

COTTENHAM NEWSLETTER



ISSUE NUMBER 81

JUNE/JULY 2004

PROGRESS

It has been an eventful couple of months for the village. The level of publicity attracted by the traveller issue has exceeded the expectations of most people. To those concerned about the situation this brings a certain comfort. To others who have had house moving plans wrecked by the adverse nature of much of the publicity, the opposite is true.

Much of the publicity surrounding the traveller issue has been hysterical and irresponsible. One national newspaper wrote of Cottenham as a village under siege. Everyone who lives here knows that to be untrue. It never has been true, even, for most of us, at the height of the anti-social behaviour by travellers last year. It has been even less true since the death of Peter Stone; a point when most (not all but most) of the anti-social behaviour stopped.

In my opinion, what we have observed over the last few months is a swing back towards the peaceful co-existence between the village and the traveller community on Smithy Fen. I am encouraged by this and hope that the trend continues. While I know that there is still room for improvement, I feel that greater acknowledgement needs to be made of the progress to date. None of the press coverage of the issue over the last few weeks has mentioned this improvement although I know that most, if not all, journalists were made aware of it.

The focus of the activity in recent months has galvanised the village into participating in the planning appeals process. Public meetings have been held and well attended. Many letters have been written and major progress in that process will take place over the coming months. Hopefully, the law will be clarified or amended to prevent the sort of abuses we have seen over the last year.

However, it is important to remember that, whatever the outcome of the planning appeals, we will have a large and legal traveller site on Smithy Fen for the foreseeable future. For that reason, it is in everyone's interest that the improvement in traveller behaviour over recent months is acknowledged and that good relations are fostered.

I was heartened to see a fine example of good relations recently in a shop in the village. Two traveller girls were laughing and joking with the teenage shop assistant. They were all on first name terms and after some banter while they flicked through a copy of the local paper they asked him to read them their horoscopes which he did. He was half way through the second horoscope as I left the shop.

I look forward to a day when such a scene wouldn't warrant a mention.

Eddie Murphy



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OPENING TIMES

MON-SAT 8.30AM - 5.30PM

SUN 9.00AM - 4.00PM

THURS LATE OPENING 7.30PM

VILLAGE DIARY

May

- 25th Parish Council, Annual General Meeting, Village College, 7:30pm
27th Parish Council, Planning Application Meeting, Parish Council Office – Watson's Yard, 7:15pm

June

- 2nd Ladybird Pre-School, Soft Play session, Village College Sports Centre, 9:30am – 11:30am
3rd Toy Library, Open session, Salvation Army Barn, 2:00pm to 4:00pm
5th Fire Station, Open Day, Fire Station, 10:00am onwards
5th Salvation Army, Jumble Sale, Salvation Army Barn, 10:00am – 11:30am
7th Fen Edge Cinema Club, The Blue Light/The Red Balloon, Village College, 7:30pm
9th WI, A bit of fun with Hilary Sage, Village College, 7:30pm
10th Salvation Army, Coffee Morning, Salvation Army Barn, 10:00am – 11:30am
10th Parish Council, Planning Application Meeting, Parish Council Office – Watson's Yard, 7:15pm
11th Seniors Club, Garden Party with Mr and Mrs Pike, Village College 2:30pm
13th WI, Cake stall at the Ladybird pre-school Fete, St George's Playing Fields, 11:00am
13th Ladybird Pre-School, Summer Village Fete at King George's Playing Field, 11:00am – 3:00pm
17th Toy Library, Open session, Salvation Army Barn, 2:00pm to 4:00pm
24th Salvation Army, Coffee Morning, Salvation Army Barn, 10:00am – 11:30am
24th Parish Council, Planning Application Meeting, Parish Council Office – Watson's Yard, 7:15pm
25th Gardeners Club, The history of the kitchen garden – Dr Twigs Way, Village College 7:45pm
26th WI, Friends of Cottenham WI Charity tea, 322 High Street, 3:00pm
29th Parish Council, Monthly Meeting, Village College, 7:30pm

July

- 1st Toy Library, Open session, Salvation Army Barn, 2:00pm to 4:00pm
3rd Salvation Army, Jumble Sale, Salvation Army Barn 10:00am – 11:30am
5th Fen Edge Cinema Club, Casablanca, Village College, 7:30pm
8th Toy Library, Teddy Bears' Picnic, 17 Corbett Street, 11:30am to 2:30pm
8th Salvation Army, Coffee Morning, Salvation Army Barn, 10:00am – 11:30am
8th Parish Council, Planning Application Meeting, Parish Council Office – Watson's Yard, 7:15pm
14th WI, Fish and Chip Supper, Village College, 7:30pm
15th Toy Library, Open session, Salvation Army Barn, 2:00pm to 4:00pm
22nd Salvation Army, Coffee Morning, Salvation Army Barn, 10:00am – 11:30am
22nd Parish Council, Planning Application Meeting, Parish Council Office – Watson's Yard, 7:15pm
23rd Seniors Club, Garden Party with Margaret Brierly, 14 Telegraph Street 2:30pm

SMALL ADS

HAND WOODTURNING to the antique trade and general public. *Paul Howard, Wilburton. 01353 649605*

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GALA EVENT TENT FOR HIRE. Having a summer party or a family gathering? Concerned about the weather? New free standing white 6x12 metre(20x40 feet) tent for hire. Will stand on a combination of surfaces. Tables and chairs also available for hire from Cottenham and Rampton Scout and Guide Canoe Club. **Tel 01954 251798**

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TO RENT – SOUTH PORTUGAL, luxury 2 bedrooomed apartment near Faro Airport. Daily maid service, balcony overlooking beach with toddler and full sized swimming pool, sky TV, both bedrooms with ensuite bathrooms. £350 per week. Available early October 2004. **Please contact 01954 200309 or email loveluck@ntlworld.com for further information.**

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small ads continued on next page

small ads continued

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DATA ENTRY AND GENERAL OFFICE ASSISTANCE. Arts Intelligence, a small friendly publishing and research company based in Cottenham seeks casual staff for occasional projects such as data entry and stuffing envelopes. Familiarity with computers in general and Excel in particular would be desirable. **Contact Liz or Brian on 01954 250600.**

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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 editor. Cheques should be made payable to 'Cottenham Newsletter'.

