

# WATLINGTON GOSSIP

SUMMER '03



MARGARET GIBBS MAY '03

**WATLINGTON GOSSIP CONTENTS**

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*Drawn by Mike Davies*

**Sketches**

*by Barry Shears*

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**oooOooo**

**The Watlington Community Magazine** is compiled by volunteers from the village and relies upon advertisers for its continued funding.

The magazine's committee does not accept any responsibility for the accuracy or otherwise of any article appearing in the pages of the Gossip, nor does it necessarily agree with any of the viewpoints expressed by our contributors in articles or other items published in these pages.

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### Please Note

The closing date for receipt of articles to be included in the next issue of the Gossip is: Monday 11th August 2003

If you have an item for inclusion which is ready before the deadline, please let us have it (see previous column for methods of doing this).

THANK YOU

### EDITORIAL

From Barry Shears

A members of the editorial  
team

I was born in King's Lynn and lived for most of my childhood in the centre of what was then a fine and typically Norfolk market town. The area in which I was brought up was a warren of tiny streets, lined with rather worn yet tidy terraced houses. These terraces have all gone now, pulled down in the 1960s as part of the then town council's 'improvement scheme', which was in fact nothing of the sort.

The area where I lived became a car park and so it remains to this day, lying directly behind the police station, with the swimming pool on its eastern edge and the backs of Tower Street shops to the west. Approaching the area today I can still walk along the narrow streets, all held fast in my imagination. Occasionally, I even find myself ambling over the car park and, by a process of triangulation with three points of original reference, namely the Greyfriar's tower and the Stepney Baptist chapel in Blackfriars Street, along with the clock tower of the Majestic cinema, I can still locate Regent Street and even stand outside the door of number 22, the house in which I spent so many happy years as a growing boy.

Never did I consider that I should ever wish to live in the countryside, although we frequently visited my mother's parents who lived in Clenchwarton and I have only happy memories of those far-off days. No, like my father before me I wanted only to remain a man of Lynn. However, within five years of becoming a married man, all was to change, for we found ourselves moving into a spanking new bungalow in this village of Watlington. That was 35 years ago and now I would not want to live anywhere else!

Why relate details of a past life in this magazine that appears to have so little to do with anyone but myself and those closest to me (and even they become bored with the re-telling after a time)? Is there anyone else who could possibly be interested in the details of what life was like in the 1940s and 50s in small town Norfolk? The fact is that I, like so many others have much I *could* reveal about those days and about much more besides. After all, I have lived here in Watlington for almost half a normal lifetime; think of the changes there have been in the village since then! This magazine has been published each quarter year for the past five years and on the whole it is still well received - even looked forward to by some. Much of its content has been focused on the structured organisations within the parish, those parts of the community that need to publicise themselves and their various activities and events. True, the Gossip contains more than that, including almost half its pages filled with useful advertisements. The rest is made up of anecdotes, letters from local residents, official notices, even poetry and tales of little folk who live their tiny private lives amidst the bustle of this very village. This edition of your magazine is different in its text, although the content is much the same.

How long can we continue producing the Gossip? If finance is the criterion, then we may continue for the foreseeable future (thanks to our advertisers). What then might cause our downfall? Could it

be the fact that the village now has an information centre that grows in status and importance almost as we speak? I understand that the office may be accessed on the village website which is proving so successful but so can the Gossip. Rumour has it that the office is to produce a 'welcome pack' for newcomers and visitors to the village. One of the items included in that pack would quite possibly be a current copy of the Watlington Gossip, for what other publication could so readily reflect the life of our village? No, I don't think the information office or the village website poses a threat to your magazine. Despite the fact that we only appear every three months, the Gossip lands on each and every doormat throughout the parish and is there as a reference point, almost without leaving your best armchair.

What then could possibly cause the Watlington Gossip's demise? Why, YOU of course! Yes you. Without your letters, articles, poems, recipes; in fact any item that can possibly be printed, we could not continue. Providing it is not salacious, rude, in poor taste, or otherwise unlawful we will print it, particularly if it is original, local, thought provoking, novel or informative.

Thank you for reading this editorial. Now might be a good time to consider not what your magazine can do for you but.....haven't I heard something on those lines before somewhere?

1.

### **The Watlington Youth Project, Obituary**

*By Anita Packwood*

The Watlington Youth Project, which was to give the 11 to 16 year olds living in Watlington a trip subsidised to Alton Towers, has had to be cancelled because of non-action and apathy.

The trip was advertised locally on posters around Watlington and in the pages of the Gossip magazine and even on the village website.

Out of all the 11 to 16 year olds that live in our community, only twelve young people put their names forward. There were a few others who said they were interested and even phoned the information office but not interested enough to leave their names or telephone numbers.

We could have lived with sending just twelve young people on the trip, but Apathy struck again, with the organiser/parents this time. The project idea was born from a small meeting of five people last November, which led to a public meeting in the village hall on January 21st this year. At this meeting young people were invited to express their views on ways of helping young adults in our community. In the event no young people came to that meeting but two more parents joined the band of organisers. At this meeting it was decided to get some funding together and subsidise a trip or event for the 11-16 age group. After which it was hoped that we could get the young people themselves to form a committee and organise and fund raise their own events.

At the January meeting the Alton Towers idea was adopted, and various tasks to do were shared among the group. Two were to explore the possibility of funding from the parish council and collect names of youngsters that would be interested in going on the trip. One was to find the actual cost of entrance into Alton Towers. Our co-opted district youth leader would look into transport. Finally, my husband and I would write the article for the Gossip and the web site and the blurb for the poster.

The next date we could get everyone together was 11th March, to which only four people attended and no apologies from absentees. With no information on either cost, numbers or funding the meeting ended after thirty minutes.

After this meeting my husband applied to the Community Chest for funds, only to be told that Watlington was about a mile outside the West Norfolk Fen area as far as funding was concerned. He then applied to the community development team at the Borough [Council] and the Norfolk Rural Community Council.

For these funding sources Michael painstakingly prepared a draft constitution, equal opportunities and a child protection policy document, which would need to be read, checked and passed by a quorum of the group.

