

62

November 1981



E. Morris

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# OUT OF REACH

## COMMUNITY MAGAZINE

### EDITORIAL

Issue No 62

November 1981

I am pleased to say that we have another "bumper" issue with no less than three articles. This is very healthy for the magazine but hard on the poor typists, still struggling on with no replacement! Two topical issues are dealt with, which should be of interest to us all as country people. Mr Clutton-Brock has written in response to the article on "The Countryside and Conservation" by S C Whitbread (September issue). Our anonymous contributor has kindly donated an article on Dutch Elm Disease from the Tree Council. Thanks to these two people.

I would like to welcome to the village this month two new families - the Fisher family have recently moved to Fair Green, and the Summers family have moved to Great Lane. Joyce Harrison will be holding her annual Whist Drive and Christmas Draw on Monday 14th December at 7.30 p.m. in the Village Centre. All proceeds are in aid of our two local hospitals Newmarket and Addenbrookes. Any prizes will be gratefully received.

Now that the evenings are drawing in it seems really wintry at last. I hope that you have plenty of indoor pursuits for the long winter evenings.

Kay Pote

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FROM THE VICAR

The Two Churches

I have the permission of the Chairman of the Suffolk Archaeological Society, Mr Norman Scarf, to reproduce some notes which formed the basis of a talk he gave to the Society on a visit to Swaffham Prior early in September.

Both Swaffhams run seven-mile strips from near the Icknield Way to the Cam, flanking the Devil's Dyke, and including much fen. Each has its lode for access to the Cam. If Bulbeck is rich in round barrows and ditches, Prior has a remarkable series of Roman settlement sites along the fen edges. White Drove way, which supplies the straight boundary between the fens of the two parishes, may well be Roman. This great broad ditched causeway provides (from Upware) the most impressive approach to Swaffham Prior.

Whereas the Bolbecs held three quarters of Swaffham Bulbeck, the Prior of Ely held only a third of Swaffham Prior in 1086; another third was held by Hardwin de Scalers, and the last third by "three of Count Alan of Brittany's Knights". I see here the explanation of Swaffham Prior's twin churches; by no means identical but set, most spectacularly, in one churchyard on the 50ft ridge rising immediately East of the village street. I suppose the first, St Mary's, belonged to Ely, the second, SS Cyriac and Julitta, to the three knights (perhaps also to Scalers, but he was based elsewhere). The rare dedication supports this idea. Cyriac, or Cyr, was a child, martyred about 304 with his mother, Julitta. His cult spread most strongly in the Near East and in France. His best known dedication is that of the school at Versailles which became the St Cyr military academy. He got Nevers Cathedral re-roofed by appearing to Charlemagne in a dream. In the Anglo-Saxon Chronical of the year 916 he was remembered when the Danes slew an innocent abbot. The earliest record of his connexion with Swaffham is 13th century, but his church here had a Norman doorway till 1805, conceivably going back to Count Alan's Knights or their heirs. Its Elizabethan chalice is inscribed "Soffame Priore othr wyse called Sant Serres".

Not only the grouping, but the architecture of these two churches is unforgettable, and after grave vicissitudes both look very well again. St Cyr's suffered most. In ruins in 1805, all but the tower was rebuilt next year, in pale yellow brick, by a pupil of Wyatt. Falling into ruin again in the 1970's, and open to the fenland winds, it has been maintained since 1976 by the Redundant Churches Commission, its beautiful light interior, on slender (wooden) gothic columns, again secure. But the 1490's tower is the thing. Its sturdy, square bottom two storeys are broached and transformed into a tall octagon for the belfry, and crowned by a lovely black-flint flushwork parapet. Round the octagon, a most original pilastered effect is created by corner buttresses rising from carved corbels to pinnacles above the parapet.'