PIP PIP!

I am trying to trace two old varieties of Apple Tree that are officially considered to be extinct. They both date from the period when Cottenham was a significant fruit growing area.

They are 'queenholme seedling', bred by a Mr. Norman, whose great greatgrandsons still live in Cottenham, and 'jolly miller'.

These descendants of Mr Norman think that there is a good chance that examples of the trees may still exist in some old gardens in the village. If anybody knows anything about either or both of them, would they be kind enough to contact me. My telephone number is below.

I used to live in the village but moved away just over 4 years ago. Having now established a small orchard of my own and upon joining the East of England Apples & Orchards Project I have discovered these 2 'missing' trees and if there is a chance that they could be 'found' it would strike a very significant blow for conservation of our native species, especially Orchard Fruits, which are being decimated by our 'masters' in Brussels.

Thanks in anticipation, Tony Pearson 01353 688275, email: tonypearson@waitrose.com

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CAN YOU COOK?

Cooking? Well, the WI have a good reputation but, like most groups of people, some of us can and some of us can't. Jam and Jerusalem don't quite fit our image after all these years but, if you want a really delicious tea, the Friends of Cottenham WI will be serving a splendid one at 322 High Street on 26 June from 3:00pm in aid of C2 Children's Ward (Cancer). I promise you the cakes will be made by those of us who can.

Perhaps you will like what you see and decide to have a further look at the WI. You can come to our meetings up to three times in one year without a fee, though we hope you'll buy a raffle ticket or some goody from our stall.

If you decided to join, the membership fee is £20, but it provides an entry to all sorts of opportunities, some organised by our Cambridge Federation, such as visits to events in London and elsewhere in the country, activities such as gliding, scuba diving, silk painting, water colour painting and even public speaking.

In Cottenham we also have groups within our village: Open House which meets from September to April, crafts, poetry and a short walking group. No, the walkers are not all short – though I am – but we just have a small group, have a friendly time and finish with a sandwich at the pub.

Why not give us a try?

COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

The Fen Edge Community Association held its Annual General Meeting on the 26th April, and as always it was impressive to see the level of community activity both within the Fen Edge Patch and Cottenham itself. After a very successful year with Deborah Loveluck as Chairman, we are very pleased to welcome Roger Daw as her successor. At the meeting, Roger gave us a thought-provoking talk on a recent survey of attitudes of young people in Cambridgeshire to various aspects of their lives – useful to know for anyone with an interest in community life.

For those of you new to the area, it's worthwhile to know how the administrative structure of the Community Association works. There are three key committees – the Finance and General Purposes, the Arts Committee and the Activities Group. The former is the hub at the centre of the wheel and as its name suggests oversees the finances of the Association and disburses grants etc. While there are keen people on this committee, we could certainly do with extra ideas, so if you're interested in an overview of the charity's activities, please get in touch.

*Steve Howie,
Treasurer
Fen Edge Community Association*

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RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION.

Residents of Cottenham – you are splendid! Two meetings, two successes, and a common aim:

“... to protest the expansion of the travellers site at Smithy Fen and to ensure that police and local authorities act in full accordance with the law to prevent any further abuse of our community ...”

The aim is not to disrupt the lives of those travellers residing lawfully and peacefully on Smithy Fen but to take all reasonable steps to return the village to its former tranquility. Many people are critical of the withholding of Council Tax (yet democracy itself was born of unlawful acts against unjust and oppressive law); several disturbed by the nature of the publicity (yet letter, after letter, after letter met with the same stalling resistance as John Prescott's failure to respond); and a few totally opposed to our efforts in general (yet all we seek is a return to peace). We respect all views, and will try to proceed with the utmost sensitivity but, respectfully, not at the expense of justice for Cottenham.

The Cottenham Residents Association committee met on Monday April 26th with five key decisions taken:

1. Its structure:

Rick Bristow (Chairman), Terry Brownbill (Media Management), Steve Casey (Treasurer), Adam Daw (Social Development), Ken Kelso (Media Spokesman), Chris Simms (Design and Reprographics), Steve Stafford (Police Liaison), Mark Swanson (I.T), Sue Branton (Village Services Liaison), Sharon Bristow (Administration), Michelle Stewart (Secretary).

2. That the Association be governed by a Charter, the draft of which is expected to be ratified at the next meeting on May 17th.

3. That a 'flyer' on the withholding of Council Tax be circulated during the week commencing Sunday May 2nd.

4. That steps be taken with the appropriate authorities to ensure that, and convince all residents that, the safety and security of the village is assured.

5. To plan the creation of Cottenham 'Fun Days', days designed to regenerate the community spirit amongst all living in and on the outskirts of the village.

At the meeting of the 19th many asked to whom they should write in order to promote a change in Planning Law. By writing to the: House of Commons, Westminster, London SW1A 0AA, you can pressurize: John Prescott, Keith Hill (Planning Minister) Yvette Cooper (Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister), James Paice (MP for Cottenham) and the Prime Minister himself. Alternatively the e-mail addresses are:

John Prescott and Tony Blair via their website – www.number-10.gov.uk

Yvette Cooper – coopery@parliament.uk

Keith Hill – keith.hill_mp@odpm.gsi.gov.uk

One resident has written saying:

“like many of the villagers I have been rather downcast and concerned surrounding recent events but Monday's meeting and taking some positive action has improved my mood considerably, and I look forward to a successful result from the Inspectorate ...”

We'll do our best to meet the wish of Mr I.H., for him on behalf of us all.

Rick Bristow



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IS IT LEGITIMATE TO BREAK THE LAW?

This is an important question for the people of Cottenham. Some members of the settled community are committed to the illegal action of withholding their Council Tax. This is in response to what many perceive as the successful flouting of planning law by the Travelling community, who themselves maintain that they are forced into this illegal course in order to provide themselves with a home.

