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DID YOU KNOW THERE IS A SUPERSTAR LIVING ON YOUR DOORSTEP? [Top](#)

From plain old moggy to the most famous feline on the planet- possibly! David and Hayley Donnan tell us how two cat rescuers and the internet skyrocketed their pet to fame



Famous Frank, resting and recovering under the watchful eyes of thousands of well-wishers worldwide

BEFORE we lived in Linton we lived in Trumpington on the busy Shelford Road. It was on this road, on a dark night in January 2002 that Frank, our cat was run over. Suffering a very badly broken pelvis (it was broken and detached from the spine) his chances were slim and enforced cage rest at home was essential to allow any hope of recovery.

We needed a way to keep an eye on Frank while my wife and I were out at work. We had a broadband internet connection, some webcams and I happen to work for an internet development company called Igentics who had developed a very easy to use website management system called 'Building site'. The solution seemed obvious and very soon we created www.cathospital.co.uk.

Initially we wanted to use the site to try to find the people who had found Frank badly injured in the road and brought him home (in the confusion we did not get their details). Anyone logging onto the site was able to see Frank live via the 2 webcams we had positioned outside his cage. We were sure that as his popularity spread, his rescuers would hear about it and come forward. Before long the site became very popular, with over 22,000 hits in the first few weeks, and then the Cambridge Evening News picked up on it.

A photo and an article on a Friday evening was all it took to turn Frank into a global feline superstar. Once the CEN ran their story other news wires picked up on it and the site was soon featured on many internet news sites and in papers all around the world from America to New Zealand, from Brazil to Russia. We posted daily updates on the site and started to feature emails which people sent in along with pictures of their own cats. Frank also had a fan club with more than 6,000 members from all around the world who received a weekly email news letter of his progress. Traffic was increasing daily to the point where, on the day the site was featured on the front page of the BBC news website, we had over 125,000 hits and 6,000 simultaneous users. An amazing achievement for a small cat! Eventually the couple who had saved Frank on the night of his accident made contact and we organised a reunion for the three of them.

After this things started to slow down. Frank was well on the road to recovery, my wife was pregnant with our first child and we had bought a house in Linton. With no broadband available, updating the site would not be easy and live video would be impossible. We decided to stop updating the site just before we were due to move. We sent out a final news letter thanking everyone for their support, moved house and took some pictures of Frank sunning himself in the garden of our new house, which we put on the site. We thought that was that and concentrated on more important things such as the birth of our own little superstar, baby Alfie.

Then in December 2002 we received an email from Yahoo, telling us that cathospital had been chosen as a Yahoo pick of the year. This was tremendous news for the team at Igentics who had given a lot of their spare time to keep the site up to date. We checked the site statistics at this point to find that the site had had over 5 million hits and served over 100 million pieces of information. The 'Yahoo' award kick started more press coverage; we did more radio interviews, an article in 'Your Cat' magazine and even ended up on Sky News. Frank, of course, was oblivious to the whole thing.

Things seemed to have slowed down again recently. Nowadays the site only gets about 600 hits per day. Frank spends his time chasing mice, sleeping and avoiding traffic on the High Street (and buses on the pavement!)

One of the questions we get asked a lot is if we will ever bring the web cams back so people can see Frank again. Unfortunately we have to say that this is not possible as

Linton has no Broadband Internet access. I would therefore ask you to do three things.

Register your interest in broadband for Linton and the surrounding area at <http://www.crse.uk.net/> Broadband will make a huge difference to our community at all levels, from education to home working and entertainment.

Please drive slowly. We live on the High Street and if you happen to run Frank over you will have 6000 very angry cathospital fans to deal with.

If you are walking from the High Street into Church Lane and see a small grey and white cat, say hello, you have just met one of the most famous cats on the planet!



Now fully recovered and enjoying the sun in his new garden in Linton
Check out Frank's website at <http://www.cathospital.co.uk/>

ALL CHANGE AT THE DROP-IN [Top](#)

OVER the last few months we have experienced various problems at the Drop-In. There have been four break-ins, culminating in every window in the building being broken. This last incident happened between 6pm and 7pm on the evening of Tuesday 25th March. If anyone has information that would help to positively identify the culprit I would very much like to hear from them.

Due to these problems and staffing difficulties the Drop-In has been closed for some two months, a great disappointment to the one hundred or more young people who use the facility. Needless to say the break-ins and damage to the building are the work of just two or three individuals, people known to us, who destroy things for other young people.

The Drop-In is only part of our work, the other services provided by LA4Y have continued, one to one support, Youth Achievement Awards, advice and guidance on a range of subjects and Family Support. Our Family Support team, Lesley Silk and Chantel Powell, are as busy as ever working with 27 clients from our community. With the support of the District Council and our insurers we are carrying out a refurbishment of the Drop-In building, with new windows and doors, internal repair work and re-decoration. Early in May we hope to have the Drop-In open for business again. This has become possible because we have had success in the last few weeks in attracting new youth workers to join us. Our Youth Work Manager, Hazel Savage,

who will be supported by five or possibly six new staff members, will lead this rebuilt youth work team.