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FROM THE VICAR - The Two Churches (continued)

I imagine a number of you will find these remarks of considerable interest, and we are certainly grateful for permission to reproduce them. There may be space in a later issue for the rest of the article, on St Mary's, which is equally fascinating. But my main purpose in drawing your attention to St Cyriac's in this way is to raise with both villages the so far insoluble problem of what to do with it. Passing by it, as I do, day after day, I find it hard to believe that there is really no use we can find for a virtually perfect and completely empty building. I realise, of course, the serious drawbacks: no lighting, no heating, no seating, and no toilets. Yet once a sensible and fruitful idea was born I haven't much doubt that all these difficulties could be surmounted. As you will remember, quite the most successful events held there so far have been the art exhibitions; but these have drawn mainly on the talents of the Cambridge Painters and Printmakers, which perhaps suggests that my fruitful use eventually found for it will have to serve a much larger area than our own two villages. The Redundant Churches Commission have saddled me with the job of finding some use for it, and I find my lack of success somewhat saddening. Perhaps you will come up with something.

J K B

Cover the Pool Appeal Bulletin

The Jazz Evening on 2nd October was a great success. John Humphreys' and Tim Phillips' groups were very much enjoyed, and £300 was raised towards the Appeal.

The Sponsored Walk on October 4th took place to everyone's pleasure on a lovely day. 300 walkers out of 344 finished the 18 mile route through the Wilbrahams, Fulbourn, Quy, Lode and back to Bottisham raising, it is hoped, £3,000. Heartfelt thanks to all the helpers.

There is now less than £10,000 to raise of the £85,000 total, and the Committee are open to new ideas. In the meantime, the good news is that the builders, Messrs. Bridgeman & Stracey of Burwell, have begun work on the site, and the Committee expect to have a covered pool early next summer.

Felicity McMahon

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FROM THE CHURCHES

Worship in November: St Mary's and Reach

1st ALL SAINTS DAY: TRINITY XX: 8th Sunday before Christmas

8.00 a.m. Holy Communion (Reach)  
9.30 a.m. Matins and Eucharist (St Mary's)  
No Evensong

8th TRINITY XXI: Remembrance Sunday: 7th Sunday before Christmas

9.30 a.m. Parish Communion (St Mary's)  
10.50 a.m. Memorial Service (St Mary's)  
10.50 a.m. Memorial Service (Reach)  
6.30 p.m. Evensong (St Mary's)

15th TRINITY XXII: 6th Sunday before Christmas

9.30 a.m. Children's Eucharist (St Mary's)  
11.00 a.m. Children's Eucharist (Reach)  
6.30 p.m. Evensong (St Mary's)

22nd SUNDAY BEFORE ADVENT: 5th Sunday before Christmas

9.30 a.m. Parish Communion (St Mary's)  
11.00 a.m. Family Communion (Reach)  
6.30 p.m. Evensong (St Mary's)

29th ADVENT SUNDAY

9.30 a.m. Parish Communion (St Mary's)  
11.00 a.m. Family Communion (Reach)  
6.30 p.m. Evensong (Reach)

30th S ANDREW THE APOSTLE

7.00 a.m. Holy Communion (St Mary's)

N B Would you please note that the Children's Eucharists will occur  
in both churches on the 3rd Sunday as I have to be absent on the  
4th.

THE STAINE HUNDRED

The next meeting of the Society will be on Wednesday 11th November.  
Mr Patrick Shallard, former Bursar and Steward of Downing College, will  
talk about 'The Downings of Downing Street'. The meeting will be in the  
Lecture Room at Bottisham Village College at 7.30 p.m.

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### TREES - Epitaph for the Elm

Everyone has heard of Dutch Elm disease. South of the Mersey and Humber rivers, 90% of Elm trees have died, or are dying from it.

Since Roman times, the Elm has been valued in Britain. Farmers, long ago, used the foliage to feed cattle and to provide shade and boundary markers to their fields. In more modern times, the tree has been a majestic feature of England's rural landscape, as well as its parks and avenues. This durable and beautiful grained timber was greatly valued by craftsmen, from the cradle to the grave, for making high chairs and coffins.

Has Elm, with such casualties, any future in Britain?

