



Published by the Watlington Community Magazine Committee and delivered free of charge to each household in the parish. **WATTLINGTON GOSSIP**

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The Volunteer Committee of Watlington Community Magazine

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by Barry Shears

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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 12th May 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

Mid February and the snow has gone at last we hope. Christmas seems an age ago and we are starting to look ahead to spring and even summer, holidays in the sun beckon as we peruse the brochures. Does it make us feel any warmer? No it doesn't!

I had thought that it was because I am getting older that time seems to fly past so quickly these days but talking to the young girls at work they say that they feel this too. We came to the decision that it was part of modern life that makes time seem to fly so. I love to watch TV programmes like "Heartbeat" and remember when we lived life at a much slower pace. It wasn't so long ago but how times have changed. Being a bit of a science fiction addict I sometimes wonder how I would have reacted if - back in the 60s when I did my secretarial course and started work in my first office job - what if I had been taken through time and dropped into a modern office. When the height of technology was an electric typewriter what would I have made of computers and E-mails and all the gadgetry that we find in a modern office. I have been browsing through a magazine produced in the village of Kilminster, Devon, produced monthly and costing 32p. I know that I am biased but on balance I feel that our quarterly magazine has a much better balance of articles than theirs but we should not be complacent - maybe we can glean some ideas. They were asking if any readers had an interesting house move story, or had maybe done some renovation on one of the older buildings in the village and discovered something interesting lurking behind the woodwork or in the attic. What a good theme for a series of articles - come on let's hear from you. It doesn't have to be a long piece; in fact it is often easier to find space for a shorter item. Can I remind you all once again that it is never too soon to let us have your items for the Diary Page. You know that advertising pays. Our deadline date is always printed on the inside front page along with directions of how to get items to us. If you are on line try E-mailing direct to Barry Shears - saves him a lot of time - or fax Jean Golding; or of course you can always drop it in one of the Gossip boxes. If you know any of the committee and live nearby, take your article directly to them. However you do it, we look forward to hearing from YOU.

Brenda Leedell A member of the
editorial team

...0000000000...

Watlington Community Magazine Annual General Meeting

The meeting, held on the 18th February and advertised on this page in the Christmas edition, attracted no one; there was not one member of the general public at the general meeting. However, because it is felt to be the democratic way, the committee went ahead with the meeting by reading the minutes of the 2002 A.G.M. Needless to say these were passed without dissent and there were no matters arising.

The chairman, having prepared his annual report, read it for the benefit of the five members of the committee sitting around the table. In it he stated that we had another successful year and although our advertisers (from which our revenue comes) had fluctuated the income from this source was stable. He thanked all those who had helped in any way with the production and delivery of the magazine and those who had sent in their articles for publication, without which the magazine would not exist. The chairman stated that we are in a good financial position - thanks again to our advertisers - and that we can continue for another year to publish the Gossip. He went on to describe some of the more unusual articles that had been printed in the Gossip during 2002 and made mention that we are now on the World Wide Web via the Information Centre's web site where the entire magazine appears. He thanked the committee for their good work throughout the year. The treasurer's report substantially supported the chairman's words in that the magazine's finances are in a fairly healthy state and providing revenue continues to come from the advertisers the Gossip will continue to be published throughout 2003.

The final act of the A.G.M was for the committee to resign. The secretary called for those who were prepared to stand during 2003 to come forward, at which point late committee were voted in en bloc; the officers remaining the same as 2002. Their names may be found on the inside of the front cover of this, YOUR magazine

Letters, letters, letters

The topic of the skateboard park appears to be still a major concern, as the following letters show.....

Dear readers

Regarding the skate park, which is built in the village, it really would be a shame for it to come down, as the children need things to occupy them and to enjoy as well. Moving over to the other side of the playing field;

what about the younger children in the village, the two to five year olds? There is nothing for them to play on. What there is, is certainly not safe or suitable. They need a fenced-in area where the tiny ones can play on or in.

The fenced-in area at the Walks in King' s Lynn is a good example.

There are lots of kiddies in the village now and in the summer months there is nowhere for them to go. Being a grandma of a two year old, I did not realise until I went to the playing field how useless it is for the little ones. I have no idea who to approach about it; perhaps the parish council can help.

Mrs S. Hewlett, Fen Road

Dear Gossip editor, Thanks for the Gossip.

I often wonder what sort of double standards are we coming to? First, your editorial states the [parish] council may close the skate park. Then, on page six Mrs Spalding thanks the council for allowing the park to be built! The first problem was the person who allowed the park to be built where it is. It should have been put as far away from the hall and the bowling green as possible. A site near the edge of the playing field would have been better; that is common sense. Teenagers get very vociferous when they are enjoying themselves. As for bad language: can any male member of the parish council put his hand on his heart and say "I never used a swear word"..... Today' s films and T.V. are full of swear words. Children watch these and listen, and think its big to repeat. I have even heard young mothers swearing at toddlers. As for litter; how about getting the youngsters to appoint a litter warden. After all the time, money and effort that was put into this, it can surely be resolved. It' s not much to ask, to save the only amenity they have. I don' t think they are that stupid! Another question I would like to ask: where and why have the minutes of council meetings been hidden? They used to be on the board, outside the post office, but it seems they have disappeared. Can' t the council afford to print them, or is there something they don' t want us to know about? For example. Estate development again.

R. F. Amor, Paige Close

[In the pursuit of accuracy, the editorial team (some of whom are indeed parish councillors) would like to point out that the parish council minutes are on public display within the post office. Furthermore, the dates of council meetings are published and the general public are at liberty to attend these. There is no secrecy attending the workings of the parish council, nor any attempt to hide matters discussed at council meetings.....ED].

This next item is part of a letter received from a young Australian woman, who spent several months living in our village during the spring and early summer of 2002.....

