

DEVELOPMENTS

Another new year is upon us and, as the turkey becomes a distant memory, we turn our thoughts to the future. Cottenham has seen some great changes over the last couple of years with the new housing estates bringing many new families to the village. The village is playing its part in supporting the growth of Cambridgeshire as one of the fastest growing counties in the United Kingdom.

Two further developments are looming on the horizon. The first is an objection to the position of the district council that there should be no further major housing development in Cottenham for the time being. This objection proposes a major new development between Rampton Road and Oakington Road. The second is that one of the proposals for an A14 bypass would lead to a major road running between Cottenham and Histon cutting Histon Road in the vicinity of Cottenham Skips.

Whether you regard these potential developments as beneficial or damaging to the village will depend on your point of view. The important thing is that either of these developments would result in significant changes to the character of the village. It will be important that you keep yourself informed of these developments and have the opportunity to express your views when the appropriate time comes. Opportunities to gain information on both of these develop-

ments are described in Rex Collinson's district councillor's report inside.

Psychlists Respond

My friend the Watchman has provided me with a very full post bag for this edition. I have had 20 letters responding to his article on cyclists and their failure to use the cycle path in the last edition of the *Newsletter* – a record since I have been Editor. He clearly struck a discord with the cyclists of Cottenham. Because of the number of responses, I have been unable to reproduce the letters but have written a summary of the main points inside.

Cottenham Walks

To accompany the series of articles which Jasper Kay has kindly contributed on walks around Cottenham we reproduce the map from the footpaths of Cottenham pamphlet which is available from the library, and other outlets around the village. Walking these routes is a great way to get acquainted with the countryside immediately around the village and can work off Christmas pudding very effectively!

Eddie Murphy

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VILLAGE DIARY

January

- 19th Cottenham Seniors' Club, The British Horse Society, a talk by Anthea Freemantle, Common Room, Cottenham Village College
26th Cottenham Gardeners' Club, New Year Party, Cottenham Village College, 7.45pm

February

- 2nd Cottenham Seniors' Club, Slides of the Spanish Armada by Alan Eade, Lecture Room, Cottenham Village College
9th Cottenham Village Society, Mr T. Holloway: The history of Marshalls of Cambridge, Primary School, 7:45pm
14th Cottenham Women's Institute – Stage make-up (demonstration) – Chris Clarke, Franklin Gardens Community Centre 7:30pm
16th Cottenham Seniors' Club, War-time women – a talk by Michael Bentinck
23rd Cottenham Gardeners' Club, AGM and Members' Gardening Problems, Cottenham Village College, 7:45pm

March

- 9th Cottenham Village Society, Mrs P Rumble: Oak Furniture, Primary School, 7:45pm
14th Cottenham Women's Institute – Annual Supper and AGM, Franklin Gardens Community Centre, 6:15pm

SMALL ADS

There are no Small Advertisements in the newsletter this time round. However, readers may be interested to know that the income from small ads in 2000 was £32.18 which will be donated to Magpas.

Why not advertise in the Newsletter! Items for sale, announcement of family events...

5p per word, with all proceeds going to charity. Send advertisements and payment to the editors.

Cheques should be made payable to 'Cottenham Newsletter'.

Short Stories & Poetry

Readers are invited to send in either original poetry or short stories for inclusion in *The Newsletter*. Short stories should be no longer than 600 words. The objective should be to entertain the general readership — go on, have a go!

ARTICLES, DATES AND ADVERTISEMENTS

E-mail, PC floppy disk and paper submissions are all welcome. Please contact the Editors if you have any questions. Dates of events to be advertised in the next issue (No. 62) should span the last week of March and the months of April and May.

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CALLING ALL COMMUNITY GROUPS

Earlier this year Cambridgeshire ACRE received funding from the National Lotteries Charities Board to deliver a unique and important programme entitled "Our Communities Our Future". The programme will survey Cambridgeshire's rural-based voluntary organisations and community groups (see below), develop a series of training programmes and provide a range of advice and support mechanisms for Cambridgeshire's voluntary sector.

The initial phase of the project is being launched in January 2001. This involves a questionnaire which will be sent to each voluntary organisation and community group situated within rural Cambridgeshire. Given the survey is just the start of this exciting project, Cambridgeshire ACRE is keen to ensure all voluntary organisations and community groups 'have their say' and are able to benefit from the project's longer-term objectives.

For clarification, voluntary organisations and community groups are:

- not for profit organisations (e.g Playgroups)
- run by volunteers (e.g Meals on wheels, Womens Institute)
- registered charities
- working for local communities (e.g Village Hall Committees, Village Appraisal Groups)
- dedicated to particular issues (e.g Sports / Hobby Clubs)

The survey will be distributed throughout the South Cambridgeshire District in February and March, therefore, if you represent a voluntary organisation or community group within that area, please contact me as soon as possible and I will ensure you receive a copy of our questionnaire.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Teresa Jones

Community Outreach Worker
Cambridgeshire ACRE, Old School House, Green End
Comberton CB3 7DY
Tel / Fax – 01223 264997.
Email: teresa.jones@camsacre.org.uk

THE BELLS TOLL FOR YOU

You may have seen a bright star in the sky at the Twenty Pence Road end of Cottenham; on closer examination you will see that the star was attached to the Tower of All Saints Church. There are even more wonders within the tower, for if you had carried your examination out on a Wednesday evening or on a Sunday there is a good chance you would have heard the sound of bells coming from within.

