

70

August 1982

Out of Reach



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O U T O F R E A C H

COMMUNITY MAGAZINE

EDITORIAL

Issue No 70

August 1982

Instead of being a skeleton issue (as August and September issues are usually), this promises to be a bumper one. Michael Allen has written a most interesting and informative article on the Devil's Dyke. As it was rather long I have included the first part in this issue and the last part will follow next month. Also the "Balaena" saga continues, with a rejoinder from "Levi Athan". Wouldn't it be fun to have a competition to guess the identities of Balaena, Nebi Yunis and Levi Athan? There is also an excellent obituary for "Toby" Sargeant who died this month. I am told that he ran the village shop for many years before his retirement to Fordham, so he will be remembered by many village people.

I now have a group of village "Mums" who are making things for a Craft Stall at the School Christmas Fair. If there is anyone else in the village who would be willing to knit or sew a few small items, I would be most grateful to hear from them.

In case any new mothers of babies or toddlers have recently moved into Reach, here is a reminder that there is a Mother and Toddlers Group at the Village Centre every other Wednesday, and the next meeting will be on August 4th.

We are sorry to be saying goodbye to Maggie and Nick Evans who will be moving away during this month, and wish them happiness in their new home. Best wishes to Sarah Robertson who has recently had a spell in hospital.

Janet Biggs will be editing the magazine next month, as she so kindly does each September. Could all material for the magazine be left at Delver House for Janet, instead of with me please?

Happy holidays to all who are going away.

Kay Pote

Tel: Newmarket 742039

FROM THE VICAR

A sermon preached at a Fordham Deanery Evensong at Reach on Sunday,
4th July 1982.

Ps 133.i: 'Behold, how good and joyful a thing it is Brethren, to dwell together in unity'.

Just over a fortnight ago the Dean of Ely, who said Good-bye to the Diocese this morning said, in a sermon I was privileged to hear, that 'the man who has lost his memory has lost his identity'. About a year ago a member of the village community here, who is no lover of the Church of England, asked me, in a distinctly hostile and incredulous tone, 'What do you do over there?', meaning here, in this church. Had he given me time to reply, I would have said 'we remember Jesus', and if he had bothered to ask me precisely what I meant by that, I would have said, 'we feed on his presence, his mind, and his life'.

Because remembering, in biblical terms, means so much more, as you know, than merely casting the mind back, say, to a past event; more even than 'bringing it to mind', as we say. It means the power of the event itself becoming operative in the present, so as actually to change the course and feel of the present.

Now, from an onlooker's viewpoint, there must be something slightly odd about a sudden influx of strangers into a church which in the normal way is studiously ignored by the village in which it stands. But to you, the strangers in question, there can be nothing in the least odd. On the contrary, it means another opportunity, occurring in the welcome weekly rhythm of the Christian life, to recover and refresh the sense, i.e. the memory, of Jesus, and so renew the sense of your identity.

Because, according to the old Catechism, the root of your identity is not your surname, your home address, or occupation, but the new name you were given by Christ in the moment of your Baptism, that moment when the almighty Lord incorporated you into the mighty act by which he raised Christ from the dead. And it is Christ risen who is here among us, recalling us to the roots of our being, our obedience, and our hope, offering us, as I say, his presence, his mind, and his life.

And how elementally good that is. 'How good and joyful a thing it is, brethren, to dwell together in unity'. Yes, it is:

Continued...

NEWSAGENTS

Tel: Newmarket 741129

and for me, a high joy - the first occasion of its kind in all my time here. In a sense, this simple being here together is one of the great goals of Christian history: human spirits worshipping the Father in the name of Jesus. In a sense, this is the gate of heaven itself - not this quaint little building, which Pevsner, in his account of Cambridgeshire churches says 'is so ugly it has to be seen to be believed' - not the building, but the experience of being the body of Christ inside it. If a heavy Boeing got out of control on its way down to Mildenhall, and crashed here, and killed us all, we would all wake up in a little while in the after world with a feeling of simply carrying on after an interruption of some kind. That is how significant a moment like this actually is.

First, the sheer enormous fact of Jesus himself, and his passing through our world like a meteor, like an explosion of light whose shockwaves we still feel, very much as, though much more powerfully than, the 3-degree background radio wave, oscillating round the universe, which astronomers tell us is the literal echo of the original big bang of Creation.

But the Christian scriptures produce belief for a rather special reason, so obvious it is too close to us, very often, to notice: they are translated, printed, published, sold, taught, and read by those who already believe, who got their belief from others, who got it from others before them, back to the original disciples. And this is the heart of it: belief originally aroused by the direct, but still mysterious, impact of Jesus himself, and spread like a holy epidemic. As Thomas Carlyle said, 'it flew' - this saving belief - 'like hallowed fire, from heart to heart, till all were purified and illuminated by it'. That is

Continued...

