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## **FLOOD: INQUEST BEGINS** [Top](#)

### **PUBLIC MEETING TO QUIZ AGENCIES AND COUNCILS**



**Linton under water Photograph: Julian's Photography from a collection taken on 21st**

ON Sunday 21st October, Linton was affected by its worst floods in over 30 years. Why? We all need answers to this question. The Parish Council has sent out letters to over 70 known victims of the flood enclosing a questionnaire which should assist in putting together a detailed map of how, when and where the water arrived. This information will be invaluable in assisting the relevant agencies to answer this question. If you were directly affected and have not received a letter, please contact the Parish Office as soon as possible. We also want to know about any gardens that were affected by flood water. Please ring the Council office 891001.

A public meeting has been arranged for 7.30pm on 9th January to enable all residents to come and question representatives of the Environment Agency, Cambs. County Council, South Cambs. District Council and Anglian Water.

At the moment it is impossible to put a figure on the damage caused, but rough estimates amount to hundreds of thousands of pounds. Detailed costings may be available following the public meeting.

Considerable effort is being channelled into securing our small businesses. Any help that can be offered is being made available. This is where everyone can do their bit. Some of the businesses are trying to trade through the disaster and you can help by using them as much as you can. Details of when the businesses closed by this disaster will be reopening will be given through the Linton News and again your patronage

will be necessary to help them recover.

Gill Barker

## **‘EXTREME INCIDENT’ WAS NO SACRIFICE** [Top](#)

THE rapid rise and equally rapid fall of flood water fed rumours that Linton had been ‘sacrificed’ to protect Cambridge downstream.

The Linton News contacted the Environment Agency to put this point and to find out why the village flooded. Nigel Woonton, Area Flood Defence Manager, refuted emphatically any suggestion that Cambridge had been spared at the cost of villages upstream. "There is no way we would sacrifice one place to save another. We do not have that level of control. The river has automatic sluices to let water through. We can increase the flow by opening navigation sluices. We never delay this. We want to get the water through the system as soon as possible."

The cause of the flood was exceptional localised rainfall in the region, which received the average amount of rain for October in the space of 18 hours. "Small watercourses like the Granta in Linton cannot cope with that amount of rainfall and the run off from the land. They rise rapidly before they can flow into larger watercourses," said Mr Woonton. This explains why Cambridge did not flood so badly until the following day. "Cambridge received a double peak in water flow. The initial peak on Sunday was followed by a second on Monday when the water from the smaller watercourses reached the river 20 hours later."

Now, with the help of local residents and the Parish Council, the inquiry into the impact of the flood and the risk of its happening again has begun. "We need to find out if the answers to our questionnaires will change our knowledge of this area," said Mr Woonton. "But we may not be able to provide any immediate answers." LNT

The November issue of the Linton News was printed just after the flood and this issue appears as scheduled despite water damage at E & E Plumridge’s High Street premises. Our thanks to everyone involved. LNT

More on pages 2,3,4 & 5

## **MOBILE WARDEN STARTS WORK** [Top](#)

ONE of the many rewards of voluntary work is the occasional invitation to coffee and cakes in a splendid setting. Linda Read and I were invited to Sheene Mill to receive an award of £250 from the Village Life Fund, sponsored by Cambridge Gas & Electricity and Cambridge Evening News, for Linton’s Mobile Village Warden scheme. We were delighted to receive this award and thank all the sponsors.

We will use the award to help fund the social activities that will be part of this scheme. We hope to have coffee mornings, meetings with speakers, shopping trips, visits to places of interest, living history meetings, etc. These social activities will add an extra dimension to the scheme and will be open to others, not just those within the scheme. If you would like to help with the social activities or fund raising events contact Gill Barker % 891001, or Enid Bald % 891069. These events are intended to help alleviate the isolation that often accompanies reduced social contact and increasing age and keep this group of independent people in touch with village life, events and each other.

The Mobile Warden, Venetia Brown, has completed her induction course and began to work in the village on 12th November. Some residents may already know her as she has previously worked here as a Care Assistant. She has already established many useful contacts and met potential clients, so Venetia will soon be a familiar figure around Linton.

Enid Bald

## **VOLUNTEERS SAVE HELPING HANDS** [Top](#)

AT Helping Hands’ recent General Meeting members learned that three people have volunteered to become Officers for at least six months from 1st January. Mrs S Buckingham is Chair/Organiser, Mrs J Button is Transport Co-ordinator and Dr B Conochie is our new Treasurer. We are most grateful to them

for their timely offer of help and should also like to thank the Editor of the Linton News for publishing our appeal in the last issue.

