

# The Elsworth Chronicle



*Holy Trinity Church*

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# **ELSWORTH CHRONICLE**

[Established 1990]

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## STREET LIGHTING



### THE NEW AND THE OLD

There would seem to be strongly divergent views in the village regarding street lighting. On the one hand there is a body of opinion that would like to see the lighting in Elsworth markedly reduced, with some parishioners addressing the parish council back in September 2012 to seek support for a campaign to open up the night sky by reducing light pollution due to street lighting. At the other end of the spectrum, some parishioners welcome street lighting as a deterrent to burglars and as a means of avoiding physical hazards when venturing out. Where do you stand?

Whether we seek darkness or light, the County Council is to impose on us a reduction of 16 light standards in the village, cuts which must be made in our residential lanes, not the main highway of Boxworth Road - Smith Street. Some might remember that these cuts were to be imposed earlier this year, but were subsequently postponed until early 2014 - February/March. It might well be asked what prompted this scheme - the initiative it seems was from H.M. Government in order to save electricity, and the local authorities have been told what percentage cuts they will have to make.

Suggestions have been made as to where street standards should be removed and these are noted below. However, it is possible for amendments to

be made providing the required reduction of 16 lights overall is made. Thus if you live in a lane in which you feel there is too much street lighting but is not noted in the suggested list of cuts, the light column in question could be added to the list of possibles. If you feel the lighting where you live is inadequate, or would be if reductions were to be made, it is important that your view is heard.

In the residential lanes, those light columns not culled will be examined and any not in good condition will be replaced by 6 metre high lights - that is a metre higher than the present light supports. All will be changed to white lights. A comparison of the present with the new is shown in the photograph on the page 3.

Suggested Number of Removals in Elsworth [Cambs.C.C./Balfour Beatty]

Broad End	3,	Brook Street	2,	Church Lane	2,
Cottrell's Lane	1,	Fardell's Lane	3,	Paddock Row	2,
Roger's Close	2,	The Causeway	1,		

The parish council will have to give a view and indicate which light standards are to be removed. It is important that opinions of parishioners are heard. Do please contact Liz Sim, the parish clerk, or the writer through the telephone number or e-mail address given on page 2 of this magazine, or any parish councillor.

Alan Farrow

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## JUBILEE CLUB

We meet on the first Thursday of most months in Elsworth School from 2.30 to 4.30 pm. We have a speaker, afternoon tea and a raffle. There is also a chance to have a good chat with people not seen for a while.

In June and July we have a coach trip that is open to all members and friends. This year we had most enjoyable days at Aldeburgh and Felixstowe.

January 9<sup>th</sup> starts off 2014 with our New Year Lunch at The George and Dragon. If you are thinking of trying us out this might be a good time to start! You will be made most welcome. For more information please contact Betty.

Betty Simcock [tel. 01954 267470].

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## THE BT SAGA BY C J D CATTO

In this age of blisteringly fast communications, as seen on the latest mobile 'phones, it may seem strange to be affected by technology more than a century old, but that's what we that dwell in villages suffer when using POTS (plain old telephone service) or his younger brother DUBB (dubious broad-band), There are rumours of fibre-optic cables being rolled out to Elsworth this very minute, but I have yet to see any results from this, and my tale of woe concerns old-fashioned copper wires. Actually, copper is good, and 128 pairs - suitably insulated copper wire with the black outer sheath, such as you may see on poles throughout Church Lane and Brook Street can, and should, offer a reliable telephone link, as well as a tolerable (though rather slow) broad-band service. However, the devil, as so often, is in the detail, e.g. the numerous joints and connections. Also, for reasons known only to themselves, BT -- or their partner-in-grime Openreach -- recruited a super-duper-devil, in the form of aluminium cable, some years ago. This experiment was soon abandoned, but alas Elsworth suffers from a not-yet-removed section of this inferior cable. You don't need A-level Physics to know that aluminium wires are totally inappropriate for telephone links: above or below ground, they go brittle, and the slightest hint of damp leads to corrosion, a white furry growth which is a very poor conductor. All this is exacerbated by joining on to the inevitable copper in the network, since the two metals form a battery at any junction that is even slightly wet. What is the result? At best, a noisy 'phone, and at worst a totally 'dead' line, though I have found that a line with no audible dial-tone can sometimes work for broad-band. Still, if you pay BT for a land-line, you do expect it to work for telephone as well as data. Some users are affected more than others: it is a lottery where you come in the 128-pair distribution, and I have heard Openreach engineers talk of swapping pairs, a modem-day version of robbing Peter to pay Paul.

