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CLAPPER HAPPY [Top](#)



That's the way to do it... Michael Impey (5) finds the secret of the new clapper stile

THE new clapper stile was installed in early December last year at a cost of just over £1,000. It was built by Reynolds Joiners of Saffron Walden, a very reputable joinery firm who also did work on Saffron Walden Church doors. Made of solid oak, the new clapper stile is an exact replica of the one which has been removed, and which has been donated to Saffron Walden Museum for their Heritage display.

The Parish Council have paid the full cost of the replacement but we are hopeful of a Heritage grant towards costs from South Cambs District Council.

Gill Barker

COUNCIL CONSIDERS INDEPENDENT FLOOD INVESTIGATION [Top](#)

THE public meeting on January 9th was arranged by the Parish Council to give those residents directly affected by the flood a chance to come and voice their concerns to representatives from South Cambs.

District Council, the County Council, the Environment Agency and Anglian Water. Naturally residents wanted answers to numerous questions. Why did the flood happen? Why was there no warning? Will Linton flood again? What remedial work has been carried out since the flood? Will Linton have a warning system in the future? Although the members of the panel answered as fully as they could, it became apparent that some of the questions could only be answered following investigations.

Properties were flooded not only from the water bursting over the river bank but also from water running directly off the fields and from blocked foul drains. Unfortunately there is not one organisation that is responsible for water management associated with all these areas. The EA confirmed that a study will be carried out in Linton in the near future. The exact nature of this study is unknown at this stage but may only be looking at the main river course from the mill ford downstream, the extent of the EA responsibility in Linton. An alternative approach therefore would be to have an independent study undertaken which could look at all the issues involved without being constrained with respect to land ownership or responsibility. Such a study may be the only way Linton flood victims will get answers to all their questions.

Over 70 properties in Linton were flooded one way or another on Sunday 21st October 2001. Many families have had to move out of homes made uninhabitable by the flood. They may not be able to enjoy their own homes for months to come. The village has been without a chemist, electrical/TV-video repair shop and art gallery since the flood. A resident, Michael Lawson, was anxious that the panel should be quite aware that the impact of the flood on the village was enormous.

The Parish Council are acutely aware of the profound affect the flood has had on Linton residents. It, like the residents, would like answers to questions. At a meeting held on Thursday 17th January, a discussion took place regarding the value of an independent investigation into the flood risk in Linton and whether the Parish Council should examine funding possibilities for such a study. I can report that Councillors did agree that investigations would be made into whether there was funding available to instigate a full scientific study into the recent flood in Linton.

Even if an independent study suggests some flood defence measures would be appropriate, this may not be feasible in the short term due to cost. A well argued study, however, would provide the ammunition required to persuade government that funding should be made available at the earliest opportunity.

Dr Val Urwin, Chairman, Linton Parish Council

Sympathetic hearing at flood meeting, page 5.

A full report of January's Public Meeting can be found on the Linton News website.

DEMOCRACY (ENDLESSLY) IN ACTION

[Top](#)

A REVIEW of the District Council wards is in its final stages and will result in some changes locally. Sam Agnew's ward of Castle Camps is being amalgamated with Balsham to make one large two-member ward. Bartlow will join with Hildersham and Linton and that will remain a two-member ward, as now. Overall the District Council will increase its membership from 55 to 57, mostly to take account of the expanding population of Cambourne.

A consequence of these changes is that the first election to be fought on the new wards will be 2003, and, for the first time, all the District seats will be contested in the one election. So, you can look forward to elections in every year except one for the next 7 years! This is how it will work.

2002: District third and relevant parishes (that's my seat plus Linton Parish Council)

2003: Whole District and all parishes (that's everyone!)

2004: County election

2005: District third (the councillor who came second in 2003 up for election)

2006: No Linton election

2007: District third (the councillor with most votes in 2003 up for election plus Linton Parish Council)

2008: County election

Happy voting!

John Batchelor

TROUBLED CHURCH [Top](#)

THERE have so far been no applicants to fill the gap created by Father Julian's move. The Diocesan Office will now place an advertisement in the national weekly newspaper *The Church Times* and we hope that there will be lots of interest in response to it.

A vacancy in a parish is never easy, not even here in Linton where we have so many willing helpers among the congregation and three retired priests who are very happy to do services. But this vacancy has certainly been made exceptionally difficult by the October floods. The church is slowly drying out but it has been without proper heating because the boiler was destroyed in the flood, as was the electric wiring. We have been running some small heaters to try and keep the air as dry as possible. Before services, we run the gas-powered space heater for half an hour or so to raise the temperature but this also produces a lot of moisture which is an unwanted side effect. Of course people feel cold during services but this is what church buildings were like for many centuries. The good news is that we hope to get new central heating in by Easter and the electric wiring is currently being replaced.