It was at this point, due to a chance remark that nothing had been done about asking the parish council for funding (although two of the group were connected). It seems they were sitting at home, silently, not telling anyone, but waiting for someone else to write an official application to the parish council. The King' s Lyn Youth and Community Service were happy to donate two mini-buses and drivers, but as yet we had no funding to get into Alton Towers.

Another meeting was arranged for March 27th, an agenda sent out about the policy documents, but this time there were only three of us with no apologies!

The policy documents could not be voted on, without which we could not apply for public money, so all that effort and no result.

So, the next time you parents see local youngsters kicking down your fence, at least you can tell yourself it' s cheaper than Alton Towers and you didn' t have to get off your backside.

It was at this point, although being disabled, I decided it would be easier to stand upside-down on the village sign than it would be to get some parents to do something for their kids.

oooOOooo

*[Look what dropped onto my doormat, just as I had finished typing the last item..... Ed]*

## Watlington Wanderers YFC

Training now for the league next season.

Boys and Girls welcome.

6 – 16 year olds

*Please bring suitable footwear, shin pads, drink,*

*football (if possible)*

**For more details contact**

**Andrew 01366 388868**

**Lorraine01553811715**

**or just turn up on**

**Saturday 24th & 31st May, 7th & 14th June Time: 2-4pm  
at Church Playing Field**

**The Rector** Writes.....The secret of inner peace.

People today are not at peace within themselves- Basically, they do not know who they are or what their life is all about. This is the source of anxiety, worry and even violence in their lives.

We have every reason to love ourselves and yet we feel unable to love ourselves because of fear. Uncontrolled fear, even of God, who we see as an uncompromising judge, prevents us from knowing and loving ourselves in a creative, sharing way.

It is the enemy within us that destroys our inner peace and takes away our freedom to share our lives with others. It cuts us off from the world and inhibits us from trying to discover who we really are and what is our purpose in life. If we are never able to get to know who we are, then how can we ever begin to love ourselves in a positive way?

For the Christian, Jesus is the perfect example of true freedom of love and peace. He was human like us and in his life He shows us what true human freedom is, and what it can achieve for our peace and fulfilment in life. When we are true to ourselves in our daily lives then we shall be at peace within ourselves.

In our faith we know that God is our Father who understands our weaknesses and fears and leaves us free to grow as persons in our own way. He knows that in true freedom lies our only hope of growing in peace and appreciation of how wonderful it is to be alive.

Christ, from the age of 12 to the age of 30 was perfectly at peace with Mary and Joseph, where he grew as a person in the freedom of his own home and village. We grow too, in our own individual situations and we will get to know and love ourselves because in our lives we are open to God and to people. We will never achieve this if we allow fear to control our lives. Christian people should be among the freest people in the world.

Fear, in purely natural terms, isolates ourselves so that we live in an emotional island of self-centredness- If we live for and by ourselves alone then we will never make meaningful contact with other people. We will have no-one with whom we can measure our reactions so that we never know who we really are. It is only when we control our fear that we are on the road to self-discovery and peace. For Christians the holy spirit does this for us, so that we know who we are and acknowledge our weaknesses and strengths-Through our contact with others we discover the fundamental value of being true to ourselves. Then we will know what we should or should not do in order to grow as a person.

Loneliness is the major cause of people' s unhappiness and isolation. Instead of loving themselves in a truly positive way many people shut themselves away from human contact and never become the kind of open peaceful person that is God' s will for them.

In the creation of the human race God said it was "not good for a person to be alone". The person who lives for himself or herself denies themselves the oxygen of human friendship, they are not in love with who they are and think that in the final analysis they are basically unlovable, remaining a complete loner. Happiness never breaks through; they never come alive in this world. They reject in practice God' s creation in them.

The fear to be ourselves in this world is the most difficult emotion to control or to heal, because people do not know of what they are afraid. Christians know that God loves them, especially at those times when they can see no reason for loving themselves. Knowing and loving oneself is only the beginning of one' s search for peace. The search for ourselves is really our search for God. Only He can light up our lives and lead us on the path of self discovery. He will show us that our neighbour is part of our family and His. Then and only then will we begin to know who we are. We will move out into a brave new world of hope and expectancy. The bonds of fear will at last be broken and we will be free to know and love ourselves. There is no greater freedom or way to peace. We will never know any love as long as we are ruled by fear. The old saying is still true: "Fear knocked at the door, faith answered; there was no-one there. A very happy and blessed Whitsuntide. James and Helen.

## **CHURCH SUMMER FETE**

Saturday 14th June at 2 p.m. In the village hall, Watlington

PATRONAL FESTIVAL Watlington Parish Church Sunday 29th June at 11  
a.m. Preacher:

the Right Reverend Malcolm Menin Former Bishop of Knaresborough

WHITSUNDAY 8TH JUNE At Watlington parish church Festival Eucharist 11  
a.m.

### **HELP NEEDED.....**

**With cutting the grass of the churchyard at Tottenhill. An hourly rate of £4 (petrol  
and mower will be provided)**

Please contact Father James on 01553 810203

### **Watlington Medical Centre**

We have at last *got* our website running after the company that was producing it disappeared into the ether before completing the job! We are now using an in-house service, so if you have any comments or would like additional information to appear on the site please let us know. The web address is:

**[Watlingtonmedicalcentre.org.uk](http://Watlingtonmedicalcentre.org.uk)**

We are having a busy time at the Medical Centre with several new members of staff in both dispensary and administration. We are very pleased to welcome Dr Vandana Bendre who will be our GP registrar until August. Dr Bendre is spending her first period of time in general practice with us before moving on to spend further time at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital covering other specialities. She has spent some time working in paediatrics and has already completed her membership exams in this speciality. Very many thanks once more to the Patients' Group: thanks to their hard work and enthusiasm we have been able to purchase more home blood pressure monitors and an event monitor which will be loaned out to patients for a period of time, to try and pin down irregularities in the rhythm of the heart. This is cutting out a wait of six months or more for an outpatient's appointment at the hospital to go onto a waiting list for the same type of equipment.

