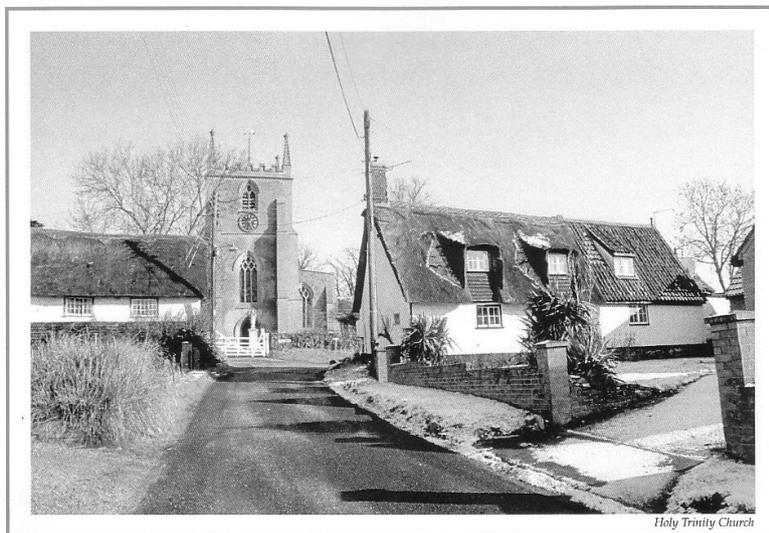


The Elsworth Chronicle



Issue No. 26

November 2009

ELSWORTH SURGERY LINK

Barbara Sterland, one of the stalwarts of the surgery link scheme whereby people without cars may be taken to the surgery by volunteer drivers, has, as many will know, moved from the village and will no longer be able to participate. Barbara has been involved since the inception of the scheme way back in 1981 – a wonderful record. So many in the village have cause to be very grateful to her. Many, many thanks Barbara.

This is perhaps an opportunity to remind villagers of the surgery link service and to seek people who are willing to give their names to be put on the active list or alternatively be on reserve to be contacted as and when a need arises. By means of this service, those without a car or who are unable to drive are enabled to attend the surgery at Papworth.

The scheme is quite straightforward and runs well. A volunteer driver agrees to stand by for one journey a month – on a rota with other volunteers – which is on a Thursday morning. If, by chance, the allocated day on one month is not possible, changes with other drivers on the rota overcomes the problem.

If you are interested in giving your name as a volunteer driver, please contact Alan Farrow who, as a member of the Surgery link committee, is the scheme co-ordinator.

[Tel. 01954 267472 or e-mail farrow16@googlemail.com].

ELSWORTH LUNCH CLUB

In Elsworth at present there would seem to be quite a number of people who have difficulty in moving around and therefore tend to be house-bound, and others, who living by themselves, at times get tired of their own company.

Mandy Smith, our County Councillor, and I have discussed this. If there is sufficient demand, it is proposed to set up a monthly lunch club for which transport to a pub or other venue could be provided. Firstly we need to know if there is sufficient interest. If the idea might possibly appeal, please contact either of us for further information, without committing yourself in any way. Mandy's telephone number is 01954 230253; e-mail mandy.smith@cambridgeshire.gov.uk and Alan Farrow's tel. number is 01954 267472; e-mail: farrow16@googlemail.com. If it is preferred, either of us would be happy to come to your home to discuss the scheme. We'd very much like to know views, for they will determine whether the scheme gets off the ground.