A major problem is a surge in vandalism in the church and around the rectory. The police have been informed. For a few days we had to keep the church doors locked. It has always been the Parochial Church Council's policy to keep the church open for anyone who wants to sit in there quietly, to pray, meditate, or just to get away from the noise of today's world. We are reluctant to change things just because one or two lads are behaving so badly. But we can all help to keep vandals away by popping into the church occasionally to see that all is well. Call the police if you see anything going on that clearly should not be happening. The police are also helping on a regular basis by including the area around the rectory and church as part of their patrol. Lesley Gore

PARISH COUNCIL REPORT Reported by GRAHAM POTTER *Parish Council's January meetings* [Top](#)

The Chair informed the meeting that recently co-opted member to the Parish Council Mr John Hall has resigned so council is once again a member short. The council could co-opt but there are not any known candidates at the moment and the vacancy may stay until the elections in May. Council were also informed that the election in May would be for a one-year term with an election again for all councillors in 2003.

No police report has been received recently, and there is a lack of visible policing. This issue will be raised at the next Police Consultative meeting. The council agreed that two years' extra funding of £500 be given to the Linton Mobile Warden Scheme.

County Councillor Terry Bear reported on the scheme for a right turn on the A1307 to the petrol station, and that the status of the section had been raised for accident prevention. He also expressed concern that there is a need for a study of all the schemes to make sure one scheme did not adversely affect another. Council did not share his views and wanted the right turn implemented as soon as possible.

It was reported that the Social Centre has replaced all of its chairs and the old ones that are still serviceable have gone to local charities. The pavilion is to have its doors and windows replaced as the frames are starting to show their age.

Much of council's time since 21st October has been taken up with the after-effects of the flooding and the action to be taken. At the meeting on 17th January, council discussed support for an official study and a call to complete our own independent study. Council were very concerned about the cost of such a study and whether the result would justify the cost. It was agreed to seek outside funding before the final decision is made.

Council also agreed on their spending requirements for 2002/2003. This was set at an increase of 2.5% , which will result in an increase to householders of 1.79%.

Council considers independent flood investigation, page 1

CALLING ALL BIKERS [Top](#)

I AM looking to form a motorcycle club/group for bikers in Linton and surrounding villages, and would like to get some idea of what the level of interest would be. Nothing is set in stone, but I would envisage meeting once a month (probably at a local pub) for a chat and to arrange ride-outs and trips to motorcycle events throughout the country. I also have plans to travel abroad on the bike and would again see what the interest level was for an organised trip.

Anyone interested in being part of a local motorcycle group, could either phone Dave or Max or email me at djhally@onetel.net.uk

Dave Hall

DUCKS MATTER [Top](#)

Starving, or pulling our legs? Ducks on the Granta



WE have had many enquiries concerning the village ducks, an attraction which is appreciated by many people. We were told the ducks are hungry, but how do you know when a duck is hungry? Nevertheless, we hope the following advice will be helpful to both people and ducks.

The summer months usually bring out many families armed with left-over bread, etc. for a pleasant walk to feed the ducks, but on cold winter days people are not so motivated.

The question is what should ducks be fed and how often? Their diet should consist of a mixture of corn and wheat or floating duck pellets. Bread (providing it is not white bread which is bad news for ducks) and kitchen scraps are ideal as occasional supplements. Floating duck pellets, as the name suggests, can be thrown directly onto the water, but the wheat/corn should be thrown on the river bank.

How often ducks should be fed is rather more complicated. They certainly did not seem to be ravenous when I offered them duck pellets recently, and as the birds on our river are probably a mixture of wild and domesticated, their owners will not appreciate a suggestion that they are starving. Unfortunately problems arise when ducks are overfed, such as encouraging them to breed more profusely. This isn't quite such a problem in Linton since our ducks are on a river and not a pond, but where ducks are more confined and numbers increase dramatically they tend to spread further a field, sometimes on to farmers' land where they risk being shot. Many areas in East Anglia, ie. Norfolk, Saffron Walden, Ely and Cambridge are already suffering from overpopulation, causing problems for local councils.

Some people will have noticed the goose with angel wings, and have been contacting the RSPCA worried that the goose is injured and in some distress. However, this condition is often seen and does not cause the bird any discomfort, so while I would not wish to deter people from reporting cases of injured or distressed animals, on this occasion the goose is perfectly all right.