Until 1st January those in need of our services should continue to phone the current numbers. From 1st January, please phone:

1st Mrs J Button Email [decpl@linton-news.com](mailto:decpl@linton-news.com)

2nd Mrs P Turner Email [decpl@linton-news.com](mailto:decpl@linton-news.com)

3rd Mrs P Carver Email [decpl@linton-news.com](mailto:decpl@linton-news.com)

New volunteers will always be welcome. If you can help, please contact Jo Bevin [decpl@linton-news.com](mailto:decpl@linton-news.com) or Jean Champion [decpl@linton-news.com](mailto:decpl@linton-news.com) or one of the new officers. Jean Champion.

## **The PARISH COUNCIL Reported by GRAHAM POTTER** [Top](#)

AT this month's meetings members of the public queried the Council's spending on a parish plan . All grants in the future will depend on there being a parish plan in place, as proof of community involvement. The danger of increased traffic from the new houses at Chalklands was also discussed.

However, Council was preoccupied with the floods of 21st October, the likely causes and ways to prevent it's happening again. Council was also concerned about ways to get small businesses trading again as the village must not lose any of its remaining shops. Further discussions about warning systems, etc., were deferred until the public meeting in January.

A new notice board has been erected on the grass in front of the Copperfields estate. The replacement clapper stile has been made and is awaiting erection.

Dr Bear reported that the proposed traffic lights for the top of the High Street were now 10th on a priority list so there may be a chance that they will be installed in 2003/4. The District Councillor reported that Council Tax would have to rise more than expected to pay for improved services in the village.

The lack of a police presence in the village was noted and increased policing requested. Although planning permission has been given for the installation of security fencing at the Infants' school, obstacles still remain over its erection.

## **BOWLERS LOSE A FRIEND** [Top](#)

NO need to elaborate on the dire state of the green, you will have seen the devastation resulting from the flood. The remedial work required is a matter between the Parish Council and the insurers. The pavilion is similarly affected.

The Christmas Party will be held at 7.30pm on Friday 7th December in the Social Centre. If you offered to assist with refreshments, please get in touch with Betty Meeks.

To end on a sad note, Albert Morley, a founder, died on 14th November. Alby was a stalwart of the club. He was my assistant greenkeeper and did so much work for the club, as did we all in those early days. We shall miss him.

Arthur Gore

## **RAIN WILL NOT STOP PLAY** [Top](#)

LINTON Village Cricket Club will hold their Annual General Meeting at 8pm on 10th December in the Social Centre.

Despite having lost all the kit in the flood on 21st October (it will cost about £1,400 to replace) the club still hope to continue to run two teams on Saturdays and an under-15 team in the 2002 season. For further information contact John Richardson(editor)

John Richardson

## **SWEET SUCCESS** [Top](#)

THE Linton & District Committee of the NSPCC want to thank everyone who made cakes and preserves for the NSPCC Duxford Christmas Fair on November 13th. We made £1,277 on our cake stall and the whole fair raised about £50,000. Susan Anderson

## **KNITTING FRIENDSHIPS** [Top](#)

THE Co-workers of Mother Teresa wish to thank everyone who has contributed to their work in recent months. Clothing, soft toys and toiletries have been donated to Swaile Humanitarian Aid, for distribution among the poor and suffering people of Croatia and the Ukraine. A special collection by the Catholic congregations at Linton and St Philip Howard, Cherry Hinton, raised additional funds for medicines and food.

A cheque has also been sent to Mother Teresa's Sisters of Charity in London, for their work among the poor and homeless in this country.

Very special thanks are due to Linton Brownies and all who contributed small gifts to fill their 84 shoe boxes, which will go to the Ukraine in January, in time for the Orthodox Christmas celebrations.

The Co-Workers of Mother Teresa meet fortnightly on Wednesdays, from 2-4pm at the Chalklands Community Room. New knitters are most welcome. Wool and needles provided!

Joy Button

## **A LOT OF NOISE, A LOT OF MONEY** [Top](#)

THE 2001 Linton fireworks display turned out to be a record breaker on two counts: it was attended by almost 4,700 people and raised a final profit of around £7,350. The profits are split equally between the three Linton schools, which means each school will benefit by around £2,450.

Over the past twelve years we have raised a staggering £56,400 to benefit local schools. This year we were very kindly supported again by Camgrain who have donated £5,000 since 1996. In addition to the funds raised for the Linton schools, a total sum of over £4,000 has been distributed to other local community groups.

