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THE WATLINGTON GOSSIP

SUMMER 2004

Mike Davies

WATLINGTON GOSSIP

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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 15th August 2004 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

It seems a fair while since I last wrote the editorial, and, as in the past, my brain is working overtime (if that is possible these days) to develop ideas for the article. As you know the spring issue was our 5th anniversary of producing the Gossip and it is good to see that you, our readers are still providing material for the magazine. The articles in that last edition were really good, especially the controversial matter of the millennium flyover, a cleverly written passage which caught some of you out (if you are honest). It was also very pleasing to see an input from the children, the poems they wrote were of a very high standard for children of that age group; well done all of you, keep it up.

Now, on to some not so pleasant matters namely, dog faeces. Yes, I am sad to report that it has started to appear on footpaths again. I am sure you are aware that it is a fineable offence (up to £150 a time) to leave such deposits on the footpath, or elsewhere. Will dog owners please place it in the bins provided by the Parish Council, or take it home with you and help to keep our village free of such awful fouling, thank you. It was very disappointing recently that the Medical Centre did not make it more widely known that a major change of computer programmes was about to take place and that it would seriously affect the booking of appointments. Unless you visited the Medical Centre, you would not be aware of the situation. May I say that this is what the Gossip is for - the passing on of information.

Apart from sending in your letters and articles we will happily include births, marriages, engagements, birthdays and other personal notices you wish to be published. I would ask you please to keep submitting your letters and articles, no matter how small. I know we keep repeating this request for material, but after all it is your magazine, help make it a better one. Well, that's all from me. Enjoy the summer to come (a good one I hope) and the next edition of the Gossip. Bye for now.....

Peter Ryder A member of the Watlington Gossip editorial team

Letters....

This first letter from a Mr A P C Pole (address provided) expands on an article in issue 21 of the Watlington Gossip. Dear Editor,

I feel sure that you have been inundated with letters regarding the letter from Mr U P Andover suggesting that the Parish Council have been involved in secret talks regarding the possibility of installing a flyover adjacent to the Millennium Green. Does he not realise that to build a flyover would allow headlights to flood residents' bedrooms with light and allow occupants of vehicles to stare into those same windows with goodness knows what effect on their knowledge and driving skills. No, your correspondent is very much behind the times. Our Parish Council is very forward looking and has been watching very closely the deliberations regarding Stonehenge, where the possibility of a tunnel going completely under the site is being considered. It is believed that, were a tunnel to go from outside the shop, diagonally to Feetham's Corner, this would save drivers passing through the village from slowing down, or even stopping. It would mean that pedestrians would not be lost in the long grass on the Green through the long summer months. Vandals could spray paint their graffiti along the tunnel walls, thus saving on maintenance costs. Possibly, looking further to the future, the tunnel could be extended to the station car park. *The Gossip team have reservations about this idea; think how it would disrupt the lives of our Waller population!*

oOOo

Dear Watlington Gossip,

Congratulations upon the Gossip attaining its fifth anniversary. It is an excellent publication and is looked forward to by the residents where I deliver. I thoroughly enjoyed your birthday editorial, which was an excellent foreword to a first class magazine. With best wishes to the team for the next five years. Yours faithfully, *Jean Papworth*

oOOo

Dear Gossip,

In the summer of 2002, I did some fundraising for my great niece's daughter Eva. When Eva was four months old she had a stroke, which has left her with health problems, one of which is sever muscle weakness. The people of Watlington helped raise £1,000, which went towards buying a special body suit, called a second skin. These suits are made to measure and cost over a thousand pounds. They are made in Australia. The suit was to strengthen Eva's upper body so that she could sit up unaided. Many people have asked me how Eva is, and did the suit help her. She is now 4 Vi years old and goes to school, where she is learning new skills every day. With the help of the body suit Eva can now sit up and because the suit has strengthened her arms and shoulders, she is now trying to crawl and reaches out for toys. She can now join the other children, sitting on a stool. Before the suit this was impossible. She also has a walking frame, specially designed to help her stand. Eva took a few steps, using this walking frame, with help from her teachers. One day we hope she will be able to do this on her own. At school, Eva loves her music therapy and cooking. She has learnt to hold a biscuit in her hand and to feed herself (she often eats the things she has made in her cookery class).

Eva also has riding lessons and can sit up in the saddle with a nice straight back. She has achieved all this with the suit she wears next to her skin. Because she has grown, she will need a new suit in September but there is enough money in her fund to buy this. She will need to wear one for several years yet. Samantha's [*Eva's mother....ed*] M.P. for Colchester, Bob Russell, has taken an interest in Eva and says he will do his best to obtain these suits on the N. H.S., as there are other children out there with the same condition as Eva.

As Eva was so young when she had the stroke, she also had epileptic fits every day. Thankfully, they are now under control. Eva is a beautiful child and, despite her handicap, is happy and eating well. She can say 'mum' and tries to say other words. She has made great progress over the past 18 months. The fundraising for Eva will always be ongoing while she needs equipment to help her live a long and happy life.

Bronwyn Fisher, 17 Lacey Close

oOOo

Dear Watlington Gossip,

At the beginning of January 2004, eleven or so enthusiastic people gave yoga a try on Tuesday mom-ings. Unfortunately, that number eventually whittled down to about five very positive and capable members, which is really not enough to sustain a regular class. Therefore, the class closed at the end of March. This is quite a shame, because I feel that those people who attended benefited from the experience both in mind and body. I wish to thank those who showed interest and attended classes. If anyone is interested now, or in the future, in attending or organising a yoga class, then please feel free to contact me on 01553 810933.

Carole Henry, Station Road, Watlington

The next letter refers to an article in the last issue entitled "It Started at Sea".

Sir,

I write to say how well-displayed my article appeared in the Gossip. However, I would draw your attention to one small inaccuracy in the setting. "Between the devil and the deep" is the correct and complete phrase. The words 'blue' and 'sea' have crept in, and I thought you might like to advise your readers in the next issue.

