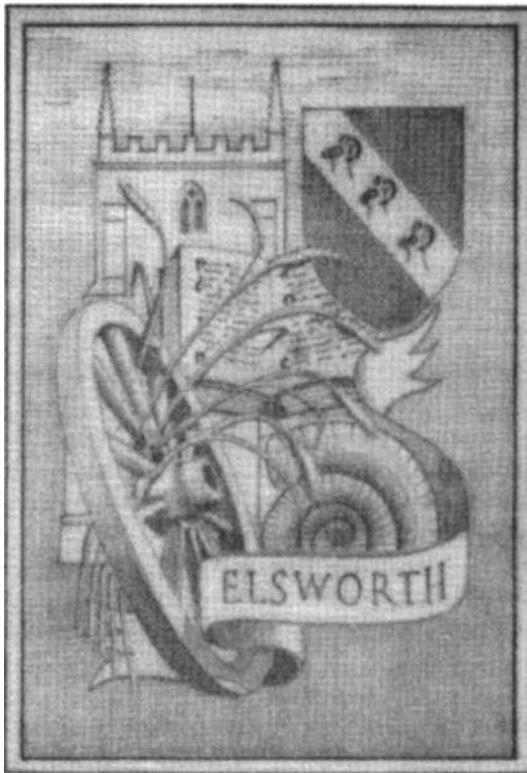


The  
Elsworth Chronicle



**No. 2**

**June 1991**

# The Elsworth Chronicle

The first magazine would seem to have been well received and all copies available for sale were purchased. I am most grateful to Rosemary Palmer and Brian Perry for providing sales outlets in their shops and to the various society officials who assisted distribution. To all contributors a special "Thank you".

Contributions to the next magazine are now required. Articles for inclusion should be sent to "The Old Rectory". If you are reluctant to write but nevertheless have ideas which might be of interest in the village, please let Alan Farrow (Elsworth 472) know so that notes might be developed by means of a chat - interview sounds too grand a word!

A.W.F.

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## ROBIN HUGHES-PARRY & ASSOCIATES

VETERINARY SURGEONS

34 HIGH STREET  
LONGSTANTON  
CRAFTS HILL (0954) 780027

66 HIGH STREET  
COTTENHAM  
COTTENHAM (0954) 52122



SURGERY HOURS (by appointment)

### LONGSTANTON

Mon. - Sat. 8.30 - 10.30 a.m.  
Mon. - Fri. 5.00 - 7.00 p.m.

### COTTENHAM

Mon. - Fri. 9.00 - 10.30 a.m.  
Mon., Tues., Wed., Fri. 4.30 - 6.30 p.m.  
Saturday 9.00 - 11.00 a.m.



*VISITS AND OTHER TIMES BY ARRANGEMENT*

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**24 HOUR EMERGENCY SERVICE**

Stockists of Iams and Eukanuba petfoods

## B.E.M. FOR DON FEW



Elsworth has reason to be proud of Don Few of 3 Church Lane. On the 23rd March he was awarded the British Empire Medal by the Lord Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire for his services over 38 years to former war prisoners of the Japanese as the Welfare Officer and Treasurer of the Cambridge Yasume Club. Don was a founder member of the club in 1953 and is the East Anglian representative on the National Federation of Far East Prison of War Camps and Associations.

Don spent three and a half years in the Far East during the Second World War. As a prisoner of war he worked on the Burma-Siam railway - portrayed in the film 'Bridge over the River Kwai' - and on the construction of the even more horrendous Merguie Road on the Burma-Thailand border.

The Cambridge Yasume Club (it is the Japanese word for rest, apparently) has some 200 members; it not only provides fellowship at its regular meetings but is actively involved in looking after its less fortunate members as well as 104 widows of former Japanese prisoners of war.

Don as also been actively involved in football administration since demobilisation and for nearly 10 years he was Chairman of Cambridge City Football Club, retiring from that post only some five years ago. As Chairman he was actively involved in the commercial development of the club's land off the Milton Road. Today, though focus is on the award of the B.E.M. Many congratulations Don.

# HOLY TRINITY CHURCH



Much effort and skill by a small dedicated group has given the church clock its voice back again. So many people have expressed their delight. Our thanks are due to those who undertook the work, to those who raised money for the clock and tower appeal and to all who contributed to the fund.