The response of the authorities is to reaffirm that the deliberate breaking of civil law can never be justified. I want to argue that, in principle, that is not so; there are situations in which it is legitimate to break the law.

I come to this question as a Christian whose ethics are formed by the theology of the Church. Not everyone shares that background. However, I offer these thoughts in the hope of stimulating an honest debate in the village.

The structure of the law is very important. It provides order and stability to society. Anarchy might provide individuals with a short-term, selfish advantage, but the long-term benefit of society requires a deep respect for the maintenance of law. It is only in very extreme circumstances that we should even consider flouting the law. To embark on a campaign of law breaking is to enter dangerous territory.

The Christian tradition has always had a great respect for the law. Human law should be accepted as a reflection of God's justice. To observe the law is therefore a sacred duty.

However, civil law can be broken in certain circumstances.

Uncontroversially, we can break the law in situations of 'imminent danger'. For example, I would feel justified in breaking the speed limit if I was rushing my child to hospital.

More controversially, in very rare circumstances, we can claim the right to break a law in the pursuit of a deeper justice (which Christians would identify with God's justice). If we take the decision to flout a law for this reason, there are a number of facts that we must consider carefully.

First, we must be sure that there is no alternative way within the law to pursue the deep justice of our case. Law in our society feeds on democracy. Democracy is a two-way

process. If it is true that the democratic structure refuses to acknowledge the justice of our case, and will not listen to our legitimate concerns, then civil disobedience might be justified as the final option.

Second, we must not complain about the personal consequences of our law-breaking. The legal system has a right to impose penalties in order to maintain its integrity. An appeal to the deeper principles of justice is likely to carry a price.

Third, these considerations apply equally to those considering withholding Council Tax and to Travellers who decide to flout planning law.

Fourth, to appeal to what I have called 'deeper justice' takes us into the realms of opinion. There will not be universal agreement about what is just. For this reason alone we should approach any decision to flout the law with the utmost caution. Everyone needs to ask themselves what their true motives are; whether they are acting with humility and integrity. Christians will want to appeal to the guidance of God who is the final source of justice.

Whether the situation faced by our community justifies breaking the law is a matter of personal judgement. Whatever the decision, our concern must be for the good of our community.

*Michael Hore,
Rector of Cottenham*

YOUNG MUSICIANS

Cottenham Young Musicians is delighted to announce an opportunity for young people to make music and sing together. This opportunity is open to Years five to nine. Classes will be held at the Village College on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th of June 2004 from 9:30am to 1:00pm. A small concert will be held on the Friday evening. Teaching will be provided by the musical director Vanessa Brown (MA Cantab M Mus) and other local music teachers. Participants need to be Grade 1 standard or above. There is a £15 charge for participation. It is hoped this will also be available in the October half-term.

Please e-mail: cottenham.young.musicians@ntlworld.com for further information.



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The fire service is committed to equality and fairness and welcomes applications from all sections of the community, including women and ethnic minority groups, who are currently under-represented within this service.

Grant Miller

COMMUNITY GARDEN

Two people who have done a great deal of work to keep a community garden in Cottenham after the move of the ACRE offices from 218 High Street are themselves moving on. Simone Navon has started an academic course and Andrew Withers is moving away from the village to live in Scotland.

Their efforts as Secretary and Chairman of the working party that secured the land alongside 218 High Street for community use and started the planting are greatly appreciated and we wish them well.

Those of you who use the footpath between the High Street and Franklin Gardens will know that the garden has recently had a good show of winter pansies and spring bulbs, but also that the weeds are flourishing. Students and staff from Cottenham Village College have been amongst those who have helped with working parties.

We hope to widen community participation in the future. In order to do this we really need more people to help. If you feel able to help in any way, from administration to getting stuck in with the weeding or planting, please contact Alex Saunders on 01954 250421 or e-mail: alexvsanders@hotmail.com



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SPRING'S UP!

April, comes she will, when streams are ripe and swelled with rain. This might be described as a normal spring; we don't have many of these. It was tricky, with no opportunities to be missed, but manageable. But on sunny days with the fresh green growth and wonderful blossom, what could be better than being outside?

After the harvest and autumn planting this is the busiest time with crops changing colour after the winter dormancy and wanting feeding, and spring crops ready to plant as frost risk recedes. In fact everything starts to come to life, the agronomist turns up and government wakens with new cunning plans to bemuse for the next cropping year.

It is also a time to reassess. The odd crop of oilseed rape (the pretty, or garish, crop with the yellow flowers) that survived the winter still looks awful despite the blossom. I notice that more crops locally have given up and been replanted, joining the majority which were re-sown after failing last autumn.

It was the worst year I can remember for pigeons and bunnies – free range, 'organic' (what does that mean?) rabbits and pigeons now available for free if you can catch them and deal with the guts, feathers and fur.

World demand for oilseed appears to be increasing enormously, with demand not only for margarine and cooking oil but increasingly biodiesel (although not on any scale in England). The great thing about biodiesel from oilseed rape

is that you can virtually make it in the kitchen and run the car without modification. What's more you can add old cooking oil. Simple really: vegetable oil, methanol, skim the glycerol, and filter.

The wheat crop is a little mixed. The dry conditions, and consequent late emergence of the first planted wheat, have left the crop a bit thin, and possibly short of stems and consequently ears. The later crops, which usually produce less than the earlier planted crops, suffered less stress, and may produce more, than the earlier planted crops this year. The winter barley (planted in the autumn) will be coming into ear within a day or two, a sure sign of summer. In contrast, the spring barley is just coming through the ground. Both will be harvested within a month of each other despite the six month difference in planting dates.

As inevitable as the wheat price rise last year the price is now falling – a few months ago it was possible to sell feed wheat for £85/t for delivery next November; it is now a challenge to get much over £75. Barring a disaster, the EU will be net exporters of wheat and maize again, and while the world is getting shorter of these crops year in year out, this local change will probably have more impact. Time will tell how production from the new EU members increases as worries about capital disappear.

continued on next page

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continued from previous page

I have never seen so many crops of field beans around. Beans are extremely erratic. They were once described to me as a sorry crop: you are either sorry you grew them or sorry you didn't plant more. There is quite an export market for the spring varieties where they are eaten in the Far East. In England they are usually used for animal feed providing a useful GM-free substitute to soya.