The present set of six bells were recast in 1800 and first rung in earnest in December of that year. To be fair not even our oldest ringer was actually about at that time although bell ringers come in all shapes, sizes and ages. To celebrate the bells' 200th birthday, local residents will be very much aware that, a peal was recently rung, taking a shade under 3 hours. Naturally the bells and the impressive wooden frame from which they are hung are showing signs of wear and tear and some work to prevent further deterioration will be necessary in the near future.

The ringers, who also show signs of wear and tear, continue to ring out for most services, weddings by request, special occasions and some funerals. Newcomers are always welcome, just turn up on a Wednesday evening at 7.30 and take the opportunity to see the bells, have a supervised ring and enjoy the relaxed atmosphere within the Tower.

Want to know more? Contact Simon Wilson, the Tower Captain, on 01954 251105.

Pete Brown

AGE CONCERN

Age Concern Cambridgeshire exists to improve the quality of life for older people across Cambridgeshire.

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ARTS IN FEN EDGE PATCH

Jazz night

There will be a Jazz Night with popular five piece band 'Cambridge Blue', plus young blood from the jazz scene in two big bands. Foot-tapping music in an informal 'club' atmosphere. BAR. Saturday 10th March at 7:30pm. Tickets from Cottenham Village College £5.00, plus concessions and family tickets.

Guys and Dolls

This year's annual production by the students at Cottenham Village College is Guys & Dolls. There will be a special matinee of this popular musical on Thursday 15th March at 11:00am. Free transport will be provided from the villages. After the show, lunch will be served. This event will be funded mainly by our Millennium Age Concern award, but we are asking everyone to contribute £2.00. All Over 60s clubs, W.I.s, and sheltered housing schemes will be contacted, but if you would like to come and are not involved in any of these, please contact the Community Office to book a place.

Spring into action

Motionhouse Dance comes to the Patch on Friday 27th April at 7:30pm. Now is the time to mark this in your diary. Their new production is a powerhouse of extreme physical action, with dancers launching themselves across platforms, swinging on steps and leaping into a 'bouncy castle' pool. They will also run two workshops beforehand, at Cottenham Village College and Cottenham Primary School as part of their education programme.

Arts Development for all!

We should like to hear the views of anyone in the patch who wishing to comment on our programme – for any age group or interest! Our programme takes months of planning and needs more "grass roots" helpers than we have at present. We aim to present high quality events and wish to encourage more people – individuals or groups – to get involved. We welcome contact with anyone who would like to help with Arts in Fen Edge Patch, particularly from villages other than Cottenham, which are not well represented at the moment. You don't have to make a big commitment, even an hour or so occasionally would be valuable. We need help with delivering publicity and looking after events, as well as promotion through your own enthusiasm and personal contacts.

Science Day

Cottenham Village College will be holding a mini-science festival on 4th April 2001. Amongst the visitors to the college for this event will be the London Science Museum which will be presenting a number of exciting workshops. Also taking part will be the well-known BBC science consultant Tom Pringle, also known as 'Dr Bunhead', who will be presenting an evening family show of fun and explosive science at the College at 7:00pm. You are all invited to this lively session!

Please get in touch. We shall be happy to talk further with you.

Jenny Kay and Jane Heath

Arts Development Co-ordinators

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Get your kicks on Route B1049

Greetings to all you rugged cyclists who ply the B1049 between Cottenham and Histon. We motorists applaud your active concern for the environment. We salute your audacious disregard for wind and rain. We are humbled by how strappingly fit you must be. And we think someone ought to provide you with a proper cycle path.

Watchman's report [*Newsletter* #60] of public-bar opinion regarding cyclists on the road between Cottenham and Histon has provoked a predictable outcry and a whole raft of entirely plausible explanations as to why some people don't like using the cycle path.

Well, Watchman has been a professional hack long enough to know that it's usually the messenger who gets shot at when the message is not what people want to hear.

But, dear bicyclists, before you call for the blood of your faithful observer, be grateful and bear this in mind: the raising of the issue has brought you three real benefits.

Firstly, it is far better to know than not to know when people take exception to your actions. Whether or not their objections are fair is not the point. The fact is a large number of motorists have been irritated by cyclists riding in the road when there *appears* to be a perfectly good cycle path.

Secondly, Watchman has created the opportunity for you to explain to non-cyclists why you choose not to use the cycle path, as well as airing a range of other two-wheeled problems. We think you will now find motorists more sympathetic towards you on Histon Road.

Thirdly, it has brought the inadequacy of the existing cycle path into sharp focus — an excellent catalyst for a new campaign to get proper cycling facilities on the B1049.

A merry little Christmas

Many people are dismayed that the festival of Christmas has become such a commercial circus. No sooner are we back from our summer hols and into the swing of real life again than the bells start jingling in the tills and we find ourselves bounced into a winter wonderland of polystyrene snow and excruciating piped music.

We could learn from our Muslim friends here. In the

Islamic calendar, based on lunar years (354 days), the dates of religious festivals change each time they come round.