The period when structural repairs necessitated the silencing of all the church bells served to make many realise how much they enjoyed, but took for granted, the sound which called people to church on Sundays and rejoiced with them on the occasions of village weddings. These same bells we now hear were summoning villagers up the hill at the time when the American colonies won their freedom to become the United States of America. Back further in time, two of the present bells were ringing in 1665 at the time of the Great Plague of London, and yet further back during the Civil War at Oliver Cromwell's time those same two bells were tolling. One, in fact, was even ringing out over Elsworth in the year of Shakespeare's death.

The church has four bells, the dates of three of which are known - 1616, 1628 and 1675. The first two are operative now and the other two will be commissioned again before very long. It is worth recalling that recent repair work on a crack in the 1628 bell now allows this bell to ring out in a manner that had not been possible for some 150 years.

## LOCAL ELECTIONS

Seventeen candidates contested nine seats at the election for parish councillors on May 2nd. The 57% poll brought five new members on to the Council. Congratulations are extended to Terry Stevens, who topped the poll with 153 votes.

Those elected, in alphabetical order are: M. Broughton, R. Empson, A. Farrow, R. Grange\*, V. Palmer\*, Mrs. P. Poole, T. Stevens\*, J. Thurley\*, Mrs. S. Warboys. (The asterisks denote membership of the last Council).

Ken Collett polled 579 votes as against 229 of Mrs. Shona Johnstone, the Conservative candidate, at the election for our District Councillor. Ken, who stands as an independent, has represented Elsworth on the South Cambridgeshire Council for some 20 years, holding in that time some most influential offices.

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

National Government seems to be coming to the conclusion that Local Government needs another "shaking up", or is the term "a re-organisation"? Meanwhile, District Councils continue to try to serve the community.

District Councils have been given new responsibilities under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to ensure that all land in their direct control which is open to the air and to which the public has access is kept clear of litter and refuse, so far as is practicable.. There is a wide-ranging code of practice for the implementation of this act, details of which can be obtained from the Chief Environmental Health Officer at South Cambs. Hall.

The Council continues to grant aid the dual use of Village College facilities; Linton Village College is the latest to submit a scheme for support and has been accepted. The Country Park at Milton continues to be developed, with the emphasis on landscaping, entailing much earth moving and tree planting. A Ranger is soon to be engaged to manage the Park and encourage public use of the site. Future plans envisage an information centre.

The S.C.D.C. local plan continues its course through the public enquiry process. Comments on individual villages are currently being heard, Elsworth being commented on in May.

At the time of writing, there is still no decision regarding the outcome of the public enquiry into the new village on the A45.

K.C. Collett

## **BRIDGE CIRCLE**

Are you interested in playing bridge? It is hoped to set up a bridge circle in Elsworth if there is sufficient interest. People, even those only vaguely interested, should contact Beryl and Peter Andrews on Elsworth 518. If you would like to learn to play, a beginners group could also be formed if there is sufficient demand. Make contact as soon as possible.

## SCHOLARS AND TEACHERS – 1847 -1875

Pity the despairing Schoolmistress who wrote in her Log Book "Still find it a difficult matter to make II Class understand the rule of simple subtraction". She was Miss Lucy Groble and the entry was made in 1873 after she had been in charge of Elsworth National School for a year. She was in a line of struggling teachers who had come and gone with startling rapidity since the opening of the School in 1847. Progress in those first twenty-five years had been blocked by lack of funds, the incompetence of untrained teachers, poor discipline and deteriorating premises. The reports of the Inspectors were severe, and it is hardly surprising that the castigated teachers resigned after their visits.

The school was founded by the National Society for the Education of the Poor. This was a Church of England charity concerned with the setting up of voluntary schools all over the country. The Rector, the Reverend Philip Bagge, gave the land at the bottom of The Causeway in Brook Street, and he became the sole Manager and Correspondent. The building (now a private house) was erected by subscription, aided by grants of £187 from the Privy Council, £55 from the National Society, £70 from the Cambridge Board of Education and £10 from Queen Adelaide, the widow of William IV. Fees were charged weekly at the rate of 6d for each child if more than two in the family attended. (Labourers' wages at that time were 9s to 15s for a 70-hour week.) Parents often refused to pay the fee and the child was withdrawn from school, to be readmitted when the money came in.