I desperately want to contribute to the Watlington Gossip and when I was reading the last one you sent (*issue 16, Christmas 2002*) I felt some anxiety about the skate park being lost because of the littering. I have been trying to come up with some solutions because I remember when I was there that there was indeed a lot of rubbish. The other thing I noticed was that there was only one rubbish bin (I think). A lot of rubbish accumulates because people like to throw their rubbish and hope that it lands in the bin and when it doesn't they leave it there. This made me think that a rubbish bin with a larger mouth and larger capacity needs to be put there. And not just one but three or four. The other thought I had was that seeing that most of the rubbish would be generated from the local store there, they should take some of the responsibility. This may sound a bit ridiculous, given that the owners of the store are not the ones dropping the rubbish. However, if they were not there to sell packaged food to the kids, there would be a lot less rubbish. I think they should implement some sort of incentive scheme so that the store gives 'cash back' to kids who return rubbish (or something like that). I am still working on this idea but I don't think it is entirely inappropriate. It would be a big shame to lose that park.

Zoe Dattner, Melbourne, Australia

A letter, here printed in full, was received after the writer's article, entitled "Troubled Youth" was turned down for publication in the Christmas issue of the magazine. In the light of the previous letters we thought it should appear here:

To all WG committee members, I received your letter this morning explaining why my article would not be printed in the December issue of the Gossip magazine. However, I do think the issues of the youth and their future is far more important than creating the right editorial balance within the magazine. You obviously believe this balancing act is not censorship when clearly it is. You are saying by your actions that problems and solutions of our young people should not be brought to the attention of the village and the surrounding areas. Applying this kind of censorship to something as important as our youth and their future is tantamount to folly. Anything that would help our young people should not be swept under the carpet in the guise of balancing the content of the magazine.

At our meeting in the village hall to discuss how we can help the young people of our community have a voice and become more balanced adults, both Colin Fawcett, a youth worker and Barbara Church thought my article prior to Open Meeting in January was a good and sensible idea. It will seem strange to them that a few old dinosaurs would block the article for the sake of balance.

I have just seen on the news, the concern about rising street crime and violence. It is no wonder when no-one cares about the young people enough to do anything for them! You can see what they feel, "Well, no-one cares about us so why should we bother?" If no article, perhaps you would like to print this letter instead. Yours most sincerely,

Anita Packwood, Paige Close, Watlington

[With the greatest respect to the writer of this letter, the Gossip committee would like to point out that we have regularly asked for articles from the youth of our village, with little result. However, it was such an article (letters page, summer 2001) that was instrumental in kick starting the skate board park. We ran a painting competition for youngsters in the spring of 2002 which received disappointing support. A Gossip box (for the receipt of articles) has, until recently been situated at the school, but we have had not one article. The box has now been moved to a different location.

As we are keen to remind our readers: this is YOUR magazine. We take the words you send to us, scrutinise them carefully at all stages of the magazine's production and finally make informed decisions in the light of all the articles we have received, as to what creates the best balance for our readers at the time, informing and reflecting the life of our village. In fact we fully publicised the January meeting to which Mrs Packwood refers in her letter and will be pleased to appraise other articles from and about our young people.

WHAT DO OUR READERS THINK about content and balance of the magazine. We need to know!]

Watlington Youth Project

By Anita Packwood

A group of individuals came together on January 21st 2003 in the village hall to see what could be organised for the young adults of our community.

The background of this meeting began last autumn, after noticing the destruction of one of the village notice boards and the adjacent fence along John Davis Way. Seeing this prompted me to write an article titled *Troubled Youth*, in which I tried to encourage our young people that there' s more to life than kicking down garden fences and ripping up notice boards. I cited my own experiences and those of my children in which we all struggled through adolescence. Although the Gossip did not print the article, things still began to happen. I telephoned Mike Cooke at the Information Office to find out what, if anything was being organised for the young adults of our village. Although he told me there was nothing much for them, he did put me onto two people who might help. Colin Fawcett, a King' s Lynn Youth Development worker and Barbara Church, who has always had an interest in helping the village' s young people. The end result of that discussion was to hold a public meeting in the village hall in January 2003, to which it was hoped that we could ask the young people themselves.

In the event the young people were a bit thin on the ground but progress was still made. Cyril Pike and Elizabeth Gibson joined in the discussion on youth clubs, events, outings, etc. We all knew *out of school* type clubs work well for under eleven year olds;

which is something else we perhaps need to look at. But something different is needed for the eleven to sixteen year olds, some of which just prefer to hang out, others need something more stimulating. It was at this point that Cyril Pike came up with the idea of village outings for the eleven to sixteen year olds to football match type events etc. Alton Towers was suggested and thought to be a good idea for a Spring Bank Holiday outing. So it was decided to see what funding was available and see how many of Watlington' s young people would like to go and perhaps pay a small contribution towards the trip. So, it is up to the young people themselves to come forward and put their names down and book a place on the coach. We are unable to say at this stage how much the contribution will be, but we still need to know how many eleven to sixteen year olds would like to go on a trip to Alton Towers. If you want a place on that coach, put your name down at the Information Office, Tel: 01553 810777, or call in, or Email:

wicoffice@watlingtoninfo.com

A Spring Bank Holiday trip to Alton Towers 11-16 year olds from Watlington

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Call the STEP office on 01953423683 E-mail: stepspecials@norfolk.police.uk

Or write to:STEP Norfolk Police, Jubilee House, Falconers Chase, Wymondham, NR18 OWW

Watlington Medical Centre

A belated best wishes for the New Year from all of us at the Medical Centre, we hope you had an enjoyable and healthy festive season. Our web site will be up and running in the very near future, or by the time of this publication may even be in existence already on:

www.watlingtonmedialcentre.co.uk

The site is primarily to give access to information about our services, telephone/fax numbers, opening times, etc. In addition, there will be an updated page covering current issues of note and interest. The site also has access to NHS Direct who are very helpful if you have day to day symptoms or need general advice regarding your health. Although we do not have the capacity to deal with on-line prescriptions, in addition to posting/delivering your repeat request, you can now fax requests using the old dispensary number (01553 811440).