This will be a great opportunity to re-launch the Drop-In and continue to improve and develop the services we provide for the young people of our area.

In the four years that the Drop-In Centre has been on the recreation ground these are the first significant acts of vandalism that we have experienced. It is disappointing, but not surprising given the difficult and challenging work that we try to do.

John Batchelor

THE MOTHERS' DAY OF ALL RACES [Top](#)

THE annual Linton Fun Run and Half Marathon, hosted by the Village College and sponsored by Granta Park, took place on Sunday 30th March.

Attendance at the Fun Run, which is open to all ages, was down from last year, perhaps because it was Mother's Day and the day after clocks went forward for the start of British Summer Time. But the enthusiasm of the participants was infectious—the first girl home Emma Ritchie, had come from St Neots in order to take part—and the speed of the runners seemed faster than ever before.

It was a beautiful morning, and mothers and fathers not accompanying their kids on the course had to scamper between strategic points in order to be at the finish at the right time.

The first runners home were Chris Ritchie, Jordon Kennard and Sam Simmonds. All finishers received a medal.

The Half Marathon took a course that went through the centre of the village and ended back at the Village College.

Sally Simmons

THE PARISH COUNCIL REPORTED BY GRAHAM POTTER [Top](#)

April Meeting

S. Lions from South Cambs. District Council and J. Barton from Hundred houses gave Council a presentation on the proposed changes to Flaxfields, including the building of two bungalows and demolishing others to build a new centre and better in-house accommodation and also to increase the resident numbers to an economical level. Although there was no objection to the overall plan, great concern was expressed about the disruption to existing residents. We were assured that none of the residents would be forced to move.

Due to increasing amounts of work, the Parish Council have taken on a part time assistant to assist the clerk while she is especially busy on our application to become a Quality Parish Council.

The sand bags that had burst and been left in the high street have been removed.

It was suggested that a census be taken that covers the use of the bridge in Stanton's Lane as this may help in getting it replaced.

After last year's meeting with the contractors, the grass cutting etc. was progressing well this year.

It was reported that children are using the cemetery as a playground and some of their games are causing concern. Some grave spaces were again expanding beyond the permitted area and edging is being installed that is causing difficulties with the grass cutting.

Initial stages of the Parish Plan were progressing well and there has been a very successful Parish Plan Pilot day, which was accomplished with assistance from volunteers from the steering group. A questionnaire is planned for distribution in June.

The traffic working party are still working hard putting forward recommendations for the village. James Paice MP is now involved and is meeting with people concerned.

The Golden Jubilee tree that died has been replaced. Last month 16 crimes were reported in Linton.

Finally, Council gave comments on yet another consultation document, this one from South Cambs. District Council on the Draft Economic Development Strategy 2003.

RUFFLED FEATHERS [Top](#)

A GROUP of ladies from Linton and Balsham are currently working to finish a quilt that will be raffled to raise money for the accident response service MAGPAS (Mid Anglia General Practitioners Accident Scheme) which runs in our area.

The double quilt, which has a modern tulip design on a cream background, is unique and offers an excellent opportunity to brighten up your bedroom while raising money for charity.

The raffle will be held in July and as soon as the quilt is finished and details of the raffle are finalised it will be appearing in the Linton News. So watch this space....

LNT

PICTURES OF THE PAST [Top](#)

LINTON Camera Club members ventured over the county border to the 13th century Clare Priory in Suffolk for their second awayday of this year on 13th April.

The priory, situated by the River Stour and overlooked by what is left of Clare Castle, was resplendent in spring growth and subtle colours and club members were fortunate enough to witness a Palm Sunday procession and ceremony.

The castle park included many photographic subjects including the old Clare railway station, the tracks long gone and now a sad reminder of when almost anywhere in East Anglia could be reached by train. The club's next stop - by car of course - was the Cock and Bell in the picturesque town of Long Melford. Tea, coffee, scones and a lively discussion about Gulf war photography and the way digital images are now sent around the world in minutes. Then, on with the photography in the area with its

many Tudor buildings.

Members had a very successful day taking pictures with film and digital cameras under what can only be described as perfect sunny conditions, and we now look forward to the next awayday at Duxford Air Museum on Sunday 11th May. It is hoped to include a short discussion on what aviation war art can teach photography. One of our members, Ron Pitkin, has been involved in both. New members, at any level of photography, are always welcome. Inquiries to John Keeble on %894948 or email jkeebled@clara.net. Roger Lapwood



Ron Pitkin gets Christianity into focus at Clare priory

SCRAMBLE FOR SCRABBLE [Top](#)

OUR friendly and informal scrabble club starts again after Easter on alternate Tuesdays, 10am – 12noon at Linton Sports Centre. The dates for the summer term are 6th and 20th May, 3rd and 17th June, 1st and 15th July.

