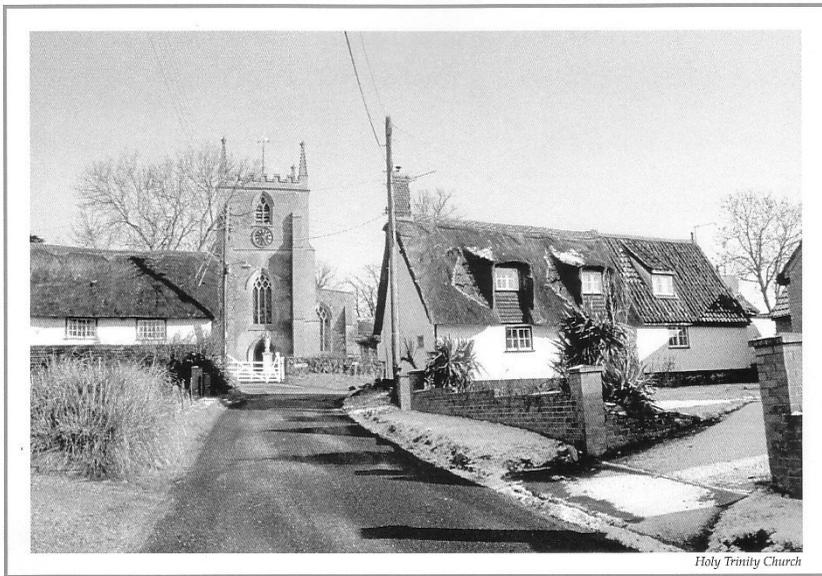


# The Elsworth Chronicle



*Holy Trinity Church*

**Issue No. 41**

**May 2017**

## **ELSWORTH CHRONICLE**

[Established 1990]

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## EMPSON'S GARAGE AND THE EMPSONS



There was marked dismay and shock in Elsworth at the closure at the end of March of Empson's Garage. Along with the school, two public houses/restaurants, the church and latterly the community shop, it was one of the treasures of the village.

It may be stated with confidence that no-one now living in the village can recall a time when there wasn't a garage in Brockley Road, for Kelly's Directory of 1929 notes Leslie Papworth as a motor engineer in Elsworth and it was from him that Old Bob Empson - Mark's grandfather - was to purchase the garage in 1964.

The Empson family hailed from Gamlingay where Old Bob, worked at his father's garage. In due course his son Robert, known perhaps rather confusingly to many in the village as Bob, i.e. Mark's father, took over the running of the business in 1990 and it was to remain his responsibility until into more recent years. The Empson family have thus served the village well for some 53 years.

The love of motor vehicles clearly ran through the generations. Old Bob favoured two wheels when racing, as did Robert [our Bob] until he moved on to cars, while Mark and his brother Paul and their families enjoyed grass-track car racing. The Elsworth Chronicle of November 2008 contained a report of their successes. Since that time, Hayley has achieved further marked success, becoming national car grass track champion in 2015. Continuing this theme of attachment to cars, Andrew, Linda and Mark's son, left the family business in 2016 to pursue a career in motor sport at Silverstone where he now paints F1 racing cars for Red Bull and, amongst other responsibilities, undertook the painting of the British Olympic cycles in 2016.

The garage will be sorely missed. It was more than a place where motor vehicles were repaired, it was a village institution. The family was generous in its support of village enterprises, providing over many years advertisements in the Elsworth Chronicle and in the Village Show programmes. When Elsworth was without a shop for a few years, the family stepped forward and the garage office became as an outlet for the sale of papers and magazines. This was typical of their kindness and thoughtfulness. The garage will be remembered as a centre of mechanical expertise and also a place of good cheer and helpfulness. The Empsons have truly earned the respect and thanks of so many in the village and the surrounding area.

AWF

## OBITUARY



**MICHAEL DAVISON**  
**20<sup>th</sup> September 1934 - 8<sup>th</sup> December 2016**

A packed Holy Trinity Church congregation paid tribute to Michael at a thanksgiving, memorial service on the 4<sup>th</sup> January. He and the parish of Elsworth were intrinsically bound together. Not only was he responsible for much of his life for running the largest farm in the parish, which extended to some 1500 thousand acres, but he, like his father and grandfather before him, took an active interest in village affairs and gave generously financially and in kind to Elsworth projects and needs.

Michael was of the 3rd generation of his family to

farm in the parish, working and managing the land for over 60 years. He was well-prepared for the work, not only from being at his father's side but also through studies at the Royal Agricultural College at Cirencester. In his lifetime he witnessed marked changes in the farming scene. In the years following the Second World War the farm employed some 40 workers, whereas to-day this has been reduced to two, partly due to mechanisation and partly to the fact vegetable cropping, then labour intensive, has been discontinued.

