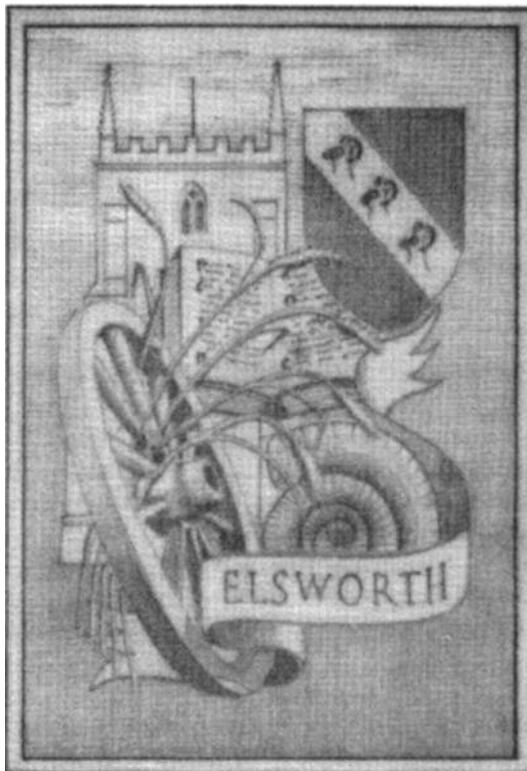


# The Elsworth Chronicle



**Issue No. 11**

**December 1997**

**SPOTLIGHT ON REV. DR. MICHAEL REISS  
PRIEST IN CHARGE AT  
HOLY TRINITY CHURCH, ELSWORTH**



The Rev. Dr. Michael Reiss has been appointed to Elsworth to serve the church and people following the retirement of Rev. Hugh Mosedale. Many readers will have met Michael and, no doubt, been curious about his background in the warm inquiring manner which marks our village.

Michael is a scientist and a Christian, being one of many who contrary to seeing conflict between the two, finds they are complementary. He studied biology at Trinity College here in Cambridge both as an undergraduate and post graduate student, being awarded his doctorate in 1982. Subsequently he pursued post-doctoral research, and following studies for the Post Graduate Certificate in Education - also in Cambridge - he taught for 5 years at Hills Road 6th Form College before being appointed to the Department of Education in the University. In 1994 he took up his present post as senior lecturer in biology at Homerton College, Cambridge.

Michael's formal preparation to serve God through the church ran in parallel with his scientific research and teaching, studying as a student of theology from 1987-90 under the East Anglian Ministerial Training Course. As such, studies had to be fitted in alongside his everyday work. Since ordination he has helped during the interregnum at Bourn and Kingston from 1993-4 and at Toft in 1995. Again his endeavours had to be fitted in with his full-time work. Now at Elsworth, Knapwell and Boxworth until a full-time minister is in office, Michael has deliberately chosen to integrate his work in the church with his at academic

interests rather than pursue a full-time ministry within the church. Clearly he has much to offer both.

Teaching, research and ecclesiastical work would seem to present more demands on time than most would care to have. But, in addition, Michael has found time to write some twelve books, perhaps the most noteworthy of which is one entitled 'Improving Nature?' in collaboration with Roger Straughan, a book on genetic engineering which last year was best seller among biology texts. In addition he has sat on government committees on educational matters. One wonders how many hours there are in his day!

In outlining Michael's career as above, there is a danger that the nature of the man is neglected. Friendly and approachable are terms that spring to mind. As well as being a person of energy and intellectual curiosity, his interests embrace art - particularly modern painting - and physical activity. While at Cambridge he represented the University at athletics and rowing and now, in spite of his heavy work-load, finds time for jogging and sessions at the Bourn Health & Fitness Club. A married man, many will have met Jenny either at church or at the social gathering held at the school to welcome them to Elsworth. Jenny too is a committed Christian and a scientist - geology and biology - holding a Cambridge Ph.D., and is an author of school and academic books. She also has practical skills, being an accomplished potter.