Everyone is welcome however good they are at scrabble.

Just drop in to the club or phone Samara Philpott for further information.

Samara Philpott

A GOOD YEAR FOR THE WI [Top](#)

WENDY Foster, President, welcomed nearly 40 members including Christine Wylde, WI Advisor, to the Annual Meeting.

Tricia Lewis gave an account of "Curtain up" where three members of Linton WI had taken part in a play "Funeral Dance" at Haslingfield; at Sawston, (as part of the Drama Festival), and at Barton. Miriam Rixon is organising a walk at Castle Camps on 4th April. There was a reminder about the Group Meeting at Abington Village Hall on 14th May when Mike Petty will speak about "Vanishing Cambridgeshire." Members were encouraged to ask at the local Post Office for information about the

ways in which allowances and benefits will be paid in the future and to use the Post Office if possible.

We were given details of forthcoming outings and events, including a visit to Woodbridge and Sutton Hoo on 15th May and a Cookery Day School at Cottenham Village College on 7th June. Brenda Smith won the Denman Bursary. Joan Argent is willing to continue as the WI's representative on the Village Hall Committee and she was thanked for her work on this committee during the year.

During the business of the evening, Jean Goodwin gave the Treasurer's report and Brenda Smith, Secretary, reported that there are at present nearly 60 members.

Brenda also gave an account of the year's very varied activities. Wendy Foster gave the President's report and thanked the Committee for their work and support during the year. Her term of office is now at an end. Jean Goodwin was also thanked for her work as Treasurer, as she is also standing down. Val Spencer gave a vote of thanks on behalf of the members to the outgoing Committee. Barbara Leake was welcomed onto the Committee. Tricia Lewis is the new President and June Bunn is now Treasurer.

Members then enjoyed cheese and wine and were entertained by a local group of madrigal singers. Their programme included songs in Welsh, French and Italian and an old favourite "Linden Lea". Wendy Foster gave the vote of thanks. The evening ended with the raffle.

The May meeting will be on Tuesday, 6th May at 7.30pm in the Social Centre.

Members will report back on recent meetings about the resolutions to be presented at the Intermediate General Meeting in June. All are welcome.

Anne Parry-Smith

CUT A DASH THIS SUMMER [Top](#)

NOW that summer is just over the horizon, it's time for a make-over. Dust off those shorts, tone up the tummy and think about a new haircut to complement the new you. Pippa and her staff at The Cutting Room are on standby to whip your hair-do into shape and offer advice on styles, colours and perms. The Cutting Room has been established for 9 years and we have the expertise and experience to create a new you. Phone The Cutting Room for an appointment and get ready for summer!

Pippa Moore

READERS WRITE [Top](#)

From where I'm sitting

Dear Editor,

Some people used to know me as Famous Dave the singer. I was indeed almost famous, but never Dave, and over the past year or so some of you may have seen me trundling about in my wheelchair. I'm just plain old Tony now.

When I was given my wheelchair, I thought it would mean that I would be able to get

out and about in Linton. How wrong I was! I have quickly arrived at the conclusion that Linton is not a friendly place for disabled people. Here are some reasons why. I have to choose my routes around the village. Some areas are impossible to navigate, and it is not at all funny (well I suppose it is really) when you are trying to outrun the 113 bus and various vans down the High Street. There are quite a few posters in windows saying 'Do something now'. I have. I don't go down the High Street.

Symonds Lane is another route I miss out. The paths are too narrow or non-existent, and I am sure I saw Damon Hill overtake Eddie Irvine on it recently, just outside Symonds Lane residential care home.

All of the shops are out of bounds for my chariot. It's not anyone's fault, but I would love to see the manager of the Co-op's face if I took the blue disabled sticker in his window literally, and tried to get around the store. Imagine the pandemonium!

Many disabled people need to see a doctor more frequently than able-bodied people do. The Health Centre has monitored wheelchair access at the side of the building, which is great. There is even a path up to the Health Centre from Coles Lane, but no dropped kerb so a wheelchair user can get up on to it.

LVC presently has no disabled students in wheelchairs, although this may change at some point with the proposed special needs facility. There is a disabled ramp to the building, but if a wheelchair user attempts to access the college from the recreation ground they will actually find themselves having to face a long detour involving the main road.

The point I am trying to make is that everyone could suddenly find themselves, their children, or loved-ones in my position. The reason for this letter is to try to raise awareness of everyone in Linton, young and old, to try to see the village with different eyes. I am working with the Parish Council and the Papworth Trust to raise the profile of Linton's disabled residents, and for disabled people to be able to access as much of the village, buildings and functions as is possible. There is much work to do, and things and opinions may have to change a little. We will be going around the village outlining the parts which are difficult to navigate, with a view to making it a little easier for wheelchair users to live in Linton in this European Year of the Disabled.

