

The Elsworth Chronicle



Holy Trinity Church

Issue No. 49

May 2021

ELSWORTH CHRONICLE

[Established 1990]

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ELSWORTH WALKING GROUP

After a protracted period where we have been unable to walk as a group, we have now taken our first steps back to normality, albeit with reduced numbers.

Prior to recommencing, the last time we had walked was January 2020 when we undertook a short walk to Conington for our annual meeting kindly hosted by two members.

We recommenced walking again in April and undertook a further walk in May, both walks starting and finishing in Elsworth. On our last walk we were greeted by a lovely display of Bluebells in Overhall Grove, Knapwell and by the sound of a Cuckoo when returning across the fields from Conington. Both of which are markers of Spring and give hope for the future.

It is hoped as lockdown restrictions ease we will undertake walks further afield.

If walking with a group of friendly people is something that may interest you, please make contact to find out more.

Lyn and Tom Hogan

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FLOOD PROTECTION FOLLOW-UP

The Flood Protection article in the November edition of the Chronicle - No.48 - attempted to give an overview of a scheme designed to overcome the problem of flooding in Elsworth, which, of course, is likely to increase in severity and occurrence with the oncoming global warming. It was not written in the form of a dream to be sent into the void, but as a serious endeavour to present a means by which to solve a problem which has concerned parishioners over so many years. The paragraphs which follow endeavour to present details so as to amplify the facts on which the scheme is based. Hopefully discussion and action will follow. If not, the scheme will at least be on permanent record on the Elsworth Chronicle website and might well be considered in the years to come when the need is recognised.

[A] Basic Considerations

[1] Remedial action demands, of course, the need to consider [a] conditions upstream of the village; [b] conditions downstream; [c] within the village. Previous attempts at flood protection have focussed on 'c', with an overview on clearance downstream.

[2] All attempts on flood prevention in the village over the last 100 years and more have failed because attention had not been paid to the catchment area immediately to the south of the village. The most noteworthy of the schemes were: [a] the construction of the main culvert from Brook Street to beyond the present Roger's Close; [b] the later shorter culvert in Brook Street.

[3] The obvious fact that flooding in Brook Street occurs when the volume of water from upstream is greater than can be accepted by the Brook Street culverts has not been addressed.

[B] A Way Forward

Water entering Brook Street at a time of a flash flood must be controlled upstream so as to be within the capacity of the culverts. This may be done by means of holding ponds and upstream culverts.

Holding Ponds

Within the field immediately south of the kissing gate at the end of Brook Street the stream is flanked by a marked rise in land on which there is a footpath. At the level of the stream there are two noticeable recesses in this ridge which, with but slight modifications, could be used as holding ponds.

The purpose of the holding ponds is, of course, to hold back the sudden rush of water characteristic of flash floods. Immediately following floods, water may be seen in a meander-like form at the base of the higher land in one of the bays and this characteristic could be developed and enhanced in both. By means of diverting some of the excessive water of the stream in the bays at times of heavy rainfall, the brook in the village could be saved from any marked overflow.

Diversion of water into holding ponds

Near the beginnings of the bays small, but substantial, curving mounds would be constructed, through which there would be short culverts able to take an amount of water commensurate with, but slightly less than, the existing culverts in Brook Street [two of 600mm dia. and one of 500mm]. In mind, but not definitively, are three culverts with diameters allowing a flow of $\frac{3}{4}$ of the inlet area of those in Brook Street. The mounds would extend beyond the stream edge into a bay, diverting water away from the stream and village when the flow is impeded downstream.

As the early flood water is able to pass through the village without hindrance it is vital that it is not captured at that stage in the holding ponds, for clearly the ponds then would not be available when the water begins to back-up. At the early stages of the storm, water will flow rapidly keeping within the brook's banks, but at the later backing-up stage, particularly when the stream water rises to the height of the top of the culverts in Brook Street, the speed of flow will be reduced and then felt at the culverts positioned in the water meadow beyond the kissing gate. At this stage water will be forced naturally into the holding ponds, steered by the mounds and the constructed gradient. By such means it is calculated that well over two hundred thousand gallons of water which otherwise would spill over into Brook Street would be diverted.

