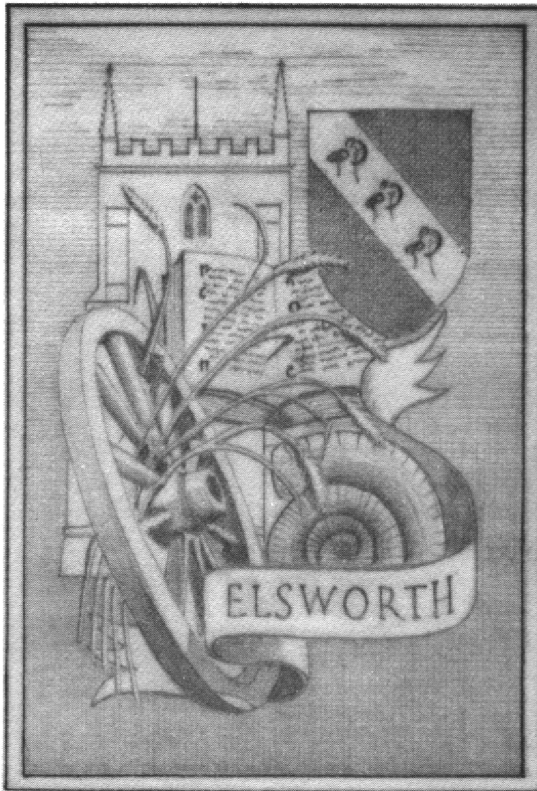


# The Elsworth Chronicle



**Issue No. 20**

**September 2006**

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Cambridge CB3 8JQ Tel: 01954 267472

**Material for inclusion would be most welcome.**

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## **EDITOR'S POSTBAG**

***Hello There,***

***My name is Colin Sewell and I lived in Elsworth as a child when my parents moved there at the beginning of WW2. My father lived in the village until his passing about ten years ago.***

***I was sad to read in Chronicle of the passing of Terry Stevens and I send my condolences to his family and friends. I grew up with Terry and his brothers and from talking to my father when he was alive Terry will be missed by a lot of people. My father lived next door to Terry for many years.***

***I would like to thank you for the Chronicle as it my only way to keep in touch with my past and the people I used to know. I remember my days growing up in the village and the visits I made to my parents with great fondness. It was a great place to grow up in.***

***Please keep up the work you are doing in helping people to keep informed about Elsworth.***

***Thanks again. Colin Sewell (Toronto Canada)***

## **CHAMPION ATHLETES**

Ellie and Maddy Rhodes of Brook Street and Lucy Readman of Boxworth Road have distinguished themselves in the athletics arena. Between them Ellie and Maddy won four first place awards at this year's Cambridgeshire County Championships, Ellie taking gold at Shot, Triple Jump and Long Jump in the girls' under 15 years group, and Maddy the girls' under 13 years Shot Putt. At the same championships, Maddy took second place in the hurdles, while Lucy was second in the girls' under 13 years 100 metres and 200 metres sprints and achieved second place in the Shot.

Ellie went on to gain first place in the Shot in the Southern Counties Championships and to represent Cambridgeshire in the All England Schools Championships, where she came fourth in the girls' under 15 years Shot. At the present time she ranks third in the UK for girls' Triple Jump under 15 years. She clearly is a multi-talented young athlete and well-suited to the pentathlon, in which her interests lie. At this event she placed third in the English Schools Championships.

All three girls are members of Huntingdon Athletic Club. They have already achieved much – do the Olympics of the future beckon? We wish them every success.

## **ELSWORTH WALKING GROUP**

Elsworth Walking Group came into being in 1990 and has been active ever since. Participants meet at 10 am on the second Sunday of each month to enjoy good company on country walks, which are normally of some 5 to 7 miles in length, exploring our local foot-paths and byways. Readers who might be interested should telephone 267472. There is no necessity to walk on every occasion – join in when convenient. The group embraces a fair age range and no one in the family, or any individual, would feel out of place.

AWF

## TOM'S FARM



At a time when many villages throughout the country are tending to become dormitory villages, with the majority of inhabitants commuting to towns and cities to work, it is refreshing to see in Elsworth the recent birth of a rural enterprise.