Can I ask you all to do all you can to look at things as if you were in a wheelchair, because from where I'm sitting, it is certainly different.

Tony Smith

15 Paynes Meadow.

PRETTY AS A PICTURE [Top](#)

Dear Editor,

Do the spring flowers always look as lovely as they did this year? Perhaps I had more time to admire them. Chalklands was a picture, first with the crocus and then with the daffodils. The crocus, narcissus and cowslips were a delightful surprise along the verges of Horseheath Road. The daffodils at Hildersham and Balsham were breathtaking. Congratulations to everyone involved with the planting.

The blackthorn bushes were picturesque, especially along the Roman Road, where at first sight the hedges appeared to be covered in snowflakes.

Kate France

OUR THANKS [Top](#)

Dear Editor

Sue and Colin Elsom and family, and Karl Ferraro would like to express their thanks to all family and friends who have sent good wishes, cards and gifts, and expressed their concern since Zoe's car accident on Saturday 19th April. They would also like to express their gratitude to the kind members of the public who were very prompt to contact the emergency services, and then cared for Zoe until the ambulance arrived. Thankfully, she is now making tremendous progress.

The Elsom Family

Dear Editor,

I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the support and kind messages from friends and neighbours since the tragic loss of my father Rafael (Rey) Barros who was killed on the A1307 whilst out walking in February.

Jose Rey

WILL THE DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT AFFECT YOU? [Top](#)

THE Disability Discrimination Act (1995) comes fully into force on 4th October 2004. Are you a business or service provider? Can you comply or do you risk being sued? Come and find out on Thursday, 8th May 2003, at 7.45 pm at The Cathodeon Centre (the new library), Horseheath Road. Sheila Smith-Rawnsley and Gerri Bird of Directions Plus, a disability advice line in Cambridge, will run a seminar on how to interpret the Act and evaluate your premises. This seminar has been arranged by Linton Parish Council in response to requests for information.

The Disability Discrimination Act became law in December 1996 and made it illegal for providers of services to the public to discriminate against disabled people in employment and in the provision of their services. This seminar will provide hands-on training in evaluating ones service and premises thereby reducing costs. It will be led by two people trained in the Act, one of whom is physically disabled.

Parish Councils, village hall committees, voluntary organisations open to the public, as well as shops and businesses, are all service providers under the Act. All now have a responsibility to ensure access to all their services and they cannot afford not to have training or an access audit for two reasons. Firstly, government figures say 1 person in 8 has a disability and 1 in 4 has a disabled member of their immediate circle - a big market sector. The largest group of people with disabilities is obviously older people and the elderly population is increasing dramatically over the next

couple of decades. Secondly, after 2004 disability groups will be able to sue those businesses that have not made any kind of effort.

Initially the Act allowed providers to offer alternative means of delivering the service where physical features made it difficult for disabled people to access the service. However the next part of the legislation, which comes into force in October 2004, requires providers to take 'reasonable steps' to remove physical barriers to access. This means that providers will have to look seriously at their premises with a view to making physical alterations. Many of the changes that can be made to ensure access are very cheap, but it is also very easy to waste money on changes that have limited benefit. It is, therefore, really important to seek the advice of disabled people in the planning stages - as architects, builders and other so called 'experts' can sometimes be wrong.

Come to the seminar on Thursday 8th May and find out more. To book space please contact the Parish Clerk on 891001.

Gill Barker

MAY REMINDERS [Top](#)

CLOSING TIME [Top](#)

LINTON Parish Office will be closed for holidays from 19th to 24th May.

FUN AT THE FAIR [Top](#)

THE Harris Family Fair will be coming to Linton again this year. There will be stalls and childrens' rides - and of course candy floss!

It will set up on the recreation ground and will take place from 14th to 19th May (closed on Sunday 18th May).

Opening times are from 6pm to 9pm each evening.

WACKY ROAD CLOSURE [Top](#)

ON Sunday 25th May the Wacky Races route from the Crown to Balsham Road on the High Street will be closed to through traffic between 1pm and 3pm.

K-CLUB WINNERS [Top](#)

THE winners of April's K-Club monthly draw:

1st (£50) Mrs. B. M. Biggs (No. 049);

2nd (£25) Jane Rayner (No. 124);

3rd (£10) Mr. P. S. Foster (No. 363)

POLICE HOAX [Top](#)

RECENTLY a distraction burglary was reported in Great Shelford. This was a person claiming to be a police officer. The aggrieved was sensible enough to ask for identification, and, when none was given, refused entry to the offender. The offender then went to the rear of the house and tried again, unsuccessfully, to gain entry. The offender is described as male, 5'10" to 6' tall, well built with short brown hair, aged 40-50yrs and wearing a blue check shirt. Remember, all police officers, whether in uniform or plain clothes, carry identification and expect to be asked to show it. PC Dave Hall

VOLUNTEERS FOR LIFE [Top](#)

WE urgently need volunteers to drive people living in Linton to local community education classes and village clubs. Can you spare a couple of hours a week usually in the daytime? Occasionally drivers are needed in the evening too. Would you like to make a difference to the life of someone who feels isolated, depressed and anxious and who has been referred to the Health for Life local community project?