We have also been very lucky to receive donations from individual patients and their families which have enabled us to furnish a room for health promotion clinics.

Issues raised by the patients' group that are being addressed include ensuring that the intercom in the waiting room is audible when doctors call patients through. We are also involved in a research pilot scheme aiming at providing support to unpaid carers to those with dementia. If you are a carer in this category please contact Scilla Ash our practice manager and she will explain what is involved and how this service may help you.

If there are any ideas for our annual health educational evening please let us know. This is usually held in the summer and includes talks by visiting specialists as well as providing refreshments and fundraising opportunities in the form of a raffle or draw.

Many thanks to Mr Taylor for his very kind donation to the Medical Centre, in memory of his wife. Also to Mrs Seaman, for her kind donation in memory of her husband. These two donations have been used to purchase a new examination couch for our spare consultation room.

Mrs Briggs made a generous donation to the Medical Centre, in memory of her late husband. At her request this donation has been used to have two benches made for the front entrance, to enable

patients to sit for a few minutes while waiting to collect their medication. These benches are in the process of being made.

We are all very grateful at the Medical Centre for such a useful idea.

**oooOOooo**

### **Watlington Pre School**

Watlington Pre School currently runs the following sessions in the village hall:

Monday 9.30 a.m. to 12 noon & 12.30 to 3.00 p.m. Tuesday 9.30 a.m. to 12 noon & 12.30 to 3.00 p.m. Thursday 9.30 a.m. to 12 noon Friday 9.30 a.m. to 12 noon

Thank you for your continuing support for Pre School events. The Easter Bingo raised £215.96 for the school funds.

If you would like any more information about the pre school, please call me on 01553 810392.

*Carol Hay, chairperson*

**oooOOooo**

### **Heritage Windows Tenth Anniversary**

The editorial team of the Gossip would like to offer its congratulations to Heritage Windows (Steve and Mandy Brindie) on recently reaching their tenth anniversary in the business of supplying and fixing windows and conservatories.

Heritage have advertised in the Watlington Gossip since the very "first issue" and we are pleased to see examples of Steve's work around the village.

If any of our readers are considering having double glazing carried out it would be worth giving Mandy a ring on 01553 670546, or Steve on his mobile phone [07767266513] for advice or a quotation. Prices are very competitive and the work excellent with careful attention given to detail. Well done Steve and Mandy.

### **English Eccentricity**

In the 1700s Jeremy Bentham Esq. proposed installing a network of 'hollow conversation tubes' linking adjacent properties so that people could converse without going outside (an early attempt at telephony?). He also thought that eminent men should be preserved and stuffed (presumably after death) as an example for others to aspire to.

### **Watlington Information Centre News**

The information centre continues to expand its tie with the community. The office is now used regularly for ad hoc meetings by various groups and is regularly used by the Parish Council's Community Projects Committee, as well as providing access to computing, internet, photocopying and other general office services. The centre has recently adopted a logo based on a signpost design, highlighting the important aspect of the service of helping to point people in the right direction.

Demand for services remains good, with the photocopying in particular helping to provide much needed income. Enquiries dealt with have included one from Shropshire, with ancestors being sought [*see also the letters page in this issue ..... Ed.*]. The village website is now well developed, with most community organisations having an entry on the site. The Parish Council have recently had pages added and minutes of meeting can now be accessed. The site also has useful links to other sites in west Norfolk. Visitors to the website include one from the USA. Any groups wishing to add or change details should leave information at the office or send an email.

The Centre could welcome some new volunteers. Volunteering in a small, friendly environment could be a good way to help if you are considering returning to the workplace or have retired and feel that the computer age has left you behind. Gentle training is given on the use of equipment,

usually by the person who will be volunteering with you on the day. The Centre also has volunteer get-together sessions to discuss future plans and promote ideas. Volunteers have recently completed a ' training needs' form so as to provide the best possible service to customers and help brush up on skills.

**Events:** The Centre has linked up with the Pensions Service. They will be available at the office on the 3rd Tuesday of each month between 10 a.m. and 12 noon. No appointment is necessary but you can arrange a specific time if you wish by calling the Pensions Office on 0845 60 60 265. The Centre will be holding a fund-raising coffee morning on Saturday 7th June in the small hall. Come along and support the work of your office and see what services are on offer. **For the services available please see previous editions of the Gossip.**

The office is open on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday mornings from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. Telephone 810777 (messages may be left). Email: wicoffice@watlingtoninfo.com Web: www.watlingtoninfo.com For those of you who have not yet called in at the office, it is situated at the east end of the village hall and has disability parking spaces adjacent.

### **Watlington Village Hall**

The "Village Hall" would seem to be very much an English, or perhaps a British institution, an essential part of the fabric and life-blood of village life. The village hall in Watlington is no exception; it is the focal point of many of the activities which take place. It is a facility provided for the general use of the community with equal opportunities and without any discrimination. Looking at the usage since the last edition of this publication demonstrates that this aim is being fulfilled. As well as the regular groups, which range from indoor bowls and badminton to the baby clinic, amateur theatre and dancing school to toddlers and pre-school, parish council and village hall committees to Womens Institute, Luncheon and Wednesday clubs and the resident information centre, other hir-ings have included a Dance Show, a Play, meetings, private hirings for children and adult parties and fund-raising events.

The village hall's own events have included a quiz which raised £290 and a jazz evening which raised £200, all for the hall funds. A puppet show was also put on for the children.

As far as future events are concerned, the management committee has applied for a number of Creative Arts East subsidised events for the 2003/2004 season and details of these will appear in the next issue of the Gossip. **Coming Events:**

Saturday 12th July at 3 p.m. A **Grand Auction.**

A different way of raising money (used successfully in the past) is planned to be run as a 50/50 auction, with half the proceeds going to village hall funds and half to the seller. There are a few rules, so we don't end up with unsaleable items: the committee reserves the right to refuse items and unsold items must be taken away by the donor.

No electrical goods or foodstuffs.

Upholstered furniture must have fire safety labels. All goods sold as seen. No warranties will be given. Items may be brought to village hall in the morning between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. Viewing between 2 p.m. and 3 p.m. Sold goods to be paid for and taken away immediately after the auction.

