

# The Elsworth Chronicle



*Holy Trinity Church*

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## ELSWORTH CHRONICLE

[Established 1990]

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## Obituary

### LIZZIE EAYRS



**22<sup>nd</sup> November 1953 - 9<sup>th</sup> January 2018**

With the passing of Lizzie Eayrs Elsworth has lost a selfless, unobtrusive worker who devoted many years in improving the landscape of our parish. Year after year she propagated trees in her garden which were destined for placement on the roadsides leading out of the village. We now enjoy their presence as they help to bring peace, beauty and interest on the routeways as they cut through the flattish surrounding fields.

Lizzie and Richard came to Elsworth in 1985 when they purchased Brock Cottage in Brockley Road. From here they master-minded their organic game rearing venture which came into being in 1987 with focus initially on breeding partridges. Since 2001, three helpers have been employed during the rearing season.

Prior to coming to Elsworth, Lizzie had experienced a varied and

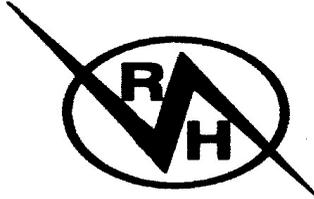
interesting life. She was born and raised on a farm in Leighton Bromswold, a parish a few miles west of Huntingdon, and educated at local primary schools before being enrolled at Cheltenham Ladies College. On leaving school she worked for two years in the drawing office of Carter Jonas and attended Cambridge Technical College on day-release to work for an O.N.D.

So far her life was quite conventional. September 1974 saw Lizzie in Australia and a marked change in the life-style. She had journeyed there for a wedding of a friend, which had been aborted by the time she arrived. Lizzie stayed on and worked in restaurants, as a hotel receptionist and as a 'Girl Friday', doing household chores for families.

Lizzie returned to England in the summer of 1976 and was enrolled by her parents at a London finishing school. Lizzie remarked "One final time to make me a lady." Some eight years later [1984] she met Richard, and after twelve months they moved to Elsworth. They had thirty three happy years together.

The diagnosis of cancer was a shock. Throughout the terminal period Lizzie showed great courage - those, not in the know, meeting her would not suspect her condition, for she was so cheerful and matter of fact. Her thoughts turned outwards, as witnessed from her words written a little before her funeral warmly expressing her gratitude to family and friends who had supported her at that difficult time.

In the first paragraph above, mention was made of the many trees planted by Lizzie in the parish. To-day, travellers will notice also many yellow markers by saplings indicating to those about to cut back the verge vegetation the presence of young trees. These were put in place by Lizzie and are an appropriate memorial to one who gave so much. It is to be hoped the markers will remain after the saplings have become mature so as to provide a lasting tribute and memorial.



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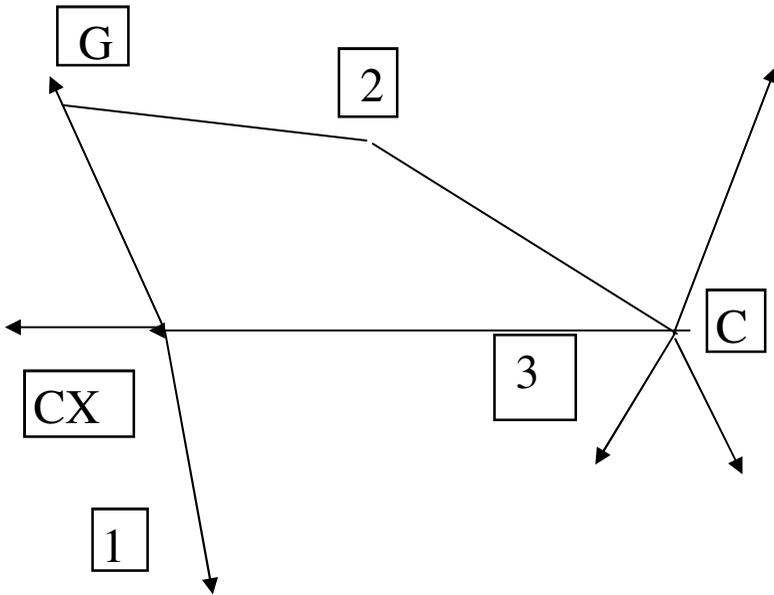
## **IMPORTANT ROUTEWAYS IN OUR AREA OVER THE AGES**

At one time in the not too distant past, people would venture out in their cars for the enjoyment of a peaceful few hours on our local roads. Not now it seems, with the ever increasing numbers of vehicles competing for limited space and the ever-present burden associated with the grinding out of the new A.14, and soon the upgrading of the A.428.