Agriculture has always had its own language. We now have more of it as rules change. Flavour of the month is 'cross-compliance'. It will no longer be necessary to grow a crop to claim subsidy (good news for the world, bad news politically in England, mixed blessing for farmers) but it will be necessary to meet other environmental conditions. The recent proposal in England is for a two metre uncropped area around all arable fields. Environmentally this is generally good news although ideally this would be better subject to a range of management conditions. It also provides access to farm yards and the backs of houses in semi urban areas such as Cottenham, encouraging other forms of diversity, some of which are quite disruptive to wildlife.

Couch Grass

Reflections... – by Moyra A. Borg

Sunday dawned a little misty and damp. I was setting off for a trip on the back of a steam lorry taking part in the Yesteryear Road Run, so was hoping for a sunny, windless day. I called in to the local shop and bought food supplies for the journey. I took a small bottle of water, my mobile 'phone, my shades and a fleece to wear. I also brought with me my huge winter coat which was not needed at all.

'I must be mad' I thought, 'I'm too old for this.' 'Here am I aged 42 going to spend a whole day in the open on the back of a steam lorry!' I was to travel on Norman's 3/4 scale model of a Beyer Peacock steam lorry. The original, made in Manchester, would have been used in the 1920's for haulage purposes. The model lorry I was on has an engine working pressure of 150 lbs. It is two speed with a maximum speed of 15mph. Rather than let everyone overtake us we were due to set off slightly earlier than the others and let them catch us up!

I arrived on Cottenham Green at about 9:20am, five minutes before we were due to set off. There were four men in the crew, Norman, Dave, Dave and Kevin. I was the only passenger. In the front part sat the driver and the fireman, while behind them under the green canopy sat the other two who were resting, facing the rear of the lorry. I was on the coal bunker at the very back facing forwards, sitting on a good thick cushion and had a wonderful view of everything around me.

I felt like a child because I was enjoying myself so much. Happiness is a gift which just arrives out of the blue sometimes and this was one of those days when it was so good to be alive. The trees were either in full bloom or like the May blossom just about to burst out in full glory. As we trundled along the engine chugged away confidently and surely.

Every now and then it 'let off steam'! This was a noisy whooshing and hissing and I got covered in moisture and soot! I was ecstatic, which made me realise what a big child I am! I suddenly realised that that was where we had got the expression 'letting off steam'! I love finding out how sayings originated. When we 'let off steam' it made such a noise that it frightened horses in fields, which bolted away from us at high speed, bucking as they went. When the driver or fireman pulled a cord our whistle blew, letting off more steam in the process. What fun!

We chugged into Rampton and spent a short while there, then Willingham, where everyone stopped again to let people inspect and admire the vehicles. I found a fine display of delicious home made cakes and bought quite a few!

continued on next page

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continued from previous page

Our engine always set off before the others, so when we started moving again we had a clear road ahead of us. The next stop was the Green at Over, then on to the Over Community Centre where we had a longer stop for lunch. Out came everyone's picnics and drink supplies, though they served hot meals at the bar there. We steamed out of Over towards Swavesey, then turned left down Ramper Road towards Longstanton.

What a perfect day! I could see for miles across the fields and enjoyed a wonderful view of the panorama around me. Wherever we stopped, crowds gathered to admire all the old vehicles. There were lorries, tractors, cars, motorbikes, scooters and even a few bicycles. Dutifully, Waterbeach Brass Band got out of its double-decker bus and played to entertain us all. They played very well I thought, including: '76 Trombones', 'Barnard Castle' and 'Those Magnificent Men in Their Flying Machines'. The band helped to create the right atmosphere. The ice cream man did a roaring trade and a great time was had by all.

For the technically minded I just thought I ought to tell you that the water tank on Norman's engine holds 50 gallons and was topped up by the Cheshire vintage fire engine when we stopped in Longstanton. We used approximately 90 gallons of water and about 2 large bags of coke and anthracite fuel. Our journey round all the villages was about 20 miles in total. Norman frequently did oil rounds checking that all parts of the engine were fully oiled. The ash also had to be emptied out.

In all there were more than 250 vehicles taking part in the parade and 28 standing exhibits in Cottenham. The whole event was raising funds for MAGPAS. (Mid Anglia General Practitioner Accident Service), Cambridgeshire's volunteer doctor accident and emergency service. MAGPAS has set up a Community First Responder Scheme in Cottenham.

At the moment there are four active responders. Since its inception in March 2003 it has been called out 30 times. The scheme works with the ambulance service. The Community First Responder is a local person who can arrive on the scene within about 5 minutes of a 999 call to help save life before the ambulance crew arrive. MAGPAS provides the Responders with a kit which includes oxygen and a defibrillator. They receive special training on how to use the kit and provide vital lifesaving skills to the patient until the ambulance crew and doctors arrive. It costs approximately £5000 to train and equip a group of volunteers. The local group is then expected to do its own fundraising to pay for its maintenance.

For more information on the work of MAGPAS – see their website on <http://www.magpas.org.uk>

I got home and had a bath. My hair was full of soot and I vowed to wear a cap on my next journey to protect my hair and eyes too. When I emptied the bath water there was a long line of black grit at the bottom of the bath.

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PARISH COUNCIL

March and April Council meetings included the following matters :

• **Parish Clerk –**

Mrs Julie Groves has been appointed to act as Assistant Clerk; Julie will work alongside Eric Smith, who is the Acting Clerk and the Responsible Finance Officer for the time being. Julie's phone number is 202928, and her Email address is julie.groves@ntlworld.com

• **Toddler Play Area –**

Tenders have been received, and a constructor has been appointed, together with a fencing contractor. It is hoped that the new facility will be in place in June. The existing play equipment on the Recreation Ground is now being looked at with a view to updating and improving.