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FROM THE VICAR (continued)

ultimately why you and I are Christians now, and here now. We are all essentially inheritors, not discoverers.

Because this power of belief is not self-generated: it is not mass hysteria either. It feeds on the continued experience of the presence of Christ in the breaking of the bread, where the Spirit himself takes our simple gifts of bread and wine, and through the effective promise of Christ raises them to their highest coefficient of value as the vehicles of his sacrificed life. 'He was' - and still is - 'made known in the breaking of the bread'. 'There, on the altar', it has been said, 'is the substance of our Christendom', the 'Christendom' which Dean Church a century ago said 'began in the Upper Room'.

So no wonder the Church has been called the 'community of memory'. Remembering is its life. And yet there is still one thing left out, without which everything is hopelessly flat and incomplete. Each one of us is slowly becoming a bearer of the image of the risen Christ; so that meeting together like this, on a very ordinary summer evening, means the mysterious unveiling of the features of Christ in each other and to each other. That is ultimately what our smiles mean: we are very much a secret society, and becoming more so with every year that now passes, as the memory of old Christendom now fades away. They carry whole worlds, these smiles, whole lifetimes of meaning.

'Behold', then, perhaps for the first time, but anyhow 'behold, how good and joyful it is to dwell together'.

J.E.B.

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"TOBY" (continued)

Toby aimed to provide services for everyone. By many he will always be remembered in his spotless white coat, listening with attention to old pensioner Reuben, advising a "new settler" that the shoe maker came from Wicken every fortnight, or helping little Charmian spend her Saturday penny.

The village revolved around the shop and Toby was the hub. Advice and help were available at any time, day or night. To help in any crisis the Sargeants man, wife and children could be relied upon to fall in and assist. Such an incident is recorded in the West Window and the Vestry of our village church. Even thunder bolts did not deter Toby.

William the Conqueror's great Domesday Book of the 1080's records that three men-at-arms held a manor in Swaffham Prior. Bred in that very Knight's Manor, Toby was a most worthy descendant of those tough Norman foot soldiers.

As one who knew him very well he was indeed a very big man and worth any three of us when it came to doing good to others.

C F SARGEANT 1905 - 1982

God Bless Him
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Reach Village Society

An open meeting is to be held at The Village Centre on Wednesday 4th August 1982 at 8.30 p.m., with regard to forming a Reach Village Society. It is hoped that as many people as possible will attend.

Parking

Complaints have been received about the amount of cars being parked on the Green. In the interest of the village would drivers please refrain from parking there.

Bus Shelters

Our thanks go to Mr Estell who has made a marvellous job of creosoting the Bus Shelters.
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Dear Madam Editor

It has, alas, fallen to me to offer a brief riposte to your anonymous historian's reply to my cousin Miss Balaena's article. She - and she would be most offended to have her gender mistaken - is unfortunately away for an indefinite period on a southern cruise, and is not contactable. All we know for certain is that she does not go to the Mediterranean now, ever since she had a very bad attack of "gippy tummy" there after eating something that disagreed with her. She was ill for three days.

I have known Miss Balaena intimately for many years, and am certain that she would accept and be flattered by your historian's charge that she wishes as far as possible to make history an exact study. Without rigorous pursuit of exactness no consequent philosophical inference deserves attention. History - which partly makes us what we are - is too serious to be left to woolly imaginings. She would also have pounced on the completely self-defeating circularity of the argument of your contributor's second paragraph; he invalidates the very point he is trying to make.

The exact nature of Roman activity here is of course unknowable in any detail; it probably changed a lot anyway over the 350 years of their rule. All we can do is draw reasonable inferences from as full a picture as possible; and that means recognising the relative insignificance of the small villa here and its waterhead in the total provincial economy. It is not without importance, but other places are much more crucial. Similarly, finding even a fair quantity of Barnack rag at a river port like this cannot by itself suggest that there was a "tradition of working stone here" when all the evidence from other sources (including common sense) suggests that stone was roughly worked at its quarry of origin and finished at its final site. One can envisage the mediaeval quarrymen roughing out the clunch from Reach Hill here and then shipping it off to wherever it was needed, but not stone being imported to be worked. One could go on; but Miss Balaena will want to reply fully when she returns.

There is nothing wrong with fantasy provided it is recognised as just that.

Yours faithfully,

Levi Athan

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We are holding a Community Day and A G M on Tuesday 12th October. We hope that representatives from local village organisations and clubs will be there to inform you of all the activities that are available to our community. Althea's Bookshop will also be at the School on this day.

Future Events

Bonfire Party

Christmas Fair

Week 24	No 73	S Richards	£10.00
Week 25	No 87	J Dolphin	£40.00
Week 26	No 15	D Ward	£10.00
Week 27	No 60	Z Houston	£10.00

A new class of Beginners Ballet for Ladies will be starting in September on Thursday mornings 9.30 a.m. - 11.00 a.m. in the Gardiner Memorial Hall, organised through Burwell Village College. The classes will be taken by Jane Newbury A.I.S.T.D.C.S.B.