There were two classrooms and a house adjoining for the Teacher. On the first day the number on Roll was 114. The staff consisted of the Mistress; a Pupil Teacher, who received instruction from the Mistress; and a Monitor, who was a salaried older pupil appointed to teach the younger ones. (This was a favoured system because of the low cost.) Children were admitted from two years of age, no doubt to relieve the pressure of the ever growing family in the home, but so great were the infant numbers in the school that the Inspector reported in 1864 that "the work of the Teacher is very heavy owing to the tender age of almost half the children". The school leaving age was between 9 and 10 years, when both boys and girls were considered old enough to work in the fields.

In 1853 John Dobson succeeded Philip Bagge as Rector of Elsworth and took over the management of the school. A revised code of regulations was introduced in 1862 which stated that "Principal Teachers must daily make in the Log Book the briefest entry which will suffice to specify either ordinary progress or whatever other fact concerning the school or its Teachers". Some of the entries are very brief, "progress as usual" or even "p a u", but other enable us to piece together a colourful patchwork of the somewhat turbulent school life in the village in the mid 19th century.

## **SCHOLARS AND TEACHERS (Continued)**

Attendance figures fluctuated wildly from a 101 high down to a 16 low depending on the weather, the time of year, illness and whatever was going on in the village:

**May 20th 1864** - very few children present - only three in 2nd class. The remainder gone to procure wheat for the "Feast".

**June 2nd, 1864** - attendance rather thin because of visit of the Princess of Cambridge.

**July 6th 1864** - attendance rather thin on account of a cricket match in the village

**October 12th 1868** - many of the children going to St. Ives Fair.

Sometimes the school work was interrupted by the demands of the community on the building, and holidays were proclaimed:

**May 3rd 1865** - Holiday all day in order that a club might hold a meeting in the School.

**July 21st 1873** - School closed for three days, the room being required for the tea provided for the accommodation of visitors to the Village Bazaar in aid of Church funds.

The school was closed each year for six weeks for the harvest, but many children were already in the fields before the official end of term, and were still working in them at the beginning of the next. When they did return the Teacher sighed:

**September 23rd 1873** - The children require great attention and work to regain what they have forgotten during the holidays.

There were three basic subjects in the curriculum - reading, writing and arithmetic. Writing was on slates but on very first day Miss Jones, the new Mistress, reported:

**January 11th, 1864** - First Class wrote on paper for first time.

Two years later another new Mistress, Miss Hogben (who stayed only seven months) introduced craft for the girls:

**May 14th, 1866** - All the girls in the first three classes taught needlework in the afternoon.

## **SCHOLARS AND TEACHERS (continued)**

A choir was started in January 1871 by another new Mistress, Miss Christina Gow, who took the children up to the church to practice. But the Inspector was more concerned with the basics, and after his annual February visit he wrote: "There is a great deal to be done in this School. The discipline is not what it ought to be and the work is inaccurately done by the children".

The behaviour in the classroom was rough and unruly and it sometimes led to accidents:

**June 29th 1864** - William Childerley hurt by falling from the First group of desks into the Second Class.

There was another occasion when the disturbance was more violent and the consequences startling:

**January 13th, 1865**- A disagreement between two boys I. Wilderspin and F. Bellamy. The father of the former rushed into school and flogged Bellamy, who has been absent from school the remainder of the day and also on the following Monday.

There is only one other record of flogging, this time by the Mistress, Miss Lucy Groble herself:

**October 18th, 1873** - inflicted corporal punishment upon Anderson Wilderspin for showing a spirit of rebellion in the school and for general disobedience.

If a beating was rare, being kept in or sent home were common. Often enraged parents (usually the mother) confronted the Mistress and withdrew the defaulter from school:

**November 10th, 1863** - Margaret Papworth withdrawn because punished for bad behaviour by being kept in half an hour after school.

**November 23rd, 1873** - M. Papworth readmitted on her mother making an apology for withdrawing her, and promising to leave her entirely under my control.

**October 23rd, 1873** - Sent Minnie, Eliza and Martha Lovell home again from school, the mother having behaved in a very uncivil manner to the Mistress for having punished her child Minnie for inattention to lessons. The mother acknowledged herself wrong, they were readmitted.

## **SCHOLARS AND TEACHERS (continued)**

**February 11th, 1874** - Leonard Thomas absented himself from school part of the morning to go sliding on the village brook. Sent for him but he would not come. When at last he came sent him home.