Elsworth is fortunate in having Michael appointed to cover the period when the parish is without a full-time incumbent. It is clear he is a man with considerable gifts and, it would seem, abundant energy. One facet of his character so far not brought out on these lines but clear to all with whom he comes in contact is his concern for others. In this regard the strength he possesses through his Christian faith and knowledge may be allied to skills honed through counselling studies, at which he has a recognised qualification. Time is clearly used to the full, and yet he is able to make those about him feel he has time in plenty for them, and

I am sure this is so. Any who doubt the proverb 'It is the busiest man who has time to spare' should perhaps reflect again!

*A.W.F.*

## **ELSWORTH SPORTS CLUB**

### Football

The highlight of the year to date was undoubtedly reaching the final of the Cambridgeshire Lower Junior Cup in April last. This was a most creditable achievement demanding victories in six previous rounds in a competition in which there were over 100 teams. In the final, Elsworth conceded to Bottisham Sports by three goals to two after extra time. Lee Draper and Neil Lucas scored for Elsworth. Player of the Year for the 1996/97 season was Stephen Merryweather.

### Cricket

The first eleven was relegated at the end of the season to Division Three of the Cambridgeshire Cricket Association League, while the second eleven completed the season half way in Division Six.

The Cricket Club would welcome new players from Elsworth. Please contact Terry Stevens at 2 Smith Street or by 'phone on 267392.

### The Pavilion

Although applications have been made to many organisations for money for the rebuilding project, some £30,000 must be raised by the club. Fund-raising activities are prominent, and more events are planned for the near future.

## PLOUGH PEOPLE

Who the 'Plough People' might have been

You may remember that in the last issue of the *Chronicle* I told you of my husband's experiences under the heading of 'Plough People'. A few days after the *Chronicle* had been circulated I received a telephone call from Mrs Grange who said that she had been reading the piece and it reminded her forcibly of a certain incident. She explained that The Plough had always been a happy place so my assumption that people were leaving unhappily could not be correct and from her recollections of some of the people who used to run it I am sure she is right.

The date in question was 16 November 1940 and the time 2.15am. The night the bombs fell on Elsworth. This event is recorded in many places but none so clearly as in Mrs Grange's memory. We know from documented evidence like reports of the time and old photographs that considerable damage was done to Brook Street on that night. I believe that a sister cottage to our own was almost totally demolished and other buildings suffered too. Mrs Grange remembers that night vividly, the air was crisp and clear and the moon was shining as brightly as daylight. A woman was trapped with her two children in the sister cottage to ours and people were frantically (and, thankfully, successfully) running around in the rescue attempt. There was certainly much activity and concern among the workers.

Isn't it strange that someone who knew nothing at all about this story, and who does not believe in visitations, should experience such a thing - almost down to the last detail.

Does anyone else have a strange tale to tell?

At this time of year if the stories don't chill you, the weather will so here's a real 'comfort food' recipe.

## **Beef Bake**

### *Ingredients*

1lb 8oz stewing steak	1oz flour seasoned with salt and pepper
1oz dripping	1pt water
2 medium onions finely sliced	2 carrots sliced
2 heaped teaspoons tomato puree	pinch mixed herbs
2oz white breadcrumbs	2oz butter

### *Topping*

8oz self-raising flour	level teaspoon salt
pepper to taste (white is best)	3 tablespoon cooking oil
¼pt milk	

### *Method*

Cut meat into cubes. Toss cubes of meat in well seasoned flour. Melt dripping in a large frying pan or saucepan and gently fry onion until golden. Add the meat and fry a further 5 minutes turning until meat is brown. Remove from heat and blend in water and tomato puree. Add carrots and herbs. Return to heat and bring to the boil. Turn mixture into a 2 pint casserole. Cover with lid and cook in the middle of a moderate oven, 170°C or gas mark 4 for 2 hours or until meat is tender. Make topping, combine dry ingredients, add oil and bind to dough with milk. Roll out to fit top of casserole and bake for approximately 30-40 minutes or until topping is cooked right through and golden.