Yours sincerely, *D. W. Norris, Lacey Close.*

[We apologise for compounding the above mistake, and in so doing own up to yet another blunder that was made in the last issue.

It appeared in the article on page 21 in issue 21, and was a spelling mistake which altered the entire meaning of the item. In the second paragraph of the S.G.I.-UK article we misinterpreted the word 'interdependent', changing this to 'independent'. We sincerely apologise for these mistakes...Ed]

oOOo

An anonymous, scribbled note was retrieved from one of the Gossip boxes, which read as follows:

Just a note - I read with interest about the Anti Social Behaviour Co-ordinator, Mr G. Watkins. I hope we won't need it, but could he please let us know his telephone number, or how to contact him!

[The gentleman concerned is, we believe contacted by telephoning the King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council and asking for the Anti Social Behaviour Co-ordinator..... Ed]

oOOo The Gossip committee believe the following cartoon to be a reference to the fact that the church did not fly the St George's flag on that saint's day. Does anyone know why?

WANTED!

Watlington Reading Group need Some new members. INTERESTED ? We meet every six weeks You don't have to be Einstein! Just love talking about books

More information? Telephone Joan on 01553 811029

Watlington Gossip,

I would like to thank all those who donated any contribution towards helping the Country Music Afternoon for the church windows on 18th April go so smoothly: from making tea to being a toilet attendant for the day. I am delighted to say that we raised £748.00. Also, thank you to the lady who donated £5.00 through my letterbox. Father James has enough money for the repair of the windows (and very nice they look) but they now require grills so that hopefully this won't happen again.

Now, on to my response to the letters in the last edition of the Gossip. Thankyou to the people who had the courage to write in, as we all know that there are many people who have opinions put there are very few who are willing to but pen to paper. Firstly I have just been informed that within the Village Hall hire fee table there is a different charge for registered charities; for an evening it is £37.00. Surely the Church is a registered charity. If not then couldn't the committee have used this as a justified reason for a discount. Why did the committee not either ask me about this or think of it themselves?

The running costs of any hall surely depend on how much it is used and what the hall is used for. Every hall has expenses and if other halls can keep their rates low then surely Watlington could try a bit harder to do the same. Unfortunately the disco never went ahead due to circumstances beyond anyone's control. But yes, the

disco did offer, off their own backs, without me having to ask a discount of £30.00. John's the Butcher in Downham (who lives in the village) donated the cakes that we sold with the tea. Also there was a business that wishes to remain anonymous that donated £150.00 to the cause. Also there were lots of individuals who contributed in many different ways. So there are businesses that are willing to offer discounts and goods to help others. Nothing is set in stone and there is always a way around things if you try hard enough. I object to being referred to as "unreasonable". Maybe if the Village Hall Committee had thought of actually talking to me instead of just sending a very "to the point" letter then I wouldn't feel so perturbed, but the writer did an excellent job of trying to rectify this in his last statement.

I am not knocking anyone that helps in any way with a voluntary organisation, because without these people places like the village hall would not exist. That is shown in the fact that there are nearly 200 pupils at the school and yet there is no one willing to do the main jobs on the PTA, and so sadly it has folded. I also never intended that the Village Hall Committee would get the label "bad guys". My letter was not about trying to make the church look better or a more worthy cause than the Village Hall. It was about the fact that when something as dreadful as this [*the breakage of the church windows.....Ed*] happens, then the whole village should pull together and help each other. The Church helps the Village Hall by charging them a peppercorn rent, so why couldn't the favour be returned.

I would like to close this subject by saying the afternoon in the Church was lovely and the atmosphere was great: 120 people had a nice time and maybe some things are meant to be.

Mrs Jeanette Rodwell

oooOOooo

Watlington Short Mat Bowls Club

From Mrs J D Stephens, Hon. Secretary

Our team ended up fourth in the Paget League!
We are only playing a couple of friendly games this summer. We will however be entering the Paget League next September.

There are a few club vacancies at present. We meet Monday evenings and Friday afternoons. Why not come along and try. If you are interested please phone 01553 811439.

oooOOooo

'We gain nothing by submission except heavier burdens for willing shoulders' *From Tacitus' Agricola*

The Wattler.

The residents of the Hedgerow Village had been suffering from many sleepless nights recently. The earth had been moving for many of them. Deep and faint rumblings beneath the safe, hidden dwellings had been going on for a couple of months and had left the Wallers tired and jumpy. None had suffered more than our friend the Watler and his young family. His dwelling was on the outskirts of the most badly affected side of the village, which lay closest to the edge of the Angel Field.

Now, we know this Waller of old. He has never been one to leave things without investigation, and lack of sleep was making him grumpy. As sleep was not easy, he decided to spend his nights listening. He created a device from a discarded biro, a cone on the bottom cut from a plastic bottle and ear plugs made from the cups that acorns sit in. As dusk fell, the Watler tucked his children into bed, kissed his wife goodnight, collected his device and set out for the village green to feel for the first rumblings.

It was not long before his feet began to tingle. Earphones in place, he positioned the cone to the ground. To his surprise he heard a scraping, shovelling noise, gradually getting louder and louder! The noise grew until the Watler realised that it was directly beneath him. Then it began to move away. The Watler made a snap decision to follow it. A funny sight he looked, inching along with his biro and cone, a look of intense concentration on his face. To his dismay the noise was heading directly for his house - under the door and under the living room! Here, the tone of the noise changed. After a brief moment the Watler realised that this change of tone meant that the noise was moving upwards towards the surface - and him!

The earth was indeed moving; in fact it was erupting! He and his device were thrown backwards as the earth rose higher, until it practically filled the room. Then, from the top of this earth volcano a black form emerged. It was a snuffley, silky, black and very short-sighted mole! A very lost mole. When the Watler had recovered from his shock, he was very angry at the state of his house, so he shouted at the mole -who promptly burst into tears! When they had both calmed down, the mole explained that he was looking for his girlfriend, but he had been digging round in circles for weeks and still could not find her.