FORGOTTEN LAND ARMY BROUGHT TO LIFE [Top](#)

AT the January meeting of the Linton Historical Society a large audience spent a most interesting evening with Mrs Reynolds talking about her passionate hobby, the Women's Land Army. Over the years she has collected a vast amount of memorabilia, books, photographs, badges and uniforms, which were on display. She gave a detailed history of the WLA from its beginning before the First World War through to its disbanding in 1950. It was a voluntary service, but most important during both world wars to help with the production of food for the UK.

For many years the WLA had been unrecognised as a service but it has recently been involved with the Queen Mother's 100th birthday celebrations and at the annual Service of Remembrance.

Of particular interest to many women in the audience was the fact that Lady Gertrude Denman was practically in charge of the WLA during the Second World War. Lady Denman was greatly involved with the WI movement and the WI college in Oxfordshire is now named after her.

Garth Collard gave a warm vote of thanks, and then Pat Genochio announced that if enough members were interested, a visit to Bletchley Park would be arranged in the summer.

Next meeting is on Tuesday 19th February, when Ashley Cooper will talk on countryside history. All are welcome. Joan Pearman

HAPPY NEW CHRISTMAS FOR WI [Top](#)

THIS year, we decided to have our Christmas dinner in the New Year! On Friday, 4th January approximately 50 members and six guests, including those from Hildersham and Abington WIs, sat down to an excellent traditional Christmas meal. This meal was provided and served by caterers, (J's Catering of Ely), so the Committee were able to After the dinner, Quintus Benziger, who had given a very enjoyable illustrated talk on the history of musical instruments several months previously, provided entertainment on the piano including songs for everyone to join in. The evening also included a raffle. The lucky ticket number draw for a year's free membership was won by Guinevere Ventress.

The next meeting is at 7.30 pm on Tuesday, 5th February in the Social Centre, Coles Lane. The evening will be organised by the members, thus giving the Committee an evening off! Visitors are welcome.

Anne Parry-Smith

A new president for Linton's WI,

K-CLUB WINNERS [Top](#)

THE result of the K-Club January monthly draw:

1st (£50) Richard Styles (No. 249); 2nd (£25) Richard Day (No. 348); 3rd (£10) Nathan Crouch (No. 034).

READERS WRITE [Top](#)

ADULT-PROOF LIDS

Dear Editor,

My elderly neighbour struggled to open a new bottle of vitamin pills fitted with a child-proof top. As she had bought two bottles as a bargain purchase, she then tried to open the second bottle, which she found equally difficult.

When I was called to the rescue I assumed my neighbour 'just hadn't the knack' It was soon clear that I hadn't the knack either. We were both frustrated by the knowledge that many children could open so-called child-proof lids while we were still struggling.

I took the two bottles back to Boots and asked the pharmacist to sort it out. She gave the bottles a smart

rap on the counter and removed each cap in turn. I told her how we had struggled. The pharmacist agreed that one cap was particularly difficult. She changed the lids to easy screw tops and suggested that further problems could be avoided by asking for the lids to be changed at the time of purchase, if there is no need for a child-proof top. I wish I had known that before.

Kate France

KEEP SMILING THROUGH [Top](#)

Dear Editor

Having lived in Linton for 50 years, I would like to wish all my friends and acquaintances health and happiness in 2002. Also I would like to send best wishes to all the people, old and young, complete strangers to me, who greet me with a smile as I go about the village. Living, as we do, in an uncertain world, it is comforting to find so much warmth and good will in Linton.

Let's keep it up!!!

Mrs J M Hodgson

PRAISE FOR 'FATHER' OF NEWS [Top](#)

Dear Editor

May I thank the paper's 'father', Ron Amsden, for all he has done for Linton? I know I am only one of many who are aware of what we owe him, not only for founding the paper, the Grapevine ñ with others ñ but for unstinting work to ensure the success of these and many others of his brainwaves. All the best to him, and Jean, in the future.

Anna Newton

OUR THANKS [Top](#)

Dear Editor,

I would like to say a very big 'Thank you' to all the kind friends who have been so helpful and supportive during my recent illness. I have found it quite overwhelming that so many people have asked after me and offered to help. I am glad to say that I am now very much better and I am looking forward to seeing you all again soon and saying thank you in person.