We would be very grateful if you feel that you have an urgent problem that needs to be dealt with on the same day if you could ring as soon as possible in the morning, preferably before 10.30 a.m., so that an emergency appointment can be allocated to you. Similarly, if you do need to request a home visit, for example if you are housebound or actually too ill to come to the medical centre, please ring before 10.30 a.m. so that the day can be planned to all the patients' benefit.

"Why have my tablets changed colour?" Patients registered at Watlington are able to collect their prescriptions from our dispensary, which is a service that newcomers to the area are very impressed with. This is particularly the case if they have come from a town based practice and are used to having to trek off to the chemists some distance away to get their medication, especially if they feel unwell at the time. The range of medications that we keep here is wide and varied and comes from various manufacturers, all of whom have high standards and are recognised as reputable suppliers.

We place many orders and from time to time, sometimes due to stock shortages at a specific company and sometimes due to NHS directives, the colour/packaging/ brand name of a medication will change. This does not alter the active ingredients of a medication and the generic name of the drug will always be the same if you check the label. What changes is the brand name, colouring, etc only. For example Paracetamol is a generic drug name but various manufacturers make Paracetamol and call the brand name something different, such as Panadol or Hedex. It is very unlikely that changes in the brand of your usual treatment will produce any new side effects.

Many thanks to Mr John Thompson of Magdalen, who so kindly donated money collected at his birthday celebration, to the medical centre. This totalled £325 and will fund a hydraulic couch to be used for our new coronary heart disease clinic, which will provide a high quality treatment and follow up for our patients.

Doctor Sue Buckland

A HOLIDAY IN SRI LANKA

During June/July 2002 my wife and I went to Sri Lanka on a 2 week holiday. Why Sri Lanka you might say? Well we fancied seeing wild elephants and other wild life plus spending a few days on a sandy beach.

This particular holiday fitted the bill perfectly. We flew from Heathrow to Colombo which was an 11 hour flight, boring in the extreme but your own personal back of seat video on which you could watch films or other entertainment including flight information i.e. a moving map of the aircraft's progress was available.

The first of the 6 day tour was to Colombo, which was the centre of the UK administration pre 1953, with many old colonial style buildings in evidence- a reminder of that era. We had afternoon tea in the Imperial Hotel, claimed to be Colombo's answer to Raffle's Hotel in Singapore.

Day 2 was a long day traveling further into the countryside and included a visit to a gem factory where many types of gems are processed after mining. This was very interesting but turned out to be expensive, making a large hole in my wallet. In Kandy, another old colonial city, we visited The Temple of the Tooth, a major place of worship which houses one of Buddha's teeth, a magnificent place with a huge golden statue of the Buddha plus many other gold artefacts. We arrived later at our next hotel where we were to stay 3 nights.

During our stay here we enjoyed what for us was the highlight of the tour; firstly we took part in a jeep safari to one of the many national parks hoping to see wild elephants - we were lucky, we encountered a herd of about 50 elephants grazing in the late afternoon sun. It was marvelous to see the mothers and the young calves, one of which was only two months old according to our guide. On our approach the grown elephants herded the younger into the middle for protection, it was wonderful to see.

Once they had realized we were no threat, the babies were allowed to wander a little further afield. The following day we rode on an elephant through semi jungle and small rivers for about an hour really wonderful experience, all the time feeding the elephant bananas at a near non stop rate, they devour an awful lot in a small space of time. On our way back to the coast we called at the world famous Elephant Orphanage -you may well have seen it on TV. Here my wife was allowed to pat a baby which was only 2 months old, complete with his black tufts of hair. We watched the babies being fed with copious amounts of milk and later whilst having lunch we had the pleasure of seeing the whole herd (roughly 75 to 100) walk through the local village for their daily bathe in the river, an amazing site, there they were scrubbed by their mahouts, which are the trainers and users of the elephants. You can imagine, in the heat of the day, how much the animals seemed to enjoy this bath which they have every day.

Finally we continued down to the coast where we enjoyed a further 8 days at a hotel backing onto a magnificent beach. This finished a truly super holiday with unforgettable memories of the elephants and the very friendly people of Sri Lanka.

Peter Ryder oooOOooo



Parish Council Report

From Colin Vince, clerk to the parish council The Christmas tree was a great success this year, lighting up a particularly dull December, weather wise. Thanks are extended to all those involved in organising the tree.

The results of the feasibility study into traffic calming measures are, unfortunately still unavailable. In the meantime the council has applied for ' THINK' notices, which can be displayed for a period of three months on telegraph posts at no cost to the parish. Playground street signs are also being sought for Church Road to be located by the entrance area to the recreation ground.

The council has decided that an above inflation increase in the precept for 2003/2004 is warranted. The precept on the parish will be £20,000, which works out at about £30 a year for a Council Tax band 'D' property. The increase is necessary to meet rising costs, particularly insurance and maintenance, and because of a reduction in the annual grant that is paid to the council by the borough council. It also provides the opportunity for the council to help in the upgrade of village facilities, particularly play equipment.

The council approved the formation of a community projects committee, which has taken on the task of improving play equipment and is also reviewing the council's quotation procedures to ensure that jobs are done at a fair price and to an agreed specification. **Planning Report:** The following new applications have been made:

WAGN Rail Station - to upgrade the car park and provide CCTV coverage. This was approved by the parish council subject to action being sought to stop commuter day parking in surrounding roads. 3 Glebe Avenue - Extension. Approved by parish council.

' Summerfield' Church Road Garage/Studio extension. Approved by parish council. 40 Paige Close - Extension. Approved. The Annual Parish Meeting is on Tuesday 18th March at 7 p.m. in the village hall, followed immediately by a parish council meeting. All are most welcome to attend. This will be the last council meeting before elections which take place on Thursday 1st May.

More from the Parish Council

A new committee has been set up by the parish council to help groups and individuals seeking funding or looking for support for community projects that benefit the village.