I have been proud to chair such an enthusiastic and extremely hard-working group and I would like formally to thank them all. I would also like to thank the local Fire Service, the ATC, and the villagers who turned up to help over the weekend. It was a delight to see so many of you on Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning.

The one disappointment, if any, was poor support of the guy competition, although this isn't to detract from the excellent standard of the entries received. The competition was won by Chloe and Sam Drew, with Laura and David Stock second, and Papi and Poppie Chamberlain third.

The committee will begin planning for 2002 in March. If you are interested in joining the most enjoyable committee in Linton, contact me on email at [alanking1@tinyonline.co.uk](mailto:alanking1@tinyonline.co.uk).

Alan King

## **TRAIN AND VOLUNTEER** [Top](#)

A SIX-week training course for volunteers to help the hearing impaired starts on 10th January 2002. CAMTAD, Cambridge Campaign for tackling acquired deafness, runs hearing help sessions where volunteers clear, check and re-tube NHS hearing aids and advise on regular maintenance and best listening conditions. We also loan out equipment, including hearing doorbells, telephone, television and household alarms.

We are a small charity with limited means and depend on our volunteers to exist. If you would like further information, please phone Sue Hempstead 01223 460616.

Training is compulsory for our volunteers but there is no obligation to volunteer at the end of the course. Most of our volunteers help at our monthly sessions. Sue Hempstead

## **K-CLUB WINNERS** [Top](#)

THE result of the K-Club November monthly draw: 1st (£50) Mrs A Bradley (No. 090); 2nd (£25) Carol Ketteridge (No. 174); 3rd (£10) James Bohanna (No. 115).

## **CHRISTINGLE SERVICE** [Top](#)

THE annual Christingle Service will be held at St Mary's at 3pm on Sunday 9th December. All children and parents are welcome to attend. Wrapped Christmas presents for the Women's Refuge would be welcome, and please bring your Children's Society boxes to this service. The counting date will be Wednesday 12th December at 38 Symond's Lane. If you cannot bring your box to the church, please contact the Secretary, Janet Annett, % 891416. Janet Annett

## **AZTECS MEET ELVIS** [Top](#)

AZTECS Junior Football Club are holding a dance at 8pm on New Years Eve at Linton Village College. There will be an Elvis Spectacular, featuring Ted Trimble, music by Snowy's Disco and a full Bar and Buffet. Call Peter Belsom for reservations% 891273.  
Max Penfold

## **A BRIEF HISTORY** [Top](#)

AT the meeting of the Historical Society on 20th November, Michael Gates showed members a fascinating compilation of films from The East Anglian Film Archive made during the Second World War. The next meeting is on 18th December, and Garth Collard will talk on 'Life in the Workhouse'. There will be Christmas wine and nibbles. All are welcome. Joan Pearman  
A full version of this report can be found on the Linton News website. Not yet available

## **PROJECTS AND POSIES** [Top](#)

THERE were approximately 40 members and one guest at November's meeting of Linton WI. Birthday posies were made and distributed by Brenda Smith. The results of the recent questionnaire to members were discussed. There were suggestions for topics for speakers. Some felt the WI should have a higher profile in village matters. Volunteers are needed to set up groups, for example a walking group and a craft group. Forthcoming events include a visit to the Wallace Art Collection in London in February and a week's holiday in Cornwall during April.

The speaker for the evening, John Capes, illustrated his talk on Cambridgeshire with excellent slides, many of which he had taken on walks (he is a member of the Ramblers). The talk ended with a quiz, when members had to identify several locations from slides. The winners were Anne Parry-Smith and Margaret Anderson. The vote of thanks was given by Clare Neville. The evening ended with a raffle.

Reports were received on the recent Autumn Council Meeting and the group meeting at Hildersham. Several members reported that they had participated in enjoyable visits to Bletchley Park and to Denman College. Vera Weatherley was the runner-up in a recent county quiz.

The next meeting is at 7.30pm on Tuesday, 4th December at the Social Centre. The speaker will be Louise Reed. Her talk is entitled "I love Christmas, but is it possible to survive it?" All are welcome.

**Anne Parry-Smith**

## **MORE BEATING ABOUT MR BUSH** [Top](#)

Dear Editor

Your response to the letter in October's issue about Mr Bush, I found patronising. While seeming to defend a person's right for freedom of speech, you made your opinions very clear in your bias towards Mr Bush. My understanding of the responsibility for this kind of editorial is to maintain complete impartiality. It seems to me that unless contributors to this paper conform to your opinion they run the risk of condemnation.