Auction will start at 3

p.m. Refreshments will be served.

For further information or help with collection of items, contact 01553 810584 or 810732 or 810231.



*Watlington Village Hall, continued..*

Saturday 27th September, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Sunday 28th September, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

***"Watlington, Past & Present" A photographic. Art and Bygones Exhibition.***

The photographic competition consists of two categories:

1. A scene or landscape taken in Watlington during 2003.
2. Animals (not human) taken in 2003, not necessarily in Watlington.

Age Groups: Children up to 6 years; Children 7 to 11 years; Young people aged 12 years and over, and Adults.

Any type of camera may be used, including digital. Print size must be 7 x 5 inches (180 x 125 mm) and mounted on board with a border. Title and entrant's name clearly marked on the back. Only one submission per person in each category. Entry forms can be obtained from the information centre or from Barbara Church, 32 Fen Road, or from John Harris, 47 Plough Lane, and returned by the closing date of 8th September. We need to hear from anyone with photographs, records, or other items of interest about Watlington's past (including the more recent past). Perhaps you have photographs and items or records about a village event which we could display. A few years ago, a group of villagers produced a book about Watlington past and present entitled "Portrait of a Village". There are still some copies around and perhaps some of you would be interested in reviving the information it contained. To jog some memories: who remembers this building? Only those born before 1988 need apply.....

There must be others out there, so get out your scrap-books and albums. We want to hear from you. Anyone with any information should contact

Barbara Church on 01553 810584 or John Hams on 01553 810711

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### **Letters, letters, letters.[and emails]**

To Watlington Village Gossip, My husband died a few months ago. His request was to be buried in Watlington churchyard - a peaceful place, and in March, full of snowdrops, daffodils, birdsong, blue sky and a place where you can ' see over the rainbow' .

When my daughter and I went to order his headstone we were told that there were specific regulations concerning the type of headstones which were permitted. This surprised us as, having looked around the graveyard there were still old Christmas wreaths and artificial flowers, which were losing their colour and going green with mildew. Although in most cases the deceased relations had kept the appearances pleasant and in keeping with the general feeling of the churchyard, these examples were upsetting to me and I could not understand how people who presumably care for those who had passed on could allow such a thing to mar their loved one's resting place. If their motivation was that some kind of colourful object be left on the grave because it was expected of them, the least they could do would be to remove them before they deteriorate as they have done. If not, could the diocese of Ely be responsible and change the rules to prevent artificial flowers being used?

My family and I feel very strongly about this, because it spoils an otherwise peaceful and pleasant place.

*[Although there was no name accompanying this letter, we decided to print it here because of its obvious sincerity.....Ed]*

oooOOooo

Dear Gossip,

In issue 17 of the Gossip you asked if there were any other telephone numbers that should be published in the Gossip.

Would it be possible to print contact numbers for the Guide and Scout leaders?

The number for Addenbrooke' s hospital is printed but not that for Papworth Hospital.

Monica Ward

*[Although we no longer have Scout or Guide groups in the village, at one time we used to receive occasional pieces for publication from other local associations. We would be pleased to renew that service. The phone number for Papworth has been added to the list on the inside backpage.....  
....Ed]*

oooOOooo

*[This next letter was in fact an email]*

We are planning to visit West Norfolk in the autumn to carry out some research into our family history. Quite a number of our ancestors lived in Watlington during the 19th century and into the 20th. The family names were Jackson and Mobbs. We would be interested to know of anyone locally who may have done some research into these families. My great grandparents were James Jackson, bom circa 1855, in Watlington, and Rachel Mobbs bom 9th July 1861. They were married on 26th December 1882 in Downham.

My wife' s grandparents were John Mobbs bom circa 1836 and Charlotte Proctor bom circa 1837 at Rune-ton Holme. They were married 2nd August 1858 at Watlington parish church.....

*The email continues by asking for access to the parish records and. if the village school records are still in existence. Mention is also made of the Wesleyan Methodist chapel.....  
....it continues.....*

We thank you for your perseverance in reading this, and thank you in anticipation!

Many thanks

Helen & Brian Cattell, 5 Femhill Lane, Gobowen,  
Shropshire, SY11 3PP

*[The email was passed on to the Gossip committee via the Watlington Information Centre. Can you help in this request? If so, contact the authors of the letter at the above address...  
....Ed]*

oooOOooo

The Gossip (who do a great job). Dear All,

Would it be in the Gossip' s boundaries to include rule No. 54 from The Highway Code, for the benefit of all pedestrians and all other road users in the village? (and please can I ask you not to add my name and address if you do decide to print it).

*the person who sent this to us did include a name and address, which we shall not print here, but below is the relevant rule from the Highway Code:*

#### **54-YOU MUST NOT**

- **Cycle on a pavement**
- **Leave your cycle where it would endanger or obstruct other road users or pedestrians, for example lying on the pavement. Use cycle parking facilities where provided.**

oooOOooo

Dear Gossip Readers,

It has come to my notice (and the evidence appears in this issue of your magazine) that despite the increase in the parish precept for 2003/4, which was raised in part to "upgrade... village facilities, particularly play equipment" at the Church Road recreation field and at Warren Close play area (see the parish council report in the spring issue of the Gossip) that, far from refurbishing or renewing the equipment it is being proposed that some of the items, namely the slides on each of the play areas, be removed because they no longer comply with current safety regulations and to refurbish them to an acceptable level will cost too much!

I no longer have young children and am far too old to attempt using any of the play equipment, but I do pay Council Tax, out of which comes the parish precept. And even though it amounts to only £30 on a band ' D' rated property, I believe that the considerable increase in this year' s precept should be used for the purpose it was originally raised: to cover the village' s increased insurance and maintenance costs and renew, or refurbish village facilities, including play equipment - and that in the year for which the precept was raised.

What else could the revenue be used for if carried over to next year? Can we expect another large increase in the precept for 2004/5 ? Is it not incumbent on parish councillors to use the revenue raised on the facilities for which it was gathered in? The word is that the parish council will be "seeking grants" for the renewal of play equipment; so why such an increase in the precept if they do not intend to use it in the year, and for the purpose for which it was raised?