The disease is a fungus spread by a beetle, which lives under the bark. It first came to the United Kingdom, it is thought from Canada and the United States, via Liverpool, in 1973. In the Mersey-side County Council, felling of dead Elms rose to 2,400 trees per year. The removal of all diseased Elms in the area at this rate will not be complete until 1985. In the five years between 1975 - 1980, Dutch Elm Disease (DED) Control costs had risen to £216,000 per annum, in that area alone. As by law, the felled tree has to be debarked, before removal to the sawmill, further great losses are made. The total estimated loss to the community may well be about £200 per tree killed in an urban area. How great a national calamity this is, may be gauged from the fact that in just this same County Council area, there were 17,704 roadside Elms alone.

Hope, however, there is. North of the Mersey-Humber line, the climate does not favour the beetle or the fungus. Enlightened councils, notably East Sussex, Brighton and the Channel Islands, have instituted, with help from the Forestry Commission and the Tree Council, Elm preservation programmes with success.

Not too badly infected trees are injected with fungicides. Badly diseased trees are killed with poisons, baited with chemicals, to attract the beetles, which are then killed with selective insecticides. Felled trees are debarked and sprayed before being moved off-site. By this means, the infection rate was reduced 50% in two years and the beetle reproduction fell 80%. These control measures cost only about 10% of what an epidemic could cost.

In places where stumps have been left, prolific growths of new, young Elm suckers have resulted. Already foresters have found disease-resistant Elms in Holland, North America and Japan. Cultivars of these

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TREES - Epitaph for the Elm (continued)

have already been trial planted in Southern England.

The killing qualities of the fungus have proved to be variable, particularly in the North, where as low as 1% infection rates have been recorded. There are five million Elms in the North.

Although 19 million Elms have died in the past decade in Southern England, there is hope for the Elm. It needs a concerted effort by all land owners and farmers to employ efficient control of DED, coupled with much more replanting to see "the end of the beginning and the beginning of the end" of DED.

With acknowledgment to the Tree Council, 35 Belgrave Square, London SW1 8QN.

BOTTISHAM VILLAGE COLLEGE MUSIC SOCIETY

Friday 20th November 8.00 p.m. at the College

JOHN EVANS who is a Research Scholar at the Britten-Pears Library at Aldeburgh, will give a lecture on BENJAMIN BRITTEN. The lecture will be illustrated with recorded music. Everyone welcome.

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AN OPEN LETTER TO JOHN ROBINSON

Dear John

I read with interest the article by S C Whitbread reproduced with your approval in last month's 'Out of Reach'. Presumably you support his views - so get ready to defend them!

He is right on one score - the future of the countryside is in the hands of farmers, and conservation (or preservation) will only work throughout most of the country if farmers want to see it work. Moreover, by and large, it is in good hands. I'm always surprised by the extent to which farmers wish to retain wild plants, animals or historic features on their ground, even when it is not in their direct financial interest to do so. Nevertheless, on most other scores, Whitbread's article implies that he understands little more about conservation (or preservation) than, in his opinion, eco-nuts do about the countryside. I have three bones to pick with him - or you.

First, what should we try to retain in the countryside? Whitbread implies that we should only try to retain plants, animals or historic features that are of direct use (by implication, to the farmers) and that the rest should be preserved in a very few reserves. There are many arguments against this, but the most honest one is that if we really followed this line, many of the attractions of the countryside would be lost and everyone would be the poorer. Would you (or he) really like to live in the vast cornfields of the mid-western United States? The normal principle underlying conservation practice is to maintain diversity so far as possible and this is usually a good one. For me, it is the sight of golden plover in spring, of the occasional kingfisher in summer, and of kestrels and owls in winter that make the fens around Reach such an interesting place to live - and I suspect this is also the case for many other people. Ten thousand years ago, there used to be aurochs and giant deer (whose annually-grown antlers weighed as much as 80lbs) on the fen, while only two hundred years ago, ruffs, godwits, bitterns, greylag geese and bustards all bred here. They have gone for good, many of them largely as a result of agricultural practices, and will never reappear. What we have left is the rag end of the plant and animal populations that used to be here. We should see them in this light and try to avoid extinguishing them.