Nora Joyce

BURYING OUR HEADS IN THE CHALK? [Top](#)

Dear Editor,

I have read the final report from the Institute of Civil Engineers' Presidential Commission in which they review the technical aspects of flood risk management in England and Wales. Although I agree in principal with their recommended procedures and with those stated by the panel at our recent local meeting I still remain convinced that in our particular case a local solution is possible.

For some time now I have advocated turning a portion of the Pocket Park into a more effective water retaining basin. An automatic sluiceway would allow a maximum and minimum flow of water safely through our village. During heavy rainfall the basin would fill, relieving flooding in other villages such as Hildersham and Abington. In fine weather the expanse of water could have recreational purposes, e.g. boating and fishing. The wildlife would flourish with a greater proliferation of bird life for visitors to enjoy. In effect we would be creating a splendid centrepiece of beauty, increase property values and turn our adverse situation into one which yields hope.

Let's be honest with ourselves. Not long ago the water levels had fallen and the river barely flowed; the ground was rock hard and cracked as a result of drought. Now we are constantly watching with anxiety its rise and fall, and so will the insurance companies.

At the January public meeting, one speaker implied that it would take approximately four years before we

have the final analysis from the feasibility study of the project. My remark that we would probably be flooded again by then was meant seriously. Weather patterns will always change. Taken in the light of the Milankovitch theory, we begin to see the complexity of variables both global and local. In other words, the recent floods may be put down to exceptional localised rainfall but don't be surprised if that exceptional rainfall becomes unexceptional.

One other thought I had would be to have a visual warning system, for example surveillance via computer, on the Linton website.

Finally, we have chosen to live in an area of Cambridgeshire with specific geological features of great beauty. It's a fine settlement dating back before Roman times. However, this comes at a price. Either we take responsibility now for the future for ourselves and our children or we accept the consequences of burying our heads in the chalk.

Darryl Nantais

GENEROUS LOCAL BUSINESSMAN AIDS PLAYGROUP [Top](#)

CHESTNUT Playgroup has received a very generous proposal from a local businessman that it is delighted to accept! Local carpentry and building contractor Kevin Meeks has offered the playgroup £200 to support and promote literacy for the pre-school children.

The group has always been keen on promoting literacy and last year ran a couple of workshops for parents and children supported by the Basic Skills Agency. This term, with the help of Kevin Meeks, they are now planning to purchase and develop some Story Sacks for the children.

The Story Sack concept helps parents and teachers develop children's listening, reading and writing skills. A Story Sack contains a good quality children's book with supporting materials. These are usually soft toys of the main characters, with props and scenery relating to the story to bring it to life. For example, there might be a non-fiction book linked to the fiction theme, an audio tape and a language game based on the book. Every sack is different.

Like most voluntary groups, the Playgroup relies heavily on fundraising and sponsorship, and offers like that from Kevin Meeks make a huge difference to what the playgroup can provide. The committee and staff would like to say a big thank you to Kevin for his support.

Chestnut Playgroup operates every week day in the Cathodeon Centre, offering pre-school education for two-five year olds. It works closely with the Infants School and other local organisations. It is run by a parent/management committee and boasts a team of trained and dedicated staff. The last OFSTED inspection in June 2000 was excellent.

If you are interested in sponsoring the playgroup or would like to find out more, please telephone Josephine Paterson, (Chairperson) or e-mail on Josephine@mjsquare.com. Josephine Paterson

MORE THAN JAM AND JERUSALEM [Top](#)



Anne Parry-Smith, WI President

Anne Parry-Smith on the unique appeal of the WI

WHEN I moved to Linton nearly four years ago, I had already decided I would join the WI. My aunt has been an enthusiastic member for many years and from her I had heard of the varied activities and courses available and what was very important, the opportunity to make friends particularly when moving to a new area. I was already aware of the excellent WI market held every Thursday morning in Cambridge market and a very good source for reasonably priced plants. I soon saw a poster at the Post Office for a WI meeting and telephoned Ann Simpkin, who invited me to the next meeting. She kindly arranged to meet me on the way to the Social Centre and introduced me to several of the members at the meeting. She also asked if I would like to come with my husband on a trip organised by the local Federation of WIs to the Thames Barrier, something I had been wanting to do for a long time!

Several months later, I was asked if I would like to join the Committee. This is not an onerous task, and it has helped me get to know the members and given me insight into the way the WI is organised at local and national level. For the past two years, as a Committee member, I have been submitting reports of our monthly meetings to the Linton News. As a WI member, I have also had the opportunity to attend some excellent day courses. We have also visited places I have been interested in for a while - The Royal Hospital at Chelsea, Bletchley Park and Denver Sluice. All made possible by the WI.