If Christmas were not fixed to our Gregorian calendar, we could be spared the relentless commercial tyranny that comes with every autumn. Under the lunar calendar, Christmas would move forward by around ten days each year. Why shouldn't the herald angels sing in the bleak mid-summer sometimes? It would keep things on the hop.

A day at the races

By the time this edition of *Newsletter* hits the streets the annual series of Cottenham point-to-points will once again be under starter's orders.

What a wonderful country spectacle these occasions provide, almost like stepping back in time a hundred years. The sleek-groomed horses, colourful jockeys, the weather-beaten bookmakers, the awesome sound of hooves thundering on turf — so little changed over centuries.

And there are still few things better than seeing the horse that's carrying your fiver come storming home a winner.

There was a surprise for Watchman on one occasion. After his selection had romped in at odds of three-to-one on a £5 wager, he was taken aback when the bookie started counting a whole stack of tenners into his outstretched palm. By the time the first £100 had been dispensed, Watchman's conscience had got the better of him and he pointed out the mistake. Well, those tenners disappeared from Watchman's hand quicker than a photo-finish.

A nearby punter, shaking his head at this squandered opportunity to put one over on a bookie, muttered: 'It's true then. Horse racing really is a game for complete mugs.'

Ambiguity on the menu

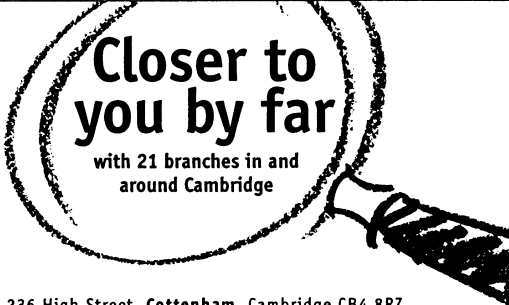
A helpful notice appears on the front of the food menu at the King William IV in Histon. It says: 'Wholesome helpings served daily except Sunday and Monday evenings.'

Watchman thought better of asking the Aussie barman, who addresses even complete strangers as 'mite', what kind of helpings they serve on Sunday and Monday evenings.

And while on the subject of words and meanings, another little gem. There's an illuminated sign outside a take-away in the village of Tiptree (where the jam comes from) in Essex. It announces simply: 'Wong's Chinese'. Ah-so.

Oh, and one other thing: why is it that when you buy a box of matches, it invariably advises you to keep away from children? What's that all about then?

Watchman



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HEALTHWATCH

by David Bradley

Stretching your health

Yoga is not just a form of exercise or a way to relax, although it can be used for both those purposes, it is an ancient science of life, perhaps dating back to 2000 – 3000 BC and steeped in the Hindu culture that emerged from Asia's Indus Valley. Although the earliest writings come from the Vedic tradition of 400BC.

Today, you don't have to be a Hindu to practise and some people disregard the more mystical aspects, and practise yoga simply for relaxation and exercise.

Yoga, also known as Hatha yoga, involves gentle stretches, strength-building exercises, breathing techniques. It is best known for its postures – the asanas – such as the crow, the lotus position and the crab. The asanas can exercise every part of the body and tone muscles and joints, although some are harder to do than others.

Practitioners believe that the asanas work on the whole body – benefiting your frame, internal organs and generally improving all-round health. There is also a third form that is becoming popular called 'power' yoga. This type of yoga is very energetic and combines Western aerobic exercise with the more traditional techniques of yoga.

Anyone can practice yoga – you don't need any special equipment or clothes. There are lots of teachers around who hold classes in local schools, health centres and even in the privacy of your own home. All you need is a soft mat, a quiet space in which to stretch out.

For information about Yoga classes in your area, call Denise Sibley-Moore on 01954 205374 or the British Wheel of Yoga on 01529 303233. Their web site is at <http://members.aol.com/wheelyoga/>

David Bradley can be reached through his web site at www.sciencebase.com

VOLUNTEER DRIVER NEEDED

The Day Centre, operated by a band of dedicated volunteers every Tuesday at the Sports and Social Clubhouse at the Recreation Ground, provides a hot meal and social venue for elderly people in the village. Many of those who enjoy their visits to the Centre have mobility problems, so a minibus service is operated to collect them and take them home again afterwards. A driver is needed, to share this task with other volunteers and help keep this valuable service going. Is anyone out there who would be able to give up a couple of hours on a Tuesday? A PSV licence is not necessary, and only about 2 hours would be required, from 9:00am. to 10:00am and 2:15pm to 3:15pm. Would anyone willing to help please contact Marie Gilbey on 01954 251802.

GREEN FINGERS NEEDED

Help! We would like to call upon the green-fingered residents of Cottenham to help with our sensory garden.

La Marsh (9 The Crowlands) is a residential home in Cottenham which has been established for four years. The residents who live here, all have some sort of sensory impairment and learning disability. All use wheelchairs.

We are looking to provide a sensory garden for all five residents, using plants, trees, raised beds and a water feature. These will help to stimulate the senses, improve awareness of individuals' surroundings and to maintain the residents' quality of life.

To get this project off the ground we require advice and/or donations of cuttings to plant in the garden. Highly-scented or colourful plants would be more appropriate to stimulate the senses. Maybe someone has some spare paving slabs left over from their own garden which they would like to donate. Or you may simply wish to donate yourself to help with some of the digging!

Any help towards this project would be greatly appreciated by residents and staff alike. Please call La Marsh on 01954 250734 to speak to either Lucy, Sue or Sheryl.