To avoid plant and animal populations becoming extinct, it is often necessary to preserve them. It is nonsense to argue, as Whitbread does, that you can't preserve living plants or animals. You obviously can't preserve individuals, because they have a finite lifespan, but

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AN OPEN LETTER TO JOHN ROBINSON (continued)

plants and animals can reproduce, and you can and should preserve species - in just the same way that animal breeders carefully preserve particular breeds or bloodlines. In fact, one of the principal conservation bodies in the UK is called the Fauna and Flora Preservation Society. Whitbread's distinction between preservation and conservation is too academic either for my Collins dictionary (Preserve: to keep from injury or destruction; to keep in a sound state. Conserve: to keep safe, to preserve) or for me (an academic!). In so far as there is a distinction, conservation implies the sensible management of wild plants and animals (or historical features) while preservation implies the maintenance of the status quo without management. But, in practice, it is all part of a continuum, for to conserve the diversity of the countryside, it is usually necessary to preserve some parts of it. For example, the bamboo forests of central China will need to be preserved if the Giant Panda is to keep going, and so will the reed-beds along the lodes if the reed warblers that nest there are to survive. Similarly, to prevent old buildings from disappearing, preservation orders are often necessary.

Preservation orders on old houses lead to my third point. Whitbread is wrong to dismiss the value of eco-nuts. I will happily accept that, say, ten or even twenty per cent of eco-nuts are arrogant, abusive, idle, impractical and ignorant, if he (or you) will accept that five per cent of farmers are greedy, rapacious and antisocial in their treatment of the countryside. The point I am making is that there are extremists in all camps and farmers are no exception. However, there is an important difference between eco-nuts and farmers, for the ten or twenty per cent of abusive and ignorant eco-nuts will cause a great deal of annoyance but little real damage while the five per cent of rapacious and anti-social farmers will cause permanent damage to the countryside. If one reckons that every farmer changes farms once in twenty years, a quarter of the countryside will be ravaged each century, and the entire country once every four hundred years! This is obviously an oversimplification but it is clearly important that someone should complain when hedges are badly burned, spraying affects common ground, archeological sites are ploughed up, hedges are rooted up on a large scale or important wildlife habitats are drained. The alternative is probably some form of legislation for it could be argued that the rights of the farmer to change the face of the countryside should be limited by law in just the same way that owners of ancient houses are (rightly) prevented from altering them without permission from the planning authorities. However, I suspect this would be unpopular and ineffective and that it is better to rely on the interaction between the farmer's conscience and public outcry. But who is to shout when something happens? It is obviously

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AN OPEN LETTER TO JOHN ROBINSON (continued)  
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difficult for someone to complain about his antisocial neighbours and far better that outsiders should do so. Who better than eco-nuts? Consequently, so long as a farmer is among the enlightened 95% (as I am sure are both you, yourself, and Mr Whitbread) he should be grateful to the eco-nut for helping to keep the anti-social minority in order - even if his or her complaints are sometimes misdirected, abusive or ignorant.

Yours sincerely,

Tim Clutton-Brock

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FROM THE PARENTS AND FRIENDS OF THE SCHOOL

Bonfire Party

The Bonfire Party will start at 7.15 p.m. Everybody welcome. There will be fireworks, hot dogs, jacket potatoes, coke, squash. It is not too late for donations towards the cost of the fireworks and there are boxes in School and in the village shop.

Christmas Fair

The School is holding its annual Christmas Fair on Saturday, 21st November starting at 2.30 p.m.

Stalls, Craft, Competitions, Games, Bran Tub, Raffle, Homemade Cakes, Christmas Cakes and Puddings. There will also be a jumble stall and if anyone has any jumble could they please bring it into School or contact one of the committee members who will collect. (Mrs Rust, Mrs Hardiment, Mrs Fox, Mrs Casey, Mrs Johnson).