Flower arranging demonstrator Janet Whiteside at a recent monthly meeting

EACH WI, through its annually elected Committee, plans a yearly programme of speakers on a wide range of subjects, including demonstrations, events and outings. During the past year, among many subjects, we have had speakers on osteoporosis and wartime women. At other meetings, there

have been demonstrations on skin care and flower arranging. We have also arranged a bring and share Harvest Supper and a Christmas dinner. Other activities include a fund-raising table-top sale and a visit to Kentwell Hall. We are arranging a walking group and a craft group and members are encouraged to join the Federation Drama Group. Branches learn from each other. Following a visit by several members from Linton WI to Pampisford WI, Linton WI is to have an Open Evening for its meeting on 5th March. Visitors are always welcome at meetings. If you are interested in joining the WI, please get in touch with our secretary, Joan Pearman.

HOW THE MONTHLY MEETINGS ARE ORGANISED [Top](#)

THE Committee of about twelve elected members meets every month at the house of one of the members. It is a very informal meeting and a chance to get to know the other Committee members. We review the previous meeting and plan the next meeting - what is required for the speaker, layout of the room, news and information to pass on to members, activities for social time, etc. We also check what is needed for forthcoming events, for example a table-top sale, and decide who is going to do what! We update ourselves on any member who is ill. After the business of the meeting, we have a cup of tea or coffee and a chat.

The monthly meeting of the Linton Women's Institute (held on the first Tuesday of every month at 7.30pm) takes place at the Social Centre in Coles Lane. At a typical meeting, Committee members arrive to get the hall ready - put out chairs and tables, so that everyone can see and hear the speaker clearly. There may be a talk and slides and the evening might include a quiz. Other members start to arrive; there are usually around 40 people present. Home and country magazines and the local county Federation newsletter are given out. Any visitors (there are usually several, including some who may become members) are welcomed. Posies are presented to those with birthdays during the month and the evening gets under way.

Business at the start of the meeting is kept as brief as possible; information is read out about forthcoming events organised by the Cambridgeshire Federation of Women's Institutes and several members speak of events, courses and competitions they have attended or taken part in.

After the speaker, there is tea, coffee and biscuits and a chance to chat, look at the notices and book up for a visit or talk, or buy from the trading stall. After the quiz comes the raffle and already it is after 9.30 pm!

CAMPAIGNING FOR NATIONAL ISSUES [Top](#)

AS the largest voluntary women's organisation in the UK, the WI has an important part to play in campaigning and lobbying on many subjects relevant to women. Each year members vote on resolutions put forward by WIs and delegates from WIs attend the Annual Conference. Recent issues include the funding of children's hospices, continuation of payment of benefits at Post Offices and support for British agriculture.

Two continuing national projects are the Breast Cancer Campaign and Caring for Rural Carers aiming to improve services to those affected. The views of the WIs are sought by policy makers. Locally, the WI has been involved in fund raising and presented a display cabinet to the new library. There are plans to raise money for a new seat in the village as our contribution to the Queen's Golden Jubilee.

The organisation gives women particularly in rural areas the chance to meet together and also to take part in activities organised either locally or through the county federation, which can be beneficial and enjoyable in itself and can lead to further interests and study.

The WI has its own residential college, Denman College, which puts on courses on many subjects throughout the year. These courses are open to members and accompanying family and friends.

WHERE IT ALL BEGAN [Top](#)

THE WI has its origins in Stoney Creek in Canada in 1897. Adelaide Hoodless had lost her fourth child through using contaminated milk. She discovered that many other children were dying for the same reason

and she was concerned about the ignorance about domestic hygiene. She resolved to try and improve matters by setting up meetings for the women in her local rural community. The first WI in the UK was established in Wales in 1915.

Linton WI started over 60 years ago. It is now just one of over 8000 local WIs. These range from under 20 members to more than 150. Each has its own character and is self-governing, within the WI rules, and WIs are grouped into county federations, whose officers are available to advise WIs and are always happy to attend their meetings.

AN APPEAL FOR MORE FRIENDS [Top](#)

THE Friends of St Mary's had a good year in 2001, registering as a charity, enrolling over 100 new members, enjoying a variety of events, contributing £7,000 to essential repair work, that is soon to begin, and improving the lighting of the chancel in the church.

In 2002 a full programme of events is already planned including concerts by the Cambridge String Orchestra and Linton Village College, a garden party, talks, teddy bear jumping (from the church tower) and much more. Last year over £3,000 was raised through such events.