I, for one will watch with interest over the forthcoming year just how my money is spent by those who have the spending of it. Yours sincerely

*Barry Shears, 17 Orchard Close*

oooOOooo

"If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away."

*Henry David Thoreau, in "Walden"*

oooOOooo

"The man of sense employs his money as he does his time, and never spends a shilling of the one or a minute of the other, but in something that is rationally pleasing to himself or others"

*From Lord Chesterfield's Letters to his Son.*

Letters.....

*[This letter came in at the last minute but it was considered to be relevant with other articles in the magazine so we changed several pages around to make room for it.....Ed]*

Dear Editor[s]

About three weeks ago I was walking back from the Angel, across the millennium green and noticed that the tree in the middle was actually beginning to sprout. Great, I thought, at last we may have a lovely tree in the field.

Alas, the following morning, cycling back from the shop, I looked for the tree and could not see it. I went onto the field and found that it had been snapped off 2 inches from the bottom. You guessed it, the vandals had struck once again. Who are these sad people who just destroy the work of lots of people, who are trying to make our village look attractive. This sort of mindless vandalism really makes me angry, especially when many volunteers offer their services for village improvements. It makes me wonder if all the effort is worthwhile.

**Peter Ryder, Station Road**

*oooOOooo*

### **Watlington Womens Institute**

Our guest for our May evening was Mrs Ann Biggar. Her title is "Outworker" with the Alzheimers Society, who gave us a short talk on what her job entailed.

Our yearly resolutions (three in all) needed discussion and voting on. These were:

- Children' s diets, exercise and health.
- Vocational training.
- Care of older people.

The delegate representing us will take our votes to the National Annual General Meeting, held at the Royal Albert Hall in June.

Our June meeting is our 36th Birthday Party where we invite other W.Is in our area to come and join us. Into July, and on the 8th our guest speaker will be Pat Saboum about ' Gift Wrapping' . On the 12th August we will have Anita Carpenter talking to us about East Anglian wind and water-mills. So, if you wish to join us on the second Tuesday in the month, please do.

**Mary Greaves, Minutes Secretary, Watlington W.I.**

*oooOOooo*

**Eccentricity** [*or downright crankiness!*] John Gainsborough, he of the famous artist brother, was also known as "the Sudbury Daedalus" because, like his mythical predecessor, he attempted to (unsuccessfully) fly. He also invented the self-rocking cradle, the walking haystack(?) and the apple dumpling tree. Apples, still on the tree were encased in dough and poached in situ, in a pot of hot water surrounded with hot coals.

### ***Diary Dates***

**Events in the village over the next three months:**

**Watlington pre-school** meets each Monday and Tuesday from 9 am to 12 noon and 12.30 to 3 pm. Also Thursday and Friday from 9.30 to 12 noon. **Wednesday Club** meets 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month.

**Womens Institute** 2nd Tuesday of each month at 7.30 pm.

**Under Fives** meet each Wednesday from 10 am to 12 noon.

**Baby Clinic** meets 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month from 12 noon to 3 pm.

**Luncheon Club** meets 1st Wednesday each month from 12 noon to 3 pm.

**June 7th:** Football meeting, 2 - 4 p.m. on the Church Playing Field (see advertisement elsewhere).

**8th:** Whitsunday Service Watlington Church, 11 am.

**9th:** Wednesday Club, Strawberry Tea.

**14th:** Church summer fete, in the village hall, 2 pm.

**17th:** Parish Council meeting, 7 pm in the village hall.

**20th:** Watlington Community School, Summer Fair, 5 pm to 8 pm at the school.

**29th:** Patronal Festival Watlington Church, 11 am.

## **July**

**9th:** Wednesday Club, Carpet Bowls Meeting.

**12th:** Grand Auction at the village hall, 3 pm (see article elsewhere).

**19th:** Watlington School of Dance, ' At Home' and prize giving.

**23rd:** Wednesday Club, Quiz Afternoon.

**All the above events take place in the village hall unless otherwise stated.**

## **Another English Eccentricity**

In the 1920s a Mr Matthewson, resident in Calcutta, ordered a car with a difference. It was made to look like a giant swan. Its eyes were the headlights, its beak could steam and hiss. Alas for Mr M, the car was soon banned because of the enormous crowds that appeared every time he went for a drive

oooOOooo

## **Watlington Carpet Bowls**

We now have three sets of equipment, all purchased with the grant that we received from Awards for All. During the winter months we entered the Fen Regis Carpet Bowls League and also the Dairy Crest League. We feel that we might have been a bit ambitious, ending up at the bottom of both leagues. For the summer season we have entered the WNCBC Summer League, hoping we can do a little better in this.

We are still a growing club, but we have not yet reached our full membership of 32, having approximately 10 places still to fill.

Our meetings are on Thursday mornings at 10 a.m. and Tuesday evenings at 7 p.m. Both of these meetings are held in the small hall of the village hall. Please come along and have a go.

*Mrs J. D. Stephens, Hon. Secretary*

## **Home Watch**

Does your community have a Home Watch scheme? If not, why not? It has been recognised that Home Watch helps to reduce crime and generates community spirit.

So, be a good neighbour and protect each other' s homes.

Contact the Home Watch administrator, Ed. Moss at King' s Lynn police station on 01553691211 or visit [www.norfolkhomewatch.info.info](http://www.norfolkhomewatch.info.info)

## **Watlington Short Mat Bowls Club**

The club held its annual Dinner and Dance on Saturday 15th February. It was a very enjoyable occasion, the meal being supplied by Juniper Catering and the music by Graham Tibbs.

The trophies were presented at the Dinner, the Singles Shield going to Brian Creasey. The Doubles Cup went to Terry and Joy Stephens and the Triples Cup to Neville Wagg, Brian Creasey and Ann Creasey. Congratulations to all six.

We have arranged a few friendly games for the summer season and are entering the Paget League for the winter months. We are determined to do better next season!