Health for Life helps people regain their confidence and self esteem by encouraging them to get out of their homes and go to local clubs and classes such as pottery, scrabble, local history, computing, keep fit, arts and crafts. Here they meet new friends, learn new skills and start to feel better. But they need people to drive them to their activities and sometimes stay in the class to give them 'moral support'. Would you like to help them? Perhaps you have always wanted to try pottery or creative crafts but haven't got round to it, well here's your chance. Perhaps you already attend a keep fit class and would be willing to take someone else with you? In return for your time we can help with your car fuel costs and you can stay in the class free of charge. In the 7 years Health for Life has been running many people have been helped to feel better and many volunteers have got a lot out of being involved. As one volunteer has said "Taking someone to classes gets me out of the house and introduces me to activities I wouldn't have thought of going to. I have met such nice people."

If you would like further information about being a Health for Life volunteer please phone me.

Samara Philpott

ROCKET LAUNCHERS NEEDED [Top](#)

SINCE our last news item Friends of LVC have had our second meeting. Among items discussed was the Family Quiz Night held at the College on 22nd March. Once again this proved to be very popular, with the Hall full to capacity. Congratulations to the triumphant Baker team from Ashdon who finally came through after a sudden death play-off. A very big thank you to all that supported this event.

November seems a long way off but preparations are under way for Bonfire Night. The Friends are represented on the Firework Committee and also help with the refreshments on the day.

The Firework Committee is looking for new members this year and would welcome anyone who is able to lend a hand with the organisation of this very popular event. If you have the time and would like to get involved, contact Paul Howe

The sale of bulbs raised £102.95. Thank you to all that supported this fundraiser and may you spend many happy hours gazing at your beautiful blooms! Our next meeting is on 13th May when we will discuss a Summer wine tasting evening to be held in June. Jane Neal

OUT IN THE GARDEN [Top](#)

THE Social branch of Linton Mobile Warden Scheme has been out and about again! After days of fine, dry weather, the day of our outing to Huntingdon Garden Leisure Centre dawned dull and damp – typical... However, there was plenty to see and do under cover, so we were able to largely ignore the elements. The centre is fairly new, one lady had lived in the area and remembered the site when it was a field belonging to one of her friends. We had a full coach, so were grateful for the luggage compartment to bring back all the shopping. It is amazing how much you can buy that you didn't even know you needed! The driver took us home by the scenic route, which added an extra treat to the day and gave us plenty to talk about.

Last month Cynthia Norris and I attended a Millennium Awards seminar on behalf of the LMWS at Southwark Cathedral, to discuss the impact of work done through the provision of this grant. We had prepared a poster display and had to give a short talk on our projects – we needed our lunch and wine after that ordeal! Our scheme generated a lot of interest and other projects showed how much could be achieved through relatively little money and a lot of goodwill. The seminar was especially valuable as it gave us ideas for our next grant application and what was available. We are now busy applying for more grants to continue the social aspect of LMWS. One project looked especially valuable and might be interesting for Linton. Is anyone interested in a "Living History" project, capturing the stories of the village and the residents?

The next get-together is on Friday, 16th May, Soup and Rolls at the Social Centre, meeting at 12 noon for 12.30pm lunch. Mike Petty will be speaking on "Vanishing Cambridgeshire" and your recollections will be appreciated. Names to Gill on %891001 or Enid - let us know if transport is needed. All older people are invited and are most welcome. Enid Smith

DOUBLE DELIGHT [Top](#)

CLAIRE and Antoinette Cann are identical twins who have delighted audiences around the world with the brilliance and style of their piano duet performances. They will be performing in Linton Village College at 8.00pm on Saturday 24th May. The

programme includes Borodin's Polotsvian Dances, Debussy's Petite Suite and Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody No.2. These works were featured on their CD which has won top awards including both the Gramophone and Classic FM's Critic's Choice awards. If you haven't heard them before, don't miss this chance; if you have we know you will enjoy hearing them again!

Members and non-members are very welcome. Tickets are available on the door or in advance through the Cambridge Arts Box Office on %503333. Hugh Wood

DO YOU REALLY KNOW YOUR VILLAGE? [Top](#)



HOW much do you really see when you walk or drive around Linton? We are all of us often so busy and rushed in our daily lives that we don't take much notice of the things around us that are always there and have become practically invisible parts of the scenery.