*Gwyneth Gerloch*

## PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

### Geoblocks in Brook Street

Grass is now growing well through the geoblock mesh and Brook Street now looks far more attractive than at this time last year. Initially it was envisaged that the bank should be reinforced to minimise damage if people insisted on parking cars on it, but the scheme has been modified so as to provide roadside parking. People are earnestly requested not to park on the unprotected banks otherwise the unsightly sea of churned mud will clearly return.

### Playground Equipment

After serving many generations of Elsworth children, the slide on the sports field has been declared unsafe by safety inspectors and therefore has been dismantled. Regretfully the thrill of climbing to what must seem a great height to many a young person will be lost for slides on the market are more modest in size, but nevertheless a replacement will be provided. The concrete runnels have also been removed; perhaps to the relief of certain mums when their offspring seem oblivious of mud on their clothes.

### Care Car Scheme

The Parish Council endeavours to be pro-active rather than merely reactive and frequently possible potential needs are found, when researched, not to exist or, perhaps, do not come to fruition for lack of support. One such endeavour was the 'Care Car' scheme. In essence, this was to provide a car service for essential local journeys where public transport was not available or not suitable, and the applicant hadn't access to a car. One example would be a person without a car needing to visit a relative in hospital. Two public meetings were convened, but there was little response, only one volunteer-driver coming forward.

## Shopping Needs

The closure of the village shop is very much regretted. The village is very much indebted to Denise and Billy Knibbs for their service over many years. Parish Councillors would like to hear from any who are experiencing difficulties regarding shopping; if there is a demand a mini-bus could be hired once a week to take people to Tescos or St. Ives. If of interest, please contact Liz Sim (267345) or Alan Farrow (267472), or any Parish Councillor.

## Millennium Green Initiative

A meeting called in April to consider views on an application to the Countryside Commission to acquire funding for the possible purchase of the field alongside the brook immediately south of the village was well attended. There was unanimous support that an endeavour should be made to acquire the field and a two-thirds majority gave support for a related scheme for flash flood prevention. The scheme was well received by the Countryside Commission but the change of ownership of the field has not allowed, as yet, for the scheme to proceed. However, the Countryside Commission is happy to keep the file open. For those not able to attend the April meeting, the scheme, in essence, is that millennium money be used to purchase the field if a satisfactory agreement is reached with the land-owner. Once acquired it would be free from any future building developments and remain as a natural conservation area to encourage bird life, plants and creatures associated with such land. Of particular interest to residents of Brook Street and Church Lane, holding ponds could be incorporated as part of the scheme, allowing water of flash floods to be contained outside the village while not impeding the flow of the stream at other times. Further, water so held - if sufficient - could be pumped into the stream and be held in the upper portion of Brook Street during the dry months of summer.

## New Houses off The Drift

Planning permission has been given for the construction of five houses on the former caravan sales site off The Drift. The Parish Council would have preferred bungalows but the District Council was persuaded on the suitability of two storey dwellings. The name chosen for the development is Cowdell End, a name associated with this part of the village as far back as 1567.

## Cambourne

It is pleasing to note that Department of Transport (perhaps not now the current name) has authorised that the dual-carriageway should extend from Caxton Gibbet to the round-about at Hardwick. The plan survived the road financial cut-backs of the out-going government and hopefully the anxieties expressed in the last edition of the Elsworth Chronicle might not materialise. Even so, the impact of a new settlement, with its population rising to some 10,000, on our narrow roads is a cause of concern.

## Overhead wires

The Parish Council has been active over the years in endeavouring to persuade British Telecom and Eastern Electricity to relocate wires to trenches rather than hang them from poles. Many in the village consider the wires an eyesore, particularly on the Causeway. Eastern Electricity is sympathetic and a representative of management has been taken around the village to appraise the position. The work could be done, but the charge would be approximately £200 per household. Now another line of approach has been broached. It would seem that B.T. has a fund designated to support enterprises focused on improving the environment; why not use some of the money to bury overhead lines in visually sensitive areas?! B.T.'s response is awaited.