Tom's Farm became operative only last summer, but already it seems an established part of the village. Some might not know it by name but, no doubt, many have been delighted at the sight of free range chickens scampering happily in the 3½ acre field between Brook Street and Brockley Road. It is an exciting venture which provides high quality poultry and eggs for the market.

The wholesome flavour of the products is already a by-word, a feature due not only to free range facilities but also in the case of the meat to its preparation. After killing, the whole bird is hung for a week in a cold house before being mechanically dry plucked. Such procedure greatly enhances its flavour – satisfied customers are amazed at the full flavour of the meat, so different from that on offer at the supermarket. The meat may be purchased as a whole bird, or as packaged breasts, fillets, [because of their tenderness ideal for children and the elderly] or thighs – both boned or boneless. 100% chicken burgers [no salt, no skin, no added salt] are also produced.

The enterprise is in the hands of Carla and Richard Throssell, with the assistance of their daughters Victoria and Alice. For Carla and Victoria it is a full-time commitment, with Richard combining work on the farm with the demands of his building firm. It certainly makes demands on time and energy. Looking after the needs of the birds and the movement and disinfection of the hen houses to fresh locations each time a fresh batch of birds is installed would seem work enough, but to that must be added the slaughtering and packaging of the meat, followed by manning sales outlets at farmers' markets at Islington, Queen's Park, Comberton, Impington Linton, Sudbury and Shelford. It makes for long days, but Carla is emphatic it is worthwhile.

As well as at markets, the produce from the farm has also proved very popular in the village. Customers wishing to make contact should leave requests in the post box at the entrance of the farm near the sluice in Brook Street. Unfortunately if you require eggs you will probably have to join the waiting list of customers, so popular are the eggs and so great the demand. As to prices, the fresh free range eggs cost £1.80 a dozen; 100% burgers 4 for £3; breasts [four times the size of those at Tesco] £4; fillets from £1; thighs £1.20 each; chickens from £12.50 for birds up to 2.5 kg to £14.50 for birds 3 kg. and above.

How did Tom's Farm get its name? It commemorates Richard's great uncle Tom, who combined his work as a blacksmith at Brook Street with looking after chickens on the land of the present enterprise. The sight and sound of poultry was clearly a characteristic feature of life in Elsworth known well to previous generations. It would seem fitting that there should be continuity with the past in activity and name.

AWF

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## **YOUR LOCAL COUNCILLORS**

### **ELSWORTH PARISH COUNCIL**

#### **Councillors**

Ian Maddison [Chairman] - Tel. 267347;  
Annie Howell - Tel. 22267324; Alan Farrow - Tel. 267472;  
Robin Grange - Tel. 267454; David Holland - Tel. 267887;  
Anne Muir - Tel. 267496; Anthony Taylor - Tel. 268042;  
Michael Taylor - Tel. 267561;  
James Witherow - Tel. 267979

#### **Clerk to the Council**

Elizabeth Sim - Tel. 267664  
E-mail. [elsworthclerk@btinternet.com](mailto:elsworthclerk@btinternet.com)

### **DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS**

Our District and County councillors clearly take an active interest in the affairs of Elsworth and conscientiously attend the bimonthly meetings of the Parish Council. Their contact details are noted below:

#### **District Council**

- Nick Wright, Marshall's Farm, Conington. CB3 8LW  
Tel: 01954 267202 E-mail: [nickwright@djinter.net](mailto:nickwright@djinter.net).
- Mark Howell, 2 Vinter Close, Papworth Everard. CB3 8RU  
Tel: 01480 831348 E-mail: [mark@howellm43.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:mark@howellm43.fsnet.co.uk)

#### **County Council**

- Mandy Smith, Ridgeley's Farm, High Street, Fen Drayton.  
CB4 5SJ Tel: 01954 230253 E-mail: [mandy.smith43@tesco.net](mailto:mandy.smith43@tesco.net)

## CHRISTOPHER PARISH

The last edition of this magazine contained an article about Christopher's wartime experience and the impact of war on surgery. His story continues with his appointment at Papworth Hospital in 1952.