The Watler then felt very sorry for the little chap. After repairing the floor of the living room together, he took the mole overland to the open field. Here he helped him to find a huge mole hill to burrow down into and resume his search in more suitable surroundings. Then, mystery solved, the Watler returned home to bed and a good night's sleep!

oooOOooo

Calling Ex Wymondham Students

Were you a student at Wymondham College any time since 1951? If you were, the Alumni would like to hear from you. Carole Arnold, who is the secretary of the Wymonham College Association, is building a database of contact addresses etc, but there are still a lot of ex-students to be traced. The database can be viewed at www.wymondhamca.co.uk And Carole can be contacted through the same site. A second website that is full of memorabilia, anecdotes and other useful information can be found at

www.wcremembered.co.uk This site is updated fortnightly and is continually growing, thanks to the items submitted by the ex-students of the college.

If you were a student, or know someone who was, please contact Carole through the website at the Alumni Office, Wymondham College, Wymondham, Norfolk, NR18 9SZ (phone 01953 605566). There is no cost to individuals and you may even find a long lost friend and revive those old memories. Attend one of the reunions and see how much old colleagues may have changed over the years, some for the better!

Mike Stacey, with assistance from some of the original students, has been attempting to compile a definitive list of names of the original 'guinea pigs', namely those who started the original the old Technical School in April 1951. No records have been found to date confirming the names of those pioneers, so the names have been reliant on memories and items like autograph books that have been retained over the years. If you were one of these originals or again knew someone who was, please let Carole know, or contact Mike directly (michael.stacey@tesco.net) or 07980 932430.

[The above •was received as an email by Colin Vince, who passed it on to the Gossip committee..... Ed]

oooOOooo

Watlington History Group

The first meeting of the Watlington History Group took place in the Committee Room of the Village Hall on the 27th April 2004. Nine villagers attended and several others sent their apologies. There was lively discussion on what the group wished to achieve and activities suggested for further meetings. A formal committee has not been established but a further meeting has been arranged for Monday 12 July 2004, again in the Committee Room. An attendance fee of £1.00 will be asked to pay for the use of the room, with surplus funds over time going towards paying for guest speakers etc. Anyone interested in the history of the village is welcome to attend.

Brenda Leedell has agreed to start the July meeting with a short talk on the Watlington War Memorials.

oooOOooo

Watlington Village Hall

From Mike Cooke

With any building, repair and maintenance is an ongoing business. The Village Hall is no exception to this and recently during the Easter break some limited but important work has been carried out. The eagle-eyed regular users will have notice the redeco-ration which has been carried out to the toilets in the large hall.

Obviously, more decoration will be needed in the near future and this can only be carried out during slack hiring periods i.e. school holidays and when volunteers are available.

Our regular fund-raising events help towards the cost of this sort of work and the recent Jazz Evening with the Woodside Swing Band was an example of this and greatly enjoyed by those who attended.

The Management Committee has planned further events for this year and others are being proposed. We have applied to Creative Arts East for a selection of entertainments for the autumn of 2004 season, as they have been popular in the past, and full details will appear in the next edition of the Gossip. These will hopefully include jazz, puppet shows and story telling for all age groups.

Finally, it is interesting to visit other village halls from time to time, as many of you probably do, to compare the facilities elsewhere with those in this village hall. This hall is a member of the Norfolk Association of Village Halls and I, along with other committee members, have recently visited other halls to attend their meetings. Whilst some halls have extensive facilities, others are not so well off and it should make us realise how fortunate we are here and why the hall is in such great demand for hiring:

not only from within the village but from further afield as well.

See forthcoming Village Hall events over the page

Saturday 3rd July (NOTE THE NEW DATE!!!) *Grand Auction* at 3 p.m.

A chance to turn out the loft and pick up a bargain

Half proceeds to the seller and half to hall funds. Items can be brought to hall between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m.

Viewing between 2 p.m. and 3 p.m. upholstered furniture only, with fire safety labels only

Refreshments will be available

For further information and assistance telephone 01553 810231 or 810584, or 810732

Saturday 4th and Sunday 5th September

Past & Present Exhibition

Displays of bygones by local groups, local history, art, craft and other items of local interest

Watlington Wednesday Club.

In February we enjoyed a fascinating afternoon watching videos, courtesy of Mr Terry Cooke. We saw four videos related to locations near here, including 'Passage to Lynn' about the work of the pilot boats based in King's Lynn. Another video was of the railway to Hunstanton, presented by John Betjeman. Number three was a promotional film of Gressenhall Museum, and the fourth was 'Watlington Past and Present', which led everyone in the audience striving to recognise faces from 25 or so years ago.

Two weeks later, we had a 'PC' afternoon - pancakes cooked by the gentlemen for the ladies, who made pincushions.

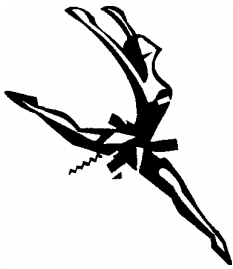
On the 10th March our speaker was Mr Derek Palgrave who comes from Bury St Edmunds, who made us aware of all the chemicals that make up and contribute to the food and drink we consume - most enlightening. On 24th March Mrs Joyce Bailey came along to get us moving and stretching as we exercised to music. Our Easter Social was held on the 4th April and on 28th April we welcomed Miss Doreen Reed from Heacham, who entertained us with the intriguing title 'No Socks to Wash' - most enjoyable. 12th May we travelled to Homingsea where we spent the morning at the Garden Centre. After lunch we were taken to the National Stud at Newmarket where we were able to see mares and young foals in beautiful surroundings.

Brenda JNewman, chairman

Watlington School of Dancing

From Penny Cooke

The school had two successful examination sessions in March and the next one is planned for Sunday 4th July. In April, two pupils, Ellen Matthews and Louise Waring, attended the BBO Dance Week held at White Lodge, the Junior Royal Ballet School.