A few minutes ago, I returned from a neighbour's house, after my seventh call in six weeks to BT, or rather a disembodied voice in a call-centre 6000 miles away, and you really have to be very insistent to get them to agree to send an engineer out. The latter vary a great deal in their energy, skill and experience, and I have found it necessary to engage with them closely. They do not always look up the computer record, or know much about Elsworth, or seem keen and able to get to the root of the problem. The worst was the young man who stayed ten minutes; assured me his equipment could find no fault but said he would go up the road and check the

pole. Two hours later, he had not returned, and the noise on the line was worse than ever; by 6 p.m. the line was dead. I suspect he had sloped off home. It is my observation that the problem is related to rain. Overnight was dry, and the next morning the line revived, so at 8.30 I was on to the call centre, this time to a Dutch-sounding gentleman. My remonstrations produced apologies and further promises of action, by a 'linesman'. Later that day a progress-chaser from BT contacted me (luckily it was not raining!) and offered me some unspecified compensation, a discount from the next bill I presume. Interestingly, he said he'd previously worked as an engineer, and he told me my best bet was to corner the next repair-man and insist that he send a request for further remedial work to his supervisor. Otherwise, it seems, everyone is working on a quick-fix schedule, and with intermittent faults such as mine it is possible the problem will appear to cure itself, albeit only in the short term. There is no automatic routine for testing your 'phone, then the line, then all the joints outside, all the way to the cabinet by the side of the road. You have to ask for that specially!

In conclusion, if we are all insistent, and persistent, perhaps they will bother to do something radical, like replace the section of poor-quality cable that seems to be the cause of a lot of this hassle. One other word of advice: it is worth keeping a cheap spare plug-in 'phone, to check there's nothing wrong inside your property, or you could be charged £99. This test is quite simple: unscrew the cover of the white BT/Openreach box that provides the first telephone socket on the cable that comes through the wall from outside. This socket on the cable that comes through the wall from outside. This isolates all your internal wiring and 'phone/internet equipment. Then plug your spare 'phone into the inner socket (revealed by pulling the cover off the box). Wait ten seconds, and then try this phone. If you still hear noise, or get no dial tone, you can be confident that the problem is external. It is just possible it is the cable through the wall, but Openreach should replace that free-of-charge. Obviously, if you have a tree with branches rubbing an overhead cable, or with roots interfering with an underground one, they may not be so sympathetic.

Continued overleaf

PS A few eventful days have passed since the notes above were written. My line went from bad to worse, but when engineer number seven arrived he proved to be more experienced and determined than his predecessors. He checked my line at every possible pole, bar one, and found an unused pair of wires he could bring into service. It started raining, hard, and the problem seemed to even grow worse, despite his valiant efforts. He then made the deduction -- of positively Sherlockian proportions -- that the cause must surely lie in a connection box at the top of the 'thing that no-one dare speak of', the bar one mentioned above, which in a cruel twist of irony is barely thirty feet away in my neighbour's garden. The reason this pole has been a well-kept secret amongst the engineers is that it carries electric cables as well as the telephone ones, and they must not climb it. Access requires a 'hoist', a special steerable platform on the back of a dedicated van. These devices seem to be scarce, but my by-now best-friend engineer 7 managed to book one for the following morning, and by 9.30 a.m. the job was done. All fingers crossed, I hope this is the ultimate solution, at least for now .....