• **Skateboard Project –**

Tenders have also been received for this project, and a skateboard equipment constructor has been chosen, and will be appointed when the funding is in place. The tarmac base will be dealt with separately by contractors using the base specification required by the skateboard equipment constructor as this overall will be cheaper. The site will be fenced.

• **Parish Plan –**

A report will be issued to every household within the village. It includes many points of action, which it is hoped many residents can be part of.

• **Theft of Mower –**

A mower was stolen from the groundsman's hut on the Recreation Ground in March. Despite the main gates being locked the theft still occurred, and obviously a vehicle was used. The police are involved, and would appreciate information from anyone to help them solve this crime. The security arrangements are being reviewed.

• **Cottenham Residents' Association Committee –**

Following the formation of the committee on 19th April the Council have requested a meeting with them as soon as possible after their inaugural meeting. The Council wants all parties to work together for the overall good.

• **Annual Parish Meeting –**

Over 200 people attended this meeting in April to hear a report from the Chairman, Mrs Paula Johnson, which covered the various events and happenings in the village over the past year, together with reports from Councillors on the Playground and Skateboard Projects, and the Parish Plan. Reports were also given on behalf of the District and County Councils. The Council had invited our MP, Mr James Paice, to speak, and answer questions on the issues surrounding the travellers on the Smithy Fen site. The meeting appreciated the time given by Mr Paice, and his concluding comments that he would do all within his power to attempt to improve the situation for all concerned.



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Poetry Corner

THE TAP

Pup, plop, pup, plop, there goes that tap again
Somebody send for the plumber, it's driving me insane.

Pup, plop, pup, plop, I'm sure its getting worse.
Somebody send for the plumber, my head is going to burst.

Pup, plop, pup, plop, the torture's most extreme
Somebody send for the plumber, I'm getting pretty mean.

The plumber's been, the tap is fixed, there's now no sound at all
Except the ticking of the clock that's hanging on the wall.

Tick, tock, tick, tock, the sound was meant to mock.
Somebody fetch me a hammer, I'll smash that flipping clock.

June Stevenson

NATURAL CAUSES

Cottenham Theatre Workshop's Spring production was 'Natural Causes' by Eric Chappell, whose credits include a number of well known TV programmes and some comedies and farces for the stage.

This play is called a 'black farce', 'black' because it is about death, and 'farce' because it includes a host of mistaken identities, misunderstandings and catastrophic errors. We, the audience, are in the enviable and pleasurable position of knowing what is going on, while watching the actors blunder from one potential disaster to another.

Beneath these hilarious proceedings there are more serious underlying themes of our approach to death, euthanasia, married life, happiness, depression, the role of the Samaritans and personal relations of all kinds.

The highly professional cast of five brought out all these themes brilliantly. Once we had got used to the idea that this was a comedy about dying, the audience was hooked for the entire evening. The cast took us along at great speed and with great confidence so that the frequent twists in the plot were for ever taking us by surprise. Clear diction, immaculate timing and a very tight production provided us with a highly entertaining evening.

As usual, I am reluctant to comment on individual performances, because they were all excellent and fitted together into an impressive team. And team work is the key element here, because it is clear that the wonderful set was built by members of the Theatre Workshop, including members of the cast.

The comments of the audience during the interval and at the final curtain said it all: 'One of their very best productions' 'A wonderful evening's entertainment.'

Thank you CTW, once again for a thoroughly enjoyable evening out. Did you not see it? What a pity. You missed a real treat!

Jasper Kay



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RONALD MACBETH

It was with great sadness that we heard of the recent death of Ronald Macbeth, or Mac as he was known to most of us in the village. He owned and ran Cottenham Pharmacy for many years until his retirement in 2000.

Mac was essentially a private person, and yet for many years he was a part of the day to day fabric of the village. He was on at least nodding acquaintance with just about every member of the community, because everybody has need of the pharmacist on some occasion.

Mac was born in Lincolnshire on the banks of the River Trent. His parents were doctors, but even from childhood he was his own man and he wasn't to follow in their footsteps as he could so easily have done. He left school and set his feet on a career in pharmacy.

Of necessity, he started as an assistant in someone else's firm. The chemist shop in Cottenham became available and, at great risk, Mac and Jennifer bought it and moved to the village. It was a risk, for they didn't have the money and the business would have to be built by their own labour and struggle. But that was not a thing to deter Mac.

By his nature, his purpose wasn't simply to establish a flourishing business. He was never very interested in the business side of his work. His gift and his concern were for the people he served. There are many in the village who could tell tales of Mac's kindness and boundless generosity.

All through his life he set himself unrealistic goals and then quietly triumphed. One of his passions was sailing. He

caught the bug, and, once caught, set about mastering it. He built his first dingy in his back room. He took lessons, learned navigation, upgraded his boat and, in time, he was at ease sailing across the North Sea and around the Baltic. If the challenge was there, he would meet it.

This extended to so many areas of his life. The customers in the shop probably wouldn't know it but he was a skilled cook, a knowledgeable gardener and dexterous with his hands and with all manner of gadgets. He was also passionate about music and sport, having been a rugby player at county level in his youth.

However his greatest devotion was to his family – his wife Jennifer, his daughters Heather and Alison and his grandchildren. It is to them we extend our condolences for their loss.

LEEWAY

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AUTUMN SHOW

The April/May issue of the *Newsletter* contained some of the details of the schedule of this Fen Edge Community Association event.

Do have another look at it and start planting, making and photographing. Remember too that there will be an opportunity for the first time for groups (e.g. school classes, playgroups, uniformed groups) of children from 6 to 35 youngsters to enter a project.

The rest of the schedule is printed below. Start to think now what you might like to exhibit. We had a record number of entries last year. Can we (I mean you) make it even better this year?