## Retirement of Clive Hines

Following 12 year's service as our County Councillor, Clive Hines decided to stand down in May. He will be much missed, not only locally but on the committees such as Social Services and the Police to which he gave so much time. We on the Parish Council have come to know him as a wise counsellor and a most reliable colleague who would do whatever he promised, whether it was finding information or taking action. To us all he has been a very good friend. We wish him a very happy and long retirement.

## Councillor Shona Johnstone

Following Clive's retirement as County Councillor he actively supported the candidature of Shona Johnstone, whom we now welcome as his successor. Shona may be contacted at 66 The Lanes, Over, CB4 5NQ. Telephone: 202392 (cable).

## Elsworth in Bloom

The Spring should see a profusion of colour at the edge of the sports field where daffodil bulbs have recently been planted. We are most grateful to the Probation Service for their help - preparatory work on the land and the bulb planting was done by people directed by the Courts to undertake community service.

## Recycling Banks

It is pleasing to note that the various recycling banks on Boxworth Road continued to be well used. Villagers are asked, however, to use the site only for the articles designated and not to use it as a general disposal area. Earlier this year a large mirror was left as have been several smaller items.

During the financial year ended March last, the parish council received £132 from this source (glass £128 and cans £4); Oxfam £31 (textiles and books); Mr. Knibbs Cub group £269 for paper.

## Possible New Homes

The family Davison is exploring the possibility of developing two small areas of land near the school for housing. Such a scheme would necessitate, of course, a minor adjustment of the village structure line. The plan would include some small houses and possibly a small parcel of land could be allocated for South Cambs to build sheltered accommodation if a need is identified. The allotments, at present on part of the site, would be resited. Councillors welcomed in principle the proposal which would provide increased amenities for the village. Support was declared for the village stop lines to be moved to accommodate such a development.

## Highways

A further section of Rogues Lane has been haunched but the western extreme by the road to Hilton must await the next financial year. Brockley Road has been repaired, the footpath in Smith Street has been resurfaced and reflection posts installed at Rogues Lane to warn of a sewage manhole which, due to traffic encroachment, is now very close to the road. There is an on-going programme of repairing potholes.

Further work planned in addition to that for Rogues Lane, already noted, includes repair and re-surfacing of Cotterell's Lane and restoration on the Boxworth Road from the George & Dragon eastwards.

Concerns regarding the state of roads or paths should be addressed to John Thurley - tel. 267450, the parish council co-ordinator or direct to the Highway Supervisor - tel. 01223 833717. If street lights are malfunctioning the number to telephone is 0800 253529.

## Best Kept Village Competition

Elsworth was eliminated in the first round in the South Cambridgeshire District competition, coming third in Group A to Knapwell, which in turn failed to progress beyond the second round. In the final round Thriplow was awarded first place, winning the Cambridge Evening News trophy, with Balsham second.

It doesn't seem many years back that Elsworth not only won the South Cambridgeshire award, but went on to win the County trophy. As most in Elsworth take great pride in the village, the comments of the judges might well be of interest.

Gardens well looked after and the appearance of the village very pleasing.

Garage, workshop and farmsteads very well maintained.

Public houses (exterior) - tidy and inviting.

Shops - satisfactory.

Burial ground well kept (Boxworth Road). Church well maintained and yard very well kept, with new rose bushes.

Bus shelter and telephone kiosks - adequate.

School [exterior only] - excellent, incorporating playing field.

Notice Board - Giving relevant information very clearly.

Village Greens, Ponds - moderate, but the stream was full of rubbish.

Recreation Ground - well equipped for children; large playing field for other activities.

Allotments - very well kept.

Direction Signs to Local Amenities - quite good.

The litter in the stream was clearly the strongest criticism. Certainly that section of the brook in Paddock Row has become an eyesore.