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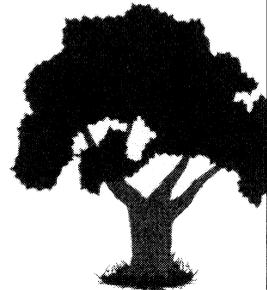
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## JOHN WATSON - AN ELSWORTH MAN ON THE WORLD STAGE

Readers might remember an article in the Chronicle not so long back [May 2012] of the contributions of John Bois of Boxworth in the compilation of the King James Bible in the early years of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Another local cleric involved in church affairs at a very high level a few years earlier than Bois was the Rev. Dr. John Watson of Elsworth, who was much involved with Henry VIII's endeavours to obtain agreement from the Pope to the annulment of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon, the failure of which resulted, as we all know, in the break with Rome and the establishment of the Church of England.

John Watson came to Elsworth in 1516 and was Rector here until 1536. This period also marked his prominence in the University and his recognition as a scholar. In 1517 he was appointed as Master of Christ's College and in 1518 – 20 became Vice Chancellor of the University, an office he was to hold again from 1530 to 1532.

Although he must have spent much of his time in Cambridge, the Rectory at Elsworth [an earlier building on the present site] was his home as well as the Master's Lodge at Christ's College. It is interesting to note that he described the Rectory here as "very handsome and tolerably convenient" when inviting his friend Erasmus, the great European scholar, to stay. It is somehow pleasing that the greatest mind of the known world should have resided here as Watson's guest, if only, perhaps, for a short time.

In present-day Cambridge, the outward appearance of the Master's Lodge of Christ's College would not be unfamiliar to Watson, for it stands to this day proudly in the First Court of the College. Those who watched 'The White Queen' on the TV. screen earlier in the year might be interested in the coat of arms on the gatehouse, for they were of Margaret Beaufort, who re-founded the College in 1505, only 12 years before Watson became its Master. Aspects of Elsworth, too, would be familiar to Watson. The church itself - dating chiefly from the 14<sup>th</sup> century - was, of course, centuries old in his time, and the Chancel within would be familiar, containing as it does Tudor pews, with poppy heads at

their ends. The Rector's stall, and the others which face to the east, contain desks under which are fitted lockers, all dating from the Tudor period.

Outside Elsworth and Cambridge, considerable demands were made on John Watson's time. This is clear from many texts, and the following notes in this paragraph are taken in the main from University alumni summaries. He was Chaplain to Henry VIII; he was involved in the delegation in 1529 of scholars/divines appointed by the University to answer questions raised by Henry on his proposed divorce; he was one of a delegation sent by the University to London in 1520/21, and again in 1529/30, to refute some of Luther's books; apparently he often appeared as a repressor of heresy, having no sympathy with new doctrinal developments.

It would seem Dr. Watson had an influence on the New Testament then being translated from the Greek by Erasmus, a work that was to be used by Luther in his translation of the New Testament into German. Luther's translation of the Bible was to become a landmark in German literary style, just as was the King James version in England, on which John Bois of Boxworth was very much involved. As Erasmus took Watson's opinion, it is with pride we may note that both these great works have been influenced by incumbents of the now combined livings of Boxworth and Elsworth.

Alan Farrow



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

Our W.I. is now more than half way through its 90<sup>th</sup> birthday celebratory year, its inaugural meeting dating back to February 1923 when the fee for hiring a room in Elsworth School was eight shillings. The first monthly meeting took place on the 2nd March and we still have our annual business meeting in that month.

It is good to recall how it all began and I am indebted to an article written in the Elsworth Chronicle back in December 1994 by Betty Evans for the historical notes that follow.

The W.I. can trace its roots back to 1897 when Mrs. Adelaide Hoodless, the wife of a Canadian farmer, founded a movement for women from which the Women's Institute evolved. Her aim was to give country women the opportunity to improve the quality of life in rural areas by providing a wide variety of educational and leisure activities. The first Women's Institute to be opened in the U.K. was in Wales in 1915 and the National Federation was formed in 1917. Today there are over 9,000 Institutes and the number is still increasing.