Linton Village College has an excellent reputation and Mr Bush clearly has made a major contribution to education in the village. That does not mean however that every view held by him cannot be challenged. Both the editorial team and majority of contributors appear to take it as a personal insult if anyone has the audacity to put an alternative view forward. The Linton News is a village newsletter not a political platform. Let everyone be heard, anonymous or not.

On a final note Mr Bush defends his opinions and the airing of them. Perhaps, due to the position he holds, his writing should be objective rather than subjective. I believe a balanced view is always good. After all isn't teaching about imparting information in a truthful and balanced way? Surely what is done with that information is then up to the individual.

Lorraine Ketland

Dear Editor

I, too, want to thank Clive Bush for his "telegrams", which always reveal first-hand knowledge of the problems of education, especially in our area, and a very deep concern for the children in his care, whom he and his staff serve so devotedly, as do the staff of the other two schools their younger intake.

Your anonymous correspondent's apparent view is that education is quite divorced from local and national politics. I am sure that the Education Secretary and the Chancellor of the Exchequer will be able to enlighten him/her on receipt of a (signed!) letter asking for information.

Anna Newton

## **WATCH THIS SPACE** [Top](#)

Dear Editor

The bottom greens at the entrance to Chalklands, the banks above them and the small green in front of the bungalows on the left as you enter the estate have been planted with over a thousand daffodil, narcissus and crocus bulbs and all being well, should be a lovely sight in the spring.

The majority of Chalklands gave generously in a house to house collection made in late summer, the District Council kindly matched the amount raised and the bulbs were ordered from Linton Village College, thus helping their funds too. There were also some gifts of bulbs which were very much appreciated.

The bulbs were planted by volunteers on 18th, 19th and 20th October and we are all most grateful to Mr Halls, headmaster of Linton Heights, and Mrs L Robinson, who brought six children who also live in Chalklands from the school, to help plant on Thursday 18th.

Perhaps next year we may be able to plant more around the estate and maybe encourage other areas of Linton to do the same!

Mrs C M Fisher

## **NICE BATH?** [Top](#)

Dear Editor

Someone recently ordered items from the Body Shop Direct catalogue—Spirit of Moonflower Bath Fizzes, Sensual Bath Crystals, Almond Fizzy Bath Sugar—but did not put his/her name or address on the order form. If they phone me on % 893125 I will process the order.

Angela Reilly

## **FLOODING: WILL WE BE WARNED?** [Top](#)

Dear Editor

Having only just finished creating the gallery in the High Street I am rather disheartened to find months of hard work washed away in the recent flood. I was told so many times (against my better judgement) that this would never happen again. My heart goes out to all those who have suffered due to the flooding. Had I just 20 minutes more warning I could have sealed my doors and airbricks with mastic. As it was on viewing the river rising more rapidly than normal my swift phone call to my business partner, who was in the gallery at the time, ensured we saved at least all our clients' work. My thanks goes out to fellow artist Sara Abbott who was there like an angel working with us to save the paintings until we were waist deep in water.

When the renovations are complete I shall be installing another camera at the gallery linked to my home computer, but at least for now let us have a simple water depth sensor on the river by the bridge linked to a siren and the river deeply dredged and correctly banked.

Some people have told me that the rainfall we had was exceptional. This may be so although my gut feeling is that Linton is exceptional too and some poor, misguided expert will come along with a colourful generalised computer model, try to convince us that a flood is unlikely to happen again in our lifetime and tell us all to go home and sleep easy – except those of us who know better!

Darryl Nantais

[nantais@arts46.freemove.co.uk](mailto:nantais@arts46.freemove.co.uk)

## **TRADERS WILL NEED OUR SUPPORT** [Top](#)

Dear Editor

For those of us who watched the drama of the Granta engulfing parts of Linton on Sunday 21st October it was a humbling experience and one we shall not forget. The force of the water and the speed with which it rose were amazing.

The scenes have provided dramatic photographs and tales to be told and re-told. But for some of our community it was particularly awesome – it was their homes and shops which were swamped by the wall of cold, muddy water, containing goodness knows what.

Seeing the trail of damage on Monday morning was heart-breaking – trade wrecked and so many personal treasures broken, coated in mud or lost.

Residents, shopkeepers and publicans have displayed staggering fortitude but behind this must lie a sense of loss that we can do little to alleviate. Most have got to leave their homes for many weeks whilst they are dried and repaired, so don't let us forget some friendly words of encouragement for those who have been hit so hard.