*From the Hon Secretary, J. D. Stephens*

oooOOooo

## **Planning report from the parish council**

Plot south of Fail-field Lane, new house: Boro' Council approved

60 Mill Road, extension: Boro' Council approved

Adjacent to 54 Mill Road, new house: Boro' Council approved

Summer	approved
field,	Plot adjacent to 25 Downham Road: Approved by parish council
Church	34 Downham Road, extension: Boro' Council approved
Road	18 Mill Road, extension: Boro' Council approved
extensio	117 Downham Road, extension: withdrawn by applicant
n: Boro'	11 Rectory Lane, pitched roof & window: approved by parish
Council	council

## And now.....

### The Waller

The Watler was having a quiet five minutes and a cup of bramble tea whilst admiring his neat garden, all ready for spring planting, when the strangest noise came from behind the hedgerow. Sort of a rhythmical, very nearly musical 'clanging'. Now alert and extremely inquisitive, the Watler slipped into the cover of the long grass and made towards the clatter.

He moved into a position where he could see quite a way down the secret pathway under the hedgerow and then waited, as the clatter got gradually louder. After a couple of minutes a most bizarre figure came into view. Slightly shorter and broader than our Watler, with a complexion much darker (though this may not have been entirely due to the colour of his skin, more to do with the colour of the 'terrain' he had neglected to remove with soap and water from his face and hands!). This fellow was wearing threadbare, loose fitting garments, a broad smile and positively bristling with cooking pots, kettles, colanders, ladles and innumerable kitchen gadgets (not all of them useful) all tied to his person by an elaborate system-parts of knotted string. He strode down the path as if familiar with the route, although the Watler had never seen him in these parts before. He was heading straight for the village with purpose in his steps, so the Watler thought that he had better intercept him and find out exactly what that purpose was. He stepped out from his hiding place, which did not seem to phase the stranger at all, and fell into step beside him.

"Good morning to you sir!" said the Watler. "Good-day" came the reply. "I'm heading for Hedgerow village; it's three winters since my last visit and I should think there's a lot of ladies in need of my services. You're new to the village?" "I'm very pleased to meet you! You'll be walking with me to prove my intentions are good then". What could the Watler reply to that! All his questions had been answered at once. They walked along briskly and the stranger talked non-stop, barely seeming to come up for air at any point.

The Watler learned much in those few minutes walking to the village. His companion, as he had suspected on first sight was a 'travelling salesman' or the title he had given himself 'purveyor of quality culinary equipment'. He was extremely well-travelled and had frequently been as far afield as Wimbotsham!

The Watler was amazed to think that he had not even known of the existence of the Hedgerow village three years ago, never mind learning that there were Watler type communities at other places in the human village of Watlington and dotted along the road from Setch to Stow Bridge, Wallington and Wimbotsham!

They reached the outskirts of the village where the 'purveyor of quality culinary equipment' was instantly accosted by hordes of Watler ladies, all haggling to close a deal on their chosen piece of equipment!

When the knotted string hung empty the salesman sat and enjoyed the hospitality of the community. He told tales of his exploits long into the evening, over many a glass of blackberry wine and lots of Watler children were carried, fast asleep to their beds, to dream of far flung places and high adventure.



oooOOooo

**Samphire:** *A recipe from Geoff Beaumont* Our readers may recall the article I wrote in issue 8 of this magazine about samphire gathering and the recipe for Norfolk crab and samphire soup. Since then, many people have asked for the recipe to be repeated and as the samphire season will be with us soon, here it is again:

**Cream of crab and samphire soup** *Ingredients:* \ small dressed crab; 1 medium potato; 500 grams of samphire; 600 ml vegetable or light fish stock; 500 grams of butter; 200 ml single cream; 1 medium mushroom; salt and pepper to taste. *Method:* Peel and finely slice the potato and saute slowly in butter in a closed pan until soft. Clean and boil the samphire for 5 minutes and remove from stalk. Add samphire to potato and continue to saute. Add stock and peeled, chopped mushroom. Bring to the boil then liquidise until smooth. Return to pan and stir in crab meat (half a dressed crab). Add cream and salt and pepper to taste. Bring to a simmer but do not boil. Serve hot or chilled. The main mixture may be frozen to eat at a later date; then thaw out, simmer for 5 minutes, add the cream, simmer for two more minutes and serve. Samphire may also be pickled: Clean and boil it for 3 minutes; remove flesh from the stalk and pack into a clean jar with half a teaspoon of salt; cover with spiced pickling vinegar. Seal the jar with an air tight cap and allow to stand for 3 months.

### **Watlington Parish Council**

*From Colin Vince, Clerk to the Parish Council* The parish council has met on one occasion since the last issue of the Gossip, with the new council (following the 1st May elections) meeting on 13th May. Clirs Beaumont and Bush have stepped down from the council, Mick Bush having served for many years and Geoff Beaumont since May 1999. Thanks are extended to both for their contributions and voluntary help for the work of the parish council.

Plans by WAGN to upgrade the station car park have been turned down by the Strategic Rail Authority. However, the council is seeking ways to resurrect the project through a consortium of partners. However, it is unlikely that much can happen before 2004 because of the re-franchising of the rail service.

The project to provide new play equipment is moving forward with consultations having taken place with the school and under fives groups. The next stage is to see suppliers and apply for grants. Given the time it takes to apply for grant applications any new equipment will unfortunately not be installed for the coming summer.

Following an assessment of the current play equipment, slides at both the recreation ground and at Warren Close play area will have to be removed, as they are too expensive to economically repair. An advice/liability notice at the skateboard park was destroyed by vandalism. The council is currently

awaiting advice from the inscribers on this matter. The new street light in Church Road is still not operational due to problems between two electricity companies, despite repeated attempts to progress this matter.

Arrangements are now in place to ensure that all the litter bins in the village are emptied regularly and a new dog waste bin is on order for the Britton Close area.