Of Michael's interests outside the family and farm, special mention must be made of Winter Sports, for he represented Great Britain in the 1959/60 season being a member of the bobsleigh team which finished fourth at the St. Moritz World Championships. As brake-man he had a vital role in descents which demanded immeasurable courage. Some twenty one years later he was to achieve representative honours in a more sedate scene, when in 1981 he was appointed High Sheriff of Bedfordshire.

Michael was born in Oakley in Bedfordshire where he spent his early years at his father's farm. He married firstly Jean with whom he had a son and daughter - Charles and Emma - and in 1969 to Philippa, with whom he had a son, Edward. The family grew and he was to rejoice in seven grandchildren. He is missed very much and held in loving memory.

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## OBITUARY



### ANN ELIZABETH THWAITES

Ann was born on the 16<sup>th</sup> January 1945 in Blyth, Northumberland. When she was 7 her parents bought a hotel on Morecambe promenade. Always competitive and a keen student, after getting 3 As at A level she went from Morecambe grammar school to study French at Manchester University.

Ann met Gordon Thwaites at a young farmers' ball in Lancaster when she was just 19. After graduating they were married in Morecambe in 1968 and Ann began teaching at Goudhurst College. Not long after, Gordon was posted to Leasingham in Lincolnshire where in 1973 she entered the wonderful world of motherhood with the birth of baby Simon. Adam followed two years later and Fiona in 1978. Shortly afterwards Ann and the family moved to the island of St. Helena in the South Atlantic Ocean. She loved island life and very much enjoyed all the Napoleonic connections, even translating letters and helping with

historical research as well as working on the island radio.

After returning to the UK four years later, Gordon was relocated to Cambridge and they moved to Brown's farmhouse, their longed for 'project'. Despite being an urban girl, Ann cherished country life. She was a natural hostess, making everyone feel relaxed and welcome in a happy fun-loving way. Her ultimate birthday present, Sophie, arrived on the 16<sup>th</sup> January 1989.

In her later years she enjoyed working at the Careers Library at Cambridge University, teaching at the Perse Prep, teaching Latin at St. Mary's School in Cambridge and, of course, her weekly French classes at Elsworth Primary School. Ann delighted in learning new things. As well as her complete adoration for classical music she was also a true lover of languages. She took Russian classes, attended Italian lessons at which she gained AS level. Then when Fiona moved to Mallorca she took up Spanish and passed GCSE within a year.

Ann loved living in Elsworth and always enjoyed village fetes, barn dances, George and Dragon lunches and taking part in the annual Elsworth Shows, with her wonderful fruit plates and delicious jams. She loved to help people, collecting for various charities and driving some of the elderly to the Papworth clinic. She was a highly valued member of the community, as was her husband Gordon.

The love she showered on her children she subsequently gave to their children. She was a wonderfully devoted Nanna to her 7 grandchildren, pouring love over them, always giving them undivided attention. She will be greatly missed by all her family and friends.

## OBITUARY



### JESSIE THROSSELL

Jessie was born on 28<sup>th</sup> January 1917 at Common Farm Cottages, Elsworth. The daughter of a horse keeper she lived on several different farms during her early life, returning to Elsworth to live in the new council houses in Brockley Road.

At about 15 years of age Jessie went into service working as a parlour maid for families in Cambridge and St. Ives, but at the outbreak of war in 1939 she volunteered for war work at Papworth Industries and became a machinist making parachutes, bomber covers and other vital items for the war.

She had known Ken more or less all her life, having been a friend of his sisters as a small child and in 1945 she and Ken were married and had more than 60 years together when he died

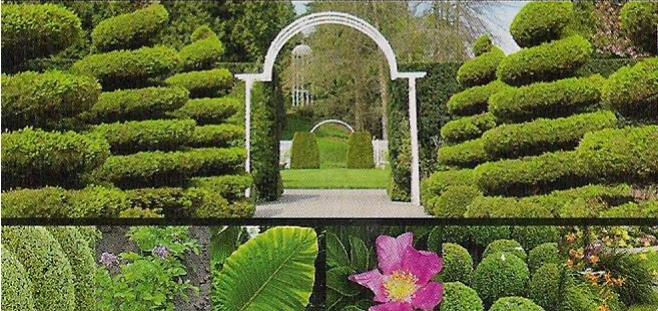
in 2006. They lived all their married life in Elsworth, firstly in Brook Street, where they had two sons, John and Richard, and later in Fardell's Lane, where, always a keen gardener, she spent many happy hours with Ken. She spent her last few years in Holsworthy Care Home and died just two weeks off her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday.