SECTION 5 – PRESERVES

47. Plum jam-any type
48. Raspberry jam
49. Strawberry jam
50. Jam made from any other fruit
51. Jelly made from fruit
52. Lemon curd
53. Marmalade
54. Honey
55. Chutney
56. Pickled vegetables – any size jar
57. Pickled onions – any size jar

SECTION 6 – COOKERY – ADULTS

58. Fruit pie or tart-top and bottom crust
59. 1 Loaf of bread-white-hand made
60. 1 Loaf of bread-brown-hand made
61. Bakewell tart
62. 6 Scones
63. Fruit cake – 7” round
64. Victoria sponge – made with 3 eggs
65. 6 Pieces of short-bread
66. 6 Biscuits
67. Tea bread – made in a 1lb tin

SECTION 8 – ART – ADULTS

75. Drawing – pencil- charcoal-ink
76. Painting – maximum size A2
77. Cartoon Character in any medium
78. Computer graphics
79. Decorated letter of the alphabet maximum 3” x 5”

SECTION 9 – CRAFTS - ADULTS

80. Woodwork – carpentry
81. Woodwork – turning
82. Metalwork
83. Ceramics
84. Item made from a kit
85. Christmas card in any medium
86. Any other item

SECTION 10 – TEXTILE CRAFTS - ADULTS

87. Soft toy
88. Cross stitch item
89. Embroidery – kit
90. Embroidery – own design
91. Crochet item
92. Hand knitting
93. Patchwork item
94. Appliqué item

95. Quilted item
96. Beaded item
97. Any other item

SECTION 11 – JUST FOR FUN

98. Largest sunflower head
99. Heaviest onion
100. Halloween mask
101. Flower Arrangement depicting a film with sell-by date (state film). Any medium & accessories allowed, size 2” x 2” (60cmx60cm)
102. Unusual container
103. Most unusual shaped vegetable
104. Oldest store cupboard item of food
- 104a. An unusual sandwich

CHILDRENS SCHEDULE 2004 PART 2

AGE OF CHILD AS OF 1ST SEPTEMBER 2004

7 YEARS & UNDER SECTION 12 – COOK-ERY/ FOOD

105. 4 Small cakes

106. 5 Decorated biscuits
107. An edible face
108. An unusual sandwich

8 TO 11 YEARS OLD SECTION 15 – COOK-ERY/FOOD

119. 6 Biscuits
120. A decorated cake (can be home made or bought)
121. 4 Small cakes
122. An edible necklace

12 TO 16 YEAR OLDS SECTION 19 – COOK-ERY/FOOD

141. 6 Squares of chocolate brownies
142. A decorated home made cake
143. 6 Savoury buffet items

ALL AGES SECTION 23 – PETS

144. The most appealing
145. The best condition
146. The best group of 2 or more together



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FEN EDGE CINEMA CLUB: "I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO SEE THAT..."

The cinema club goes from strength to strength, with good audiences and discussion about the films. To reiterate the arrangements – I've avoided a subscription system so people don't have to commit themselves a full year ahead. All I ask is a contribution to cover my expenses – currently about three pounds per person per session. We show the film by DVD (DVD player bought thanks to a set-up grant from the Community Association) attached to the College's projector. This works very well – both sound and picture quality are good. Then we have an informal discussion about the film and related matters over a drink, soft or otherwise.

So please feel free to come along anytime. We meet the first Monday of the month at CVC at 7:30pm. The only exception to this is when that falls on a bank holiday – then we meet the following day.

For details of the current programme, please see the diary section of the *Cottenham Newsletter* or our website www.fencinema.org.uk

Steve Howie

CHALLENGE

Has anyone in your family or among your friends had breast cancer? As some of you may know, my daughter, Rachel, has been undergoing treatment for breast cancer during the past year.

With this in mind I have decided to take part in The Three Mountain Challenge, organised by Breakthrough Breast Cancer. This involves climbing Skiddaw, Scafell Pike and Helvellyn during the weekend of July 10th – 12th.

If I haven't already approached you, and you would like to sponsor me, please call in or give me a ring. The organisation and I would be really grateful for any support you can give.

Jasper Kay, 85 High Street, Cottenham. Tel: 250485.

LADYBIRDS GROWS!

During the last two years, demand for pre-school places in Cottenham has increased to such an extent that new parents have been concerned that there may not be enough places available for their children.

The Ladybird Pre-school waiting list reflected this, with fifty children being eligible for a place before July 04 (the end of the academic year).

To accommodate these, the pre-school has negotiated to hire the adjoining Sports and Social Club hall for three mornings a week. This enables us to cut class sizes on two mornings each week for two and three year old children and also enables us to open an additional Little Ladybird session (for children who have just turned two).

From Easter, government-funded places for children increased by another term. This could further increase demand for places.

Hiring the Sports and Social Club hall creates a significant extra workload for staff and stretches storage resources to the limit; we could not continue this indefinitely.

Plans have been drawn up and negotiations have begun with Cottenham Parish Council to explore the possibility of building an extension to the Pre-school. We anticipate an extension will not only provide more places and hopefully smaller classes, but also provide opportunities to extend facilities for young children and their families by providing a centre for related groups and activities.

The Ladybird Pre-school is a charity run by a voluntary committee of parents and does not make a profit. Government funding contributes to finances but we have to charge fees and fundraise continually to maintain our high standards.

We are very fortunate to be working with the Parish Council on this exciting Community Project. If you would like to know more or have any ideas that could help us in this initiative please contact us at the Ladybird Pre-school.

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e.mail: enquiries@ladybirdpreschool.org.

Rosemary Miller, Principal.

Siobhan Lihoreau, Chairperson

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BIRD REPORT

On Good Friday I did one of my favourite walks – Church Lane, Long Drove, River Bank, Lockspit, Smithy Fen. When I got home I made a list of the birds I had seen and was surprised to find that I had identified exactly fifty birds, reminding me once again just what a rich environment we enjoy here.

Of these birds, nineteen were water birds, seen mainly on the Long Drove lagoons. This is a wonderful place at the moment. I saw five different species of gull, five ducks, two geese and a few waders. There were tufted duck, teal, shoveller and shelduck. There were redshanks and oystercatchers and of course a heron. It was here too that I saw a swallow, my first of the year.