It is our idea to co-opt individuals onto the committee with a particular interest or experience in any project, to form a working group that can either take a lead in running a project or provide support for other groups organising their own scheme. Do you have a good idea for the village? Do you have expertise in fund raising or community projects? Are you willing to help? Then get in touch with the Community Projects Committee. The committee members are John Harris (Tel: 810711) Cyril Pike (Tel:810169) Brian Toates (Tel: 810231) and Barbara Church (Tel: 810584).

Watlington Information Centre

The information centre re-opened after the Christmas break when our volunteers recovered from their overindulgences of the festive season, and after following a frantic search for the key.

One of the first things to happen this year has been the annual general meeting, where chairman Mike Cooke reported on the success of the centre' s first year. Amongst many activities, the centre has been involved in running IT courses, offering a facility for small groups seeking to improve facilities and the quality of life in the village, providing free internet and e-mail access, and towards the end of the year starting work on setting up a web site for the village. The centre is also proving to be a good access point for keeping up to date with village activity, especially with its close ties with the village hall.

Treasurer Brian Toates reported that the centre now has its own banking arrangements and a positive bank balance, supported by good demand for the photocopying service, a payment from the Careers Service for a completed course and continued support from the village hall in paying for heating and lighting.

The committee elected for the year comprises Mike Cooke (chairman) Brian Toates (Treasurer) Barbara Church (secretary) Margaret Fox, Ken Fox, Simon Paget and Colin Vince. New volunteers are always welcome-simply turn up any day we are open. Volunteers work in pairs so you will have plenty of opportunity to learn how to use the equipment in the centre.

The web site continues to make progress. Please have a look at the site and let us know what you think. We would be more than happy to receive further input for the site and make use of your expertise in helping to develop this community resource. We are particularly keen to hear from the many groups in the village and from any organisations with their own web site who feel that a web link to the village site might prove useful.

*The centre is open on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday mornings from 10.00 a.m. to 12 noon. The telephone number is 810777 (messages can be left). E-mail address: wicoffice@watlingtoninfo.com
Web site: www.watlingtoninfo.com*

The Rector Writes Buns, Witnesses and a recipe for trouble

When I was training for the priesthood, as ordinands we decided to do a procession of witness in the city, on Good Friday in the form of Stations of the Cross. We would act out the passion drama and one of the ordinands would be chosen to play the role of Christ and there would be a crucifixion (not literally) on the cathedral green. I played the part of Joseph of Ari-mathaea.

The route of the procession of witness went through the busy shopping area and as we processed into the busy city centre the more complicated things became. A pride of the city was a bakery and a long queue had formed outside to buy freshly baked hot cross buns.

The procession and the queue became entangled and while some witnesses found themselves heading for the bakery counter, some bun-buyers were heading for the place of crucifixion which concluded our Stations.

Our procession also gave rise to, well, if not road rage, as it was not invented then, at least road irritation. Some red-faced drivers, delayed by as much as three minutes, were heard to utter some words with the expletives undeleted while others simply fumed, raising their blood pressure and as a result shortening their lives.

I suspect that the scene was not that different from the scene at Jerusalem when the way of the cross met the busy pre-Passover shoppers. I do not think that there is any general hostility to Christianity in this country. Certainly, I have not found any in 26 years of ministry. On the other hand I have found much ignorance; ignorance that is understandable.

I once saw an Easter card on sale that depicted a rabbit with the message "Happy Easter" and while I presume the card was not intended for a pet rabbit, I wonder exactly what a Happy Easter implied. Easter does mean two days off from work; the children on holiday for two weeks and the typical Bank Holiday weather, a cocktail of sunshine and showers. Is that all?

A recent survey showed that the majority of people asked thought that Easter Sunday was the day that Jesus died.

In that case, A Happy Easter is indeed no more than the wish that we can spend the Bank Holiday without too much hassle, or being bothered too much by odd religious people processing and delaying our quest for hot cross buns.

From that survey, we can see that it is still important for Christians to give witness. I am sure, all those years ago, that the sight of our Stations of the Cross procession did cause a few questions to be raised in the minds of onlookers. Any Christian procession of witness can gauge the moods of people from letters to the press, and opinions uttered in public. Some of these opinions are laced with anger and sometimes sadly, with venom. If one is honest, I am sure there was anger in the hearts of some of us ordinands as there was among the delayed motorists. There was much emotion displayed on the first Good Friday; hatred, anger paranoia, jealousy and perhaps worst of all, indifference. In Christ, there was no hatred, no anger, no indifference.

During the procession back to the college, we passed an attractive and exciting coffee shop that was just opening. Some ordinands made their way back to inspect it. I would like to say that I was not among them. Alas, I cannot. A very happy, blessed and peaceful Eastertide.

From Father James and Helen.

Dates for your diary **Mothering Sunday, 30th March:** All Age Worship (with communion). 11 a.m., at Watlington Parish Church. There will be a presentation of flowers for the children and Simnel cake.

Good Friday Worship, 6 p.m., 18th April.

Easter Sunday, 11 a.m., 20th April.

Festival Eucharist, Watlington Parish Church.

The Church Tower Clock

Compiled by Brenda Leedell

I am sure that most villagers noticed the scaffolding against the church tower during the latter part of 2002. This was to enable the church tower clock to be re-gilded.

You may be interested to know that the clock was installed in 1920 by Gillett & Johnston of Croydon, specialist makers of tower clocks. It was paid for by public subscription in thanks for the men of Watlington who returned safely from the 1914-1918 war. This was the third time that the clock had been re-gilded, each time by a member of the Featherby family.

The clock was first re-gilded in 1937 (Coronation year) by Thomas Arthur Featherby and cost approximately £180.00. Villagers holding a Firework and Bonfire Evening followed by a Social Evening raised the money to pay for the work.