Within the village attention has been drawn to the continuing need for people to clean-up after their dogs - many are diligent in this respect and have our thanks but there are some who remain happy that their pet's excreta should be carried on the shoes of others on to carpets where children might play.

Comment has also been made that hedge trimmings and the like can become unsightly when left for the wind to scatter. Again most are thoughtful and clean debris, but it is a point to keep in mind.

### East Anglia in Bloom - 1997

The initial impact of the village was deemed to be average(+) by the judges and Elsworth was not among the award winners. However Michael Davison brought credit to the village for the appearance of Avenue Farm Industrial Unit, and is to be congratulated for its being placed second in the Norwich Union Trophy competition for the best industrial area.

The judges summary comments were as follows. "A village of natural beauty with a well decorated pub. It has a recent conversion of farm buildings and a commercial centre of award nomination. The village sign records many well deserved successes and rates among the best seen. Private housing decoration made a considerable contribution to the presentation."

## END OF THE LINE

The Autumn sun filtered through the stained glass windows of Gloucester Cathedral and cast coloured patterns on the thick Norman pillars. The nave was full on 16th September for the memorial service for the Revd. Wilbert Awdry OBE who had lived in Gloucestershire for the last 32 years and who died in March, aged 85.

The boys' choir processed in and the service was introduced by Canon Roger Grey, Canon in Residence. Wilbert Awdry's son, Chris, and his daughter, Veronica, read the lessons and the choir sang two anthems, Brian Sibley, who wrote the biography "Thomas the Tank Engine Man", read from "Thomas the Tank Engine" which we all enjoyed, but especially the choirboys. His other daughter, Hilary, led the prayers and his daughter-in-law, Diane Awdry, sang Handel's "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace".

Bishop John Yates, formerly Bishop of Gloucester, announced his text from "Thomas the Tank Engine". He referred to the Revd. Wilbert Awdry's priestly work, including his six years as Rector of Elsworth and Knapwell, and the use he made of his creative gifts which brought pleasure to so many children in this and other countries. The Bishop said: "Thomas had always wanted to be a really useful engine and, following Wilbert's death, one can imagine The Fat Controller saying, 'Wilbert, I have heard all about you and you were a really useful person.' Just as Thomas strove to be a really useful engine, so Wilbert passes into immortality as one of God's really useful priests and servants."

The choir and clergy processed out after the rousing hymn "All my hope on God is founded" and the service to celebrate the life and work of Wilbert Awdry, priest and writer, came to an end. We filed out into the autumnal sun - and a chance meeting with Mary-Ann Mitchell (now Sue Jones) who lived in Elsworth as a girl and whose mother was Headmistress of the school in Brook Street.

The Revd. Wilbert Awdry was Rector of Elsworth and Knapwell from April 1946 to December 1952 and was also Rural Dean of Bourn. His second railway book ("Thomas the Tank Engine") was published when he was at Elsworth but it was written before he arrived in the village. He wrote five of his 26 railway books when he lived in the Rectory in Elsworth.

*David Hollier*

## **CAN YOU CARE?**

Caring people are wanted to help families with children who have physical and/or learning disabilities.

By looking after children for anything between an occasional few hours, an overnight stay, weekend or part of the school holidays you can offer the parents a much needed break and the children an enjoyable change.

You don't need any special qualifications, just lots of energy and understanding. Whether you are single, married, divorced, working or not working we'd like to hear from you.

You will need to be assessed and approved as carers for Cambridgeshire County Council. In return you will receive training, support and expenses for the care given.

*If you would like to know more please contact:*

**Family Link Scheme, Social Services Department, 18-20 Signet Court,  
Swanns Road, Cambridge Tel: 01223 718433**

## **A CHALLENGE AND A REWARD**



## **CAMSIGHT**

### **THANK YOU ELSWORTH!**

CAMSIGHT (The Cambridgeshire Society for the Blind and Partially Sighted) would like to thank the residents of Elsworth for their generosity and, in particular, the very kind people whom collected on our behalf between 28th June - 12th July this year. The village raised the magnificent amount of £175.47 towards helping blind and partially sighted people both in the county and in our Resource Centre at 167 Green End Road, Cambridge CB4 1RW, Tel: 01223 420033. We are most grateful for this wonderful boost to our funds which is £115.89 up on last year!