Concern has been expressed over access to the minutes of council meetings. Copies are available in the shop, the medical centre and via the village web site at [www.watlingtoninfo.com](http://www.watlingtoninfo.com). This can be accessed at the information centre free of charge (with assistance if you are new to the internet.) Council documents are available for inspection under the Freedom of Information Act and can be seen by application to the parish clerk. Further information is available on the web site. Councillors are due to discuss a report on traffic calming measures prepared by Richard Miller, at the meeting on 13th May and will also be considering the possibility of leasing the Glebe Lands. After the Annual Council Meeting and ordinary council meetings on 13th May the next meeting will be on Tuesday 17th June. Meetings are held in the small hall in the village hall and start at 7 p.m.

*Note that a planning report appears on page 15.*

### **Watlington School of Dancing**

The Dancing School was founded on the 10th September 1977 and the recent production of Dancetime 2003 celebrated the 25th Anniversary. Eighty-five performers took part in - the show from the age of four upwards, including for the first time three generations of the one family - Jo Jones from Magdalen, her mother June ' Etherton and her daughter Katherine. The second half of the show included the ballet Coppelia, with Maureen Ireland, Chip Carpenter and Lisa Elliot recreating the roles they played in the ballet when it was last performed by the school in 1993. Lisa has taken part in every Dancetime since the school began as has Michaela Richardson. After the performance on the Saturday evening, Mrs Cooke thanked everyone who had helped to make not only this production possible but all those who had supported the school during the last 25 years, including Margaret Mould and family. Bill and Dolly Cameron, Kate and Chip Carpenter and family and of course her husband Mike. Most of the costumes in the production were created, as usual by Judy Parsons of Harvey Costumes, Runcton Holme. However, an ' old girl' from the school, Theresa Blake (formerly Jones) supplied the costumes for the role of Swanilda, beautifully danced by Claire Yax-ley. Theresa completed her education by studying costume design and after working on couture bridal gowns and in the wardrobe departments of the Welsh National Opera and the Royal Shakespeare Company at Stratford upon Avon, has returned to the area and is hoping to expand her business to include the making of professional tutus. How lucky to have a former pupil willing to give her time and energy for the benefit of the school. The raffles held during the performances raised over £300 for the new stage lighting system and Mrs Cooke presented Sue Cave from the East Anglian Air Ambulance with a cheque to the value of £1,220 as a result of ticket sales. Videos of the production will shortly be on sale and the proceeds from these will also be given to the East Anglian Ambulance Fund.

On Saturday 3rd May the school repeated the ballet, Coppelia in a Gala Evening presented by the Watlington Players. The evening raised approximately £400 for the lighting fund and all dancers performed exceedingly well in spite of a two week gap between performances.

The school is now busy preparing for the next set of examinations to be held at the end of the summer term. The annual ' At Home' and prize giving is to be held on the afternoon of the 19th July.

## **Watlington Players**

The Players are in the process of updating their lighting rig the village hall. This is necessary due to new regulations and will be an expensive process even though we are doing the installation ourselves. We are going to have to do some fund raising this year and we are very grateful to Penny Cooke and her school as we were able to run raffles at the Dancing School shows on the 18th and 19th April which raised over £3 50.

The next event took place on the 3rd May when the Dancing School very kindly performed Coppelia for us at a Gala Evening. Seated at tables with a light supper and subtle lighting, it was a very pleasant evening and raised over £400. As each lantern costs an average of £175 you can see we are very pleased with the monies raised. Everyone is very welcome at our fundraising events as well as our shows.

The autumn play this year is to be Run For Your Wife, a very funny farce produced by Andy Prior. The dates of the show are 29th, 30th and 31st October 2003.

The Children of Watlington Players (COWPS) held an ' At Home' in the village hall on Friday 9th May their usual club evening. They performed poems from T. S. Elliot' s ' Cats' and a play ' the Seesaw Tree' for parents and friends, and raised nearly £100 for their charity World Vision. *From Kate Carpenter*

## **Recruitment Details**

Special Constabulary Recruitment *Anyone wanting information on the step program should contact 01953 423683 or email:*

*stepspecials@norfolk.police.uk Alongside the step program we are recruiting Special Constables.*

*Individuals wishing to join the Special Constabulary can get an application pack by contacting*

*01953 423823 or email: recruitment@norfolk.police.uk*



Regular Officer recruitment

*We are also recruiting regular officers. Anyone interested in a career as a police officer should contact 01954 423823 or email: recruitment@norfolk.police.uk*

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## **Watlington Wednesday Club**

Since our last report the Wednesday Club has enjoyed a variety of meetings. In February, our speaker Mr Demonty, Customer Liaison Manager, provided a most useful and helpful talk on the new pensions service which was formed last year. At our second meeting that month, the lady members made some very attractive greetings cards under the skilled guidance of Mrs Betty Bray, while the gentlemen cooked delicious pancakes under the equally skilled guidance of Mrs Barbara Church. In March we welcomed members of Magdalen Happy Circle when we enjoyed a most interesting talk by doctor Stefan Zago, who told us of his experiences working with wild animals in parts of Africa and in the Far East. Doctor Zago is a member of the Mill House veterinary services team in King' s Lynn.

At our first April meeting the ladies were working under the kind guidance of Mrs Bray, when a most attractive parade of Easter bonnets was created. As it was impossible to judge which was the best, everyone had prizes!

Our second April meeting was spent visiting a military establishment in Thetford forest. Everyone found this most enlightening and our thanks go to everyone who took part in its organisation, it is greatly appreciated.

You would be most welcome to join us at our meetings on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month. We start at 2 p.m. at the village hall. Admission is £1 and includes a cup of tea or coffee and biscuits.