In 1977, The Queen's Silver Jubilee year, the clock was again re-gilded, this time by Ted Featherby and the cost was £480.00. This was paid for from funds raised by a Carnival Queen Dance, Film Show and Carnival Procession with floats. The whole village took part and a collection was taken in buckets held by villagers accompanying the floats.

In The Queens Golden Jubilee year 2002 the re-gilding was done by Michael Wallace Featherby, son

of Ted and grandson of Thomas. The cost was £1,200 and was paid for by the Parish Council. A large amount of the cost was for erection of the scaffolding now required by safety laws. In 1937 Thomas Featherby used a ladder!

Parishioner John Harris has wound up the clock every week since 1986.



*Re-gilding the clock in
1937*

Refuse Collection Service

The Borough Council have advised that, if for any reason (usually inclement weather) no refuse collection takes place on a Friday or Saturday, a double collection will take place on the following Friday or Saturday, including the emptying of recycling boxes. If there is no collection by any Saturday, householders are advised to remove ' wheelie bins' and recycling boxes back onto their own property until the double collection the following weekend.

It should be noted though, that in the recent missed weekly collection some areas of the village did not get their double collection until Monday, so I suppose the advice is that if it is the second weekend, leave it out!

Strange Happenings

By Les Warren When I

was about twelve years old, I saw hundreds of tiny frogs come down during a thunder storm. My father told me he had seen small fish come down. None of the frogs appeared to be hurt and were all gone the next morning.

When I was lorry driving, coming home at about two o'clock in the morning I saw about ten or twelve orange balls which appeared to be floating round and round. I stopped and watched them and another driver pulled in behind me. It was a sharp, frosty morning but there was no sound at all. We watched them for about 15 minutes and they were still going round when we left.

One afternoon during the summer, I was in the garden. The sun was shining but I happened to look up and saw what appeared to be a very bright star. I watched it for quite a long time and it was stationary but suddenly disappeared. Travelling along the M6 near Preston one morning about 2 a.m. in my Austin lorry, the engine stopped and the lights went out. I pulled onto the hard shoulder and felt for the torch that I always carried. At that moment the lights came on. I started the engine and carried on. When I got into the depot, the electrician checked and could find nothing wrong.

[Well! What do you make of that? If any of our readers have experienced similar strange happenings, please let us know.....

Ed]

*We know little about conscience, except that
It can be dissolved in alcohol*

King' s Lynn Hospitals League of Friends

*The Christmas Table Appeal in
Watlington raised a total of
£143.59.*

In future, if you feel you could help collect the donation envelopes please contact Di Bentley, 7 Orchard Close Watlington, King' s Lynn
Phone:01553 810703

The purchases made since last Christmas Appeal have totalled approximately £112,600.

(For a list of items that have been purchased please contact Di Bentley at the above address).

LOCAL INFORMATION SUPPORT TEAM

L.I.S.T. is for older people and people with a disability, who are generally well but worried.

Are you in receipt of your full entitlement, or need help filling in a benefit form?

Would you like advice on aids and equipment to help you manage at home?

Are there small jobs or repairs at home that need doing to prevent accidents and reduce risks?

Do you need advice on a well-balanced diet and healthy eating?

***CAN L.I.S.T. HELP YOU? Contact us on
01553 774525***

Litter Bins



If you live near a litter bin within the village, on a play area, open space or on the footway, would you be willing to empty the bin when necessary and put the bag out with your own rubbish? The Borough Council will supply the bin bags and we are assured that they will be collected by the dustmen. If you can help please contact the parish clerk, Colin Vinceon 01553812082

Watlington Short Mat Bowls Club

We are once again entered into the Paget League, but we do not seem to be doing as well this year. However, there are still a few more games to be played and perhaps we will be able to recover.

We sadly miss Alan Campbell who died just before Christmas. He was a very involved member of this club, having been club captain for many years, and chairman for a few years. Our sympathy and support go to Enid and her family.

Joy D. Stephens, Hon. Secretary

Watlington Carpet Bowls Club

We have now been going for nine months and have a membership of 24 people, of whom 20 regularly attend meetings.

We have entered a few competitions but at the moment do not win many. Hopefully, this will change in due course.

Lynn Sport were kind enough to lend us a carpet and bowls. However, these have to be returned soon. We applied to ' Awards for All' (Lottery Grants) and have been awarded £2,000. This will assist us in purchasing our own mats and equipment. 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 at the village hall. Please come along and have a go.

Joy D. Stephens, Hon Secretary

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ASDL

Probably, you started reading this article because you either thought that a spelling mistake had occurred in the heading, or perhaps you merely wanted to find out what the initial letters stand for.

Well, there is no mistake and the letters relate to Broadband Internet connections. This is the place where many of you will now decide that you are no longer interested, possibly because you do not have a computer; more likely because you don' t have any interest in the Internet. Well, that' s alright too, but for those who continue to read on, let me explain what this article is about:

A plea has been made for those local people who are conversant with the Internet but have not yet considered Broadband as a means of logging on. British Telecom will only facilitate a Broadband location in any area if the interest is great enough and therefore financially viable.

If you are interested, sign up by going to www.demandbroadband.com which will not commit you to anything but will add support to those who are trying to encourage B.T to bring Broadband to the area. This support could bring Broadband into the village school, to local businesses and individuals in this area.

So, don' t delay, find out more regarding this interesting option.

St German' s Art Club



We meet every Thursday evening in St German' s Memorial Hall from 7 p.m. until 9.30 p.m. New members are always welcome. Contact Kaye Holmes on 01553 827486 for more details



Archery in the Village Hall

Once again, over the winter of 2002/2003 the King' s Lynn Bowmen Archery Club have made use of the large hall at the village hall on Sunday mornings (and some Tuesday evenings) to practice their sport. By the time this magazine drops onto your door mat the club will be preparing for their outdoor target season at Walton Highway, which starts at the end of March.