Most importantly let us show our loyalty to the shopkeepers and publicans and when they are able to re-open, support them with our trade. Without them the village will lose its heart and be an infinitely poorer place

Clare Neville

## **VILLAGE IS NOT ON FLOOD ALERT LIST** [Top](#)

Dear Editor

I recently received the autumn edition of *South Cambs. Magazine* and on page 10 I found "Flood Alert" and read that: "If you live in a flood area you can be put onto a phone mailing list. If there is a flood warning or alert issued for your area you will be called with a warning message day or night."

I rang straight away and asked to have our number added to those on the automatic warning system. The young lady at the Environment Agency took all the details and then I asked, as a matter of interest, at what time the warning was rung through on Sunday 21st October? She was so sorry she couldn't tell me but would ask someone to ring me back.

Thank goodness I did press for this little snippet of information! When a nice young man rang me, he said that no one in Linton had been rung with a warning. Linton wasn't in one of the districts covered by the flood warning system and the nice young lady would have to take our number off the list!

The river runs through the very heart of this village, which has been seriously flooded in the past, but would you believe it, our gauging station only measures low water flows and was completely submerged during this last flood and incapable of recording anything. Just as well someone had the sense to use a tape measure after these latest floods re-ceded and record the height of the water – 9 feet above normal level! Perhaps there is some devious purpose behind the South Cambs. advice; perhaps they hope if there are enough callers requesting this service from Floodline then the Environment Agency will do something about providing it. A little warning time would have been a huge help to all those who were flooded.

Judy Rossiter  
Springfield House  
Horn Lane

## OUR THANKS

Dear Editor

My wife and I wish to thank most sincerely all the residents of Linton Heights who showed such concern when our pet African Grey parrot escaped from our home last month.

After two anxious nights an eagle-eyed resident of Granta Vale spotted our parrot when he landed in her garden.

We have a calendar at home containing Biblical Texts and the text for Tuesday read, ‘Behold, the Lord has done great things’.

Mr and Mrs D Rose

Dear Editor

**On behalf of St Mary’s Parochial Church Council I would like to offer our heartfelt thanks to all those people in Linton who came to the church to help during and in the aftermath of the flood. Without their help and touching kindness the church would not have been ‘back in business’ within three weeks.**

**Margaret J Cox**

Dear Editor

Following my recent admission to hospital, I wish to thank all the neighbours and friends for their kind support, offers of help and good wishes during my stay.

The treatment I received at Addenbrookes Hospital was excellent and deserves much praise. We are indeed fortunate to have such a good hospital close at hand.

Frank Sweeting  
Symonds Lane

## IN OUR THOUGHTS [Top](#)

Dear Editor

**As one who was until recently heavily involved with Linton I was more than casually interested to see the flood pictures on your website.**

**Please remind all the people of Linton that we thought of them and prayed for them, when we heard of the floods.**

**Mind you, I remember when everyone was complaining that the river was dry!**

**Rev. A Armstrong**  
**Mansfield, Notts.**

## FOR THE RECORD [Top](#)

Dear Editor

The Parish Council report in the November issue incorrectly stated that the Infants’ School had reached

maximum numbers. Year 2 is indeed full at 60 children, but we should welcome any additional children for year 1 and reception.

The report also mentioned ISA status. ISA stands for international school award. The award has been given for three years and recognises the activities undertaken across the curriculum to make the children more aware of other countries and cultures.

An international week is planned for next summer and the school staff would like to hear from anyone who would be able to talk to the children about specific countries and customs.

Sue Mudge

Chair of Governors

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## MORE FLOODS



Photographs: Julian's Photography

## HEALTH CENTRE: 'WE NEED YOUR PATIENCE AND UNDERSTANDING' [Top](#)

THE closure of the village pharmacy has caused much disruption to Linton residents and I would like to take this opportunity to explain why the Health Centre cannot dispense for Linton patients.

Firstly, I should point out that the chemist is contracted by the health authority to supply pharmaceutical services to the village. Any complaints regarding service provision should really be directed to the Cambridge Health Authority and not to the health centre.

General practitioners are only allowed to dispense for patients who live more than a mile from their nearest chemist. For us, this means that we can only dispense for those patients who live in the villages outside Linton. Due to the special circumstances, the health authority has granted us permission to dispense for Linton patients who are housebound and for those who genuinely cannot get their prescriptions filled by any other means. It has not granted permission for us to dispense for all patients as the licence is still held by the village pharmacist.

Even if the health authority granted us permission to dispense for all Linton patients, we could not do so. Our dispensary is designed and staffed to dispense for about 7,000 patients, not 11,000. We would need additional staff and stock and we would also have problems with secure storage space. With planning,

these difficulties could be overcome but it is impractical to expect any business to increase its output by 50% overnight.