This widespread road-building activity will doubtless be a boon when eventually completed. Interestingly, the pattern of the new routes on the landscape will not be dissimilar to what it was in Roman times. Then, the Roman fort at Cambridge [later the town] was linked to the Roman fort at Godmanchester [also, of course, to become a town] along the edge of the Fen, much the same route as the present A14, although a section of the new road will follow a slightly more southerly path. And there was a Roman road along the ridgeway occupied in part by the modern A.428.

The pattern set by the Roman roads continued over the centuries. Yet to be mentioned, in the west of our region, Ermine Street was the Roman artery to the north, essentially for its army but increasingly for trade. With the passage of time, deterioration of these fine roads set in, but they remained of great importance. Ermine Street was to become The Old North Road and was to attract at nearby Caxton coaching inns from at least the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Interestingly, here, the village migrated to the roadside from its early centre by the parish church, possibly initially as early as the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

Continued over



**Key:**

- 1 Ermine Street  
(Present A1198)
- 2 Present A14
- 3 Present A428
- C Cambridge
- CX Caxton
- G Godmanchester

**LOCAL ROMAN ROADS**

These roads, so well constructed by the Romans, suffered from neglect over the centuries, particularly due to lack of attention to their foundations. A common means of repair was to heap stones on to the surface, placing more in the centre to improve drainage, but the camber was soon worn down by wheeled traffic and torn into ruts. Today in the 21<sup>st</sup> century we complain endlessly about the state of our roads. So too, in the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century - Arthur Young, the noted agricultural and travel writer, was to complain “that the only mending it in places receives is the tumbling in some loose stones, which serve no other purpose but jolting a carriage in the most intolerable manner”.

To seek corroboration of Young’s words, reference was made to William Cobbett of ‘Rural Rides’ fame [1830]. However, Cobbett’s attention was not on the condition of the underlying road but on the rural landscape at the side. Although a slight digression, his impression of the countryside near Caxton as he travelled along the Great North Road might be of interest.

“The land just about here does seem to be really bad. The face of the country is naked. The few scrubbed trees that now and then meet the eye, and even the quick-sets, are covered with a yellow moss. All is bleak and comfortless; and, just on the most dreary part of this most dreary scene, stands almost opportunely, ‘Caxton Gibbet’ tendering its friendly one arm to the passers-by”.

To be fair to the landscape, it should perhaps be mentioned that Cobbett was a keen advocate of the enclosure of common lands, and the scene he was describing had not lost its common lands at the time of his journey, and consequently lacked hedgerows.

Turnpike roads were, of course, a characteristic of 18<sup>th</sup> century

principal routeways, with users having to pay a toll for using the road. In our region the road linking Cambridge to Huntingdon; the ridgeway route due west from Cambridge; and The Old North Road were all managed in this way. Indeed, the Old North Road was the first to be so authorised in the country in 1663. Prior to this innovation, the good parishioners of Elsworth probably felt grateful that a principal route did not pass into their boundary, for if it had done so they would have had to pay for maintenance of that stretch of the road.

Although the lines of our principal roads may be traced back to Roman times, one, that of the present A428, is of even greater antiquity, it being important in pre-historic times. Here the ridge provided for a routeway linking the River Cam with the River Ouse avoiding the difficulty of crossing the minor river valleys of the adjacent lower land.

The relative importance of the major routeways in this area has varied over the centuries. As noted, in pre-historic times the ridgeway was pre-eminent; from the Roman period Ermine Street became ascendant and remained so over many centuries. Today, though, the latter has steadily lost its importance in our area, with the main London road to the north being a little to the west, the line of the A1. In recent years declining importance has been marked by its change of numbering from A14 to the present A1190.

What of the future? It would seem Ermine Street/Old North Road will not regain its former importance. The present A14, now pre-eminent, will attract even more traffic with the completion of the scheme now in hand as, too, will

the present A428 when it becomes an artery of the Cambridge/Oxford corridor. The network of major routeways has remained, then, constant over so many centuries but the relative importance of the major roads has not remained constant. It is interesting that the pre-historic routeway along the ridgeway to the south of our parish has emerged again to a prominent position.

AWF

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## Obituary

### **RICHARD KENNETH THROSSELL**



**9<sup>th</sup> July 1952 - 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017**

A service celebrating the life of Richard was held on the 19<sup>th</sup> January at Holy Trinity Church.