Our aim in 2002 is to increase membership much further by enrolling not just church members but all those who care about the future of St Mary's. The basic subscription is £10 a year (just 20p per week). Many people have given much more and we are now able to reclaim tax under the Gift Aid scheme. Our 100 members raised £3,500 through their subscriptions alone last year. The Friends' Membership Secretary is Margaret Clark, and membership forms are available at the back of the church by the main door.

The first phase of building repairs will cost £25,000 but that still leaves a further £80,000 of work to be done. The Friends of St Mary's will go on raising money for this basic work while at the same time undertaking smaller projects each year. In 2002, the sound system will be improved and updated: this is vital for those with hearing difficulties.

The flooding of the church in October delayed some repair work but it has also given the Church Council an opportunity to look at the refurbishing of the church afresh. Most urgent is the replacement of the boiler which must be brought above ground. It is possible that not all of this cost will be covered by insurance.

The Friends will want to help with the restoration and refurbishment of smaller projects. The more members we have the more we can do. This month's edition of the Linton News encloses further information on the Friends. Please join us. With your help we look forward to another good year in 2002.
Alan Clarkson

NETTING THE YOUNG [Top](#)

THE Linton Junior Badminton Club had a very successful first term. Children between the ages of eight and 11 have been attending regularly on Fridays, 4-5pm at the Village College Sports Centre. The Club has been able to run thanks to a South Cambs. sports development grant, which helped to pay for new equipment and coaching and subsidises the cost to the children. The club has been a joint venture between the Village Badminton Club (who play on Thursday evenings, 7.30-10pm) and the Sports Centre.

The spring term began on January 18th and we are still welcoming players. For any enquiries, please call Lucy Howe, Sports Development Assistant, at the Sports Centre on 890248.

Lucy Howe

SYMPATHETIC HEARING AT FLOODS MEETING [Top](#)

AT a well-organised meeting on 9th January, chaired by Val Urwin of the Parish Council, 110 residents and interested persons gathered to discuss the worst floods in Linton since 1968. Lesser flooding occurred in 1974, a fact verified by Dr Brian Cox who has a flood mark in his cellar of that date. A list of questions

was put to representatives from the Environmental Agency, Cambridgeshire County Council, South Cambs. District Council and Anglian Water.

We learned that the sluice adjacent to the ford had been opened but that due to the amount of rainfall in 18 hours, double the amount which normally falls during the whole of October, this made no difference to the outcome. As mill sluices are privately owned, the Environmental Agency has limited powers, but these issues are being addressed by the Government with a view to overcoming the antiquated legislation. On the subject of the surge as the rainfall reduced, this is considered normal after heavy rainfall onto already saturated ground in a steep catchment.

The County Council cleans the gullies once a year and trouble spots more frequently, but due to financial constraints the courses between the gullies are not rodded. Open watercourses are the responsibility of the local landowners so the Environmental Agency only becomes involved if neglect is proved. The erosion of the river banks is the responsibility of riparian owners but the Agency removes debris, silt and weeds. Several residents feel that the river needs dredging, so although Nigel Woonton (EA) recently inspected the river, finding no problems, he agreed to do further checks if specific sites were notified to him. Alan Duncan from Anglian Water said that the responsibility for ensuring that surface water does not enter the sewers rests with householders, but reassured residents that drinking water is safe following a flood as a sealed system prevents any contamination.

Some residents felt that they had not received any practical help at the time and one suggested that an 'after care' service would have been most welcome. All agencies, including the police and fire service, had been greatly stretched due to the extent of the flood, so help was inevitably limited, but an aftercare service is being considered by the County Council.

Questions were asked regarding the storage of sandbags, as many residents had experienced difficulty in obtaining any. The District Council's policy is that sand and bags should be stored locally and be distributed by the Parish Council. This arrangement proved unpopular with Councillors as it may prove difficult to implement.

There was strong feeling regarding the lack of warning, particularly as Ashdon and the Camps had been affected before the water reached Linton. Currently the Linton area is not directly warned, but that situation will be reviewed this year, including the use of a siren. Automated Voice Messaging, which is a computerised list of "at risk" contacts, will be expanded to include Linton.

Pat Matthews, from the District Council, reported that as a result of the huge increase in flooding in recent years, the Government has tightened up planning rules. These include no new developments near flood plains, existing at-risk areas to have flood protection measures and drainage systems to be improved. The County Council pledged to enter into talks with the District Council based on data collection in the flooded areas and the Environmental Agency is keen to work with local authorities. Ironically, Mark Baker from the County Council told the meeting that a flood response exercise had been planned for 25th October!