Corporal punishment, which did not appear to provoke parents, was another frequently used weapon:

**March 6th 1873** - Kept whole school in for half an hour after 12 o'clock was a punishment for general talking throughout the school and inattention to reading lesson.

**December 10th 1873** - Many of the children kept in for talking. Gave them a long writing lesson on slates as a punishment for same.

Amidst all the trials surrounding the teachers, who were clearly not up to their job, the sole Manager stood firmly in support. The Reverend John Dobson visited the school regularly, taught in the classroom (arithmetic in particular), pressed the founders for extra funds to appoint another apprentice and took charge of the school in emergencies, backed by his family:

**January 21st, 1868** - Mistress away all day through illness. School conducted by the Reverend J. Dobson, Miss Dobson and Pupil Teacher.

**January 23rd, 1868** - School conducted by the Reverend J. Dobson and Miss Dobson in the morning, and Mrs. Dobson and Miss H. Dobson in afternoon.

**September 23rd, 1872** - Miss Gow ceased to have charge of the School. School opened by Manager, assisted by uncertificated paid teacher, Catherine Bleet, the Pupil Teacher and Monitor.

Even Mr. Dobson, however, failed at times to stimulate the scholars and once blamed the hot summer:

**July 23rd, 1870** - The great heat of the weather seems to make the children listless.

He could be magnanimous. Three days after the 1871 inspection the Mistress writes:

**February 11th, 1871** - Reverend J.R. Dobson gave each child a penny.

The Education Act of 1870 made education compulsory for everyone between the ages of five and thirteen, and the meagre State grant to the National Schools was doubled. Slowly matters improved in Elsworth. On January 11th 1875 the first Headmaster, Mr. Henry Thomas Matthews, who was a well qualified teacher, took charge of the School. His first impressions were "the scholars are under very little control and given to much talking, especially the girls". Let that be the last word on these first twenty-five years.

**Betty Evans**

## **ELSWORTH JUBILEE CLUB**

The Jubilee Club hold their meetings at Elsworth School in the Hall on the first Thursday in the month at 2.45 p.m. during term time only. We now have a membership of 30, some coming from Boxworth, Connington and Knapwell as well as Elsworth.

In January we had a lunch at The Poacher, in February an illustrated talk on 'Boats and their Ports of Call', in March 'Forensic Science', in April 'Conservation and Farming in the Old-fashioned Way'. On May 2nd we went on a mystery tour, leaving The Poacher at 2.00 p.m.

Regarding future events, in June we have a cooking demonstration, in July Bingo and also on July 25th, we are having a day at Felixstowe when friends will be welcome to join us. Money raising efforts will be a coffee morning at the home of Mrs. Grange at 8 Brook Street on Thursday, June 20th at 10.30 - 12 noon. Everyone is very welcome to our meetings, so please do come along.

**Eileen Grange**

## **ELSWORTH SCHOOL FRIENDS ASSOCIATION**

The fund-raising work of ESFA, through its Committee, goes on throughout the year. Membership of the current Committee is drawn from several parishes and the Elsworth representatives are: David Nuttycombe (Chairman), Gill Habichi (Secretary), Sue Bufton, Pauline Goodwin and Martin Shrosbree.

For the current year, the Committee have agreed to continue funding:

1. The leasing cost of the School photocopier @ £130 per term.
2. A coach fund for some School trips @ £75 per term.

These base items cost £615 over a full year. In addition, a computer and some playground equipment will be purchased from fund-raising activities.

£800 profit has been raised from the sale of Christmas cards. That's over 6,500 cards sold! An amazing achievement. This money is being banked until later in the year and will enable the School to take advantage of another computer offer.

The Auction on the 16th March of household goods raised a further £700 which will be used for playground equipment. Peter Day, a professional auctioneer and former Elsworth resident, took the bids. The afternoon was both entertaining and profitable.

Our next event is a Barn Dance on Saturday, 20th July; further details will be circulated.

**David Nuttycombe**

## ELSWORTH NATIONAL WOMEN'S REGISTER

NWR started the year with a fascinating talk by Bernie McConnell, illustrated with slides he took while living on South Georgia studying elephant seals. Members who were unable to come to the meeting are hoping he will talk to us on another occasion. The next meeting took the form of a Greek evening, when everyone brought some delicious Greek food, which was accompanied by plenty of Greek wine and Greek music. In March, a member of St. John's Ambulance Brigade taught us (with the aid of Anatomic Annie) how to resuscitate and give heart massage. Everyone had a go at practising on Anatomic Annie, and a nameless member was used as a guinea pig to put in the recovery position. Unfortunately, she couldn't stop coughing and took a while to recover after being placed in a variety of positions!