They had an exciting time, taking class with many professional ballet teachers from the various aspects of the world of dance. One of the highlights of their week was being able to chat to Wayne Sleep and learn of his experiences in the jungle during *I'm a Celebrity*..... Also in April, the senior ballet class took part in a celebration of arts at the Corn Exchange in King's Lynn entitled "The Youthful Side of Theatre". The event was organised by the King's Lynn Players, who were hosts to the AGM and NODA (The National Association of Operatic and Dramatic Societies).

We hope to provide some entertainment at the Pre-School Summer Extravaganza on 10th July, after which we will be passing the hat round for contributions to their cause!!

The annual prize-giving will be held on Saturday afternoon, 17th July, which will also be the last day of term.

oooOooo

Watlington Carpet Bowls

As reported in the last Gossip we entered the league being held at Lynn Sport and Downham Market. At the end of the season our 'A' team was 6th and the 'B' team was 9th. In the singles we were awarded a 6th and a 9th place. In the doubles we are 7th, 8th and 11th. At Downham we are 6th in the team games and 4th in the pairs.

As already reported we entered the Borough Cup/ Mayor's Charity Shield. We were knocked out of the Borough Cup. However, both our teams were in the quarter finals in the Mayor's Charity Shield. Every month we enter the Charity Tournaments held at Littleport Leisure and we have been getting through to the finals (still no change there). These tournaments are over until September. We sadly miss Ken Fox, who died in March. Ken was one of the founder members of this club. Our sympathy and support are with Margaret and her family.

We still have a few vacant places, so if you are interested, come along on Thursday mornings or Tuesday evenings, or telephone 01553 811439.

Mrs J D Stephens, Hon Secretary

Watlington Players

The tickets for Guys and Dolls have been on sale since May 22nd. If you have not obtained yours yet, phone the usual office on 01553 810452, Bill Cameron always does this job for us. Can I take this opportunity to thank Bill and Dolly the years of support they have given us. Firstly with outside bars under our theatre licence and then box office and car park attendant, and now box office (must be slowing down Bill!).

I think it would amaze most people how much time and hard work goes into our shows. The cast have been learning the songs with our musical director since February, and the choreographer is now putting music to those songs. Our scenic artist is designing and painting (how does one capture Broadway, New York on a flat piece of canvas, 20' x 12'?).

The costume department, over 30 in the cast, over half of them men, all to be dressed in 50s style. Men wore hats then, didn't they? The staging management has been working out how to flow from scene to scene, without the audience looking at blank curtains. How to stage a show like Guys and Dolls, in a village hall and give the feeling of a night out at the theatre? We decided on a night club setting. On top of all this, the financial side! Musicals are horribly expensive; to put on extra rehearsals, musicians, royalties etc., we must sell all the seats to break even. Well, I suppose it's the very challenge and team effort that makes us want to do it, a bit like football and going for the Cup. We have been very lucky in getting a grant to update all our lighting. As one lantern can cost over £500, we are well pleased. They will all be in position for Guys and Dolls (more work!). The filling-in of the grant forms seems very complicated, but I would recommend it to any club needing funds to improve. The junior Players, COWPS, are going from strength to strength. Some seniors (12 to 17 year olds) took part in the N.O.D.A. Youth Festival at the Corn Exchange in Lynn in April. They performed the "15 Minute Hamlet" by Tom Stoppard and gave a very good account of themselves: well done! The whole show, using 250 young people drawn from local Societies, was a joy to watch and their enjoyment of it was evident. It is nice to see so many youngsters involved in the theatre: they are, after all its future.

oooOOooo

Watlington Pre-School

The spring term has flown by and we are now on our way to summer. The children have been busy making Valentine heart biscuits, decorated flowers for Mother's Day, and had a sponsored treasure hunt, and great fun with a pyjama party at the end of term. Along with the usual daily activities, some of our themes for the terms were dinosaurs, opposites, and is currently textures and china.

Following the Ofsted inspection in December, we have the final report, which we are thrilled to say was excellent. A big 'well done' and thank you to the staff and all who helped our pre-school achieve this standard.

Three new members of staff have been welcomed onto the team: Marcia Knapp, Jo Hartley and Allison Hoey Still. These are replacing Tricia Brown and Carole Browne, who have sadly left. We wish them all the best.

The easter bingo went well and we managed to raise £420, all of which will be put into pre-school funds for new equipment. Thank you to everyone who gave donations for prizes and those who helped out on the evening, and to all who came along on the night to make it a full house.

The Summer Extravaganza will take place on the 10th July on Watlington church field. There will be loads of different things to do (see the separate advertisement in this edition). Please try to come along. In preparation, the children will be making crowns and tiaras for the fancy dress competition. Money raised on the day will be going towards our relocation fund.

Our older children will be moving up to primary school in September. Some places will be available from then. If you have a child over 2½ you would like to join our pre-school, please ensure you put their name on the register as soon as possible. Please contact Clara Thiant on 810739 for an application form.

Session Times are currently as follows:

Monday, 9.30 to 12 noon Monday 12.30 to 3.00 p.m. Tuesday, 9.30 to 12 noon Tuesday 12.30 to 3.00 p.m. Thursday, 9.30 to 12.00 p.m. Thursday, 12.30 to 3.00 p.m. Friday, 9.30 to 12.00 p.m.

If you would like any further information about Watlington Pre-school, please ring Helen Gooding on 810637.

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200 Club

FEBRUARY 2004 WINNERS

22 Mrs W. Simmons £40 200 Mr T. Burton £15
8 Mrs G. Goodship £10 86 J Cook £5
67 Mrs D Cameron £5

MARCH 2004

49 Mr A. Rogers £40 59 Mr G. Famham £15
9 Mr J. Loft £10 113 Mrs L. Haynes £5
134 Mrs M. Ireland £5

APRIL 2004

135 Mrs A. Bullock £100 112 Mr E. Horn £15
92 Mr P. Ryder £10 65 Mrs J. Toates £5
101 Mrs J. Gooding £5

There are some vacancies in the 200 Club and it costs only £1 a month to be a member. Every fourth month, the first prize is £100. For the remaining eight months the first prize is £40 and the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and fifth prizes are as stated above. For further information, please contact the club organiser, telephone: 01553 811345.

oooOOooo

DEADLINE DATE = a date beyond which no further copy may be received for publication. So why do many contributors to this magazine leave their articles until AFTER the given date? Ed.