Mrs Vicki Russell  
House to House Collections Co-ordinator

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

Elsworth & Knapwell W.I. was formed in 1923 and has been going strong ever since. We are a friendly group with a traditional and modern outlook, and have a wide variety of guest speakers,

We meet on the second Wednesday of each month at 7.30pm in the School Hall.

You can be sure of a warm friendly welcome at Elsworth & Knapwell W.I. For further information please contact Sue Chapman (President) on 01954-267568 or Lyn Hogan (Secretary) on 01954-267254.

*Lyn Hogan*  
*Secretary*

## **NATIONAL WOMEN'S REGISTER**

Elsworth National Women's Register is an active group with approximately 15 members which meets every 3 weeks in member's homes - if you have recently moved into the area it's an ideal way to make new friends.

Recent activities have included a speaker from the Botanical Gardens in Cambridge, a visit to the cinema and wine tasting. The programme is chosen by members and reflects a wide range of interests from the serious to the light hearted. In the past we have had speakers from The Samaritans, St. John's Ambulance as well as a graphologist.

New members are always very welcome; please contact either Beryl Andrews (tel: 267518) or Shirley Emmerson (tel: 267583) for further details of forthcoming meetings. As we shall shortly be arranging our programme for the next six months we would very much welcome new members with their ideas.

*Shirley Emmerson*

## HOLY TRINITY CHURCH

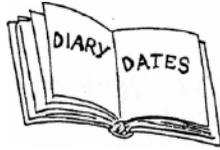


### **Occasional Brass, The Light programme**

The concert held at Holy Trinity on 2 November 1997 was a huge success. The music was varied ranging from the *Messiah* to *Big Spender*. It was performed by a group of professional musicians, led by our very own Clive Baker, who normally play in the London shows such as 'Cats' and 'Les Mis.' and who gave up their only free day of the week, Sunday, to entertain us which they did in right royal fashion. The young baritone, Koen v. Stade, came all the way from Amsterdam to sing for us and his first piece from the *Messiah* had us all transfixed. One of the highlights of the evening was the first hearing, for me at least, of the wonderful organ we now have. It truly is a magnificent instrument and surely one of the finest in any parish church anywhere. The concert was followed by a supper in the Old Chapel; many thanks to Michael Taylor for lending us his beautiful home.

The whole evening was such a success (and the heating had been switched on early!!!). On behalf of the whole Parochial Church Council many thanks to all who supported us on that evening and also to all who have supported us in the past and made the rebuilding of that magnificent organ possible. Watch this space for details of forthcoming events and thank you all.

*Gwyneth Gerloch*



## ***DECEMBER***

- 20** Football - Elsworth v. Milton 'A'. Home
- 24** Holy Trinity Church - Midnight Communion at 11.45pm
- 25** Holy Communion at 10.30pm

## ***JANUARY***

- 3** Football - Elsworth v. Witchford. Home
- 8** N.W.R. - Aromatherapy Demonstration
- 14** Women's Institute - Members' Evening
- 17** Football - Elsworth v. Bottisham Res. Home
- 21** Parish Council meeting
- 28** N.W.R. - Silk Painting
- 31** Football - Elsworth v. Buckden Res. Home

## ***FEBRUARY***

- 10** N.W.R. - "Call my Bluff"
- 11** Women's Institute - 'Writing for Pleasure'. Speaker Mr Ogden
- 14** Football - Elsworth v. Fordham Res. Home

## ***MARCH***

- 5** N.W.R. - French evening - members bring a dish
- 12** Women's Institute - Annual Meeting
- 18** Parish Council meeting

## ***APRIL***

- 18** Football - Elsworth v. Wilbraham. Home

## ***MAY***

- 20** Parish Council meeting
- 27** Annual Parish meeting