It was fitting that Jessie should be buried at Elsworth for she had lived so many years of her life in the village where the Throssell family had played such a prominent role. Not many years back they owned practically all the houses on the west side of Brook Street and J.T. Throssell had acted as clerk to village council for some 50 years without seeking reimbursement.

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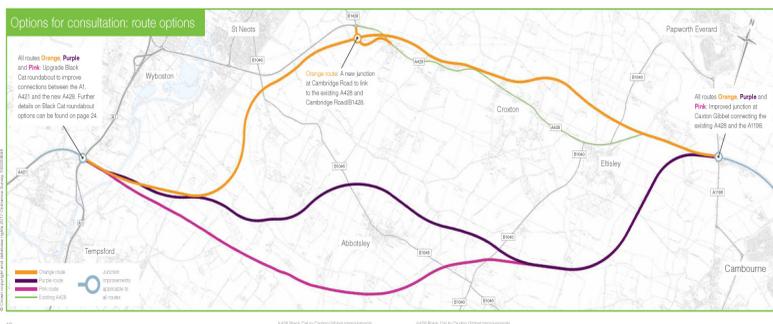


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## A428 IMPROVEMENT SCHEME



### MAP SHOWING ALTERNATIVE ROUTES

Now that the public consultations regarding an improved A428 scheme have been completed, it would seem that at last we may look forward to a commitment to action to provide a dual-carriageway between the Caxton Gibbet and the A1.

Of particular relevance to Elsworth are [a] the impact on the major traffic bottleneck at the Caxton Gibbet and [b] the subsequent consequences on local road connections. Considerations such as these are examples of the issues on which local views were sought.

The fact that the proposed dual-carriageway improvement is designated as an “expressway” throws light on both [a] and [b] above. Regarding [a], the troublesome A1198 junction with the A428, there should be a marked improvement as entry and exit would be as for a motorway by virtue of the classification of the A428 as an “expressway”, with the A1198 going over or under the A428. However more traffic is likely on the A1198. On two of the three routes submitted for consultation, the Caxton

Gibbet is the only exit/entry point between it and the A1 at the Black Cat roundabout where the A421 branches westwards south of Bedford.

Regarding local communications, it is noteworthy that the proposed improved duelled A428 options west of the Caxton Gibbet all avoid the present line of the existing road, save a short section east of Eltisley. The present local pattern of roads is therefore well preserved to serve the local communities while allowing the ever increasing east-west road traffic to pass through hopefully unimpeded.

What has been written above is factual and worthy of note. What follows are comments and must be read as such. The scheme would certainly seem to have much to offer. But - and this word warrants emphasis - it would seem essential for planners to extend their vision further eastwards to link the improved road with the south-bound M11. By abruptly ending the proposed improvements at the Caxton Gibbet no attention has been given to the present vehicle snarl-up of A428 traffic on entry into Cambridge - and this on a scheme which is to be part of the Oxford-Cambridge much heralded improvement. No doubt extra funding would be required. Heidi Allen has suggested that funding could be found by dipping into the money which comes with the acceptance of an additional local government factor in the form of a mayor for our region. The money was clearly an incentive [perhaps a stronger word could be used] which swayed acceptance. Let us hope Heidi will be successful - it would seem an excellent use of the money.

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## **ELSWORTH SPORTS CLUB**

The local football season has now drawn to a close, but unfortunately Elsworth was once again unable to field a team. However, as will have been seen, the facilities have been used by Swavesey Spartans Girls' teams. If anyone is interested in starting a new team please contact either Bill Knibbs, on 01954 267266, Anthony Taylor on 01954 268042 or myself 01954 267534.

The table tennis season finished also in April with mixed success for Elsworth teams - in the Cambridge League Elsworth I finished runners-up in Division 2 and will be promoted to the 1<sup>st</sup> Division, which will bring strong opposition. Elsworth 2 finished in 6<sup>th</sup> place of the 12 twelve teams in Division 3.

In the Ely League, Elsworth 1 finished 4<sup>th</sup> of nine teams in Division 1; Elsworth 2 finished 3<sup>rd</sup> of nine teams in Division 2, just missing promotion by three points, with Elsworth 3 finishing in 8<sup>th</sup> position in the same division and expect to be relegated.