The club members would like to thank the Watling-ton Village Hall management committee (and indeed, all Watlington parishioners, whose indoor centre it is) for allowing its members to use the hall facilities, without which it would be difficult to give continuity to the club throughout the winter months. It should be said that we do not shoot in the main hall on every Sunday morning throughout the winter. We also have a permanent field course set up in a quarry elsewhere in West Norfolk but not all of our members are so hardy as to take advantage of this facility. It is necessary therefore to have an indoor range as well, thereby allowing everyone to continue their chosen sport over the entire twelve months of the year.

If you would like information about the club, or concerning archery in general, contact Barry Shears on 01553 810203

Watlington Village Hall 200 Club

from Jean Papworth

NOVEMBER WINNERS 154		Mr.P.Johnson 1		Mrs B. Jackson 143	Mr. W.
Simmons 79	Mr. G. Ward 104	Mrs. B. J.	£40	Church	
			£15		
			£10		
			£5		
DECEMBER WINNERS 194	Mrs. B.	Robinson 117	£5	Mr. B. Cole 161	Mrs.P.Cooke
167	Mrs. J. Golding 55		£100		Mr.J.Elftett
			£15		
			£10		
JANUARY 2003		WINNERS 130	Dr.H.Lacey	£40	
6	Mr. M. Summers			£15	
		91	Mrs.M.Napp	£10	
		16	Mr. S.Jones	£5	
		10	Mr N. Carpenter	£5	

There are now seven vacant numbers and if you wish to become a member and take part in the monthly draw please contact the 200 club secretary, WITHOUT DELAY, by phoning 01553 811345. The cost is £1 per member per calendar month and all the profit goes to the village hall funds.

English Eccentricity

Sir Francis Galton, a cousin to Charles Darwin, published a ' Beauty Map of Britain' . Personally-researched, he travelled the length and breadth of the country to discover where the prettiest girls lived.

He concluded that the loveliest were from London, and the plainest (in his opinion) were from Aberdeen. The map became a best seller - **in Aberdeen !**

W^ You can get hooked on crocheting.

Emma Johnson, NVQ.MGPBT.IIHHT.IHBC

RELOCATION OF WATLINGTON PRE-SCHOOL Registered Charity 1029303

With the ever increasing pressure from OFSTED to provide greater learning opportunities for our children, we feel that the pre-school would benefit greatly from having its own facilities to cater for the OFSTED requirements.

The school governors have agreed for us to use part of the school grounds to place a mobile. We will be totally self contained with our own outdoor play area which we believe is something the pre-school have had limited access to previously.

The school grounds are an ideal location. We feel that it would be an excellent opportunity for the preschool children to interact with the primary school children, which in turn will make the transition from one to other a lot less stressful. We won' t be restricted with time and the children would have an adequate outside play area, which we feel is imperative for their physical and creative development. At present we aim to complete the new premises by September 2004, to do this we need to raise £45,000. Although we realise this seems like a huge amount we are contacting local companies and approaching various recommended organisations for grants and funding. We appreciate that your child may not benefit directly from the relocation, however, together with the school we would like this to be a community project of which all our children will benefit throughout their primary education. If anyone would like to help with this project please contact us for more information:

Julia Suiter

(01553 811887, jools66@ukonline.co.uk)

Sarah Berry

(01553 811726, sarah.berry@tinyonline.co.uk)

Angela Revell

(01553 810497, aa.revell@btopenworld.com)

Clara Thiart

(01553 810739, clara.thiart@tinyworld.co.uk)

West Norfolk Community Transport Project

The project operates the Dial-A-Bus Service and the Shop Mobility Scheme in West Norfolk. The dial-a-bus operation involves easily accessible minibuses, providing door-to-door rural and urban bus services answering the transport needs of those people who have mobility problems and those who have difficulty accessing public transport. At this present time we operate a weekly Wednesday

service into Downham Market and a weekly Friday service into King' s Lynn, collecting people from the Watlington area.

The Shopmobility Scheme is specifically for those people who have difficulty accessing shops and services because of long term or short term

limited mobility. Members have free use of powered scooters, wheelchairs, walking frames and self propelled wheelchairs. This scheme is now available five days a week in King' s Lynn and will be starting in Downham Market on March 3rd this year, in conjunction with Age Concern Downham Market and the CSV Vocal Project.

The project is always looking for volunteers to help in the provision and expansion of its current services. If you would like to help or obtain further information on the above services please telephone WNCPT on 01553 770310.

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Watlington Sports & Social Club

The club has had a record breaking year and is still proving to be a popular meeting place for people living in the village.

Membership is due for renewal at the end of March and the A.G.M. takes place on 31st March at 7.30 p.m. New and old members are welcome. The Green will open on the 19th April when a bowls drive will take place, with a race night in the evening in the clubhouse. Lists of events are available for 2003 from the clubhouse.

We are looking for a Green keeper for the new season. Wage is negotiable for the right person. Please apply in writing to the Bowls Club. The Oddfellows Association has its meeting in the clubhouse four times a year. Anyone wishing to join may get details from the clubhouse during opening hours.

M. Desborough (chairman)

Proud of your garden?

Would you care to open it to the public on Sunday 18th **May**?

Please contact one of the following For details:

**Father James Nolan, Tel: 810305 John Murfitt, Tel: 811086 Richard Aisthorpe, Tel:
810940**

Watlington Wednesday Club

The past three months have included mainly light-hearted themes. We held a beetle drive early in November and on 26th November we were provided with an afternoon of delightful poetry reading - old favourites and humorous - by Mr Brian Ogden from Wicke Green near Fakenham. We were happy to welcome visitors from Magdalen Happy Circle and the Womens Institute on that occasion.

On 6th December, a small group of us ran a stall at the village hall Christmas fund-raising coffee morning "Name of the Doll" game helped to raise the funds.

The following week we enjoyed our Christmas party, which included more poetry reading (this time from some of our own members) a seasonal quiz and a special raffle to complete the event. We sat down to a tea of delicious festive fare provided by the committee and Mrs Bray. The next day we went to Thursford for the splendid Christmas Show.