*"I recall that at that time Papworth was a very tiny organisation surgically, a little, tiny theatre - with an even smaller anaesthetic room - and very few facilities, and certainly not enough to do modern thoracic surgery. As a result, I made it a condition of my appointment that I was to get new operating theatres. I decided that it was a good idea to develop cardio-thoracic surgery in Cambridge, as there were no facilities of any note. There was a visiting surgeon and two visiting physicians from London. It was done on a very peripatetic basis. It was mainly tuberculosis lung, or carcinoma lung, or a certain amount of oesophageal surgery, but I'd had experience during the war with all types of surgery with 8th Army in the desert, in the Salerno landing and again at Anzio, where we had to deal with all sorts of chest wounds, and through Italy to the Po Valley battle, and finally to Vienna.*

*Amongst these cases, there was one, a German prisoner of war, who had a large piece of British shrapnel sticking out of his chest wall and projecting in to the left ventricle of the heart. With the use of two chromic catgut sutures and big curved intestinal needles, and in the absence of ethical committees and families to consult, we decided to go ahead and attempt to remove it. We had a living patient. We had plenty of blood because the soldiers were always willing to give blood.*



*By allowing a lot of blood to escape, but no air to enter, we managed to close this wound in the heart and the patient survived. That was my first example of cardiac surgery and I knew you could operate on the heart. Howard Florey had brought Penicillin to us in Tripoli and we used it as a powder in wounds at Salerno in September 1943.*

*The teaching that I had been given as a student was that 'any surgeon who attempted to suture a wound of the heart would lose the respect of his colleagues'. So it wasn't surprising that because I knew it could be done, I decided we ought to try and develop cardiac surgery with thoracic surgery at Papworth. We knew that TB was under control, the new antibiotics had come in, the case material was falling away but there were lots of cardiac cases waiting to be done, even dying on the waiting list. The initial opposition was chiefly by the nursing staff. However, we persevered and the Regional Board supported us.*

*Unlike modern surgeons, we hadn't got trained cardiac and pump technicians. Before the construction of the twin operating theatres with space to accommodate all the equipment round the theatre, we had to do all that ourselves. In the past the theatres were more or less standard, you had room for an anaesthetic trolley, for a nurse's kit, and so on, and the main operating table and the anaesthetic machine but nothing else material there. There was a lot of travelling, and the A14 hadn't yet been developed requiring one to meander through the villages to get to Ipswich. Dr Grove, from Norwich, was doing a certain amount of TB surgery at Foxhall Hospital at Ipswich. I alternated with him to start with and did some surgery there, but eventually he took over all the Ipswich operating. With the help of the Ministry of Health, we managed to get Dr Lum appointed at Papworth as the first consultant respiratory physiologist in the country. The Ministry was very helpful in many*

*ways. When we were considering getting the new theatres established, Ian McLeod, who was then Minister of Health, came one day and I saw him in the anaesthetic room after I'd done a particularly gory operation. I had a lot of blood all over my shirt, and was sweating. Ian McLeod sat down and we talked and the following day we got the go ahead.*

*I was given the opportunity to develop Papworth from a small tuberculosis sanatorium by expanding its staffing. We had no radiologist originally. I did the first aortagrams myself with Edmund Groves (a former Sidney undergraduate), the only radiographer who was there. We had two visiting London physicians and no cardiologist. I had the job of convincing the Regional Board that we should have a cardiologist because they thought that Dr Cole, who was on the staff of Addenbrooke's, was the cardiologist for the area, but he was not prepared to do the cardiac catheters and the sort of work we wanted at Papworth. Eventually we appointed Dr Fleming from Australia, and from then on the Cardiac Medical Unit developed.*

*The challenge was to convince people that these things were possible and that it wasn't meddling surgery, and that ethically it was satisfactory. I talked to various ethical medical committees on the subject. The Westminster Presbyterian Training College in Cambridge held a forum on the ethics of cardiac surgery and I talked to them about it.*

*The Authorities also had to be convinced that cardiac surgery should be done in the country as opposed to the town. I had been promised when I first came to Cambridge that we would be the first unit to move to Addenbrooke's when it moved to the new site, but the neurosurgeons had nowhere to go when they were appointed and they were subsequently given the first unit. So we were delayed, and for fifteen years, they've said 'In fifteen years, you'll*