Although Richard and his family had moved to Wales in recent years, he was a true Elsworthian, having been born and bred in the village - it was here in Elsworth that he attended school and worked on leaving. In 1980 he married Carla, from which union Victoria and Alice were born. They established their home initially at Fenstanton and were to move to Needingworth before returning to Elsworth in the 1990s.

Richard was a skilled wood-joiner, learning his trade from his father

and at day-release classes. For many years he worked in the family firm, but subsequently was to set up business on his own account. He was in great demand. Brook Street was his home for many years. He was brought up at No.6 and later was to move to No.16, which he converted to a house from the long established workshop on that site. It was on the land behind that Carla, Richard's wife, ran a poultry farm. In 2011 Richard, Carla and family moved to South Wales, where Richard was to use his skills renovating houses.

Fishing was a hobby which brought Richard much enjoyment. Another great joy in his later years was his grandson Harry. They would spend many happy hours together.

Richard's departure from Elsworth brought to an end an epoch, for the family had for many years been prominent in the village. At one time practically all the houses on the western side of Brook Street were owned by members of the family. It was fitting that Richard should be buried in the church-yard here along with so many of the family.

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## Obituary

### JULIE ANN LAWS



**1<sup>st</sup> November 1942 - 8<sup>th</sup> February 2018**

Julie and David come to live in Elsworth in 1972 and set up home in Cotterell's Lane on a delightfully situated site adjacent to the brook, but sufficiently high above it to be free of the fear of flooding. They had come to the village from Comberton, although both were originally from Cambridge.

Once settled in, Julie became very much involved with the young children in our area. She ran a playschool at Boxworth, was Tawny Owl in the Elsworth Brownie Pack and at one time was a dinner lady at Elsworth Primary School. And at home, her garden was often characterised by the sounds of happy children from other homes as they played with Julie and David's two girls, Suzie and Caroline. Life in Elsworth clearly suited Julie. She had many friends and was very much involved with village life - making costumes for the school plays; involvement with school fetes; school sports; attending the village show; membership of the W.I. and the Jubilee Club.

When she was 45, Julie was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. She accepted MS and never wished to talk of it, saying, with a smile, 'I'm all right' when asked about her health by people she would meet in the village. However, being wheel-chair bound, with the loss of independence must have been hard for her. The acquisition of an electric buggy for use on days out gave her joy and she delighted in driving at some speed.

At the service to celebrate Julie's life, daughter Suzie paid tribute to her mother on behalf of the family. She concluded her address by referring to the many tributes and messages of love that had been received, characterised by the one quoted here:

"She was a kind, funny and lovely lady who made everyone smile when she was around. Your Mum was a very special lady who will be missed by all who knew her."

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## **ELSWORTH WALKING GROUP**

The walks usually start in a location within 30 minutes driving time of Elsworth. Walks are generally easy going and about 5 to 6 miles in length. If you feel it is something that may be of interest, why not join us on one of them. For more details contact:

Lyn or Tom Hogan Tel. 01954 267166

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## **THE BIRDS AND THE BEES AT HOPE FARM**

Spring is here at the RSPB Hope Farm in Knapwell. The birds, bees and butterflies are hard at work from dawn until dusk, our contractors are tirelessly getting the last of the spring crops drilled despite the difficult, wet conditions, and our wildlife monitoring team are out from the early hours to monitor what wildlife is thriving here.

The Starling nest boxes are busy, although the cold weather made for a slow start. Having the pockets of grassland around the farm, starling-specific nest boxes and plenty of habitat to keep insect food in abundance means that we can hope for the successful fledging of chicks in the next month or so with good weather.

We have also found two lapwing nests and are thankful to say that both clutches have hatched. It is a rare sight to see a lapwing breeding on the farm, so we are thrilled to have them back here.

We are proud of hosting such a diversity and abundance of birds, but we are not the only people looking after wildlife on farmland. Many farmers across the county were commended this month at the Red List Revival Awards for the abundance of endangered birds on their own farms. We managed to achieve a diversity of birds that left us standing within the top 1% range for densities of farmland birds of Conservation Concern across the whole of the UK within the Life on Land benchmark. We're also sitting within the top 1% density for grey partridge and corn bunting, the top 10% density for corn bunting, lapwing, yellow wagtail and yellowhammer, and the top 50% density for starlings.

We work hard to look after wildlife at Hope Farm, but we are also working to support new sustainable farming practices through research. Cover crops, grown overwinter and destroyed in the spring before planting a harvested crop, and compost fertilisers, using processed rich organic matter originating from

your green bin, are thought to improve soil conditions for farming.