G B Roofing

COTTENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

The Council has met with representatives of one 2 one, the communications company proposing to erect a new mobile phone mast in Long Drove. At that meeting we were shown computer-generated plots of the coverage that would be achieved from such a mast, and it seemed to us that the coverage would be no better than that which could be achieved by sharing the existing mast operated by Orange off Beach Road. Subsequent tests have shown that this is indeed the case and we now understand that the Long Drove site is unlikely to go ahead. However, the Beach Road mast may need to be modified to increase its height to accommodate the additional antennae. It does seem that, on this occasion, a new aerial near a residential area has probably been avoided, but this is most unlikely to be the last application in Cottenham, considering the growth in demand for mobile telephone services.

The Recreation Ground in Lambs Lane (or at least the original six acres) has become a registered charity. The land was purchased by the Parish back in 1938, partly funded by a grant from the King George's Fields Foundation, an organisation set up to create public Playing Fields as a permanent memorial to the late King George V. We still have the letter congratulating the village on its new Playing Field, signed

on behalf of the Foundation by one Clement Attlee! Such fields had to be marked by stone "Heraldic Panels" at their entrances. Residents may remember these panels, built in to the brick piers of the original gates – they are now incorporated into the brickwork of the Ladybird Pre-school building. Apparently the field should also have been registered as a Charity, as should a couple of hundred others set up at the same time. For reasons that remain a mystery, this did not happen, and now, 60 years on, we have been required to register it. This is a legal obligation, and the registration process has taken place, so that the original Rec is now a Charity with the Parish Council acting as Trustees. If anything, this means that its long-term future as a public amenity is even more secure.

Since the last Newsletter the Council has lost the valuable services of Colin Watson, who tendered his resignation after 18 years' service, which included a brief period as Chairman. His experience will be greatly missed. Having followed the formal procedures in such a case, and having received no request to hold an election, the Council has asked for applicants for co-option. Accordingly we are pleased to welcome Mr Reynold (Ren) Pesci to fill the vacancy left by Mr Watson.

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DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

Concessionary Bus Passes

The new Transport Bill includes a requirement for Councils to provide free concessionary bus passes to all people of pensionable age and people with a disability. It is expected that the new free bus passes will be available from April. Once they are introduced the Parish Council refund, which has been available to residents who have purchased passes under the old system, will no longer be needed.

However, in order to enable those residents who have purchased a bus pass in the twelve months up to April to obtain a refund if they have not already done so, the Parish Council will be running two more refund sessions this year. The first will be on Friday 30 March at the Communal Room, Franklin Gardens and the final session will be on Friday 29 June at the Communal Room, Stevens Close. So, if you have bought a bus pass during the twelve months up to April and have not yet claimed a refund on it, make sure that you come along to one of these sessions – or ask a friend or neighbour to do so for you. The bus pass needs to be produced when the refund is claimed.

Possible A14 Northern Bypass

Many readers may have seen in the local press that, following a lengthy study of the problems of the A14, several alternative proposals have been put forward for dealing with the congestion on it. One of the proposals is for a northern bypass which would be very much like a motorway. It would run along the southern boundary of Cottenham Parish crossing the Histon Road near Cottenham Skips and the Oakington Road near Lambs Cross. Proposals have also been put forward for Cottenham to have a guided bus which would run along the Histon Road to Histon and then into Cambridge on a Guided Busway along the site of the old railway line.

These proposals are only consultative at this stage and, even when an official decision is taken about a preferred option, there will have to be a full statutory consultation with the public. Meanwhile, further details can be obtained from Judy Howlett, Public Relations Manager, Mouchel Consulting Limited., The Colonnades, Beaconsfield Road, Hatfield, AL10 8YJ. Tel. 01707 280102. E-mail: judy_howlett@mouchel.com. Any comments about the proposals should also be sent to her. For readers with the internet, details of all the options can be found on the GO-East web site: <http://www.go-east.gov.uk>

Public Enquiry on Rampton Road/Oakington Road Sites

As mentioned in the last *Newsletter*, the date on which the Local Plan Inspector will hear the objection which proposes housing development to the north and north-west of Oakington Road and bordered by Rampton Road has been changed to Thursday 22 February 2001. The sessions will be held at 10:00am and 2:00pm at South Cambridgeshire Hall, Hills Road, Cambridge. Members of the public can attend as observers but cannot take part.

Surgeries continue as before: 3rd Friday of the month, 5:30pm to 6:30pm, Franklin Gardens

Rex Collinson

one 2 one and the phone mast that never was

The issue of mobile telephone masts has received much coverage recently. Since my role regarding the siting of the one 2 one mast has been seriously misrepresented elsewhere I am grateful to the editor for allowing me this opportunity to set the record straight.

Following a meeting of the District Council and representatives of the mobile telecommunications companies, I put to the parish council a proposal that we should make contact locally. The refusal in recent years of all but one of five applications for masts meant that coverage and capacity over Cottenham were generally deficient, and the operators were bound to keep coming back at us with more applications. In the past the parish council had always found itself on the back foot, given that it was among the last to find out about them. I argued that we would know the village better than agents of the mobile companies and could help to improve services in the village while minimising visual disruption and unnecessary anxiety. By the way, I have always maintained that if you don't want the masts you shouldn't use the phones!