*move in'. Even to this day, they still say 'They want you to come into Cambridge', but we didn't want to go; the facilities at Papworth are better than we would get in Addenbrooke's, far better parking, far better surrounds, the patients come from all over the country and it's easier to get to Papworth than it is to get into Cambridge. Experimental work on heart pumps and oxygenators was undertaken at Cambridge University Veterinary School with tremendous help from Col. John Hickman and Dr Leslie Hall.*

*It is now over fifty years since the first heart operation in 1953 and more than twenty-five years since the first transplant operation, but that was when Terence English, later Sir Terence and President of the Royal College of Surgeons, was appointed in my place and I ceased to do cardiac surgery."*

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## PESTS ATTACK HORSE CHESTNUT TREES

Regretfully some horse chestnut trees in Elsworth have become victims of the insect pest *Cameraria ohridella*, the leaf-mining moth.

Premature defoliation, with leaves turning in early summer, is characteristic of an attack. As there are many horse chestnut trees in the village readers might be interested in the following abstracts from a report published by the Forestry Commission.

The insect was first found in the UK in Wimbledon in 2002 and has since spread to many parts of SE England, East Anglia and, into the Midlands and elsewhere. It is expected to spread further.



Leaf mines of *Cameraria ohridella* on horse chestnut, Wimbledon, London, July 2003

The moth, which is only approximately 5 mm long, lays eggs on the leaves. On hatching, tiny larva burrow and feed between the leaf upper and lower surfaces creating mines - if many larvae are present the mines coalesce, giving a translucent area. After pupation, new adult moths emerge to lay more eggs, the cycle being repeated up to 4 times a year, with the most severe damage towards the bottom of the tree. The final pupae hibernate over winter with the fallen leaves, with new adults emerging in the spring.

Once established in an area, numbers build up quickly and leaf damage becomes an annual event. However there is no evidence to suggest that otherwise healthy trees will die as a consequence of being infested. The trees do not look pretty but they seem well able to withstand the damage to their leaves. In the spring following attack, fresh new, undamaged foliage will appear, but the leaves will gradually become infested again as summer progresses. It would seem the trees remain healthy because they grow most vigorously during the spring and early summer before the most severe damage to the leaves occurs.

Disposal of the leaves in winter is recommended as the leaves contain the over-wintering stage of the moth. Leaves should either be burnt or composted, if the latter covered with a 10 cm layer of soil or 15 - 30 cms of other plant material to be effective.

## OBITUARY

### ROBERT EVANS

Robert Evans died peacefully after a short illness on 18 December 2005 in Hinchingsbrooke Hospital. At 96, he was amongst the oldest people in Elsworth. He moved here on the occasion of his marriage to Betty in 1955; Betty continues to live in Elsworth.

Robert was born in 1909 at Wallington, Surrey. He went to Repton School and then to Clare College, Cambridge eventually becoming a research student in the Cavendish Laboratory under the aegis of Lord Rutherford, the Nobel Laureate who predicted the existence of the neutron. Robert obtained his PhD in 1934.

The pre-war years found him as University Demonstrator in the Department of Mineral and Petrology. At this time he wrote his exemplary well-ordered book on crystal structure, *An introduction to crystal chemistry*, first published in 1939 by the Cambridge University Press. This is a standard text. He revised the book and you can order it off the internet today.

Wartime found him in the Ministry of Supply at work on the design and testing of armaments. Being attentive to detail and naturally thorough, he would have been well suited to such work.

In 1945 he returned to the University of Cambridge now promoted to Lecturer. He made a major contribution to the founding the publications of the International Union of Crystallography. There were big names behind the initiative but Robert made it all happen, serving as editor for many years. The existence of the six major journals that are at the heart of the Union's activities is due to Robert.

He became a Fellow of St Catharine's College. There he was a Tutor which is how I and hundreds of others came to know him well. He was quite strict but was a person with our best interests at heart. It was, however, not wise to tell him you had joined the Boat Club! He entertained students both in College and later, following his marriage, at his house in Elsworth. He was a gracious host, much assisted by Betty with her skills for putting the awkward-mannered student at ease. But with his quiet, straightforward integrity he was popular, "a good egg" to quote a contemporary.