Although the various agencies involved admitted they were not as co-ordinated as they should have been, this situation is being rectified and many complex issues are being studied. The residents were given a sympathetic hearing and although an investigation on the scale that everyone would wish will take some time, all efforts are being made.

Gloria Fidler

GOLDEN DAYS [Top](#)

IS your group or Society organising something special to commemorate Queen Elizabeth II's 50 years on the throne? Do you have a good idea on how this event could be celebrated? Some ideas raised so far include: commemorative coins/cups for Linton children; a street party; tree planting; a commemorative clock set somewhere in the village.

Share your ideas with us all. The Parish Council is keen to hear from anyone organising special events to try to co-ordinate and ensure there is no duplication. Don't forget to use the village diary in the Post Office to publicise your event and please ring Gill Barker on 891001 and advise her of what you have planned. Suggestions to this number also please, or put them in writing to the Parish Office, Social Centre, Coles Lane, Linton.

FASHION SHOW [Top](#)

THE Friends of Linton Heights are hosting a fashion show/clothes sale at 8pm on 8th March at the school. The clothes are all current lines and manufactured by the factories that make items for leading chain stores. Tickets, which include one glass of wine, are available from Jane Lee. Annette Brooker

AZTECS DANCE [Top](#)

AZTECS junior Football Club will be holding a Valentines Dance at Linton Social Centre Coles Lane Linton at 8pm. Tickets are only available in advance. Please phone Peter Belsom
Max Penfold

THE BUSH TELEGRAPH [Top](#)

IT'S that time of year when the word 'budget' appears on the agenda of almost every meeting I attend. More money than ever has been put into education, yet once again, householders in this county will be asked to support a council tax increase. Without this, school budgets will have to be cut in spite of the much publicised national increases. How can this be? Cambridgeshire suffers from a very low starting point from which the government allocates money to the county to conduct its business. This level was set over ten years ago when councils were vying with each other to be seen to be reducing local government spending. We've had a problem ever since. If you add to this the fact that Cambridgeshire still gets nothing to compensate for London-based high living costs, the extent of the problem becomes clearer. If LVC were moved half a mile south into Essex, the budget would be close to £200,000 more than it currently is. Without seeking to make a political point, this simply cannot be right. It gets worse: the costs of the performance related pay scheme now operating within schools will have to be met from within that allocated budget. This is possible if that budget has increased but what if it hasn't? Do we simply say well done, you've worked really hard and met your targets but sorry, we haven't any money to improve your salary? Hardly a good motivator in these days of teacher shortages. So when the County Council leaflet comes through your door explaining the council tax rise to fund a *standstill* education budget (note no growth!), please be clear that the problems faced in this county by public services like education are real and make the running of our schools a difficult and delicate balancing act. And much as I hate to say it, please support the increase so that we can at least have as much money in the LVC budget as we had last year.

FERNY BUSINESS [Top](#)

MRS Margaret Nimmo-Smith was welcomed by a good turnout of members including five new ones and several visitors for the January talk on 'Hardy ferns—dispelling the myths'. By the end of the evening she had certainly done that by providing specimens to be examined and bought as well as slides of ferns growing in contrasting places.

It is widely believed that these plants require very specific conditions, but as many of us have discovered they will thrive on the local mixture of chalk and clay. "If you can't grow this one you should give up growing ferns or perhaps growing anything!" was our introduction to a very easy winner, *Polypodium Vulgare*.

We are familiar with bracken, a British fern which can be troublesomely invasive, especially in Scotland but ferns are a very diverse species; deciduous and evergreen, giants or groundcover living in moist woodland or the dry lime mortar of walls, and even in hot conditions.

They generate spores, thus managing to reproduce without the benefit of flowers but their propagation requires endless patience to provide the necessary sterile conditions. The end result is a range of beautiful

plants not only in the usual green but silver grey and pink-edged too.