Tel: 741274

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SHIRE HALL NOTES

Improved Examination Results

Cambridgeshire's secondary school pupils have gained better examination results every year since records were started in 1976. "The first pupils to go into comprehensive schools in the area arrived in 1976," said Mr John Pearce, Senior County Inspector, "so they reached Advanced Level in 1981. Until now many of the students taking 'A' level had come up through grammar schools, and their results were very good. The 1981 crop came up entirely through comprehensives - and they did just as well, strongly above the national average."

Cambridgeshire's pass rates at 'A' level are well above the national average (73% to 70%). And we have better entry rates and better pass rates in all the major subjects at 16.

Religious Education Syllabus

A new syllabus for religious education in schools in Cambridgeshire has been prepared by the County Conference on Religious Education. It was presented at the May meetings of the Education Sub-Committees.

Providing that the requisite finance is identified by the Education General Purposes Sub-Committee, the Primary and Special Education Sub-Committee agreed to the publication by September of the new syllabus and supporting handbook.

John Brooks
County Councillor

The Swaffham Prior Playgroup will now accept children at the age of 2½ years and the Playgroup will now start at 1.00 p.m. - 3.00 p.m. everyday. Anyone in Reach interested please contact JUDITH NEEVES, telephone Newmarket 742519.

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But Were Afraid to Ask

The article in last months edition of 'Out of Reach' about the countryside in July has prompted me to write something more about the Devil's Dyke which was mentioned as a site for wild flowers. Although beyond Newmarket Heath the Dyke is cut by several roads and the railway, between Reach and the Heath it forms a footpath of over five miles in length broken only by the Swaffham - Burwell road.

Surprisingly little is known for certain about when the Dyke was built, by whom or why. At one time it was thought to be the work of the Iceni, possibly to defend their kingdom against the Romans. Certainly the Dyke cuts across and blocks the ancient track way known as the Icknield Way, which must have been the route used by the last and most famous Iceni ruler, Boadicea. In 60 AD she led her army to sack Colchester and London and slaughter their inhabitants. Excavations have shown that the pottery fragments beneath the Dyke are late Roman, and it could not have been built earlier than the 4th Century AD. Another theory is that it was built to defend Britain from the Saxons invading from the east. This must also be discarded - the ditch and scarp face towards the south west, so the danger lay in the direction of Cambridge. The southern end of the Dyke, which now seems to end abruptly at Woodditton was originally protected by the thick forests that covered the southern parts of Suffolk and most of Essex, while towards Reach the Dyke changes direction quite noticeably just over a mile from the village in order to align with the Roman canal, which followed the same line as the present Lode, and which was part of the extensive system the Romans had devised for draining the Fens. Geological evidence shows that at the beginning of the Roman period the fens were relatively dry, sufficiently so to support woods of pine, yew and even oak, and the trunks preserved by the peat are still ploughed up from time to time, all known indiscriminately as "bog oaks". But climatic changes meant that the area was becoming more liable to flooding, so that when the Roman drainage system fell into disrepair it reverted to fen for another thousand years. The Lode therefore provided a continuation of the defensible line, since the surrounding country was certainly not swampy impassable fen but summer pasture and arable land. It has recently been suggested that Britain, far from being a tiny awkward corner of the Roman Empire, and a continual drain on its resources, became in fact, an increasingly important economic asset, as the Mediterranean area grew more arid. One estimate, has even

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Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Dykes (continued)

guard action fought by the British against the Saxons in the Western part of Britain in the 6th and early 7th Centuries. So if Britain did lose some if not all her legions at this period then it is an obvious time to build defensive earthworks as a precaution.

TO BE CONTINUED

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AT REACH VILLAGE CENTRE
 on Saturday 7th August.
 there will be dancing to Total Eclipse
 8.00 p.m. - 11.30 p.m.

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CHANGE OF DATE

EXEMPTION DOG SHOW
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THIS MONTH'S RECIPE

Summer Pudding

2 lb soft fruits (e.g. strawberries, raspberries, gooseberries,
blackcurrants, redcurrants, blackberries)
6 oz sugar
10 medium slices bread
whipped cream

This makes a really delicious yet very simple dessert for summer days.

Wash and prepare fruit. Put sugar in a pan with 6 tablespoons water. Add the fruit and cook for two to three minutes only. The fruit should not become pulpy. Remove from heat. Cut crusts off the bread. Brush one side of each slice of bread with fruit syrup and put this side against edges of a mould (3½ pint). Line with slices overlapping a little. Spoon fruit into the mould and cover with remaining bread. Put a weighted plate on top and chill for several hours or overnight. Loosen edges of pudding with a knife. Turn out on to a serving dish and serve with whipped cream.

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