A majority of the parish council agreed I should make contact and I approached the mobile companies all in October. Orange, BT Cellnet and Vodafone had no immediate plans in the vicinity, but one 2 one had already selected a site for a fifteen-metre mast. The agents were on the point of finalising the details, but I persuaded them to meet residents and the parish council first, which I organised straight away.

I put out a leaflet to all residents of Coolidge Gardens, Beach Road, Coolidge Close and Calvin Close and notices all over the village, inviting people to meet representatives of one 2 one in the Communal Room a week later. There was also coverage on *Radio Cambridgeshire* and in the *Cambridge Evening News*. In the event, only seventeen people turned up during the three-hour session. As the representatives later said, this had been both the best-publicised and least-attended meeting they had ever held.

It was awkward that one 2 one had taken its plans so far forward before I got hold of them and I hope that the mobile telecommunications working party will prevent a similar occurrence in the future.

Having worked so hard to resolve this problem I was not much pleased that a story was put around the village that I had conspired with one 2 one to dump a mast near Coolidge Gardens. I know the source of the falsehood and I have warned him that any repetition will result in grave consequences.

Regular surgery

Your County Councillor Peter Stroude and I are available for consultation in the Communal Room at Franklin Gardens, first Friday of every month, 5.30pm – 6.30pm. Other means of contacting us are on the back page.

Tim Wotherspoon

MY GRANDFATHER'S CLOCK

“There in the hall it stands
Covering its face with both its hands
It steadily rings the hours away
Passing through the night and day”

And it has stood in all of the ‘halls’ I have lived in. It was already a family heirloom when I was born. The clock and I got together quite early on, and gave me a bit of one-upmanship due to my mother teaching me to tell the time by going into the hall and telling her the numbers under the ‘big’ and ‘small’ hands. This was before I started school and then in first class I was asked the same question about the hands and said “It’s half past two” (or something). My mother was duly complimented for this later!

Later, in my teens, my father, being no mechanic, I was allowed to clean and adjust it. This wasn’t very technical and there were only half a dozen wheels in the clock, and the smallest was around half an inch.

The clock is about two hundred years old and was made by John Wood of Grantham (my mother’s home), who was in business from 1780 to 1810. He was not a big name in the trade, so the clock is not of exceptional value.

The family story is that my grandfather found it in a shed somewhere, where it had lain for years. It was so dirty that my grandmother refused to have it in the house unless it was cleaned. So it was taken into the yard and swilled out with water and has been going ever since! It keeps time to within about five seconds a week normally although there are some variations due to changes in temperature. One little mystery is that at irregular intervals it will stop with the weights only half way down. I have never been able to find a cause, and begin to think the clock takes umbrage – perhaps we haven’t been cleaning it properly.

It has only really been out of action once when, due to wear, a gear became damaged and I wondered if this was the end of the road. But luckily I found, in Grantham of all places, a clockmaker who made the parts needed. Grandfather was in business again. Keep going old chap, I should miss you.

Frank Northedge

THE PSYCLISTS SPEAK (SPOKE!)

The Watchman article in the last edition of *The Newsletter* (Beware the Psycho Path) has provoked the biggest response from the readers of *The Newsletter* that I have experienced – I have had twenty letters from outraged cyclists on the content and tone of the Watchman’s article. The tone of the article was consistent with the Watchman’s usual style and I do not intend to comment on that here. However, as a cyclist myself, I would like to summarise the main points which were made in the correspondence on the content of the article.

The “apparently perfectly good cycle path” between Cottenham and Histon is nothing of the kind. It is a footpath which masquerades as a dual use cycleway and footpath. It is too narrow to overtake other cyclists and pedestrians. It is also adjoined by ploughed fields (resulting in large clumps of mud on the path) and an unfenced deep ditch (which most cyclists using the path find very dangerous). Furthermore, the issue of who has the right of way between a cyclist on the path and a motorist pulling out of a driveway crossing the path is unclear. It is perfectly clear that the cyclist has the right of way when on the road. In spite of these points some cyclists do use the path when travelling from Cottenham to Histon.

Using this path to travel between Histon and Cottenham after dark is a whole lot worse. The headlights of on-coming cars are angled to shine to the left – straight into the eyes of cyclists using the path. This means that even when headlights are dipped (by no means always the case) cyclists are totally blinded by on-coming traffic. This is extremely dangerous on a narrow path with a deep ditch on one side and the road on the other.

Whether cyclists use the cycle path in either direction is entirely discretionary and there are very good reasons why some cyclists will prefer to use the road. In choosing to do so they do not cause danger or delay to other road users. If a dangerous situation arises because a motorist overtakes a cyclist, then the cause of that danger is the motorist who is approaching the cyclist from behind. While, cars do sometimes have to slow down before overtaking a bicycle they frequently go on to be delayed by the huge volume of other motorists blocking the road later in their journey (or traffic congestion as it is otherwise known). Cyclists do not contribute to this congestion – so rather than swearing at cyclists, motorists could consider thanking them for doing their bit to keep traffic levels down.

Eddie Murphy



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WINTER WALKS 3

This winter the footpaths have been exceptionally muddy, so here are a few suggestions of walks which avoid the worst of the wet ground.