A SMILE

Smiling is infectious, You catch it like the flu, When someone smiled at me today I started smiling too.

I passed around the corner And someone saw my grin, When we smiled, I realised I'd passed it on to him

I thought about my smile and then I realised its worth, A single smile like mine Could travel right around the earth.

If you see a smile begin, Don't leave it undetected, Let's start an epidemic, quick And get the world infected.

oOo

RETREAT

It's my little healing comer And a little cosy nest, I can go out to the garden When I need a little rest. We come to our garden to sit, Some with dogs, some with cats, Watching the flowers bloom, Roses and forget-me-nots, Not to take the sunlight From each others 'face, But give God's grace to all.

[Sorry, but the above poems appear to be anonymous. If the authors would like to have their names recorded, please let us know for the Gossip's next issue...Ed]

The Rector Writes

The Real peace that friendship brings Many people in today's world have an inner loveless emptiness. Friendship at its deepest level is never allowed to enter the secret, desolate place, deep inside them, where they feel secure, yet abandoned.

For many, the bitter wind of loneliness blows through their lives. Because they do not love themselves as they should, they feel threatened by friendship because they are afraid that in the process of making friends, they will lose something of themselves. Clinging to what they have, they are psychologically and emotionally unable to reach out to others. They may hunger for the nourishment of human company yet, at the same time, they instinctively reject it.

They live in an isolated bubble. In their lives there is only room for one person - themselves. Sadly they are enmeshed in chains that they cannot break, because it is the only life they have ever known. Christians should be noted for their caring friendship for other people. Christ is aware of our need for friendship because He knew of His own human need to be loved.

Jesus was a great sharer of the friendship to the most unlikely people. "While He was at dinner in the house it happened that a number of tax collectors and sinners came to sit at the table with Jesus and His disciples. When the Pharisees saw this they said to His disciples "Why does your master eat with tax collectors and sinners?" Our Lord replied "It is not the healthy who need the doctor but the sick". He knew that in loving them and sharing a meal with them. He was doing exactly what the Father wanted Him to do. His friendship for others had a healing quality which He passed on to His disciples. Friendship changes our lives. In our increasing materialistic society people need to experience the peace of friendship which is a 'peace which the world cannot give'. They have everything but love. They need to be told that they are loved and wanted for themselves, not for what they have or what they do. They will know that what we offer them is a friendship that expects no return.

We are someone with whom they can share themselves and learn the new language of friendship. It is true love that really heals, love that shows that we need them as they need us.

True caring for another person in genuine Christian friendship means that we want them to be at peace with themselves. Friendship opens the door of their prison and sets them free to venture out into the world with confidence and hope that they will find others to love and be loved by.

God, our father has given everyone deep within their being the desire and capacity to love. They need someone however to activate this healing power within them. It is for this reason that the risen Christ shared His healing ministry with His disciples. He healed people through friendship, and promised "I tell you solemnly, whoever believes in me will perform the same acts as I do myself, he will perform even greater works, because I am going to the Father. Whatever you ask for in my name, I will do". Just as our blessed Lord's love touched other people and made them whole, so our contact with others in Christian friendship will set them free to enjoy life in the company of friends. If only we could see into the future, we would be amazed at the hidden impact for good that Christian friendship has on people's lives. Selfish people give little to others because of the fear that controls them. There may come a time when they begin to realise that we want to be their friend, with no strings attached. When they do, they will gradually come alive in the sunlight of friendship, knowing that they have nothing to fear.

Their crisis is a crisis of faith and hope. In the final analysis, we do not trust ourselves to God's loving care because we find it difficult to believe that such love exists anywhere. For some it is just a pipe dream that they would like to believe in, but they do not understand the meaning of the word 'love' because they have never experienced it in their lives.

What we need today is not so much a belief in God but a belief that God believes in us. We shall then be as Saint Paul describes 'A new creature, a free person, free of fear and free for love. A person at peace because they are full of the joy of living; someone transformed, who is really a son or daughter and not a slave; at one with themselves and at peace because they are saturated by the truth of the good news of Jesus Christ, that they are blessed with a new dimension to their lives'.

May God go with you.

Father James

Please give us your full support at this special event

Watlington Patronal Festival Sunday 27th June at 11 a.m.

The preacher will be Canon Michael Rees

Watlington Parish Church OPEN GARDENS

Sunday 4th July, 2 to 5 p.m. A selection of village gardens Many other attractions

Programmes: £2 Telephone 810305

The Future use of the Glebe Land

Report from Colin Vince the Parish Clerk

As you may be aware, the Parish Council has agreed terms for a 10 year lease of the Glebe Lands (the large field behind the Village Hall and the narrow strip running down from the field to Downham Road).

Since it has become clear that the Council would sign the tenancy agreement with the diocese, there has been much speculation as to how the site would be used. Much of this speculation has arisen after the cutting of the whole of the large field at Easter. So that all members of the community are aware of the plans agreed with the Parish Council and what can and what cannot be done, set out below are the main points of the agreement and the decisions taken at the moment by the Parish Council.

Terms of the lease show the site 'as an open space to be used for recreational use by the residents and inhabitants of the village of Watlington and the grazing of animals and the cutting of hay'. The Council are specifically excluded from using the site as a nature reserve or wildlife sanctuary or plantation. As part of this latter exclusion, the grass has to be trimmed and any scrub, brushwood, saplings and shrubs removed.