100 Club

Don't forget to get your tickets for next year's 100 Club. Lists are already in the village shop and in School and tickets will be sold at the Christmas Fair.

100 Club Winners

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The next Committee Meeting will be held on Monday 11th January at 7.30 p.m.

Sue Hardiment

Tel: 741274

When we left England we little anticipated that we would be living in our van for six whole weeks - half of our holiday. On arrival on our island, it was with great trepidation that we set off for our house, which is semi-dilapidated at the best of times! Two years absence can bring about enormous deterioration and on this occasion our fears were only too well-founded. Before even reaching the house we discovered that our path up the mountain was blocked by boulders from the ruins of other houses - havoc wrought by last winter's rains - the worst in memory on the island. Our house is about eight feet above ground level and the steps giving access had collapsed too. So even gaining entry was a hard climbing feat! Inside was a most depressing scene as both rains and rats had penetrated and done their worst. The house is a typical old-style Greek house, dating from Venetian times. The roofs are flat, and made of beams, bamboo, seaweed and earth. They need regular yearly maintenance and new earth to replace that washed away by winter rains. Unfortunately we are unable to go every year to do the necessary work, and now would spend most of our stay restoring the house to the state in which we had left it. As the place was clearly uninhabitable, we decided to continue camping in the van on one of the beaches. A few days later the van broke down, so we ended up marooned on the beach living the life of beachcombers for three weeks. Initially I viewed the prospect with horror, but really came to love our beach existence. In temperatures of 90° - 100° plus, the heat reduces life to a very basic level. Laundry is kept to a minimum when you wear only a bikini, or in the case of my son, nothing at all, for days at a time! We deemed it wise to make friends with the men in the building yard across the road, and when we saw them drawing water to mix cement, we would hurry across with our cans! Cooking the evening meal on the beach was always guaranteed to arouse the curiosity of the Greeks, who would sometimes sit and watch the whole proceedings unashamedly. They were also intrigued

Continued...

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OUR GREEK TRIP (continued)

by our home-cum-van and many times would come and have a look around completely unabashed. Even when we were living in the house, people frequently wandered across our roof to admire the view, even sometimes walking into the house. To the Greeks this is natural curiosity - their lack of reserve is so unlike ours. Perhaps the best part of these days on the beach was swimming first thing in the morning and last thing at night, when no one else was there. I could almost believe that the beach belonged to us.

Once settled in the house, life still remained basic. Our water we carried up the mountain in huge canisters, which ensured that we were economical in its use. On Milos they still use the cistern system. Each house has a cistern, which is a deep well, outside, with a bucket attached to it. They rely on the winter rains filling them. Of course the water is not purified and often contains small creatures, but it doesn't seem to harm the Greeks! They are not over-concerned with cleanliness, and very few houses have bathrooms. We constructed a hole-in-the-ground loo out on the mountain, but for me the worst problem was reaching it through our four cellar rooms, which have always been the domain of rats. We reduce their numbers with traps, but unfortunately the young ones are quite appealing. On one occasion the children grew so attached to one that we had to drive into open country in order to release it. After that we made sure of rising early to dispose of them while the children were sleeping. Even more unpleasant was the resident scorpion. We burned rubber in the house for the whole of one day, as this is said to get rid of them. Whether it did or not I never knew! Life was certainly not without its hazards. A very different one was experiencing an earthquake for the first time. Although this one originated on the mainland 200 miles away, it felt as if the whole house was shaking, as indeed it was. I believed that the poor old house was about to collapse. Only two rooms of the house are habitable - the third upstairs room has been taken over by pigeons. Well at least they don't frighten me - they just make cooing noises all night long - in the room adjoining the bedroom. Besides the communal bedroom, we have a kitchen-cum-dining-cum-living room-cum-bathroom. Cooking is done on a couple of gas rings and lighting is provided by oil lamps.