One member of the Linton News Team has recently spent some time walking round the village photographing features that we may all have seen but rarely remember. Can you recollect the location of the feature pictured above? Answers on a postcard!
LNT

MULTIPLE REALITIES [Top](#)

RECENTLY I visited some friends who have just moved to Harrogate and because we had not been there before, I was map reading instead of dozing, which is my normal habit when in a car (only as a passenger, not when driving I hasten to add!) While debating two slightly different routes I noticed that we would be driving very close to Linton - Linton West Yorkshire that is. My plans to stop there were thwarted due to lack of time but I did look up how many Linton's there are in Britain when I got back. Apparently there are about nine. It is now my mission to travel to all of them and report back but if you get there before me, or indeed have been already,

The Linton News would love to know your impressions. Any accompanying photos are also welcome! Hazel Olway

CALLING ALL YOUNG PIANISTS [Top](#)

THE art of duo playing. An opportunity for young pianists of any ability to perform their piano duets in public with expert and informative guidance from the Cann twins. The workshop takes place from 3pm to 4.30pm on Saturday 24th May and there is a small fee for each participant. Booking to take part is essential. Please phone me on %894908.

Visitors are very welcome to listen to this fun session for free.

Hugh Wood

TRAFFIC CAMPAIGN MAKING PROGRESS [Top](#)

YOU can't fail to have noticed in the bright pink notices in High Street resident's windows, proclaiming "LINTON TRAFFIC - DO SOMETHING NOW". These have been circulated by the Pavements are for People group, with the aim to visibly show how many people just want something to be done about the traffic problems in Linton.

These posters showed the strength of public support when County Council representatives attended the recent meeting that our local MP, James Paice organised. This meeting was arranged because of pressure from the residents of Linton concerned at the lack of action over the years with regards to the safety of drivers and pedestrians in the village. So thank you if you displayed a poster or took the time to write a letter – it really did make a difference.

The Pavements are for People group are holding their next meeting on the 6th May, if you have any suggestions or would like to volunteer to help move the cause forward, please contact Rachel Cornell or Alan Jones on %891818 .

Please keep the posters in your windows and keep writing letters. We have achieved more than in the past and working together we can achieve safer roads in Linton and improve the local environment.

Below is a press release from James Paice MP after the two meetings with Linton residents, County and District Councillors about the traffic problems in Linton and what can be done to reduce traffic and increase safety.

Rachel Cornell & Alan Jones

PRESS RELEASE - JAMES PAICE MP [Top](#)

Progress has been made at a series of meetings aimed at getting improvements made to the A1307 in the Linton area. A meeting was held on March 14th for representatives of local organisations to discuss the issues of road safety in and around Linton followed by a further meeting on 4th April to present the conclusions to Cambridgeshire County Council. The two meetings were organised and led by Jim Paice, MP for South East Cambridgeshire, and were the result of continued concerns from constituents about increasing traffic and worries about safety.

Following the meetings Jim said, "The rapid expansion of Haverhill is causing significant traffic increases through the Linton area. Large numbers of people have to cross the road to get to work or school and countless more have to join or leave the road at Linton, the consequences for the narrow High Street are horrendous. "No-one will pretend that everything is going to happen as quickly as we would like but the County Council now clearly realise the problems faced by local people and that we have put together our concerns in a cogent and united manner. I am pleased that both Shona Johnstone and Brian Smith, the two most senior figures responsible for our transport, not only listened intently but have promised to return in the autumn to report progress. In the meantime a steering group will work with Mark Kemp to put together a package of improvements which can be implemented within the next year or so. I am also relieved that the need for a roundabout at the Bartlow crossroads is not only recognised but actually in the County's plans, albeit further away than we would wish. This will not only make a huge difference to getting on and off the A1307 but remove a considerable amount of traffic from the High Street. Now that we have got this far we shall keep up the pressure on the County to take forward both short and longer term improvements."

Cllr. Shona Johnstone added "We have long recognised the problems around Linton, but finding solutions has been a harder task. Within the last two years we have received sufficient resources to enable us to introduce a roundabout programme to tackle some of the worst rural accident black spots. This will help Linton in the longer term and will enable the local community and the schools in the village to work together with the county to draw up a programme of improvements within and around the village prior to the construction of the roundabout."

The second meeting was attended by representatives of Linton Parish Council, the Access A1307 Action Group, 'Pavements are for People' and County and District Councillors. Councillor Shona Johnstone, Cabinet Member for Transportation and the Environment, Brian Smith, Director and Mark Kemp, Area Traffic Manager attended to listen to concerns.

OUR CHILDREN NEED SAFER ROUTES TO SCHOOL [Top](#)

ON 4th April, James Paice MP and representatives from village groups, along with the Parish Council, met with County Council officials to discuss Linton's traffic problems with the A1307, High Street and other village roads.

The meeting was to show the strength of feeling in the community and the strength of unity about the principal issues.

The attendees at the meeting heard how improvements to the roads in Linton need to be done as part of a package and Shona Johnstone suggested a steering group to develop a package of proposals for implementation in the next year or two. The package needs to involve different pots of money that the County Council has available, with some of the funding coming from the new special school to be built on the Village College site.