At present, of course, there is no such vital retardation upstream of the Brook Street culverts.

A major feature of the scheme outlined is that flash flood water can be controlled without necessitating a dam being constructed upstream of the village, an important consideration in view of the fear of major flooding should the dam be breached. The cost of the scheme presented would also be small in comparison.

External Support and Involvement

Flood protection schemes attract Government money and are to be given prominence in future legislation.

Drainage consultants and the Environment Agency must clearly be involved at appropriate stages. Two approaches would seem in need of consideration. The first involves seeking detailed computerised calculations from flood protection consultants concerning, among other factors: [a] the amount of water the holding ponds could take out of circulation at the time of a flash flood, related to: [b] the capacity of the Brook Street culverts to accept the water flow before backing-back occurs, which in turn, [c] is governed not only by the diameter of the culverts but also their length, as friction is an important factor; [d] the extent of the catchment area; [e] essential variables including the amount of precipitation and degree of land saturation, variations of vegetation etc.

The number of variables would produce a number of different results, and the consequent high cost of such a survey, it could be in excess of £5,000, would suggest another approach is required. A more meaningful approach would be to focus initially on the reality of observed physical facts, i.e. [a] the speed and volume of flash flood water which is too great for the culvert in Brook Street, and [b] the extent of the water overflow.

Working from Reality

Firstly to consider the amount of water over-spilling in Brook Street at a time of severe flooding with the water rising above the road bridge arches -

an unusual occurrence - and its prevention. Holding ponds covering but an acre at a depth of but one foot could take out of the system 269,568 gallons, given 6.24 gallons to a cubic foot. [This is greater than the amount held on Brook Street pavements / road at the peak of severe flooding a primitive basic survey would suggest]. Even if the survey is not absolutely correct, 269,568 gallons held in an acre would seem a large amount, which could be increased with greater depth if needed. If the area of land available was less than an acre, depth could compensate for area so as to hold back the required amount of water. Fear of danger should not arise as the held back water could be pumped back into the stream after the storm, action which could be facilitated by the ponds sloping gently to the north, the direction of flow of the stream.

The envisaged holding ponds would in reality be a cross between holding ponds and a created flood plain, the difference being that the holding area would be made artificially deeper owing to the limited space available. Many provisional calculations could be undertaken 'in house' initially to determine the likely viability of the scheme prior to approaching consultant engineers. Such early discussion and more minds on the matter could be beneficial.

The present would seem an appropriate time to act and it is hoped the parish council will consider the proposals. The Government is keen to support flood protection measures and there could be grants available, as noted above. The parish council has been contacted and if, as is hoped, it is to be involved another means of financing the project would be to obtain a loan, repayments being made gently through later precepts. At a time of low interest rates this could be an expedient way forward. If flooding is to be a feature of the past it seems clear that the initiative must come from the village.

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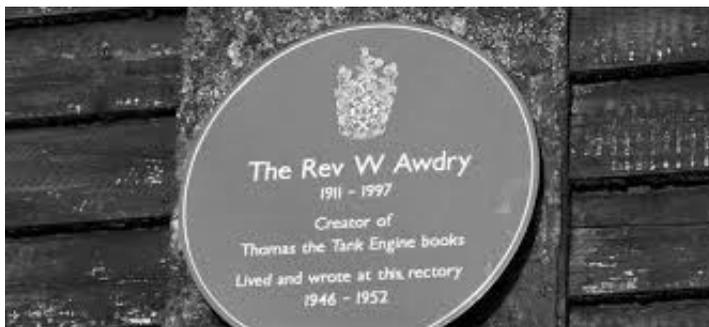
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THOMAS AND WILBERT AWARDED A BLUE PLAQUE



A blue plaque to celebrate the residence here in Elsworth of the Rev. Wilbert Awdry, the creator of Thomas-the-Tank Engine and Friends, now greets people at the rear entrance of The Old Rectory, with another on the house itself. The plan of the organisers, Cambridge Past Present and Future, had been to link the installation with a ceremony at our school, but the coming of Covid 19 necessitated a change and the occasion had to be simplified and restricted to but a few invited people at The Causeway Gate in December. Nevertheless, Thomas was there in the form of a splendid working steam model built by Tim Coles.