Our first venture in the New Year was to Norwich to see "Jack and the Beanstalk"; a great afternoon's entertainment.

Our programme for the spring and summer months includes a talk on the history of the Fens on 23rd April, and a variety of outings and games.

We meet on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month at the village hall (in the main hall) starting at 2 p.m. Admission is £1, which includes refreshments. If you would like to know more, please come along.

Mrs B. Newman, chairman

^(^(^

Another English Eccentricity

The splendid Victorian, Sir George Reresby-Sitwell stencilled willow patterns on his herd of cows, invented a musical toothbrush that played ' Bonnie Annie Laurie' , and a miniature revolver to shoot wasps!

Bogus Callers Targeting the Elderly

Bogus callers will try to gain entry to older people' s property. They may offer to carry out work in their homes and gardens and then charge far too much. They may pose as meter readers or officials. Some criminals will simply ask to use the phone, or request a drink of water.

Please help keep your elderly relatives and neighbours safe. Keep reminding them to

STOP! CHAIN! CHECK!

Stop! Do you know this person, have they made an appointment? If the answer is no, don' t let them in.

Chain! Always use your door chain or other restraint.

Check! Carefully check callers identity. If in doubt, ask them to make an appointment. Phone for help if necessary. If you would like any advice on personal safety and security for the elderly, contact your local Police Crime Prevention Department. Their advice is free. Phone them on 01553 665037

This advice is issued by the Community Safety Department at King's Lynn Police Station, in conjunction with the Safer West Norfolk Steering Group.

Gardening with Disabilities

Gardening with Disabilities [Norfolk] is a registered charity which was set up in 1994 to encourage, support and enable people who, for various reasons, find many gardening activities difficult or beyond their reach.

Becoming a member. As a member one can expect lively monthly meetings at Park House, Sandringham. There is also the chance to borrow and try out a selection of suitable tools. There is a book and video lending service and help from our own gardening adviser is available. The organisation publishes an informative quarterly newsletter and is a fertile ground for meeting other gardeners and sharing ideas.

Meetings are held on the third Friday in the month at Park House from 2 to 4.30 p.m. For a small charge transport may be arranged for those who need it. Membership fee is £6 a year. £1 is charged for meetings, which includes tea, biscuits and raffle ticket. **Aims and Objectives.** The promotion and development of tools and other gardening aids and equipment and the search for new ideas and information. We wish to encourage and assist the formation of other similar groups in Norfolk. **If you would like further information** contact any of the following people:

Jennifer Purple, [Secretary] ' Purple Peace' 37 Old Hospital Mews, King' s Lynn, Norfolk, PE30 5RU. Telephone: 01553 770918.

Jan Seymour, [Membership secretary] ' Genefax' Gayton Road, Bawsey, King' s Lynn, Norfolk, PE32 1EP. Telephone: 01553 630264.

Watlington Womens Institute

Our Christmas Dinner was held at the Angel and both food and company proved most enjoyable. We had a Christmas Party on our normal meeting night in December when members enjoyed each others company and performed a very original Pantomime arranged by Brenda Newman. We found that we have some talented performers amongst our members!

In January Diane Webster, our friendly WI Adviser, officiated over our AGM. Future AGM's will be held in November, in line with most other WI's, for administrative reasons.

Nine members were nominated for the Committee and Brenda Newman agreed to become our new President. Thanks were given to the retiring Committee. After the business everyone had a good chin-wag over a cup of tea/coffee as usual. At our February meeting we heard Jacqueline Smart talk to us about "Foot Care for All". This was a very informative talk that made us all take a new look at how we treat our poor old feet. We hold one meeting a month ladies, the second Tuesday at 7.30 p.m, (see Diary Dates). We love to see new faces and have a really good programme of speakers arranged again this year. Look forward to seeing you?

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we have our A.G.M., then on the 15th it's the Annual Dinner at the Castle Hotel, Downham Market. Rather than staging a musical production in the Spring, we have decided to do something a little different and put on two plays over two weekends. The first of these (on the 23rd and 24th May) will be Terry Pratchett's 'Mort', adapted for stage by Stephen Briggs, produced by Claire Cooper. The producer writes:

' For this comedy we transport you to the Discworld (flat planet carried on the back of a giant turtle). Young Mortimer needs a job and Death needs an apprentice. But ushering souls into the next world is not as straightforward as it sounds. Death is an amiable chap, very good at his job, and a hard act to follow. Soon Mort's mistakes are causing problems that even the most powerful wizards at the Unseen University can't sort out' .

In complete contrast, the next weekend (30th and 31st May) we will be putting on the restoration comedy 'She Stoops to Conquer' by Oliver Goldsmith, produced by John Hollands. Tickets for either play are £5 (£3.50 concessions) and are available

from 01553 810452 A plea for new members: over recent years the Players have found it increasingly difficult to put on shows because of a lack of people wanting to be involved, either with acting or with the backstage/front of house work. If you would like to be involved in YOUR village drama group, why not come along to our A.G.M. (March 8th at 7.30 p.m. in the small hall) and find out more about us.

Diary Dates Watlington Pre-school: Meet each Monday and Tuesday, from 9.30

Watlington Players

Our recent pantomime 'The Rabbit Prince' was a great success and was enjoyed by cast and audiences alike. March will be a busy month for us. On the 8th to 12 noon & 12.30 to 3.00 p.m. Thursday and Friday from 9.30 to 12 noon.

Wednesday Club: meets 2nd and fourth Wednesday of each month, 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Womans Institute: meet second Tuesday of the month at 7.30 p.m.

Under Fives: meet each Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 12 noon.

Baby Clinic: meet first and third Tuesday of the month 12 noon to 3 p.m.

Luncheon Club: First Wednesday of the month 12 noon to 3 p.m.

(Unless otherwise mentioned, all these events take place in the village hall).

MARCH

11th. Womens Institute, Grand UK Holidays.