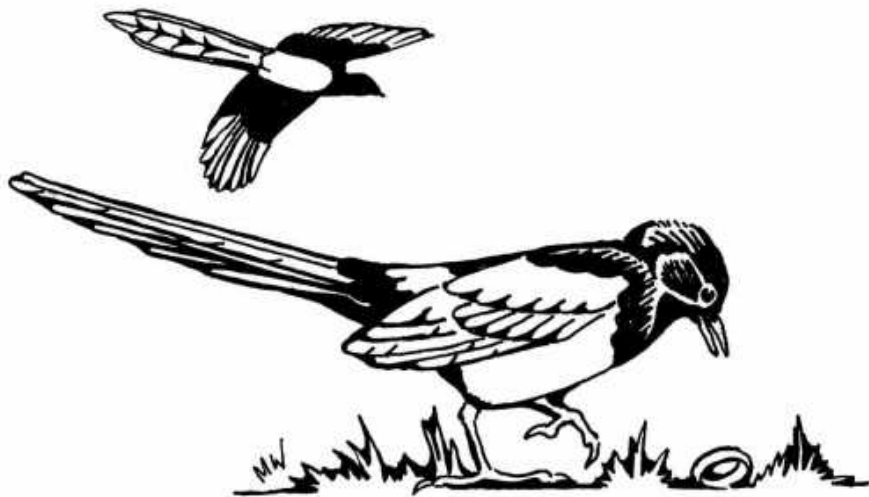
The next meeting on 12th February features Peter Walker speaking on 'British Wildflowers and their habitats'. We hope to see all our members and would be pleased to hear any further suggestions for the May outing.

Gloria Fidler

LINTON COUNTRY DIARY by Darryl Nantais [Top](#)

Friday 18th January 2002

Illustrated by Maureen Williams



EARLY one morning recently I was awoken by an alarming sound coming from the cemetery behind my home. It was neither quite rat nor rook. The call more closely resembled the desperate and pitiful cry of an injured fox. Those of us who remember a time when wire rabbit snares were commonly used will perhaps also recall the haunting sounds of a fox unfortunate enough to get caught up in one. I decided this creature had to be of the *Corvidae* family. Having had a crow named Albert follow me around for many years I am familiar with the variety of sounds produced by these clever corvines. Albert had a broad vocabulary, using phrases such as 'I won' or 'Hello Ed' and a wealth of screeching and attention-seeking sounds. A blow or two on my crow caller only produced longer silences from the creature responsible, then suddenly, as if clearing its throat—maybe of a silver coin?—a more distinct and recognisable chattering emerged. There, awkwardly clinging to the very tip of a pine was a most magnificent magpie, *pica pica*. The morning sunlight exaggerated the contrasting black and white plumage and splendid iridescent tail. It is said that like swans, magpies mate for life but this bird was swinging alone and was certainly calling 'one for sorrow'. Within a few moments another chatter could be heard as a second pie landed clumsily beside the first and there began a harmonious duet as they sang for joy.

Superstition has it that seeing two magpies is lucky, but seeing only one is unlucky. The more widely known rhyme begins 'One for sorrow, two for joy' although there is an earlier version:

One's for sorrow,
Two's for mirth,
Three's a wedding,
Four's a birth,
Five's a christening,
Six a dearth,
Seven's heaven,
Eight is hell,
And nine's the devil's anesel'.

Magpies build magnificent nests often over three feet in diameter. The nest is usually built by the female with materials given to her by the male. It forms part of their courtship ritual and during this time your jewellery is not safe. People might like to know (especially those children who remember Albert's visits to the schools) that our old crow sadly passed away after a long and distinguished public life on 7th July

1998 and is buried not far from the pine tree I mentioned. Spring cleaning the following year we discovered pen tops, dress jewellery, countless piles of coloured paper and all the missing silver trinkets.

DANCE TO SAVE THE CHILDREN [Top](#)

THE Linton and District Branch of Save the Children are holding a Ceilidh evening with Bib Ridout and the Tamarind band at 8pm on Friday 22nd February at The Manor, 42 High Street, Balsham. Tickets (to include a finger buffet and a glass of wine) are available from Judith White or Anna Newton. Tickets are limited, so book early. Judith White

EAT FOR A GOOD CAUSE [Top](#)

BREAKFAST will be served all day on Friday 1st March at Hadstock Village Hall. Britain's Biggest All-Day Breakfast, sponsored by Kellogg's Bran Flakes, raises funds in aid of the Cancer Research Campaign. Last year's breakfast made over £500, so come along again and eat a full English breakfast while you support a great cause. The Village Hall will be open for breakfasters from 6.30am to 2pm.
Sue Crawley and Gill Boyden

COFFEE OFFER [Top](#)

THE last three years have seen coffee bars opening country-wide as coffee takes over from tea at the nation's preferred drink. The coffee craze originated in Seattle, quickly spread over the whole of the US, from there to the rest of the world ... to Linton, where you can experience the coffee phenomenon at The Crown Inn.

Readers bringing this article during pub opening hours will receive a free freshly-brewed coffee of their choice and a freshly-baked croissant. Limited to one per person.

Louise Gooden

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