Thomas was born in Elsworth, in what is now known as The Old Rectory, but conceived in King's Norton, near Birmingham. From the time when Wilbert's son Christopher had measles, Father would dutifully tell his son the adventures of the engines, stories which Christopher liked repeated again and again, as is the wont of small children. If a detail was wrong in retelling, such as the colour of an engine, Father would be corrected before moving on. Notes had to be made for consistency, later to form the essence of the books when published.

Following his earlier appointment as a curate at King's Norton, the

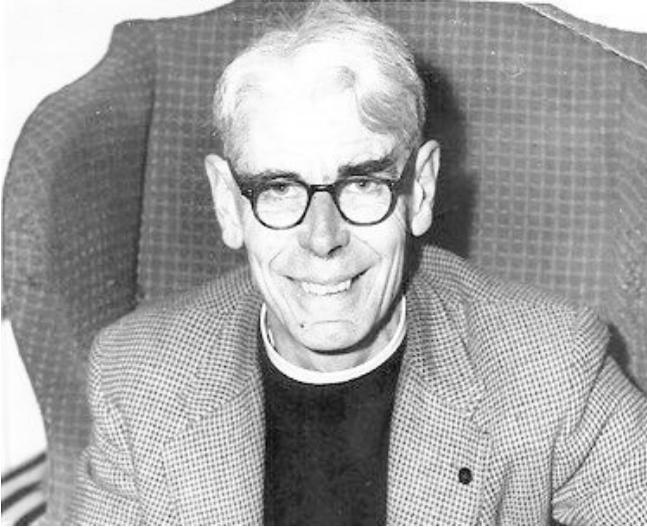
Rev. Wilbert and family moved to Elsworth in 1946 and it was here that Thomas first made his appearance in printed form. It was the second book in a series which was to grow and grow. It was entitled simply 'Thomas the Tank-Engine' and contained the Foreword :

“Dear Christopher,
Here is your friend Thomas, the Tank Engine. He wanted to come out of his station-yard to see the world. These stories tell you how he did it. I hope you will like them because you helped me to make them.
Your Loving Daddy”

At the beginning there had been no expectation of a great demand for the books, but this view was soon amended as they clearly were selling well. Many new stories were written and published, to be followed by television productions not only in this country but also overseas. Thomas became an international figure, being particularly renowned in the USA and Japan. To-day Thomas and his friends remain very popular. At the time of his death in 1997 Awdry's Railway Series had sold in the order of 50 million copies in a dozen languages and inspired videos, toys and games. But Wilbert had sold the copyright near the beginning of the venture!

That Thomas is well known and loved still is apparent by the interest shown to the plaque on The Causeway, with a remarkable number of smart phones coming into use. Few outside the village know of the connection with Elsworth it would seem. Maybe in due course pilgrimages will come this way! Even if not, perhaps thought might be given to an annual celebration involving the current franchise holders, the children of the school and the people of the village. Tim Coles would be happy to bring his working steam model of Thomas to provide rides behind the engine in full steam, the engine being capable of pulling two carriages with ten adult passengers.

AWF



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REVEREND
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We'll begin with box, the plural is boxes,
But the plural of ox is oxen, not oxes.
One fowl is a goose, and two are called geese,
Yet the plural of moose is never called meese.

You may find a lone mouse or a house full of mice;
But the plural of house is houses, not hice.
The plural of man is always men,
But the plural of pan is never pen.

If I speak of a foot, and you show me two feet,
And I give you a book, would a pair be a beek?
If one is a tooth and a whole set are teeth,
Why shouldn't two booths be called a beeth?

If the singular is this and the plural is these,
Should the plural of kiss be ever called keese?
We speak of a brother and also of brethren,
But though we say mother, we never say methren.

Then the masculine pronouns are he, his and him;
But imagine the feminine...she, shis, and shim!

Could you add a few lines or a verse ?