Speaker: Harold Burke. 18th. Watlington Parish Council Annual Parish

Meeting at 7.30 p.m. 30th. Watlington Church, Mothering Sunday

Service 11 a.m. at the church.

March continued.....

31st. Sports & Social Club A.G.M. at the club

house for 7.30 p.m.

April 8th. W.I., Flower Arranging with Sue Engledow. 17th. Lempen Puppet Theatre, 2.30 p.m. 18th. Watlington Church. Good Friday

Worship at 6 p.m. 18th & 19th. Watlington School of

Dancing, "Dancetime 2003". 19th. Watlington Sports & Social Club, The Green

Opens 20th. Watlington Church, Easter Sunday Festival

Eucharist at 11 a.m. **May**

5th. Proposed trip to Alton Towers (see page 4) 10th. The Woodside Swing Band, 7.30 p.m.

12th. Deadline day for your Gossip articles. 13th. W.L, "Resolutions". 23rd/24th. Watlington Players present MORT.

(see article on this page for details).

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[Please see the independent articles in this magazine for more details of the above events].

Watlington Village Hall News

As we move into the new year, the Management Committee has been planning various events for the enjoyments of the community, as well as to raise much needed funds to continually maintain and improve the facilities in the hall complex to the standard that we all expect. Various ideas are being explored and so for the events listed below have been organised.

An important fund raiser is the 200 Club. This is a club of up to 200 members who each pay the sum of 10p per year and £1 each calendar month. The draw takes place on the third Wednesday of each month in the village hall at about 8 p.m. The prizes consist of £40 first prize followed by prizes of £15, £10 and £5 except every fourth month, when the first prize is £100. Winners details are displayed on notice boards at the village post office and the village hall. There are currently seven vacant places in this club, so if anybody would like to join they should contact the club organiser, Jean Papworth on 01553 811345. She will arrange for a collector to visit you. **Coming events:**

Thursday 17th April at 2 JO p.m.

Lempen Puppet Theatre presents

"Puppets in the Wild"

Some of you may remember Lempen's popular show

"The Rainbow Forest" which came to the village hall a couple of years ago.

Their latest exciting and absorbing show is a funny

and adventurous tale about a documentary film

maker whose curiosity and naivety takes him deep

into the misty and mysterious wilderness where he

loses his way but finds a secret that could make him

into one of the most famous film makers ever...

Puppets in the Wild! Yes, animal puppets living, breathing and dancing in their hidden community.

Lempen will combine original atmospheric music, delightful puppetry, subtle lighting and sound effects to transport children and their families into the enchanted territory of wild puppets. Many children and their parents will only ever have seen tame puppets in captivity. This is a unique opportunity to watch and learn from puppets in their natural habitat! Tickets in advance from 01553 810584 or 01553 810732: Adults £4.50, concessions £4.00. Child, £3.50. On the door. Adults £5.00, concessions £4.50, child £4.00.

Saturday 10th May at 730 p.m. The Woodside Swing Band.

The return of this popular band for an evening of easy listening, popular, foot tapping, mainstream music.

Tickets in advance £5.00, concessions £4.00 from 01553 810584 or 01553 810732. On the door, £6.00 concessions £5.00. Price includes a light supper. Bar applied for.

Saturday 27th September at 10.00 a.m. until 6 p.m., and Sunday 28th September at 10.00 a.m. until 4.00 p.m.

"Watlington Past & Present" A photographic, art and bygones exhibition.

This two day event will include a photographic competition of two categories: the first, a scene or landscape taken in the parish of Watlington during 2003. The second, animals, not necessarily taken in Watlington but taken in 2003.

Age groups: children up to 6 years; children 7-11 years; young people aged 12 years and adults. Any type of camera may be used including digital and print size must be 7" x 5". Only one submission per person per category. Entry forms will be available in future. It is also planned to have an art exhibition of works by amateur artists. An exhibition of local bygones is proposed so if any of you have old photographs of Watlington, old records, documents or other items of interest, we want to hear from you.

For further information about this event, or if you have any interesting items, please contact John Harris on 01553 810711, or Barbara Church on 01553 810584. **Saturday 6th December**

Day of Christmas fund raising and social evening. *With films of horse racing.*

For further information about all these events look out for future advertising.

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The penalty of success is to be bored by The people who used to ignore you

Useful telephone numbers:

Current Parish Councillors:

01553810276 Dr H Lacey (chairman) 01553 810476 Mr G Beaumont 01553810543 Mr M Bush
01553810216 Mr E W Featherby 01553811362 MrsJGolding 01553810711 Mr J Harris 01553 810848
Mrs B Leedell 01553 810212 Mrs S. Miller 01553810169 Mr C Pike 01553 810331 Mr R Rockcliffe
01553810231 MrBToates 01553 812082 Mr C. Vince (Clerk)

E-mail address of the parish council:

watlingtonparish@onetel.net.uk

Borough Councillor:

01553810428 MrAnsell

Other useful numbers:

01553 810253 Watlington Medical Centre

01553 810253 Emergency (out of hours)

01553 811440 Prescriptions (fax only)

01553811631 District Nurse

01366383241 Health Visitor

01553 617429 Patients Group

01553 613613 Queen Elizabeth Hospital

01223 245151 Addenbrooke' s (Cambridge)

01603 300600 Norfolk Health Authority

01553 810468 Watlington Community School

01553669300 Social Services 01553 695800 Benefit 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 811510 Chas' s Chippy, fish & chip shop 01553 811345 Village correspondent to Lynn News 01553 810305 Father James Nolan 01553810732 Village Hall (Bookings) 01553 810777 Information Centre.

E-mail address of the Information Centre:

wic@watlingtoninfo.com

Do you know of any other telephone numbers that ought to be displayed on this page

HOABCBIaT

DRIVING SCHOOL

PRINCIPAL: LIZ HOWLETT. DTp. ADI.

Telephone: KING'S LYNN 810462 8 DOWNHAM ROAD, WATLINGTON, KING'S LYNN