The village below provides our daily food. When I first went to the island, donkeys were used to take vegetables, fruit, fish and other commodities around the villages. They still do so, but in most cases have been replaced by motorised carts. When they arrive each morning the sellers shout their wares at the tops of their voices. I could even hear them up in the mountain - it was the signal for me to hurry down before they sold out. There is only one baker and he

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### OUR GREEK TRIP (continued)

still uses an enormous ancient wood-burning oven. The villagers can also take their own baking to him and he will bake it for them in his oven, as few of them have proper ovens. Plaka, as the village is called, is probably much smaller in size than Reach, but its inhabitants are about 800. The streets are very old, narrow and cobbled. The hub of village life is the Taverna, the equivalent of our English pub. It is open from early morning until midnight and is a way of life. The old men of the village spend all day sitting either inside or outside, playing cards or watching the world go by. But children also are welcomed, one of the most endearing things about the Greeks being their love of children. My children were always made a fuss of, and even the 17 year old son of the Taverna would hug and kiss Dominic. They are a very emotional people, and each time when we leave the women would shed tears.

Night life in Greece is also very different from England. There everyone is out-of-doors, and the children are never left at home. I think it is so nice for the children not to have to miss all the fun, and they catch up on sleep with an afternoon siesta. What the Greeks lack in sophistication they more than make up for with their overwhelming friendliness and warmth. For example, we met a Greek family while we were camping on the beach. By lucky coincidence the man was a motor mechanic. He gave up countless days' work in helping to fix our van, and arranged for his brother to bring us a new engine from the mainland. He refused payment although he knew there was no way that we could ever repay him. He also invited, not only us, but some of our friends also, to a meal at his house. It was the biggest spread I have seen, course following course, I thought I would never move again! Before leaving the island we gave a midnight barbecue for all our friends. As we (my husband that is) bought the house 20 years ago, some friends are of very long standing. We consisted of English, German and Greek, and even though we didn't all speak the same language, we managed to communicate somehow.

After leaving Milos, we spent a week on another island before starting the long journey home. The island of Thassos is breathtakingly beautiful, and very different from Milos. Milos is an arid, rugged island, perhaps not conventionally beautiful, although the wild side of the island, where tourists do not go, is as lovely as anywhere I have seen. But Thassos is a green, verdant island covered with pine forests, a striking contrast. Commercialism has so far left both islands unspoiled, and it is delightful to savour an

Continued...

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OUR GREEK TRIP (continued)

unhurried, simple existence free from pressures. But I must say that I was glad, after three months, to have a bath again, and oh the sheer wonder of turning on a tap! I hope that this has not bored you too much; and if anyone fancies cheap accommodation on a Greek island ...

Kay Pote

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## THIS MONTH'S RECIPE

### MOUSSAKA

A recipe which does not have to be followed slavishly, Garlic, spices, wine or mushrooms may be omitted if not liked or available.

3 medium aubergines sliced  
3 tablespoons oil  
2 onions sliced  
1 lb minced beef or lamb  
4 tomatoes or 14oz tin tomatoes  
small tin tomato puree  
seasoning  
1 glove garlic crushed  
1 lb potatoes sliced  
2oz mushrooms chopped (optional)  
1 tablespoon chopped parsley  
1/4 teaspoon cinnamon  
1/2 teaspoon nutmeg  
4 fl oz red win (optional)

#### SAUCE:

2/3 pint milk  
1 oz butter  
1 oz flour  
4 oz grated cheese

Slice aubergines thinly and sprinkle with salt. Leave half an hour. Fry aubergines in oil until golden brown. Par-boil potatoes for ten minutes. Fry onion slices in oil until soft. Cook meat, add tomatoes, seasoning, garlic, mushrooms, spices. Simmer for 10 - 15 minutes. To make sauce - melt butter in pan, stir in flour, make paste with a little of the milk. Add rest of milk and bring to boil stirring continuously. Add cheese. In ovenproof dish put alternate layers of aubergine, potato and meat mixture. Top with aubergines. Pour sauce over mixture, sprinkling cheese on top. Bake at 350° F, Mark 4 for 30 minutes. Serve with salad and Pitta or crusty bread. Serves 4 - 6 people.

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