Several new people have joined us since the beginning of the year, and we now have eighteen members. It would be nice to see the group grow even larger, and if anyone is interested, either ring Louise Maddison (347) or come along to one of our meetings.

- 18th June "Schooldays-were they the best days of your life? Would you send your children to the same schools you went to? Janet Hicks will lead a discussion. Bring your school photos.  
Venue: Joanna Gilbert - Elsworth 378
- 6th July Members summer BBQ - bring a salad or a dessert. Cost to be advised. Venue: Louise Maddison - Elsworth 347
- 13th Aug. Pub lunch for members and their families. Meet 12.30 p.m.  
Venue: White Swan, Connington.
- 10th Sept. A day in the life of a G.P. Dr. Bartlett will give us an insight into his work. Venue: Chris Roberts - Elsworth 489
- 25th Sept. NIMBY'S guide to radioactive waste. Lesley McConnell will present the facts. Venue: Marian Randerson - Elsworth 461
- 9th Oct. Programme planning meeting. Shirley Emmerson - 583  
Members meal out. Joanna Gilbert will advise of the venue
- 28th Oct. Oxfam evening. We will watch a video and have the opportunity to order goods in time for Christmas.  
Venue - Elly Peal - Yelling 048087 412

**All meetings start at 8.00 p.m. Subscriptions due June -£8.00**

## 90 YEARS IN ELSWORTH



Johnnie Desbrough is Elsworth's oldest inhabitant. When he was born 90 years ago in a cottage at the foot of The Drift, Elsworth was very much a small, somewhat self-contained village tucked deep in the countryside. To listen to Johnnie is to be taken back to another world, even though the form of the village on the map hasn't changed much since that time.

Johnnie kindly agreed to reminisce with the writer (AWF) and one of the stalwarts of the village, Joe Braybrook. Johnnie spoke of a village of five public houses, a clear brook which remained in being throughout the year, of a village where the lamp-lighter - one of the Throssell family - walked his rounds each evening, of the joys of the annual Feast Week, of life in a village where people looked to each other within Elsworth for so much of their needs.

To begin at the beginning. Johnnie was one of four children born to Sarah and Thomas. Shortly after his birth the family was to move to Spigot Lane to No. 8. The time came when he was to set up home for himself, and Johnnie moved into No. 3 Brook Street, a house clearly visible from where he now lives at 6 Smith Street. In those days the present detached house, which is now in the process of being renovated, consisted of three dwellings - one room up, one room down in the case of his home.

Brook Street was the heart of the village. In it were to be found three public houses within little more than a feather throw of each other - The Three Horseshoes, The Plough and The Dolphin; the post office - manned for many years by Miss Annie Throssell; a shop at 10 Brook Street; the bake house; and the village school which catered for children throughout their school life from the infants stage to the time when it came to leave to obtain a job.

For Johnnie the time to earn money came at 13 years when, like so many in the village, he obtained work on the land. At that time the largest landowners around the village were the Pamplin Brothers who farmed, it seems Lordship Farm, Rectory Farm, Pitdean Farm, Brockley Farm, Crows' Nest Farm among others and it was in their service that the young Desbrough joined the agricultural workforce. His early work was general, but with increasing mechanisation Johnnie specialised more and more on the mechanical side, a role he developed later when employed by the Davidson family.

## 90 YEARS IN ELSWORTH (continued)

When Johnnie was first on the land just before the First World War there was much comradeship, for, of course, many local men obtained their living in this way. And to the fields also came many women at certain times of the year - Johnnie tells of the occasions in the Autumn when there might be 100 people at a time working on a field dibbing Brussel sprouts.

An agricultural community had to be served by local craftsmen and between them Johnnie and Joe triggered off memories of blacksmiths, a carpenter, a tailor and a chimney sweep. There were also carriers, but more of them later.