Long Drove Circular: Start at the Church and go up Church Lane (it can be a bit wet!) until you come to the T-junction with Long Drove. Turn right here and continue until you come to Beech Road. Turn right again and then into Rooks street until you come back to the High Street. Turn right towards the church to finish. Of course, you can start and finish this walk where you like and vary it as you please. The walk I have described is about 2 1/2 miles and would take about an hour.

Long Drove itself has a good firm surface and many people use it for walking their dogs or trying out a new bicycle. If you are feeling fit, you might get as far as the lagoon, which is well worth a visit.

There are various possibilities in Broad Lane too. You can walk to the end and back or you can visit the lake (good for buggies and small bikes) and all without getting your feet wet. Go on – give it a go!

Jasper Kay.

[If Jasper has whetted your appetite for walks with this short series of articles, then perhaps you might like to explore walks around Cottenham further, with the map on the facing page.]

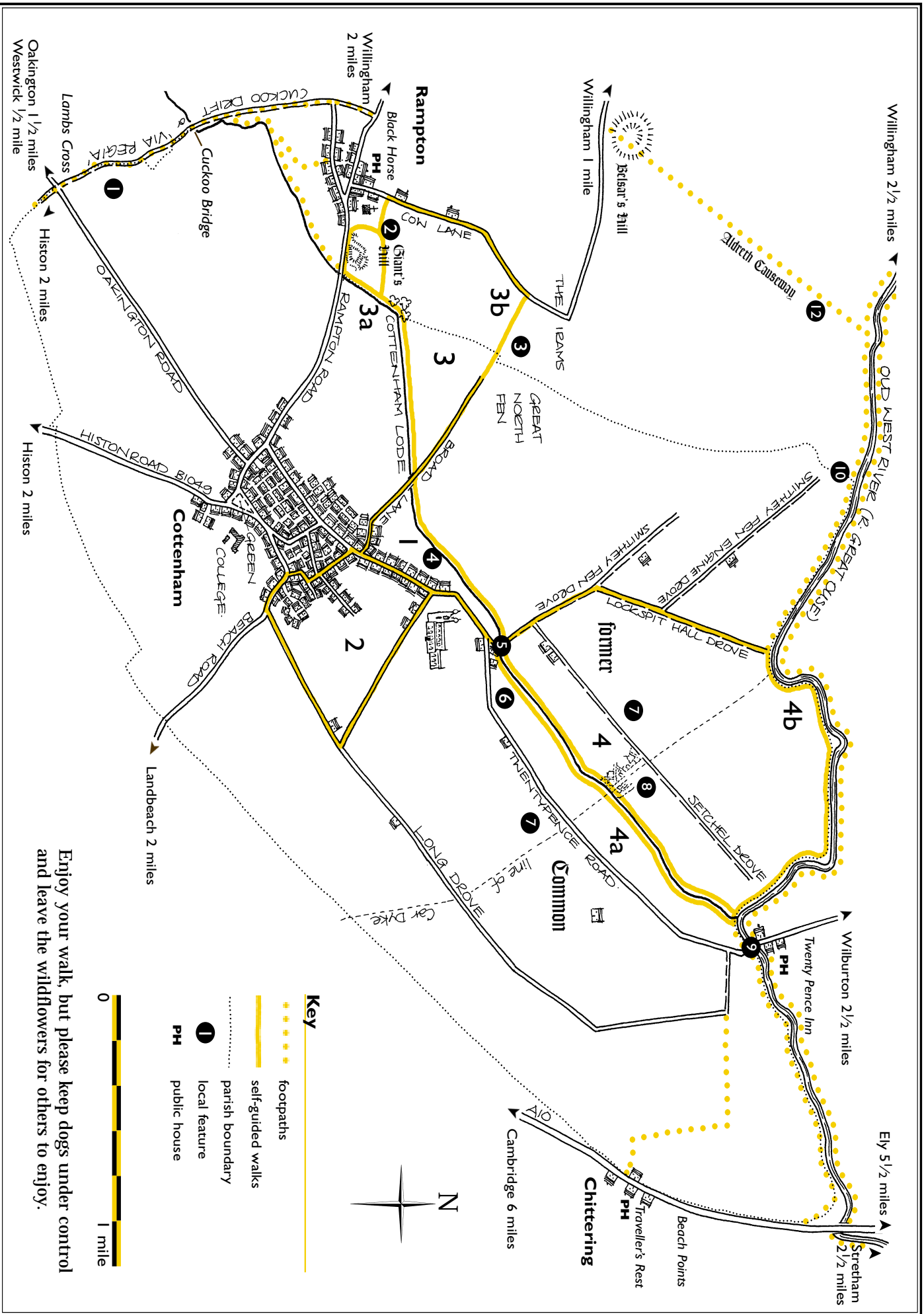
CHILD AND FAMILY NURSING SERVICE

Our health visiting and school nursing services have been combined to create an integrated service for children and families. Each team has qualified nurses who have the knowledge and experience to provide services for families with children less than 16 years of age. Our team covers all patients registered with the practices of Dr Grande & Partners (Histon & Cottenham) and Drs Gould and Cole (Cottenham). We can also call on the expertise of community paediatricians (doctors specialising in children's medicine). There is a leaflet available detailing the services we can offer and they are provided in a variety of ways, depending on the needs of your child. They include home visits, clinic and school-based appointments for parents and children up to 16 years of age, specialist clinics, referral to other services.