I met a real expert there, who told me that recently he had seen there Icelandic gull, glaucous gull, Mediterranean gull, kittiwake and also a pintail duck. The weather was fine on Good Friday, so there were plenty of skylarks and meadow pipits about. In Church Lane there were several chiffchaffs (they had been around two weeks earlier), a jay and a green woodpecker. By the Great Ouse there were goldfinches, reed buntings and cormorants. There were lapwings in the fields and yellowhammers in the hedges.

So I had a real feeling that spring had well and truly arrived. But which birds did I not see? Well I saw no rooks (although they are often in my garden), no great spotted woodpecker and no feral pigeons. You can't win every time, and I am now (mid- April) eagerly awaiting the arrival of the whitethroats, house martins and eventually – the cuckoo.

If anyone would like to see my full list of fifty birds, please let me know.

Jasper Kay April 2004

DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' NOTES

Planning issues, Smithy Fen

At the time of writing, everyone living in Smithy Fen is either living there with benefit of planning permission or is occupying land which is the subject of enforcement action by the council. All the outstanding appeals against enforcement action, including the appeal for which written representations closed on 27 April, are due to be heard on 20 July 2004 at the council's new offices at Cambourne. Members of the public can make oral representations to the appeal hearing at the inspector's discretion. An injunction has been obtained by the council to prevent further deliveries or spreading of hardcore on an area of the land subject to enforcement. Further legal proceedings relating to this are scheduled for early May. A planning application for eleven caravan pitches has been submitted to the council, also in respect of land currently subject to enforcement.

Appletree Close

By the time the *Newsletter* is published an appeal will have been heard against the council's refusal of planning permission for the extension of this mobile home park adjacent to Histon Road at the southern end of Cottenham.

Council Tax

The council has apologised for a printing error on council tax bills which transposed the amount levied by the district

continued on next page



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continued from previous page

council (which has not increased this year) with the amount levied by the Police Authority (which has). The total tax due shown on bills is, however, correct and therefore re-billing was not necessary.

Council tax is collected by the district council to help fund its own services as well as those of the county and parish councils and the fire and police authorities. In addition to the fire brigade and police, these services include refuse collection and environmental health, roads, libraries, schools and student finance services for higher education, social services and support for the disabled and elderly, and local recreation and community facilities to mention but a few.

New council offices and contact numbers

By the time you read this the council's headquarters will have moved to the new office at Cambourne. A small Cambridge contact office is being retained at Mandela House, Regent Street.

All phone calls will be routed via the contact centre which will also deal with county council enquiries. Numbers for the district council are:

- 08450 450 500 for general enquiries
- 08450 450 051 for general housing enquiries
- 08450 450 061 for benefits

- 08450 450 062 for building regulation inspections
- 08450 450 063 for environmental health, including abandoned vehicles, licensing, pest control and pollution
- 08450 450 064 for billing and payment enquiries - e.g. council tax, business rates, housing rents
- 08456 500 280 for waste and recycling, including refuse collection

Lines will be open every day, except Sundays and Bank Holidays, from 8:00am – 8:00pm.

Elections

Elections for three district councillors for the Cottenham ward and for representatives to the European Parliament will be held on Thursday 10 June. For any enquiries regarding these, phone the council's general enquiries number and ask for electoral services.

District Councillors' Surgery

The last of these for the current term of office will be held on Friday 4 June from 6:00pm to 6.30pm in Rampton Village Hall.

*Rex Collinson
Tony Nicholas
District Councillors*

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PCSO GILBEY

I am, at last, pleased to write an article for the *Cottenham Newsletter*, which I have been asked to do on a number of occasions. I am the Police Community Support Officer for Cottenham and I look forward to meeting as many of the people of the village as possible as I go about my rounds.

I have been working in Cottenham for six months now and that time has flown by. I have been keen to tackle quality of life issues in the village. Also over the last six months I have been working with the Cottenham re-assurance team delivering a sustained period of re-assurance. Many people have expressed appreciation for this increased presence.

I have been working very closely with the Parish Council, local schools, and members of the community in looking at ways we can tackle issues such as the standard of parking in the village, particularly outside the Co-op and the fish & chip shop. I want to make clear to everybody who parks in the village that parking on double yellow lines or parking in private drives anywhere in the village, causing an obstruction, is not acceptable.

Many people are inclined to blame travellers from Smithy Fen for all of the problems in the village. However, many people from the village seem to think that illegal parking is acceptable when it is convenient for them to do so. It has a very great effect on those living in the vicinity of village facilities, who can't get into or out of their driveways because of the inconsiderate parking of others.

I have powers to issue parking tickets and I will embark on a sustained enforcement campaign as long as the problem continues. This also includes looking at the long term ways in which we can improve the Co-op corner and the area around the fish & chip shop. This will require continued contact between myself and the Parish Council, the highways department and the wider community.

I hope many of you will agree that things in the village have improved since the low point at the end of last year. However there is still work to be done. Everybody has a duty to report any crime in the village whether it is speeding, driving in an anti-social manner, or the excesses of a small minority of teenagers in the village.

Only by reporting crime do we build an accurate picture of what goes on in the village. If problems that have occurred in the past begin to reoccur then please report them to me or to the police station. I am here to facilitate communication between the community and the Police. Please stop me and tell me about things you have seen if you feel that they might be of concern to the Police. If you don't see me on the street I can be contacted via Histon Police Station on 01223 358966.

PCSO Steve Gilbey 7050.

LETTERS to the Editors

Dear Editor,

I think the recent hype and press about the traveller situation in Cottenham is something to be ashamed of. I am a 16 year old resident of Cottenham, and for all I know I'm being naive. But with letters being sent round entitled 'LAST CHANCE or NO CHANCE', it seems to me like all this is doing is inciting racism and undoubtedly bigger problems will come in the future because of this.

I know travellers may have a reputation for anti-social behaviour, and that they have been blamed for the murder of Peter Stone (without sufficient evidence I'd like to add), but apart from occasional speeding I have never seen anything. I think it is unfair to blame all anti-social behaviour on the travellers, when in fact a large portion of it is because of the villager's children who have nothing better to do.