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ELSWORTH JUBILEE CLUB

It is what it says on the tin - but so very much more. In 1977, The Queen's Silver Jubilee Year, Elsworth inhabitants did her proud and celebrated in style - and many and various commemorations were made.

This dwelling place since Saxon times has had many and varied attributes but no defined meeting place where people could meet, apart from functions connected with the church and the restricted British Legion, until one far seeing member of the community suggested a club which would provide for all, especially the more mature members of our society. So the coming together of parish council, Elsworth school governors and community members brought about the club. What else could it be named but Elsworth Jubilee Club, established to receive warmly anyone between the ages of 0 to 100 and off it went, the first meeting taking place in 1978.

After 13 years of a Steering Committee trying to obtain community use of Elsworth School our hopes were dashed when the Government of the day pulled the plug on financing such frivolous activities. Not all was lost, the governors of the school and the Diocesan Board granted the use of the school premises for a peppercorn rent on one afternoon a month.

Over the years we have met in the afternoon on the first Thursday in the month to enjoy so many and varied speakers presenting demonstrations and very informative talks. Out of term we have outings - one in Spring and one in Summer, usually to the seaside or to a stately home or garden. It is important that the opportunity for families to join us on seaside trips is always available, and that we always start our year with a New Year Lunch.

From the beginning we have enjoyed members coming from the other villages around and used to need quite a bevy of drivers to ferry members to meetings. Over the years we have held 'bring and buy stalls' and a 'book club' and held 'coffee mornings' at various establishments, all to raise much needed funding to pay our way for without such endeavours and the support of the Franklin Trust we would not be viable.

Our committee has shrunk over the years and is quite small but the vitality and success of the club for the past 25 years has been in the hands of one quite extraordinary lady, our President Mrs Betty Simcock. She has steered every meeting, organised every speaker, arranged our outings, done the job of secretary and steered the ship. Although Betty has now retired, she is continuing to support the club and just enjoy it we salute you Betty and thank you very sincerely.

So forty years on and in spite of enforced inescapable inactivity we will continue with our activities once more hopefully with our meetings commencing in the new term in September. We will be seeking a President, a Secretary and lots of new members.

But in the meantime a provisional outing to the seaside has been booked to visit CROMER IN NORFOLK ON THURSDAY 29TH JULY 2021 - 9 o'clock at the bus shelter, Elsworth. Usual cost £10.00 adults, £5 children.

The outing will be advertised in the usual way, as will the commencement of meetings - fingers crossed for all systems go and no further restrictions.

Rita Backhouse
[ritabackhouse@btinternet.com]



**BETTY SIMCOCK -
SADLY RETIRING
AFTER 25 YEARS
AS PRESIDENT**

ELSWORTH SPORTS CLUB

The current pandemic has meant that virtually all local sport has been non-existent over the past many months. Elsworth had not entered a team in the Cambs football league for this last season, and the Swavesey Spartans Junior team was similarly curtailed but had hoped to play a few matches with the slight easing of restrictions.

The table tennis league season has been non-existent - it had been hoped that both the Cambridge and Ely leagues would have been able to play matches after Christmas, but with the lockdown in December this was impossible. A few practice sessions were held in October, with two players only present. As regulations stand, practice will be permitted from 17th May and, circumstances permitting, both leagues will commence in September, when Elsworth hope to field two teams in both.

The cricket season started on May 1st with Elsworth playing matches in the Cambs Junior League Division 5 West. Net practice sessions began in early April and will continue on Thursday evenings throughout the season. The league matches will be played on Saturday afternoons when with the current restrictions there will be limited use of the pavilion and a shortened break between innings. It is hoped that some mid-week friendly matches will be arranged.

The home league matches are:

1st May v NCI 4
8th May v Sawston/Babraham 4
22nd May v Cambourne 4
5th June v Cam Kerala 3
3rd July v NCI 4
31st July v Bar Hill 2
7th August v Stapleford

The snooker sessions on Monday mornings and monthly whist drives on Friday evenings are both currently cancelled due to the pandemic, but it is hoped they will be resumed later in the year, along with carpet bowls as renewed interest has been shown.

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