Robert joined the Parish Council in 1955. In 1956 he became Chairman and continued in that role until 1980. He oversaw the introduction of the new culverts for the brook between the sluice and the bottom of Cotterell's Lane. However, his first choice was an open brook, a scheme approved by the County Council but which went down due to bureaucratic delay and a local change of heart. He was Chairman of the Elsworth Charities from 1963 to 1995 and retired as Trustee in 2004. He was a Committee member for the support group for the Papworth Surgery and set up its charitable status; until a few years ago, he organised the Newsletter. He was a Committee member of the Huntingdon Bee Keepers Association and once had six hives. His honey appeared regularly at the Elsworth Show and Betty made beeswax as a by-product. He was a keen handyman and made the main village notice board as well as his own beehives. He had a workshop and encouraged others to use it.

Robert was dedicated to the welfare of the community, and to Betty. To him the health of Elsworth really mattered. He gave much to the community; the Elsworth of today benefits from his dedication over many years.

John Bridgwater

## OBITUARY

### KEN THROSSELL



Ken Throssell who died in June was a craftsman of outstanding ability whose workmanship as a wheelwright was nationally recognised. The quality of his work may be appreciated by the fact that a large wagon wheel he made was a prominent exhibit at the Tercentary Exhibition of the Wheelwrights Company in 1970 at the Guildhall Museum in the heart of the City of London. This was a marked tribute to Ken's craftsmanship for the occasion commemorated the granting of the Wheelwrights Company's Charter by Charles II. The exhibition had been opened by the Lord Mayor of London.

Another honour was at the Royal Agricultural Show at Cambridge in 1951 when as the most successful entrant in the Apprentices Competition he was awarded the Wheelwrights Certificate of Merit.



Later as the demand for cartwheels diminished, Ken's joinery skill continued to be put to good use in the joinery firm of K.C.Throssell and Sons. He was a skilled cabinet maker, as his home at Brookside testifies. His work gave him great satisfaction, although at one time he expressed the view that he would liked to have been a farmer. He did in fact keep some cattle and hens for a period. Cricket was another interest and Ken was a member and captain of the village team.

Ken lived in Elsworth throughout his life. Here he was married to Jessie in 1945 and with her raised John and Richard. He was born in Spigot Lane, moved to Brook Street as a young child where he resided for many years before moving to a newly built house in Fardell's Lane. Another true Elsworthian.

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## OBITUARY

### **Frederick Leonard Smith** **16 February 1913 – 2 December 2005**



Fred was born in Elsworth on 16 February 1913. The second youngest of five children of Charles and Phoebe Smith. Fred spent his early years living in a thatched cottage in Brook Street, before later moving to Grove Cottage in what is now Smith Street. Having attended Elsworth School he left at 13 to train, like his father, as a Carpenter at Papworth. This career was short lived, and although he had ambitions to join the Navy, these never reached fruition.

At the age of 21 he purchased a series of small plots of land in Broad End, and formed a small holding with a cow, pigs, geese, ducks and a large flock of free range chickens. Work on the land beckoned, and he spent the majority of his working life at work on local farms, carrying out, by hand, all the tasks now performed by machinery. He and his contemporaries were honest and trusting, qualities he carried with him throughout his life.

In 1940, whilst working as a gardener and handyman at Hillcrest House, Anna Elisabeth Schmocker entered his life, when she and her employer, Mrs Colvin, visited Elsworth for a few months, from Eastbourne to escape the severe bombing on the South Coast. After a courtship spanning 8 years; they married in October 1948, and moved into a small cottage in Cotterell's Lane, where daughters, Stella and Shona completed their family.

Shortly after this Fred and Elisabeth decided it was time to move, and saved hard to design and build a house on the smallholding, which became ready for occupation in 1964.

During this time Fred continued to work locally, and at one stage he worked for Coulsons, the builders, during the construction of Longsands School in St Neots, where he mastered the skill of driving, but never continued with it after he left.