The chemist is in an impossible position and our sympathies are with her as she struggles to rebuild her business. Our dispensing staff are doing their best to help those in real need and we must ask for the understanding of our Linton patients when we ask them to take their prescriptions to another chemist.

Sheila Griffiths

Practice Manager

## **PHARMACY: 'WE TRIED TO CARRY ON BUT IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE'** [Top](#)

ALTHOUGH her premises were devastated and stock destroyed in last month's flood, village pharmacist Deepa Bhachoo was determined to fulfil her commitment to customers and undertook to deal with all repeat prescriptions within days of the flood. Unfortunately, the task was overwhelming and the experiment could not be repeated.

"It took us 25 hours to deliver the prescriptions; without our computerised records I could not check whether everything had been supplied as required and we spent a lot of time and a great deal of money." Regrettably there was no funding for this within either the Health Authority or Primary Care Trust budgets and the pharmacist had to withdraw this service as it was being run at a loss.

Mr and Mrs Bhachoo have had many sleepless nights and exhausting days looking for ways to continue their business while repair work is done to the pharmacy. "We even considered buying another place but when we calculated the cost of fitting up other premises as a pharmacy it was clear that we might just as well wait until our own shop could be occupied again."

The pharmacy is unlikely to be open until after the New Year. The Bhachooes will take the opportunity to redecorate and redesign the shop and will take their first holiday for over five years. Sally Simmons

## **GIFT SHOP: 'SIREN WOULD HAVE SAVED A LOT FOR US'** [Top](#)

BRIAN Pettit, who runs the jewellery repair business and gift shop, Small Gifts, is saddened and out of pocket after the sudden and unexpected flood.

All his shop stock from below the water level has been lost and many expensive tools, including a binocular microscope, are now worthless.

Old watch spares dating back to the 1800s (when watches were often driven by miniature steel chains) and thousands of parts for more modern watches were also ruined.

He would like to say how much he appreciated the help and encouragement given by several good friends immediately after the water subsided.

Mr Pettit had visited the shop in the morning and thought it would be safe but had not anticipated the sudden rise in the level of the water.

He said: "I think a siren system would have saved a lot of stock and belongings for everyone. It would have saved me thousands.

The shop is open for business but it will be months before things are back to normal, as plastering and redecorating will have to take place when the property has dried out.

## **ELECTRICAL SHOP: 'THERE'S NO ESCAPE IN OUR HOME OR BUSINESS'** [Top](#)

J C Tournant & Sons, the electrical shop and repair business in the High Street, was one of the many homes and businesses affected. It is in fact both a business and a home, so we see both sides of the problem.

John and Lorna Tournant are unable to escape from the mess that has been made of their home by going

out to work, and unable to escape the problems of a flooded business by relaxing at home. On the Monday following the floods, this part of the High Street was buzzing with activity, people all along the street were throwing out carpets and fittings, every so often we would all congregate outside our devastated homes and businesses to try to look at the lighter side of events. Everyone was supportive and there were many offers of help from those not directly affected.

There is a lot of work to be done, and although it all seemed very slow to begin with, there is now much activity – plaster and wallpaper to come off, floorboards to be lifted, kitchen cabinets to be discarded and the constant drone of the de-humidifiers.

Following this period of activity we have to expect a quiet time to allow the buildings to dry, then more activity to reinstate the shop fittings and replace all the stock that was destroyed by the water.

The electrical shop will be back in business early in the New Year: please watch the shop window for news nearer the time.

In the meantime we would like to apologise for any inconvenience to our customers and hope you will all be patient and understanding. A big thank you for all the kind help and support from customers and friends alike.

The Tournant family

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## **DOG & DUCK: ‘WE LOST EVERYTHING. WE ARE SHOCKED AND ANGRY’** [Top](#)



Photographs: , Small Gifts and the Darryl Nantais Gallery

WHEN Tracy Harrison and Bob Hackett decided to buy the Dog and Duck last January they had made extensive inquiries and were told quite definitely that the property would not flood.

How wrong this prediction turned out to be on 21st October when the flood water which engulfed the pub caused the loss, through contamination, of everything connected with the business.

As the water invaded the premises customers were still eating but it soon became obvious that lunch would have to be abandoned as friends and clients helped to carry as much as they could upstairs.

Eventually the last six people, who were by then thigh-deep in water, had to escape through a window.

Bob had been trying to phone the Environment Agency since 11am that morning but he was given no help at all, with the contact not even knowing where Linton was situated.

In fact, Bob describes the whole episode as a fiasco and said that they received no support or advice from councils or utilities.