One of the pots of money is the Safer Routes to School program, which utilizes funding from central and local government. The idea is to promote walking and cycling along safer routes and to reduce congestion around schools as well as aiding the health and independence of children. The scheme actually puts the responsibility for applying for funding onto schools to develop safer roads and requires a level of commitment from the schools, as well as the undertaking of travel surveys, road safety education, producing leaflets and information sheets. Therefore, as well as educating the children in the village, schools are now responsible for getting them safely to school as well.

Benefits of the scheme are numerous and not specific. The following are examples of what can be achieved, a Walking Bus, car sharing schemes, distance parking schemes, cycle training, cycle paths, improved signage and road markings, parking restrictions, pedestrian crossing facilities, footway improvements and new paths and speed reduction measures.

At the meeting it was established that the Safer Routes 2003 application closing date had passed, but if all three Linton schools made an application within two weeks then it would be considered for acceptance onto the program. With no time to lose, contact was made with all three schools to support an application with the promise of support from the local community and with the Parish Council to help with the program.

The application process usually takes at least two months and involves the collection and collation of data received from parent questionnaires. This was omitted from the application made by the village schools, however, some data had been collected at the Heights for the Parish Plan Project and this was submitted with the promise that full data would be collected at the start of the Summer term. To this aim, when children return after the Easter Holidays, schools will be handing out questionnaires for all parents to fill in. We need to achieve a high rate of return on these for the bid to be successful.

We are aware that often it is difficult to find time to fill things like this in but the data collected will be used to help find ways to enable more children to safely walk or cycle to school and there are large sections to allow parents to comment. Input is crucial in a scheme such as this.

A representative working group will need to be set up to help with the scheme and the working group should include governors, parents, parish council representatives along with local residents. The working group will support the schools through the process with help required on road safety education, survey analysis as well as producing leaflets and newsletters and many other different areas.

If anyone wishes to join the working group email linton safer routes@btopenworld.com or contact Gill Barker on % 891001

If the schools are accepted onto the scheme it will not only mean safer routes for the schools but safer routes for the whole community.

Esther Cornell

FOR those of us connected with education, whether we are teachers, parents or pupils, the testing times are here again. Now don't get me wrong, I believe it is very important to measure what we have achieved, otherwise how do you know what works and what doesn't. Indeed if nothing is ever measured where are the standards to be found against which things can be judged? This applies to all things, but education is the area where measurement by testing gets the biggest press. The problem is, as a nation, we have become a bit obsessed by testing and now tend to think that if it hasn't been tested it can't be up to much. On many occasions I have heard parents tell me that their child is a level 5 or whatever, as if this somehow defines that young person. This is often in the context of attempting to secure a place at the College as if it is only the upper levels we are interested in, understandable perhaps in these competitive days but nonetheless dangerous. When we start defining children by their test scores we are heading for trouble. I am far more interested in the personality and attitudes of the young person in front of me and indeed those of their parents. The test scores provide some additional technical information that will only help in terms of expectations, appropriate groups etc. Unfortunately, even that information can be seriously flawed. Last year's English tests taken by fourteen years olds were so problematic that huge numbers of scripts were returned by schools all over the country, including LVC, and the vast majority had their results amended upwards. This year's English tests are looking similarly problematical. The government has woken up to the fact that all is not rosy in the testing garden and there is now a serious debate about the value of putting seven year olds through Key Stage One SAT tests. Let us hope that this is the beginning of a slightly more rational approach to the measurement of children's attainment. The second major issue at the moment is that old problem with funding. In spite of major changes to the way local authorities and therefore schools are funded, a very large number of schools in this country are reporting significant shortfalls in their budgets. Nationally this amounts to around £500 million less than the money needed to fund the same schools in the same way as last year. I know I have been banging on about it for the past nine years or so, but the issue has not gone away. And let's face it, given the collective experience, intellect and qualifications of all those in control of this, the most significant aspect of our education system, we really should have got it right by now!

C R Bush Principal

ON STONY GROUND [Top](#)

THE fashion for alpine and rock gardens may come and go but for some they are a lifelong passion. Alan Moores, a keen gardener, naturalist and secretary to the Cambridge Alpine Society warned that his hobby of searching out and photographing these lovely plants is very addictive. He and his wife Jane, also a naturalist, entertained us with slides of rock and alpine plants in their natural habitats in the mountainous areas of Cyprus and Spain as well as in man-made sites in the botanic gardens of England. The placement of huge rocks, no longer natural limestone of course, which previously required pulleys, levers and a great deal of muscle can now be achieved by fork lift trucks. In contrast, one picture showed a site