In agreeing to the lease of the site, the Parish Council was keen to allow the recently formed Watlington Youth Football Club facilities on the land. At its meeting on the 4th May, the Council agreed that the football club should develop one full-size pitch, this to be located on the site of the pitch that existed a few years ago. As part of this agreement the football club have assured the Council that the pitch will be maintained to the highest standard. Further discussion will be held with the football club to consider any applications for smaller pitches, for the junior teams.

At the present time, only the area of the single football pitch will be mown, although the Council will need to develop a strategy over the next few months for maintaining the whole field area in accordance with the leasing terms. Over the same period the Council will also be considering the maintenance and use of the narrow strip to Downham Road.

The container for the football equipment will be moved, when the lease has been finally settled, to the north east corner of the site, in an attempt to reduce anti-social behaviour around the footpath area. The Council accepted that the football club needs a container of this size, to house the goal posts and other equipment. The container will be painted an environmentally friendly green colour by the football club. The Council confirmed that it has no intention of moving the line of the public footpath on the west side of the site. Other footpaths are not designated as public footpaths and the Council has no plans that they are so designated.

There are no intentions to bar dog walkers from the public footpath. However, dog owners are reminded that the site is within the 30 mph zone of the village and as such dogs must be kept under control at all times and all fouling cleared. The Council has already provided a dog litter bin by each of the footpath entrances to the site. Finally, on the issue of the grass cutting at Easter, although keen

to see that a cut was made, the Parish Council did not authorise the extent of the cut, and it was not paid for from the public purse.

A Footnote to the above

From Parish Councillor Mrs Jean Golding After the intense discussions with the football club and members of the public at the last parish council meeting, I decided to walk around the Glebe Land, not having really looked at the field for some years. It was a pleasant walk, and I can understand why so many people like the area. However, I was absolutely disgusted by the amount of dog faeces I saw as I followed the 'path' around the perimeter. There are bins at the ends of all the footpaths on the Glebe Land, so there is no excuse not to clean up after your pet. One of the concerns of the football club is the mixing of dogs and children playing football on the same land. This I can understand. Aside from the health issues, the sheer horror of having to clean a child up covered in dog dirt, having landed in it whilst playing football, is not acceptable.

If you see a walker not clearing up after their pet has fouled, please ask them to do so, for the sake of public health. Notices will be posted around the area. Unfortunately, dogs can't read. Nor, it would seem, can many of their owners.

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Late Postal Deliveries

Some villagers are suffering late postal deliveries. Up to 2 p.m. is considered not to be late in rural areas. However, deliveries to Hawthorn Close often arrive after that time. I realise not everyone can have their post with their breakfast and someone must be last in line.

Upon enquiry at the village Post Office to find out who I should contact to complain, I was told by Jim that he too is having problems. His contact (and the person I need to write to) is away on sick leave, and there appears to be no replacement.

If your post regularly arrives after 2 p.m., or even if yours doesn't, but you would like to support our cause, please drop a note into one of the Gossip boxes and they will be sent by Jim to the relevant person. I would like to point out that I am not complaining about any of the delivery personnel, it is the system that is failing.

Jean Golding

Watlington Medical Centre.

There will be changes in the arrangements for patients to be seen out of hours, following the implementation of the new General Practice Contract in April of this year. The new contract alters the GP's standard hours of availability to 8 in the morning until 6.30 at night, Monday to Friday. All the time outside of this is regarded as out of hours and arrangements are being put in place for the service to be run by the East Anglian Ambulance Trust. They will be responsible for an organisation called Anglian Medical Care, which will work across the whole of Norfolk to deliver out of hours services. The main features of these changes are that the base currently operating from Downham Market Health Centre will be manned by a paramedic overnight rather than a doctor. There will be a doctor based at King's Lynn who will be providing cover and support to paramedics operating within West Norfolk. Staffing for weekends and week days is otherwise very similar to before, when care was provided by the GP Cooperative. The other change will be that surgeries will not open on Saturday mornings and the main base covering Watlington is likely to be Downham Market, although it may be that patients will have the option of travelling to King's Lynn to be seen. The details of staffing arrangements are currently being finalised in terms of the number of GPs on Saturday mornings. There may also be nurse practitioners based at Downham to provide care and there will also be a paramedic for home visits.

The practice will give the final details of this arrangement to the Gossip for the next issue [September...^]. Changes to out of hours is one of the many alterations to the GP's contract which will include a large number of targets that the practices will have to achieve in order to gain health service remuneration. Patients with certain chronic illnesses are likely to be seen on a regular basis by trained nurses to undertake the tests that are required under the new contract. Further details on some of these services will be given in the next article in the Gossip.

From the Medical Centre 19th May 2004

Church Farm Visit From CSV Volunteers

As a thank you for all their volunteering over the past year, and as a fun end to his term as Mayor of Downham Market, Stephen Teverson took a group of CSV Volunteers out for the day to the recently opened Rare Breeds Centre at Church Farm, Stow Bardolph. The CSV volunteers help in various community activities, including charity shops, gardening for the elderly, day centres, riding schools, and animal projects. The visit to the Rare Breeds Centre was a pleasant and deserved surprise. Despite the gloomy day it was a hit with everyone. The volunteers, Mr Teverson, CSV staff and support volunteers took a walk around the Centre to admire the many rare breeds there. The pigs seemed to be a particular favourite with everyone. There was also a woodland walk which was very informative, if not a bit wet! Tractor tours were taken and there was a giant picnic lunch. The Centre staff were friendly and helpful, and information on the animals was always available.

Stephen Teverson and his colleagues provided a spectacular lunch and were part of an enjoyable and informative day out. CSV Vocal volunteers and staff would like to thank Mr Teverson, his colleagues, and the staff of the Rare Breeds Centre. For more information on the Rare Breeds Centre please phone 01366382162.