"At first we thought the flood was a natural disaster," said Tracy, "but sometime during the night the water disappeared with such speed and force that we are left wondering how this could have happened.

"By Monday morning there was hardly any water in the road outside."

Bob and Tracy are left angry and shocked and although they are sure they will 'stay afloat' they are concerned for their future trade, as it will be some time before they can re-open for business.

"Apart from the support of our friends and customers and the offers of practical help we have received, the only good thing to come out of this situation is the opportunity to redecorate the pub in the style we have always wanted," said Tracy.

"At the very least an electronically controlled siren is needed so that people would have the warning they need in the future."

## **GALLERY: 'INSURANCE WILL NOT COVER LOSS'** [Top](#)

"A TRAUMATIC experience" is how local artist Darryl Nantais described October's flood and although his new High Street gallery will survive he still has bad days during the clearing-up operation and seemingly endless problems sorting out the insurance claim.

The entire ground floor of his gallery was flooded to a depth of between three and four feet and although he managed to save all of his clients' work, some of his own paintings were damaged, and cannot be restored. He stayed in the shop until foul water reached his waist and he was forced to leave because of the health risk.

After drying out, the ground floor walls will need to be re-plastered to their full height. Because the nature of his business is preserving art, he cannot afford to risk the possibility of damp permeating the pictures which will be re-hung.

Darryl is hoping to re-open the gallery at the end of January but three months' loss of trade as well as the likelihood of rising insurance premiums are a big worry.

In the meantime he is grateful for the offer of a complete wall at the Village College to hang his paintings. He said: "My main concern is that people are protected in the future. A siren would be a start and as insurance will not entirely cover people's losses, perhaps there should be a fund to help those affected by disasters like this. The enforced withdrawal of services which local businesses provide for the community results in a loss for everyone in the village."

## **HOME: 'WE'LL SPEND WINTER IN A MOBILE HOME IN THE GARDEN'** [Top](#)

THE only people braving it out in Meadow Lane after the flood are Andrew and Janet Williams and their daughter Hannah who have been forced to live in a mobile home craned into their back garden, because no rented accommodation is available in or near Linton.

Until this new home arrived on the Friday following the flood, they had camped out on the first floor of their ruined house, which will need plumbing, heating and plaster replaced before the family can consider moving back.

The situation was made worse for the Williamses as they were on holiday at the time, so were unable to move possessions upstairs to safety.

Andrew's parents, who were animal sitting for them, had to be rescued with the dog in a dinghy and they all spent the night at the Social Centre.

The cat, left upstairs for one night, added to the havoc by covering important papers with muddy paw prints.

Andrew said: "Most items can be replaced but we are upset at the loss of personal videos, photos and school reports. They are irreplaceable."

Their lives have changed completely as they have no neighbours and have had to adjust to very cramped conditions after the convenience of a four-bedroomed house.

During this trying time they have been heartened by the great support received from Clare Neville and would like to pay tribute to her.

In six months' time the house should once again be habitable but the flood could be responsible for its devaluation and inevitably insurance premiums will have risen.

Having lived in Meadow Lane for more than seven years, during which time only once has the river looked threatening, Andrew and Janet were surprised to discover that the new houses in the road were also flooded, even though they had been built on a higher platform as a preventative measure.

Janet said: "We need to know if the cause was just the freak weather or if there was action or inaction which was responsible. Although some sort of warning would be helpful, that will not create the peace of mind that a solution to the problem would give."

## **THE BUSH TELEGRAPH** [Top](#)

LAST month I wrote about our plans to develop a new and innovative way to move the college forward, tapping into the economic success of our region by seeking partners from business who will help the college develop a Government-supported specialism in business and enterprise. Since then a planning team has been appointed and begun work, a special information meeting for parents has taken place and I have held meetings with potential sponsors (we have to raise £50k ourselves to lever £500k from the Government). Responses to our plans have been positive. A number of companies see this development as a real move forward for education. They like the idea of LVC students understanding how they do business and they also like the idea of having their names linked to a flagship enterprise. Some of the developing ideas are very exciting. How many schools would give students the experience of helping to manage their catering or cleaning operations, for example, and how many young people get the chance to help generate small businesses in a challenging country like South Africa?