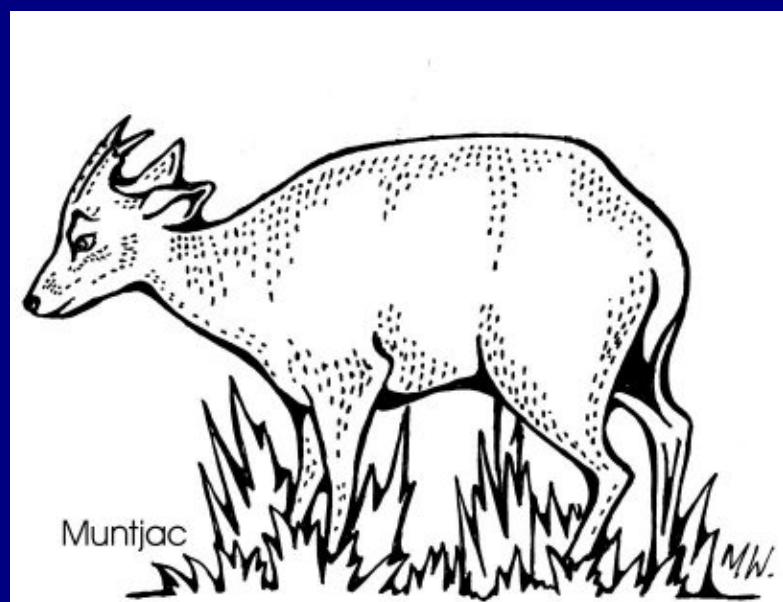
in Cumbria where rock gardening was thrust upon the owner by the presence of an enormous sheet of indigenous limestone. Mr Moores finished by offering suggestions for unusual and cheap containers for small gardens such as old sinks covered in hyper-tufa and polystyrene fish boxes painted and coated in sand. This was the last formal meeting of this season of the Gardening Club but there will be an evening outing to a garden in Harlton on Tuesday 13th May leaving the Social Centre at 6.15pm. Will anyone wishing to go who wasn't at the April meeting please contact Bruce Conochie

The annual plant and produce sale will take place at 3 Mill Lane on Saturday 10th May from 10am till 12 noon. Donations will be very welcome and can be left during the Friday afternoon or evening, or early on Saturday.

Schedules for the Annual Show, due to take place on Saturday 12th July will be available at the plant sale. For details of both these events, please contact Susan Anderson

Gloria Fidler

LINTON COUNTRY DIARY BY DARRYL NANTAIS [Top](#)



Illustrated by Maureen Williams

ON sixteenth of April at 6am a happy little Muntjac crossed Balsham road from Wheatsheaf Way still chewing a stolen primrose. A few petals fell to the black tarmac creating a picture of shooting stars and leaving a trail. The munching muntjac then scampered cheekily, bright eyed and energised by this exceedingly fine weather, across the fields towards the spinney by the water tower. The early morning raid had paid off, but now others would follow and risk the road for one of their favourite foods; *Primula Vulgaris* and other varieties .

The sun had risen that morning against a deep ultra-marine blue background. Later that day in the quiet of a field I could hear the hiss of drying grasses and the creaking of shrinking bark. Some say plants have little growth this year through lack of rain, but one of my favourite plants will soon reveal if this is true, for the lilacs length of

blossoming is as good a gauge as any to available moisture. Although we regard lilac as a very English plant, it only arrived here around three hundred years ago from Asia and is a member of the genus *Syringa*, as is the olive tree.

In another field just beyond our homes, two long spiked ears rose above young yellow rape. They belonged to a hare with a shaggy coat, ruffled but ready to take on the day. He swung his head nervously and cartoon-like from side to side and up and down as if surprised at the good weather or perhaps he was joyously proclaiming victory after the fight of his life? To watch boxing hares is to see one of nature's most riveting shows on earth. The display of swinging legs and incredible footwork make our human form of boxing look rather awkward and cumbersome. The rules are not simple, but the winner seems to be the one with almost magical powers to walk on air, punching and rising higher until the opponent is exhausted.

It is now Good Friday and I have just received a most beautiful chocolate Easter bunny. I happen to notice it has very long ears and consequently looks more like a hare. Okay, rabbit-hare, hare-rabbit, they look very similar, but are they? You see, baby rabbits are altricial which means they are vulnerably under-developed at birth. They are also born blind and unable to run about after a gestation period of some thirty days. They stay developing and huddled up in a warm burrow nest for about three weeks. A baby hare known as a leveret, is by contrast precocial, meaning it is ready to roam, fully dressed and with excellent eyesight, usually within an hour or so after birth. The gestation period for hares out of interest is somewhat longer than that of the rabbit, so it seems staying a few days extra in the womb makes all the difference!

For the third year running, from beneath the shade of a lavender bush, something stirred. This time it emerged at over five feet long with sixteen legs (fourteen of them small) and two large wings. Residents stood like markers down the hillside, guiding with tender care and concern the mother duck and her seven young safely across the roads towards the river.

It is now 6am, Monday 21st April 2003, white lilac blossom in my garden is about to bloom and with it will come its intoxicating scent. The name Lilac incidentally is from an old Persian word, 'nilak' meaning bluish. We have ol' King Charles (the first) and especially the naturalist John Tradescant to thank for the introduction of lilac to Britain....a thought for you John!

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