Having celebrated our 90<sup>th</sup> birthday in March, we have enjoyed a variety of topics. The June title "From Nits to Knitting" was intriguing but all was revealed - our speaker had been a schools' Nit Nurse, but on retiring had opened a wool shop in Ely. Christopher and Jane South entertained us in July - intrepid travellers with many a tale to tell; Bee-Keeping was the topic in September which brought pertinent questions from Rita Backhouse, our local expert. October saw us tying ourselves in knots - of the scarf variety. We will round off the year with a Christmas Party in December.

Visitors are always welcome to our meetings, which are held on the second Wednesday of the month at Elsworth School with no obligation to join!

Isobel Farrow [tel. 01954 267472]

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## Obituary



### **RONALD KENNETH STEVENS** **1933 - 2013**

Ron's first sight of Elsworth was in 1940 when as a lad of 7 years he came to the village as an evacuee after the family home in West Ham, where he was born, was destroyed during a World War II bombing raid. Ron came with his parents, his sisters Vi, Helen and Dolly, his brothers Bert and Terry, and brother Jim when on leave from the navy. Their first home here was in Brook Street [now 28 and 30], after which they moved to Dear's Farm and then to Paddock Row. Ron loved village life and after the trauma of London at that time, delighted in being able to wander around and explore the countryside.

When he first came to the village he attended Elsworth School until it was closed, when he was transferred to Childerley Gate School and then on to Swavesey. On leaving school, Ron worked on local farms until conscripted into the army when he was 18 years of age. He was drafted to the Medical Corps and was soon to be transferred to the regimental police. In 1952 he was posted to Korea where the South was at war with the Communist North. It is remarkable that both Bert and Ron were there at the same time, but they were never to meet in Korea - even a special request from Ron at one time to be allowed leave to see his brother after Bert had been wounded was turned down.

After demobilisation Ron first returned to farm work, then after a short period with a builder he was able to take up the work he had wanted for so long, which was to be a lorry driver. He stayed in this employment until he retired. Much had happened to Ron in the 1950s, but perhaps the most significant was his marriage to Maureen in 1957. They lived at Boxworth at first, then Bourn, and to Elsworth in 1966 where Ron was to become a special constable in his spare time. They were blessed with two daughters - Julie, born in Ron's parents' house in Elsworth, and later, Jane. He was very much a family man and was delighted to see it grow through daughters, sons-in-law, four grandchildren and a great grand-daughter.



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## ELSWORTH SPORTS CLUB

At this time of year the football and table-tennis seasons are under way with cricket having finished in early September.

Cricket Elsworth was represented by one team only this year, playing in Division 4 of the Cambs Junior League, in which we finished just above the half way mark out of eighteen teams. It was considered to be a reasonable season as apart from the league a few matches were played in the Business Houses League and some friendly matches were also enjoyed. Anyone interested in cricket should contact either Bill Knibbs on 01954 267266 or Anthony Taylor on 01954 268042.

Football The season got under way in early September and Elsworth has found Division 2B of the Cambs NMC, to which the team has been promoted after last season's successful campaign, rather harder than the previous division and the first three games have been lost and at the time of writing sit twelfth of thirteen. However, some teams have played three or four matches more.

Two trophy competitions have been entered in which the team is enjoying success, reaching the third round of both the Creake Charity Shield and the Cambs Junior Cup. In the Creake Shield competition Elsworth is now to play away against Castle Camps at the end of November and at home against Mepal Sports in the Junior Cup on the 4<sup>th</sup> January. Anyone interested in playing or seeking more information on football should contact David Triggs on 0789 1011055.

Table Tennis The local table tennis season started in late September and, as last season, Elsworth has two teams in the Ely League. Additionally this season we are to have three teams in the Cambridge League as the previously named Over teams will now be known as Elsworth and play their matches here. The majority of players play in both leagues - in the Ely League Elsworth has one team in the first division and is currently finding life slightly harder after promotion last season and is currently placed tenth of ten teams. In the Cambridge League, Elsworth has two teams in the second division, and currently hold third and tenth position of twelve teams.

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

Carpet bowls continues to be played throughout the year on Wednesday afternoons and, recently started, snooker is played on Monday mornings in the pavilion. Whist drives are also held monthly on Friday evenings commencing at 7.30 pm.

Roger Fensom [tel. 01954 267534]

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