The Government has recognised that there are some exciting opportunities here and have agreed to loosen the strait-jacket of the National Curriculum for schools which become specialist colleges. The core curriculum will remain but with imaginative timetabling a much wider range of choices will also be on offer. Of course not everyone will end up in business. Public services or academia will still beckon for many students, but it is hard to see how anyone, no matter what their career choice, will fail to benefit from knowing how the world of business works. What of enterprises, in many ways the more important half of the equation? If through this aspect of our work we produce more self-motivated, confident and articulate young people who are able to think laterally, learn independently, solve problems and work with each other, then in my book we have helped them become more enterprising and we have properly educated them as well. Clive Bush, Principal

## **PRICKLY MEETING** [Top](#)

CACTI is a small word which covers an enormous subject of over 1,650 species. Brian Waygood, the former chairman of a local cactus society, has learnt the art of handling without gloves these fearsome spiny plants whose flowers come in every colour but blue. He brought along 300 slides from which he made a selection. We saw minute and huge cacti growing in deserts in many parts of the world, some of which were the candelabra variety familiar from backdrops of old cowboy films. There were also pictures of vast numbers of beautiful cultivated varieties grown in greenhouses for showing at competitions. Mr Waygood has been interested in cacti since 1966 and his talk elicited many questions. It was a pity he had such a small audience to whom he could pass on his enthusiasm.

This month's meeting on 11th December will be an informal evening featuring members' slides accompanied by some festive mulled wine and mince pies.

Gloria Fidler

## **LINTON COUNTRY DIARY** by **Olwen Williams**

Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2001

*Illustrated by Maureen Williams*

YET another record to set be-side many others, in these days of rapid climate change. After a month of mild wet weather, October saw rainfall of 75mm on one day alone, followed by the worst flooding in living memory in Linton and Little Linton. The Hildersham fields flooded over, inundating the village hall approaches and blocking the road. The first ground frost of the year was delayed until 5<sup>th</sup> November, but since then, leaves have turned into wonderful autumn colours of reds and oranges.

It is another excellent year for fruit of all types: nuts, hips and haws in the hedgerows and also top fruit such as apples. The annual apple day at Cambridge's Botanical Gardens was crowded with folk, anxious to stock up with cider, apple juice and apples in all sorts of wonderful variety, old fashioned types, aromatic and tasty. Some were there just for a day out – this was fortunately a week after the rains! Some brought apples for identification: a team of experts with a table of samples provided answers. Others wanted advice about the best cultivars for a particular spot, or about organic disease control (difficult!). My main excursions for the month have been to the river north of Cottenham, to sample the population of fresh water mussels. Britain has six native species, of which five are found locally in East Anglia. We were in search of the depressed variety ('depressed' as in flattened, not sad), so returned the duck and swan mussels, the tumid and painter's mussels to the river. Although there are still good populations to be found in some parts of the river, there is evidence that a general decline has occurred, possibly due to decline in the fish which act as host to the developing juveniles or to changing river conditions.

When I started this diary five years ago, the A11 roadworks had recently been completed. I noted with pleasure the care which had been given and the high survival rate of the small trees through a couple of difficult dry summers. Now, there are the beginnings of a new wood around this junction. What other ecological gains have we seen? Many people now regard their gardens as an important resource for wildlife. Can we count more ponds? Thicker, taller hedgerows? More diversity in farmland? Larger areas of woodland? Less use of pesticides and herbicides? Better care of the SSSIs? I leave my successor and my readers with my best wishes and the hope that Linton and its villages will remain a haven for both people and nature.

## **MORE PLACES AT GRANTA PLAYGROUP** [Top](#)

THE Linton Granta Playgroup is a registered charity, employing seven staff and caring for 36 pre-school children. The dynamic and imaginative team who run the playgroup constantly bring fresh ideas to stimulate the children. They create a caring atmosphere of fun and education where children can learn, play and socialise in a safe environment. The Toddler group caters for children under 2+ and parents or carers stay with their child.

Both groups meet in the Youth Club building at Linton Village College where we are currently working to improve the playgroup decoration and the toilet facilities. There is a garden attached to the building so the children enjoy exercise and fresh air.

We have a new leader, Liz Simpson, and although we have previously been short-staffed, we now have a full team. We are glad to be able to offer Playgroup every weekday. (Toddler groups are on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday.)

We would like to invite any pre-school children to join one of our groups. Please call Sue Roke for details  
Linda Richardson

## **WANT TO BE ACE PARENTS?**

BRINGING up children is the most exhausting, nerve-wracking, heartbreaking and absorbing job you will

ever do. But it is also the most rewarding and valuable.

Would you like to learn how to enjoy parenting more fully?

Parentalk has just completed another successful course in Linton and is now taking registrations to start again in the New Year.

The course is free of charge, video based and easy to understand.

For further information please contact Sarah Thorne or Tracey Russell

Tracey Russell

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