Work in the early part of the century was generally more physically demanding than it is today. Nevertheless it is clear that there was surplus energy for the leisure hours. Sing-songs in the local public houses were popular and there was billiards for some in that section of the Manor House which served as the Conservative Club; for many of the younger men cricket and football was an absorbing interest. Johnnie recounts with glee matches against the neighbouring villages when the chief delight was to drive a four into a cow patt! So much for the men-folk. What of the women? Their lives seemed to be less raucous; certainly they wouldn't be seen in the public houses and it would seem their place - whether young or old, single or married - was in the home, knitting, sewing, cooking and baking. During the annual Feast Week things would have been a little different in that the women and children would join in the fun and games, but even so the public houses remained a male preserve. Feast Week was the climax of the summer. During that week there would be a fun-fair on the land where the gardens of the houses on the northern side of Cotterell's Lane are now located. In the evenings there would be cricket matches against neighbouring villages chiefly, and the feeling of celebration would spill over into the public houses. The Feast Week would end on the Saturday with a dance, most likely in the George and Dragon Club room, the room now used as a restaurant

It would be wrong to think of Johnnie when a young married man as one who went out constantly in the evenings while his wife stayed at home. After a day's work he could be found cutting hair, shaving, repairing bikes and even mending shoes.

During the course of our talk I asked Johnnie if any characters stood out in his mind. He and Joe agreed the village had been full of them. Thoughts of the carriers, though, made them chuckle most. There was Billy Wayman who took goods to Cambridge and St. Ives by horse and wagon.

## **90 YEARS IN ELSWORTH (continued)**

Billy's problem was that he was a late starter who wouldn't get up in the morning in spite of his wife's protestations. A delayed start invariably meant a late return and he could often be heard whistling late into the night on his homeward journey to Ivyfold in Broad End where he lived.

Apparently he was not the man to take items to St. Ives market - it could well be almost finished before he arrived! Sam Braybrook was another carrier of note, taking people and goods by horse and wagon to Cambridge on Saturdays and Wednesdays and St. Ives on Mondays. The roads in the first quarter of the century were, of course, peaceful, a fact which allowed two mail-cart carriers - Johnnie's Uncle Bob and Ruben Poulter - to follow distractions on their way to and from Cambridge. Apparently concealed on their wagon were shot guns which were used once out of the village and near to woods to procure unsuspecting long-tailed birds for the cooking pot!

Many today look longingly back to earlier times, and the eagerness of many to restore old buildings to their former style is perhaps a witness, at least in part, to this. Was the Elsworth of the early years of this century better than the present? On this Johnnie would not be drawn. "It was different", he said.

**A.W.F.**

## **ELSWORTH & DISTRICT SHOW**

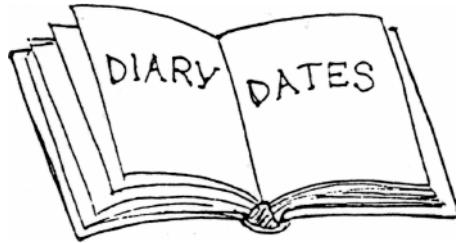
The Elsworth and District Show has been running for 34 years. Residents from Elsworth and District are invited to exhibit and show Garden Produce, Flowers, Home Baking, Home Brews, Arts and Crafts etc.

Challenge Cups and prizes are awarded. Attractions include Rural Crafts, Band, magician, treasure hunt, lots of games including a tug of war - fun for all the family.

The Show is to be held at Elsworth School on Saturday, 31st August, 1991.

**Susan Chapman  
(Chairperson)**

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



### JUNE

- 14th** Holy Trinity Church - Visit of Archdeacon  
**18th** N.W.R. - Schooldays - were they the best days of your life?  
Discussion - bring your school photographs - 8.00 p.m. 35 Smith St  
**20th** Jubilee Club-Coffee morning 10.30-12.00-8 Brook Street

### JULY

- 4th** Jubilee Club - Bingo - 2.45 p.m. - Elsworth School  
**6th** Holy Trinity Church - Church Fete - Elsworth School  
**6th** NWR - Members summer BBQ - Lordship Collage, Fardell's Lane  
**20th** ESFA - Barn Dance - Elsworth School  
**25th** Jubilee Club - Outing to Felixstowe

### AUGUST

- 13th** NWR - Pub lunch for members and their families  
12.30 White Swan, Connington  
**31st** Elsworth & District Show - Elsworth School

### SEPTEMBER

- 10th** NWR - "A day in the life of a G.P." Talk by Dr. Bartlett  
8.00 p.m. - 15 Paddock Row.  
**25th** NWR - NIMBY's guide to radioactive waste - 8.00 p.m.  
Elmbrook, Paddock Row