I think it's time to stop scapegoating, and make Cottenham a more interesting place for young people (that includes young travellers). Boredom is what leads youths to anti-social

continued on next page

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continued from previous page

behaviour. 43 houses in a village of around 6000 people is not a huge amount, and is certainly no reason to headline the front page of the Cambridge Evening News 'TIME TO GET OUT?'

I think it's time the complaining villagers stopped being hypocritical (by saying the travellers are breaking the law, when they withhold their council tax!). Also, a less propaganda-like and more balanced campaign would be better for everybody.

Name and address supplied

Dear Editor,

Our coffee morning in aid of the Leukemia Research Fund on the 28th February raised, once again, £ 525. May we take this opportunity to thank all those who supported us by coming to the house, and also those whose donations were anonymous.

Of course we thank all the small businesses who gave us raffle prizes. As we have said over many years, they support all the home fund-raising events, so we hope the village will support them: Sara Jane's Hairdressing, Clements Hardware, Wards Greengrocer, Cambridge Building Society, Gawthroup & Sons Butchers and Shaun's Newsagent.

Joyce and Henry Fleck

Dear Editor,

My family and I would like to thank everyone in Cottenham for the overwhelming kindness shown to us at this unbelievably sad time. We have received so many letters, cards and wonderful words written about Ronald. These have helped us tremendously and will be treasured always.

When we first came to Cottenham in 1966, we were amazed at the warmth and friendliness and help given to us by so many people. These kindnesses have become even more apparent in the last few dreadful weeks.

Thank you very much indeed

Jennifer Macbeth
Heather and Alison

Deadline

FOR NEXT ISSUE

25th JUNE

Dear Editor,

In early December last, I lost a passport holder containing a bank book and £200. Fifty two days later it was thrust through my letterbox with no note of explanation.

A week later my car had two tyres deliberately punctured with a sharp tool, resulting in £73 of damage. Someone on learning of the incident sent me £70 in the post.

In April of this year, the rear light of my car was shattered in an Ely car park. There was a note under one of the windscreen wipers. It contained an apology and an address to invoice for the cost of repair. This morning (April 27), a cheque arrived in the post.

Walter Adams

NOTICE

To the young woman who was in Cottenham Co-op at lunchtime on Tuesday 20 April 2004 who stole my purse/wallet from my bag which was in my basket on the floor. You have my money, but also precious and irreplaceable mementos of my family. Please return these personal things to me. You have my name address and two books of stamps I purchased just before going to the Co-op.

EJN (full name and address provided)

ARTICLES, DATES AND ADVERTISEMENTS

E-mail, PC floppy disk and paper submissions are all welcome. Please contact the Editor if you have any questions. Dates of events to be advertised in the next issue (No. 82) should span the last week of July and the months of August and September.

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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Contact Peter Robertson on 01954 200080

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Police	Community Beat Office.....	01223 358966
	Central Control.....	01480 456111
Doctors	Dr. Julie Gould, 188 High Street.....	250079
	Dr. M. Grande, 42 Telegraph Street.....	251180
Community Nurses	Answerphone or between 1.00 – 2.00 pm.....	251071
Cottenham CareCar	Co-ordinator, 10.00 am – 4.00 pm.....	251837
Cottenham Day Centre	Mrs. M. Gilbey, 45 Victory Way.....	251802
Cottenham Toy Library	Carol Grange.....	251528
Dentist	Mr. Faber, Old Telephone Exchange, 40 Margett Street.....	251696
Chemist	Co-operative Pharmacy Cottenham, 222 High Street.....	250556
Chiroprapist	J.R. Kain, 13 Pelham Close.....	251143
Osteopath	Roger Giddings & Associates. Physic (Oakington Therapy Centre) Oakington Road, Girton. email: reception@physic.co.uk.....	01223 237459
Veterinary Surgeon	R. Hughes-Parry, 66 High Street.....	252122
Schools	Cottenham Village College and Community Office.....	288944
	County Primary, Lambs Lane.....	250227
Under Ones Group	250609
Pre-School	Ladybirds Pre-School, Recreation Ground.....	250891
Out of School Club	250025
Council Offices	South Cambs. District Council.....	01223 443000
	Cambridgeshire County Council.....	01223 717111
Parish Council.	Clerk – Julie Groves, 44 Victory Way. e-mail: julie.groves@ntlworld.com.....	202928
District Councillors	Rex Collinson, 20 Rampton Road. e-mail: rex@rcollinson.fsnet.co.uk.....	251377
	Tony Nicholas 77 Pelham Way. e-mail: janicholas@genie.co.uk.....	201314
County Councillor	Peter Stroude, e-mail: peter@stroude.fsbusiness.co.uk.....	780008
British Red Cross	Cambridge Office.....	01223 354434
Citizens Advice	CAB, 72/74 Newmarket Road, Cambridge.....	08701 264010
Social Services	Histon Team.....	01223 718011
Mobile Warden Service	251182
NSPCC	Cottenham Area Team, Peterborough.....	01733 558245
RSPCA	Area Number, Peterborough.....	0870 5555999
Samaritans	Cambridge Centre.....	01223 364455
Railway Station	Cambridge, Passenger Enquiries.....	0845 7484950
Driving Instruction	TOPS Driving School.....	252239
Taxi	Pegasus Taxi.....	261324
Library	Margett Street.....	273322
Library Doorstep Service	Hilary Firth.....	01223 718358
Parish Church	The Rectory, 6 High Street.....	250454
Baptist Church.	Jeff Boyden, 72 Lyles Road.....	250985
Catholic Church	Fr David Paul, St Lawrences Church, 91 Milton Road, Cambridge.....	01223 704640
Methodist Church	The Rev'd. Cynthia Hardiman, Wesley House, 250 High Street.....	250242
Salvation Army	Majors Ian and Barbara Fawcett, 15 Pelham Close.....	250524
Royal British Legion	Matthew Baldry, 123 Coolidge Gardens. e-mail: matthew.baldry@tesco.net.....	202797

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