If you have any concerns about your child's health or development please do not hesitate to contact our team or attend one of the baby clinics held at your doctor's surgery.

The Child and Family Nurses in the Cottenham/Histon Team are: Anna Edge, Jan Wilkins, Christine Plunkett-West, and Kathryn Julian
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Cambridge Cabinet Makers



Enjoy your walk, but please keep dogs under control and leave the wildflowers for others to enjoy.

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Situated at the rear of Cottenham Village College, the Sports Centre has been designed to cater for the needs of not only the school children but also the residents of Cottenham and the surrounding district.

The Sports Centre boasts a wide range of facilities and activities for any sporting ability, young or old. These facilities are available for casual and block booking use on weekday evenings and at weekends.

Over the last nine months we have spent a great deal of time in re-developing and updating the sports centre. It is a long and ongoing process, which is now starting to show results. Over the summer holidays we have decorated our main changing rooms and the reception area. I'm sure that you will agree with us that the results are very impressive.

Other services include children's sports parties, men's and women's circuit training, children's Saturday multi-sports club, children's trampolining sessions and much, much more.

Did you know that Cottenham Sports Centre has a fitness suite? Do you want to get into shape, become fitter or just get away from the stress of everyday life? If the answer is YES, then the Cottenham Sports Centre Fitness Suite is for you.

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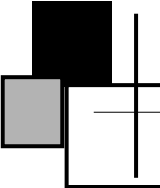
We also offer Fitness Consultations which are divided into two sessions. The first involves a fitness test and designing a personal fitness programme to meet your aims and needs. This is followed by an introduction to your programme and the fitness equipment.

We have recently been successful in bidding for a grant from the National Lottery's New Opportunities Fund, to set up an After School Club called The Zone for young people aged between 11 – 13 years (years 7 and 8) in association with O.S.C.A. (The Out of School Care Association). We are the first such club in the South Cambridgeshire area.

We wish to provide a safe & stimulating environment, supervised at all times by experienced staff. There is the opportunity to take part in a variety of activities or just unwind and relax. Opening Times Monday – Friday 3:30pm – 6:00pm. Current Rates £2.10 per hour per child.

Activities include Playstation 2, arts & crafts, trampolining, Uni-hoc, T.V. video & DVDs, cooking, use of computers & internet, pool and much more. For more information on The Zone contact Jo Ison (01954) 288944.

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REFLECTIONS

— by Moyra A Borg

It is Christmas morning and I am enjoying the fresh air. My bedroom window is open and I can hear birdsong. I always love Christmas morning even if the weather is foul, because there is a special peace which you only really get on that day. I thought I would have a bath and hairwash and spruce up before my Christmas dinner. A brilliant idea came into my head. Yes, I would play my Crispian Steele-Perkins compact disc on my computer. He plays the baroque trumpet so beautifully that I thought that it would be wonderfully relaxing to listen to him playing John Stanley's Trumpet Concerto in D while I sloshed about in the bath. I was revelling in the beautiful sounds when suddenly I heard the sound of a wild feline in distress. At first I thought that it was one of my two monsters ... but no, because I hadn't touched the keyboard for a long time, the spaceman had started his circular tour round the planets on the screensaver. Then I heard what sounded like a strangulated macaw screech coming in between the heavenly notes of the Trumpet Concerto. Oh no! The sound of a phone number being dialled on a tone phone. Then the waaahh! of the distressed beastie! The screensaver sound effects were playing at the same time as the compact disc. This did rather ruin the atmosphere. I will have to tweak the controls to try to stop it from doing this again.

Christmas Day is not happy for everyone. My cats do not like it at all – because it is different from other days. Star did a little 'fruit-cake' display by going berserk and jumping into the computer box and going completely nutty in there. She leapt about and scratched the box so it moved around the bed wildly. She howled her head off and made as much noise as possible. Why? Well I was on the telephone at the time and neither cat likes it when I am apparently talking for a long time to a piece of black plastic. Jade always levers her rather obese self onto the desk to be there whenever I am on the phone. She rarely misses a phone call. She then feels hungry while she is waiting for me to finish, so starts to eat her pellets while I am talking. When Jade had to have her 'peg' (one of her front teeth) out, I decided to separate her from Star, so Jade's pellets were put into a dish and the dish placed on my desk. This is now a permanent arrangement, because that is Jade's domain and Star is not allowed up on the desk – so therefore there is no query over whose pellets they are. The problem is that I always have to tell people what the crunching noise is, in case they think that it is me having a snack while trying to talk to them on the telephone!

BIRD REPORT

The movement of birds depends largely on their search for food. That is why, in winter, large flocks of birds can often be seen feeding on open fields, particularly where corn has grown earlier. Long Drove and Broad lane have plenty of these fields, and these are good feeding grounds for sparrow, chaffinches, greenfinches, and yellow hammers. Elsewhere there are flocks of lapwings, wood pigeon and skylarks and, where fields are being ploughed, black headed gulls.

Swans cannot easily feed if the water is too deep. Where water levels are higher than usual, for example at Welney, some swans have moved to shallower floods. Large flocks have been seen in the fields north of Cottenham and prompted someone to ask an interesting question – if swans have so much difficulty taking off from water, how do they manage to take off from land?