Fred's leisure hours were spent on maintaining his garden, and in later life when his free range hens were sold, due to a new job at the Houghton Poultry Research Station based in Boxworth, his garden expanded. In retirement it became his full-time job, producing vast quantities of organic fruit and vegetables for Elisabeth's kitchen, as well as the propagation of hundreds of geraniums and bedding plants for the flower garden, and mowing the lawns twice a week. Fred was gardening regularly until a spell of ill health and hospitalisation forced him to give up at the age of 90.

He was a religious man who loved the country and enjoyed simple pleasures in life.

## **OBITUARY**

### **WIN BRAYBROOK**

Elsworth's oldest resident, Win died peacefully in January at her home at Broad End where she had lived for some 30 years with brother Jo until his death in September 2003. She was nearly 99 years old, remaining alert to the end.

Win was very much a contented home orientated person. She loved flowers and her greenhouse, and at one time she and Jo kept pigs, chickens and goats on land given her by Lord McNair of Dale Farm for whom at one time she was employed domestically. She was a true Elsworthian, having lived in the village throughout her life. Perhaps even more of note, she had lived in the same north-western corner of the village near the end of Broad End for nearly 100 years.

### **DENNIS KING**

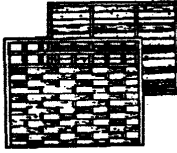
Dennis King of Church Lane died in January after many years in Elsworth and Bourn. He was born in London in 1914, and after service as an army wireless operator on the fighting front in Burma during the Second World War, moved to Bourn with Irene to work on the farm of Alec Witherow.

Later Alec had a house built for them in Church Lane and Dennis became responsible for looking after Rectory Farm. The pigs and chickens on the land by the house are remembered still. He was a first class carpenter, so useful on a farm, and skilled at the cultivation of plants, winning many prizes at the Elsworth Show.

AWF

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## **ELSWORTH, KNAPWELL & CONINGTON W.I.**

We have a wide variety of guest speakers at our meetings in Elsworth School on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of each month at 7.30 pm. In September we shall be hearing about the RSPB and Hope Farm. June and Christopher South will entertain in October and later topics are Painting on Silk and The History of Magic.

Our membership numbers 28 at the moment. We are a very friendly group and anyone can come along to a couple of meetings without any obligation to join – though of course we hope all do!

The Cambridge Federation is very lively, organising a great variety of courses, talks and outings each year. There really is something for everyone, so if you've been thinking about coming along to a meeting – please do – and give us the opportunity to show you how enjoyable an evening with us can be!

Contact Mary Norris [267260] or Isobel Farrow [267472] for details.

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## **JUBILEE CLUB**

The Jubilee Club, based in Elsworth, is open to everybody living in the local villages. We meet in Elsworth School Hall on the first Thursday of nine months of the year at 2.30 pm.

In January we have lunch at The George and Dragon. This year in June we visited Springfields Gardens and Shopping Outlet in Spalding, Lincs., and in July we visited Bressingham, Norfolk. We do not meet in August, and not in the School in January and June.

We have had some interesting speakers during the last six months and now look forward to enjoying our winter meetings.

Why not come along and join us? You will be made most welcome and hopefully want to come again!

Contact Betty Simcock [Tel. 267470] for details.

## ORCHESTRA IN A VILLAGE

In a groundbreaking first for classical music and arts education, the London Mozart Players and composer Fraser Trainer will be living and working in Swavesey for a week in November as part of the 2006 Cambridge Music Festival.

Such a project has never been attempted before on so large a scale. Throughout the week, the LMP will become an integral part of the local community, working all round Swavesey and neighbouring villages visiting play groups, primary and secondary schools – including Elsworth Primary, women's groups, the pub, local businesses, retirement centres and private houses of those housebound. Residents will be joining the Swavesey Choir to perform Mozart's Coronation Mass at Swavesey Village College.

A summary of the programme, with dates and locations will be put on the village notice board. Seats for the final concert on the 16<sup>th</sup> November – Mozart Overture Don Giovanni; Mozart Coronation Mass; a new work by Fraser Trainer – may be looked through Swavesey Village College.



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