If anyone would like any information on the CSV Vocal Project, or to find out how you can help us to support our volunteers in their community activities, please contact Jemma Mindham on 01366 385839, or atjmindham@csv.org.uk

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Watlington WI

Dr Stephen Ashworth from the UEA came to speak to us in March and brought with him lots of high tech equipment with which he demonstrated the effects of light on various substances. We were even shown how to manufacture nylon! This was a fascinating talk on a quite complex subject made interesting and easy to understand by a very good speaker. In April, Hilda Bond demonstrated what to do with "A free bag of oranges". She prepared soup, a chicken dish, and sweet, and several other items, and all this on her camping stove.

Our May meeting was mainly dedicated to voting on the resolutions that WI representatives take to the Federation AGM. However to break up the proceedings a little we were shown a video entitled "Fields of Gold" from the Fair-Trade group which dealt with the growing of bananas in the Windward Islands. And finally thanks to all who helped with and supported the WI Spring Fair held in the small hall of the Village Hall on 24th April. *See Diary Dates for W.I. Future programme*

Chairman's Report at the AGM of the Parish Council

2004 will bring a big change to the village with the go-ahead being given to the developers to build 182 houses on the land adjacent to the school, despite vigorous opposition by the Parish Council. It is to be hoped that the building work will not be too disruptive to those living near the site. The impact on the development on the village facilities and the road system remains to be seen. On completion, the development will see the population of the village rise by 25%, from the total of 2015 recorded in the 2001 census. Other small developments may well be coming in Rowan Close and in Thieves Bridge Road. It should also be noted that the new local development strategy for the West Norfolk area is due in the next two years and this may bring new challenges.

Unfortunately, at the same time as the development was approved, news came through that the station car park would not be increased in size, which will no doubt increase the day parking problems in Station Road and John Davis Way. Local councillors will be lobbying hard for a change in this policy and at the same time urging that traffic management measures be introduced into this area of the village.

On other traffic measures, it is hoped that a zebra crossing will be installed to allow safe crossing from the Millennium Green to the Angel Pub, shop and post office. This scheme will also hopefully make the Church Road/Downham Road safer with the widening of pavements. Other traffic control

measures under consideration are the introduction of speed reactive signs and village name signs on the five routes into the village.

A proposal to close the road C54 to Tottenhill was shelved after strong opposition in Watlington, Tottenhill and Wormegay, though the junction remains a safety problem and it is hoped that other solutions can be found. More positively, a new street light has been put at the entrance to the path to the village hall from Church Road and other such lights are under consideration.

Anti-social behaviour remains a problem in the village, with many petty incidences being overshadowed by the breaking of windows in the church. This incident did have a silver lining in that it brought the community together in condemnation of the incident and in subsequent fund-raising for the more than £3,000 needed, enabling the windows to be quickly replaced. Though perhaps it is a sign of the times that it was felt necessary to fix security grills over the new windows. It is to be hoped that the memory of this incident and with co-operation between various enforcement agencies that anti-social behaviour can be severely reduced in the coming year.

One positive measure that brought greater participation in the village was the formation of the new foot ball club. This has proved a major success with six teams being entered into local leagues. May I congratulate Andrew Matthews and his band of willing volunteers for all their hard work and effort getting this venture off the ground (or more rightly onto the ground!). Thanks are given to the Sports and Social Club, the Village Hall Committee and the Parish Council for their help and support to this project. Leading on from this, the Parish Council is currently seeking to lease the Glebe Land behind the Village Hall and if this proves successful it is hoped that a new football pitch can be installed on the space

On the recreation ground, the project to bring new play equipment has reached the stage of seeking grants, and the results of all the efforts put in are awaited.

Litter remains a problem in the village, whether as an escapee from the green boxes, thrown by passing traffic or dropped by residents. The Parish Council is addressing the problem by an increase in the litter picker hours and by adding more litter bins, which are cleared on a regular basis. Can I please urge all in the community to do their bit - the best advice being "take your litter home".

The shop/post office changed hands this year and thanks to the efforts of Colin and Alison Brown a thriving business has been handed to the new owners. Maybe this will be the year that the newly installed lottery machine turns up a millionaire winner in the village!

The Millennium Green has had a good year, with much planting carried out and the installation of some very solid seating carried out by a willing band of volunteers who meet on a regular basis. The fruits of the planting regime will all become clear in the next few years as plants mature and the wild grasses become less prominent.

One small but significant change in the village has been the correction to the War Memorial. Sidney Challis has rightly been added to the memorial as one of the parish's fallen heroes. My thanks to Cllr Brenda Leedell for all her hard work in verifying the correction.

Congratulations are extended to John Murfitt who was awarded the Mayor's Golden Jubilee Award for Voluntary Service. Mr Murfitt was only one of 11 people out of over 200 applicants to receive the award, rightly deserved for all the voluntary work he has put in over the years.

The village has its own fully developed web site to compliment the work of the Gossip quarterly magazine, these sources giving easy access to formation about all the various facilities, clubs and societies that are flourishing in the village. May I finish by giving my thanks to all those individuals in providing all these local activities and facilities and in doing so making Watlington such a pleasant and active place to live.

Parish Council Report

From the Clerk to the Parish Council, Colin Vince. As you will all no doubt be aware, approval has been given by the borough planning authority for the building of 182 houses on the land adjacent to the school. Details of the conditions of the permission have been posted on the village website and should be read in conjunction with the previous decisions already made for the site. Work has started on the old Hutchinson site in Thieves Bridge Road., which will bring an additional 10 properties to the

village. The lease of the Glebe Land has finally been settled, the leasing being for a period of 10 years, with a rent review after five years. Please see the separate item on the Glebe Land now that the Parish Council have the tenancy.

The Borough Council have approved a grant towards the new play equipment. This has allowed the council to hopefully unlock a much larger grant from a potential founder, WREN. The awarding of the grant was just in time to allow the application to go forward to WREN for their current round of allocations. It is hoped that news will be heard in September as to how the council's application has fared. The Community Projects Committee, as part of the project to provide the new play equipment on the recreation ground and council will be giving further consideration to how to make the best use of the area.