The sudden arrival of cold weather just before Christmas has brought in large flocks of fieldfares. Long Drove is an excellent place to see these noisy, handsome birds.

Many birds, of course, look for food on bird tables or in gardens. Have you tried counting the different species which feed near your house? The ten most common birds in our garden are: sparrow, robin, blue tit, great tit, collared dove, blackbird, song thrush, starling, greenfinch and chaffinch. How does the list look for you?

Several people have reported sparrow hawks in their gardens. This is not surprising. Small birds which feed in our gardens also provide food for sparrow hawks.

Jasper Kay – December 2000

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FOLLOW THE STAR

For their Christmas production this year, Cottenham Theatre Workshop presented a Christmas musical rather than a traditional pantomime. But 'Follow the Star', written by Wally K Daly and Jim Parker, cleverly combines the story of the nativity, with many pantomime features. Herod is the baddie, angels are goodies, Mary and Joseph are heroine and hero and of course there is a cow and a donkey.

It is a very enjoyable work. The music is attractive and singable, the text amusing, there is ample opportunity for dance and there is much back-chat between players and audience.

Cottenham Theatre Workshop rose to the occasion marvelously. They now have an enviable group of talented performers – young and older, experienced and new – all working hard for our entertainment.

The cast moved through the audience before the performance began, immediately establishing an atmosphere of warmth and fun. As soon as the music began we knew we were in for a real treat!

The set was cleverly designed and skilfully painted, the same construction providing Earth, Heaven and the stable. The costumes were colourful without being garish and suited the tone of the production beautifully. The singing and the act-

ing get better every time. The highly professional band was placed at the back of the stage and the balance between the musical accompaniment and the singing was just right. We have become accustomed to a high standard of acting from the more experienced members of the group, but it is a real pleasure seeing this confidence rubbing off on to the whole group. The excellent chorus effortlessly combined the talents of adults and small children.

This was a real family show, both for the cast and for the audience. It was delightful, funny, moving and adventurous. No names are singled out for mention – this was a workshop production where everyone's contribution is important. Every year the company goes from strength to strength in all areas – singing, acting, movement, dance, costumes, set, band. If you missed 'Follow the Star' you missed a treat. Don't let it happen again. Follow these Stars!

Jasper Kay

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LETTERS to the Editors

Dear Editors,

We would also like to comment on the Healthwatch article (issue No. 59), regarding head lice, as there were several points that are at variance with the latest Health Authority information available.

Head lice live very close to the scalp and are spread by climbing from head to head. They do not fly, jump or swim. They cannot be spread via bedclothes, hats, combs or hairbrushes.

The recommended insecticide treatments available from the chemist are in lotion form, not shampoo. They should only be used if a live louse is found: the egg cases (flits) are impermeable. The most effective way of removing the flits is by regular and thorough use of a fine-tooth comb. If you are unsure of what action to take, your pharmacist or child and family nurse can advise.

Yours sincerely,

CHILD & FAMILY NURSING TEAM

.....

Dear Editors,

Congratulations to Cottenham Cricket Club 1st XI on winning promotion to the Cambs, senior league for the first time.

However, the present administration is rather modest in stating the age of the club (102 years). I played in Cottenham cricket club 1st XI (Div 1 North Cambs. Junior League) in the late 1940s and 1950s and we celebrated our centenary in October 1952 as the enclosed ticket photocopy verifies. This being the case, the club will be 150 years old; come 2002.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Taylor

[Sounds like an excellent excuse for another dinner in 2002! - Ed.]



Dear Editors,

It isn't until you lose something that you realise how much you miss it!

As many of you will know, my wife Brenda Buttifant passed away very peacefully on Friday 8th December. She was at home in the loving surroundings of her family, her friends and the countryside with views across to Landbeach.

I would like to thank all of you who have sent messages or who attended her service of thanksgiving at All Saints

Church. I and my family have been comforted and felt uplifted by your love. I am unable to write to each of you personally, so please accept this letter as an expression of the family's gratitude to you all with our love.

Brenda has left a lasting marvellous legacy which will be remembered for many years by her family and her many friends.

Yours sincerely

John Buttifant

.....

Dear Editors,

On Wednesday December 27, the day before the snow, I fell off my bike in the High Street near the Co-op. I would like to thank the young man who came to my aid.

I carried on to the chemist, feeling very shaky, to collect my prescription. They were very kind there, allowing me to sit for a while and gave first-aid to my bruises. I would like to thank them all very much.

Happy New Year

Mollie Allen

Coolidge Gardens

.....

To all my friends and neighbours in Cottenham and around - many thanks for the kindness I have received. Cards, letters, phone calls and little Christmas touches such as mince pies, meals and lovely flowers. I'm back home from hospital now - it's so good to be in Cottenham.

May Knight

Letters for publication may be sent to the Editors, and should include the name and address of the sender, although this may be omitted from publication if requested. Please keep correspondence short and topical. Please note that the Editors may use their discretion regarding publication, and their decision is final. The views expressed by correspondents and other contributors are their own and are not necessarily shared by the Editors.

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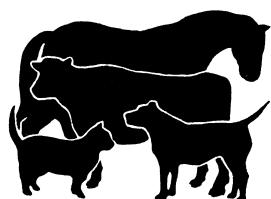
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