**Diary Dates for future events** 9th June: Strawberry tea 9th July: Carpet Bowls meeting 23rd July: Quiz Afternoon

*Brenda Newman, chairman*

# **Watlington Community School Hotdog Society Summer Fayre**

**Please note that once again the Watlington Community Hotdog Society will be catering for you at this year's Summer Fayre.**

**We look forward to seeing all our old customers, to enjoy probably the best hotdogs in Norfolk.**

**The Summer Fayre is to be held on 20th July at the school.**

**Thanks to Graphic Attack for supplying our T shirts We hope you will come and buy a hotdog**

"Bother!" and "O Blow!" and also "Hang spring cleaning!" *Mole, at the beginning of Wind in the Willows*

## **S.G.I.- U.K. THE BUDDHISM OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN**

**"TRUST THROUGH FRIENDSHIP PEACE THROUGH TRUST"**

*"Unless we can achieve a fundamental transformation within our lives, so that we are able to perceive our intimate connection with all our fellow human beings and feel their sufferings as our own, we shall never be free of conflict and war." (Daisaku Akida - World Tribune - 22nd September 2001)*

We are now entering the second half of 2003. Where did the first one go? Expanding our hearts in order to embrace others more easily and, through dialogue, come to greater understanding and compassion. Making the cause of expanding our dialogue with others will inevitably bring the effect of lessening anger and ignorance and increasing understanding of our fellow human beings. Thus creating peace step by step and word by word.

**Feel free to drop in for a coffee and a chat**

Do call Marion on 01553 811333 for more information on where and when we meet

**We look forward to meeting you.**

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## **A Way to Start**

*by Henrietta White* By the time you read this the Flora London Marathon will be over and done with and the usual groups of enthusiastic joggers/runners appear on the roads and pavements eager to try this new sport, inspired by watching the marathon on television. However, enthusiasm soon wanes and I think the reason for this is that many people push themselves too hard and try to do too much at the beginning. Here' s a simple programme that I found in a magazine. I started with a similar one and I am still jogging after three years! I would not call myself more than , a plodder but it gets me out in the fresh air and I feel much healthier when I do go out. Jogging is a great stress buster and gives you a chance to work out problems in your mind and often find solutions. Here' s a few tips that helped me Try to relax; you' re not like those blokes in Chariots of Fire, all pumping arms and raised knees; that' s a sure way to injury, unless you' re a professional runner. Try to avoid running on your toes, it puts too much strain on your feet (as I found to my cost at the beginning).

Ignore hecklers, you' ll have your fair share of comments but just think to yourself that they are probably too lazy to make the effort to take exercise. The main point to remember is that you are out there doing what you want to do in the way you want to do it.

Do invest in a pair of trainers. Warm up before you go out and again when you get back.

Smile and say good morning or good evening when you meet someone. Runners get a reputation for being a sullen, introverted lot. We need to dispel that image if we can.

When running on the roads, run towards the traffic except on right hand bends when extra care is necessary. Drivers do the most unexpected things, so be prepared. It also pays to wear something bright coloured (reflective gear is a must in the winter): yes, I know black is flattering but it doesn't give drivers a chance to see you.

Keep it up! I know there will be some days when you won't feel like going out, but there will be more days when you really enjoy going out—take it from me.

Most importantly, if you're not used to strenuous exercise always check with your doctor first. GOOD LUCK.

WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEKS	WEEK 4	WEEKS	WEEK 6
Monday Run 1 min walk 1 min Repeat 10 times Thursday Run 1 min Walk 1 min Repeat 11 times Saturday - take some other form of exercise Sunday Run 1 min, walk 1 min Repeat 12 times	Tuesday Run 2 mins Walk 2 mins Repeat 5 times Thursday Run 2 mins Walk 2 mins Repeat 6 times Saturday Do some other form of exercise Sunday Run 2 mins Walk 2 mins Repeat 7 times	Tuesday Run 3 mins Walk 3 mins Repeat 5 times Thursday Run 3 mins Walk 3 mins Repeat 5 times Saturday Take some other form of exercise Sunday Run 3 mins. Walk 3 mins Repeat 6 times	Tuesday Run 4 mins Walk 3 mins Repeat 4 times Thursday Run 4 mins Walk 3 mins Repeat 4 times Saturday Do some other form of exercise Sunday Run 4 mins Walk 3 mins Repeat 5 times	Tuesday Run 5 mins Walk 3 mins Repeat 4 times Thursday Run 5 mins Walk 2 mins Repeat 4 times Saturday Take some other form of exercise Sunday Run 5 mins Walk 2 mins Repeat 5 times	Tuesday Run 5 mins Walk 1 min Repeat 6 times Thursday Run 5 mins Walk 1 min Repeat 5 times Saturday REST Sunday Run/walk 5 k (that's about 3 miles)

Useful telephone numbers:

**Current Parish Councillors:**

- 01553 810276 Dr H Lacey (chairman)
- 01553811282 MrRAmor
- 01553810216 Mr E W Featherby
- 01553 811362 Mrs J Golding
- 01553810711 Mr J Harris
- 01553 810848 Mrs B Leedell
- 01553810212 Mrs S. Miller
- 01553810169 Mr C Pike
- 01553810331 Mr R Rockcliffe
- 01553810231 MrBToates
- 01553 812082 Mr C. Vince (Clerk)

E-mail address of the parish council:

watlingtonparish@onetel.net.uk 01553 811870 Mr D Widowson

**Borough Councillor:**

01553810428 MrAnsell

**Other useful numbers:**

01553 810253 Watlington Medical Centre  
01553 810253 Emergency (out of hours)  
01553 811440 Prescriptions (fax only)  
01553 811631 District Nurse  
01366 383241 Health Visitor  
01553 617429 Patients Group  
01553 613613 Queen Elizabeth Hospital  
01223 245151 Addenbrooke' s (Cambridge)  
01480 830541 Papworth Hospital  
01603 300600 Norfolk Health Authority  
01553 810468 Watlington Community School  
01553 669300 Social Services  
01553695800 Benefit Agency  
01553692722 Borough Council  
01553 772568 King' s Lynn Library  
01366383073 Downham Library  
01553 691211 King' s Lynn Police Station  
0800 555111 Crime Stoppers (free phone)  
01553 810263 Watlington Post Office & Stores  
01553 811326 The Angel Pub and Restaurant  
01553 811510 Chas' s Chippy, fish & chip shop  
01553 811345 Village correspondent to Lynn News  
01553810305 Father James Nolan  
01553 810732 Village Hall (Bookings)  
01553810777 Information Centre.

email address of the Information Centre:  
wic@watlingtoninfo.com

Still some space here for other useful telephone numbers!