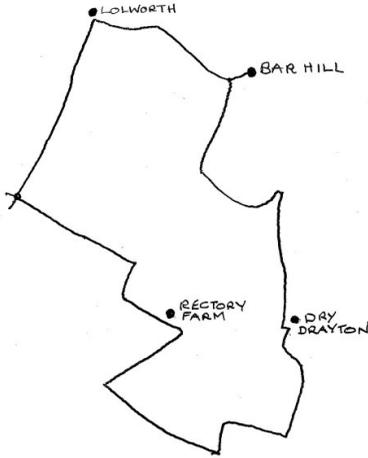
In the Ely League Handicap Plate, Elsworth 1 won the competition for the second year running, beating Fulbourn 1 in the final 5 – 0, the match being much closer than the score suggests. Elsworth 2 decided not to enter the competition and Elsworth 3 lost in the second round to Fulbourn 1.

Table tennis club evenings are arranged during the summer and during the playing season when there are no matches. Anyone interested should contact Bill Knibbs on the number given above.

The cricket season starts for Elsworth this month, and after a good finish last year - third in their division - hoping for similar or even better results this year. The team will play in Cambs Junior League, Division 4 South, with matches on Saturdays and in the Business Houses League with mid-week evening matches. A few friendly matches will also be arranged and net practice is available on Thursday evenings. Any prospective new players should contact either Bill Knibbs or Anthony Taylor on the numbers given above.

As for other activities, snooker is played in the pavilion on Monday mornings, and monthly whist drives are held on Friday evenings commencing at 7.30. Carpet bowls, previously played on Wednesday afternoons, continues to remain suspended due to lack of players.

Roger Fensom [tel. 01954 267534]



## ELSWORTH WALKING GROUP

The Elsworth Walking Group (EWG) was originally started by Rita Backhouse with the inaugural walk held on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> October 1990. This walk started at The Drift at 10.30 am and was approximately 10 mile long. Walks now are usually approximately 5 miles in length and take about 2 to 2.5 hours. They are usually held on the second Sunday of the month starting at 10.00 a.m.

At present there are 15 members mostly from Elsworth or the surrounding villages. In previous years one or two members took it in turns to arrange the monthly walk. This year we are trying something different. There will be a mixture of member arranged walks and four unled walks. Three of these will be walks starting in the village, the exact route being determined on the day by people taking part. The fourth of these walks will be the December walk which will start in St Ives and follow the footpath to Houghton then across the meadow to Hemingford Abbots then back to St Ives.

A typical walk from last year was from Bar Hill – Lolworth – Rectory Farm - Dry Drayton - Bar Hill. Approximate distance was 5.5 miles.

In January we hold our AGM which is a very informal meeting where we decide which members will be responsible for each of the monthly walks, pay our subscription which at present is £2.00 per year. The remainder of the time is spent enjoying a glass of wine, food and chatting.

If you feel this may be of interest why not join us on one of our walks and see if this is something that you might enjoy.

For more information contact;

Isobel Farrow Tel. 01954 267472

Lyn or Tom Hogan Tel. 01954267166

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## **ELSWORTH, KNAPWELL AND CONINGTON WOMEN'S INSTITUTE**

By tradition we do not have a speaker at our December meeting but enjoy instead a Christmas party. We have a meal, sing carols and there is 'home grown' entertainment by members.

The January speaker's 'Accent on the Positive' was a pointer to self-confidence, and in February Hilary Richard's talk was on 'The History of Addenbrookes Hospital from the admission of the first patients in 1766 in the Trumpington Street building [Old Addenbrookes] through to the present building in Hills Road, the first part of which was officially opened by the Queen in 1962. Hilary drew our attention to internal signs featuring lettering by David Kindersley engraved on Welsh slate.

In March we had our annual business meeting, and in April Joanna Studdert's talk was about the charity 'Home Start' which supports families which are having problems in life.

Looking ahead, on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> June the W.I. will be holding a coffee morning - open to all from 10am to 12 noon in the Sports Pavilion. As well as coffee and cakes there will be several stalls, notably books, cakes for sale and fancy goods. We hope to see you there!

Isobel Farrow - telephone 01954 267472

## THE JUBILEE CLUB

On the first Thursday of most months we meet in Elsworth School from 2.30 to 4.30 pm and welcome anybody who would like to meet others of the local villages, have a chat, listen to a speaker [we cover many subjects] and then enjoy refreshments and a raffle.

Our coach trips this year take place on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> June to Blenheim Palace and on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> July to Southwold. Both leave Elsworth [The Poacher] at 9.00 am and leave the respective places at 4.30 pm. You don't have to be a member to book a seat! We will be pleased to welcome you whenever you feel like joining us.

For more information, please contact Betty

Betty Simcock - telephone 01954 267470

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