At Hope Farm, we are finding out how useful they are as habitats for birds and invertebrates, as well as looking at their claimed benefits for agronomical practices, in collaboration with Agrii. We are running a field-scale trial between 2015 and 2025, to analyse the soil's microbial diversity, carbon, nitrogen, crop yield, weed burden, and vegetation structure.



The count of our winter bird surveys at Hope Farm in one of the three fields that we are using for our experiment. Each dot represents a bird and each shaded dot a different species. Hashed lines represent where the cover crop is grown and the shaded area where compost was spread.

There is a lot more going on at the farm than can be explained in an article. However, we are holding an Open Farm Sunday in June so that people can come and visit us and see

what we do first hand. We are going to be celebrating everything farming and wildlife under the LEAF nationwide event, with lots of fun for everyone to enjoy. Tractor rides will tour around the farm, as well as having farm machinery on display, sheep shearing and wool spinning demonstrations, chicks with hopeful eggs hatching, arts and crafts, farmland bug hunts and pond dipping and more. This is a free event for anybody who wishes to attend, so we really hope to see you there.

**Georgina Bray**

Hope Farm's Assistant Farm Manager



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## **ELSWORTH, KNAPWELL AND CONINGTON W.I.**

Christmas 2017 is long gone but happy memories remain of our Christmas party in December at the George and Dragon. Since then we have had some very interesting meetings, the flavour of which may be gleaned from the two noted below as examples.

In January our speaker spoke of The History of Belly Dancing. There was a demonstration of dance routines and presentation of the elaborate costumes which may differ from country to country. Our worthy President bravely volunteered to ‘have a go’ and was much applauded by her audience.

A more serious note was struck in April when we considered possible loneliness in old age. Our speaker, Madeleine Jones, of the local charity “VIP Companionship”, which focuses in particular on rural areas, spoke of this increasing problem as people live longer, family members now more likely to move away and divorce being more common. The charity makes personal contact with people who get in touch, and will organise outings in line with their interests such as to the theatre, garden centres, football matches, etc. Madeleine talked about the volunteers and how they tried to make sure each person was with someone they trusted and liked.

There are many more interesting meetings to come, including ‘The Homes of William Morris’; ‘The Remarkable Story of Heffers’; and an evening focussing on puppets. We meet each month, apart from August, on the second Wednesday at 7.30 pm in Elsworth School.

Isobel Farrow  
01954 267472

## **JUBILEE CLUB**

A good start was made to the year with our New Year Lunch at the George and Dragon in January, followed in February and March with speakers entertaining and informing us on:

“The Shop-girls Life in the Elegant Ladies Department Store ‘Hayworths’ in Cambridge from 1940 to 1960.”

“A Fenland Garden from Scratch.”

In April we had an hour of Flanders and Swan songs.

We meet most months on the first Thursday at 2.30pm in Elsworth School Hall. After our entertainment we have refreshments, a raffle and a good chat!

Our trips this year will be to:

Lincoln on the 31<sup>st</sup> May

Cromer on the 26<sup>th</sup> July

The coach for both excursions will leave Elsworth at 9 am, with the return journey starting at 4.30 pm.

For further information, please contact Betty on 01954 267470.

Betty Simcock

## **ELSWORTH SPORTS CLUB**

The football season has once again come and gone, but as in the previous few seasons Elsworth has not been able to field a team. If anyone is interested in forming one for next season please contact either Bill Knibbs on 01954 267266, Anthony Taylor on 01954 268042 or myself. However the facilities have been used on Saturday mornings by Swavesey Spartans teams.

The local table-tennis season has just finished. In the Cambridge League, Elsworth 1 finished 9<sup>th</sup> in Division 1, having been promoted last season. Elsworth 2 finished 7<sup>th</sup> in Division 3, although only a few points separated four teams. In the Ely League, Elsworth 1 finished 4<sup>th</sup> in Division 1 and reached the semi-final of the Handicap Cup, losing to Soham the eventual winners of the trophy. Elsworth 2 again finished third in Division 2 and reached the quarter-final of the Handicap Plate. Elsworth 3 finished 4<sup>th</sup> in Division 3 and did not compete in the Handicap competitions.

Club table-tennis evenings are arranged both during the summer and the playing season and anyone interested should contact Bill Knibbs on the number above.

The cricket season starts this month, with Elsworth playing in the Cambs Junior League Division 5 West. Matches are played on Saturday afternoons and the team also competes in the Business Houses League with matches being played on mid-week evenings. Any prospective new players should contact the captain Craig Miller on 07730 212219 or Bill Knibbs or Anthony Taylor.

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, remains suspended due to lack of players.

Roger Fensom [Tel.01954 267534]

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