The council is hopeful that this year will see the installation of the crossing from the Millennium Green to the shop, there hopefully being funds available from the county council to allow the scheme to go ahead. Issues relating to other traffic management measures are still under discussion, as a result of hoping for county funds and the costs involved. The two main issues being considered are speed reactive signs and village 'gateway' signs, which clearly announce the start of the village and the start of the 30 mph zone.

The council is seeking a 40 mph zone along Station Road, from the 30 mph zone to the boundary of Magdalen village. The council has received an early hopeful reply from the County Council and has backing from Wiggenhall St Mary Magdalen Parish Council.

Our Council is still pursuing the state of the railway station car park. This has proved a frustrating matter, as the parties to a possible funding of any improvements seem intent of finding ways of funding an expensive upgrade, whereas the Parish Council, although agreeing that a 'bells and whistles' would be wonderful, are trying to seek a more immediate solution in the short term, whereby the area would be tidied up to allow maximum use of the available space and improvements made to the current surface.

The new notice board has been installed outside the Medical Centre and the notice board outside the shop is going to be improved. Continued thanks to Geoff Beaumont, who carries out these works at basic cost. An application for an additional light in Britton Close has been made to the Borough Council and consideration is being given to the lighting arrangements along the path linking Chestnut Close and Downham Road.

Planning Report

The following decisions have been received from the

Borough Council:

Thieves Bridge Road (the old Hutchinson site) for residential development - approved, with conditions. Plot adjacent to 41 Mill Road, construction of dwelling - approved, with conditions. Land, rear of 12 Downham Road, on Fairfield Lane,- construction of dwelling - refused. Land adjacent to the school, 182 houses - approved with conditions.

Orchard Farm, Thieves Bridge Road, 2-storey extension - approved.

15 Fen Road, conservatory extension - approved, with conditions.

6 Bure Close, extension to dwelling and retention of boundary fence - approved, with conditions. 9

Fen Road, conservatory extension - approved. 29 Stone Close, 2-storey extension - approved.

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Watlington Information Centre

From Barbara Church, a volunteer and secretary of the Information Centre Committee.

Most of the community groups serving our community (and several individuals) know about and use the Information Centre which is located at the east end of the village hall. It's a fairly small room really but kitted out with some useful equipment, bought with successful grant applications just over two years ago. The Centre works as a community office in many ways and is staffed by volunteers three days a week on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. If readers haven't managed to pop in yet we think you might be pleasantly surprised by a visit, and you will certainly be warmly welcomed. We are planning to have a stall at the Pre-School Summer Extravaganza, on July 10th, which will also give a window on our activities and give us a chance to try and answer any of your queries and respond to suggestions.

We would welcome more volunteers to help with staffing the Centre, so if anyone reading this article feels able to help, please do pop in or ring when the Centre is open.

The Centre is self-financing and was supported last year by a grant from the Parish Council which was gratefully received. Another small source of income was the 6% of telephone call bills from a group of people who have signed up with the Phone Co-op, an ethical and environmentally responsible telephone service provider. Readers would like to find out more about this simple way of supporting one of our village amenities, please do come and see us, or telephone the Phone Co-op on 0845 458 9004. For those who have home computers, have you accessed the website on www.watlingtoninfo.com where there is all sorts of useful information about village activities and links to other sites. The contact details for the Information Centre are telephone 01553 810777, and email wic@watlingtoninfo.com

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Dirary Dates

June 2004

Sports & Social Club, June 12th, Paul Copestake
Church Summer Fete, 12th June at 2 p.m.
Watlington Church Patronal Festival, Sunday 27th June.

July 2004

Open Gardens (Watlington Church) Sunday 4th July.
Watlington Players, 'Guys and Dolls' 20th to 24th July.
Grand Auction, 3 p.m. Saturday 3rd July.
Sports & Social Club, July 10th, Bondy
Summer Extravaganza! Saturday 10th July.
W.I. 13th July, The Work of a Prison Chaplain, Revd. Betty Humphries.
Banger Race & Social Evening, 7 7th July.
Sports & Social Club, July 24th, Robert London.

August 2004

W.I. August 10th Film, Stage and TV World – Mr Don Westcott.
Deadline date for copy to the Gossip, 15th August.
Sports & Social Club, August 14th, King's Lynn Brass Band and Barbeque.
Sports & Social Club, August 28th, Quiz Night.

September 2004

Past & Present Exhibition, Saturday 4th and Sunday 5th September.

Sports & Social Club, September 11th. Mark Steel W.I. Sept 14th "Granny's Drawers".

The next Gossip Magazine comes out in September

Useful telephone numbers:

Parish Councillors:

01553 810276 Dr H Lacey (chairman)

01553811282 Mr R Amor

01553810216 Mr E W Featherby

01553 811362 Mrs J Golding

01553810711 Mr J Harris

01553810848 Mrs B Leedell

01553 810212 Mrs S. Miller

01553810169 Mr C Pike

01553 810331 Mr R Rockcliffe

01553810231 Mr B Toates

01553 812082 Mr C. Vince (Clerk)

01553 811870 Mr D Widowson

email address of the parish council:

watlingtonparish@onetel.net.uk

Borough Councillor:

Mr Julyan Ansell 01553 810428

County Councillor:

Mr Richard Rockcliffe 01553 810331 (Mobile number: 07958 352 975)

***REMINDER! The closing date for receipt
of copy for the next 'Gossip' is
STRICTLY the 15th August 2004***

Member of Parliament for South West Norfolk:

Mrs Gillian Shephard M.P., 01366 385072

Other useful numbers:

01553 810253 Watlington Medical Centre 01553 810253 Emergency (out of hours) 01553 811440

Prescriptions (fax only) 01553 811631 District Nurse

01366383241 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

01553 695800 Benefits Agency

01553 692722 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 841454 Chas's Chippy, fish & chip shop
01553811345 Village correspondent to Lynn News
01553 810305 Father James Nolan
01553810732 Village Hall (Bookings)
01553 810777 Information Centre.

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