Alan Farrow

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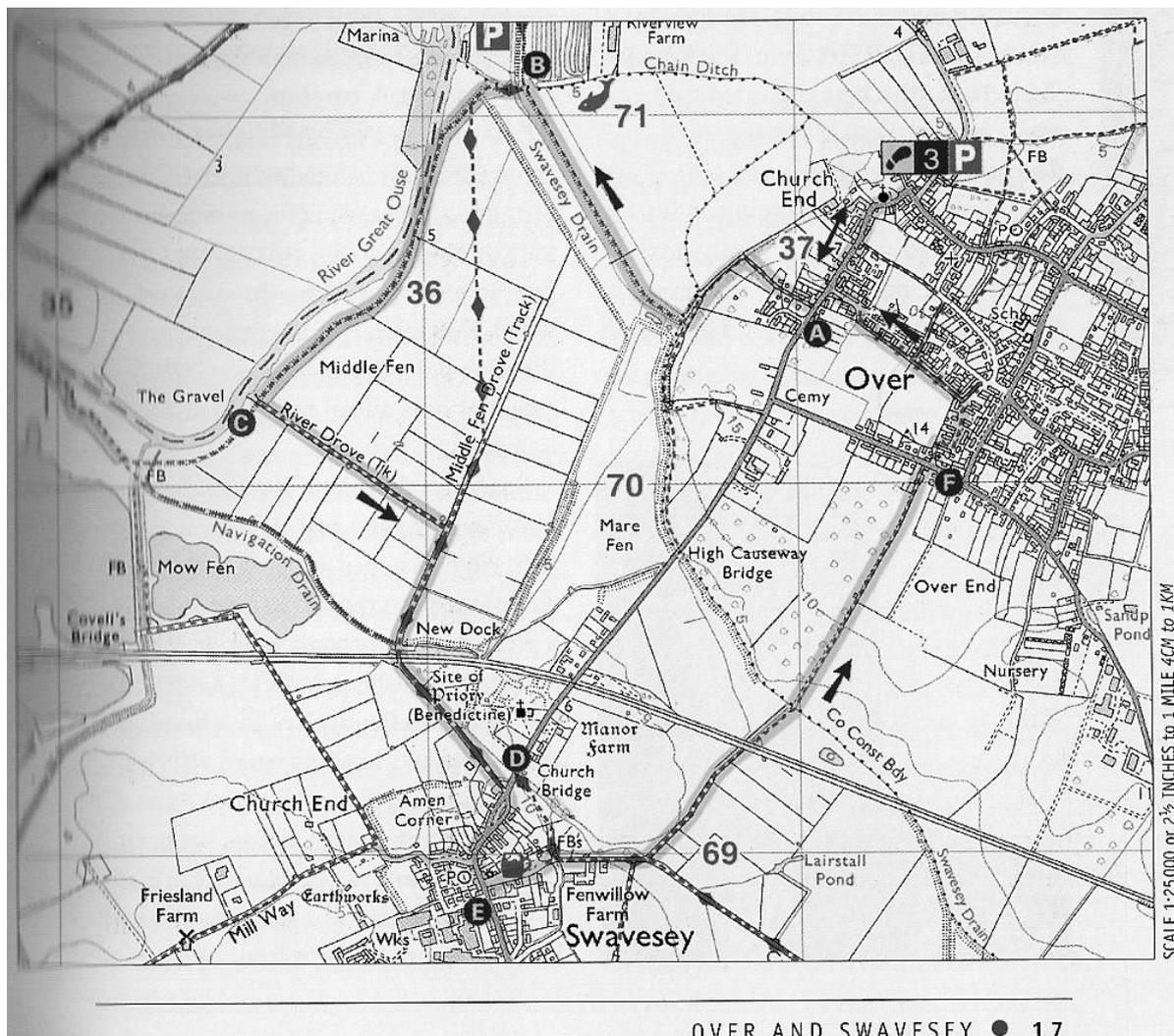
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ELSWORTH WALKING GROUP

Back in December 1990 The Elsworth Chronicle reported the birth of the Elsworth Walking Group. 19 years later it continues to flourish, maintaining its pattern of embarking on local walks and others at no great distance from the village on the second Sunday of every month throughout the year. The number of walkers is usually around twelve to fifteen, with a designated leader for each outing. For walks starting in the village the group meets at the church car park, normally at 10 am. If the starting point is outside Elsworth, members are advised by that month's leader in advance. The distance covered is usually around six miles with a break near the half-way point, the route being chosen by the leader. Over the years so many paths have experienced Elsworth boots but new routes are constantly being explored with old favourites also re-visited from time to time.

If you feel like a morning of companionship, laughter and good exercise do join the group. You would not be committing yourself for future walks but the chances are that you would like to. If time presses, just come when you can. Individuals and/or families are welcome. For further information contact Rich Stokes [tel.267506], Isobel Farrow [tel.267472] or any member of the group known to you.

A typical walk is shown below.



OPEN AND RESPONSIBLE LOCAL GOVERNMENT

What do you expect of your parish council? To my mind responsibility and accountability must be key words. Accountability, of course, demands that facts are made known to the electorate, and responsibility demands that every effort is made to ensure the right decisions are made. Procedures regarding the sluice have exposed marked deficiencies in both regards. Is there a lesson that must be taken into the future? It would seem so. The sluice has gone [and must be now allowed to go in peace], but its manner of going draws attention to the need for accountability of decision-making and management. [To ignore expert advice and not even consider it in debate is clearly not managing affairs satisfactorily]. Accountability demands information to parishioners that is factually correct without inconvenient salient facts being glossed over. If this doesn't occur, the matter must be pressed further. Such has been my stance over flood protection measures.

Contrary accounts have been put through the village magazines. The intended thrust of the submitted reply to the article by Paul Solon in the August Elsworth Times was to relate what he had written to evidence in hand. However, in the published form in the Elsworth Times this would seem to have been lost by the modifications made. As matters stand, it is difficult for readers to know what to believe, and comments have been made in this regard. Paul Solon has taken issue with points made in the July Elsworth Chronicle and made strong comments in the Elsworth Times and more strongly elsewhere. The matter should not be one to be taken at a personal level, and this is certainly not the intention here, but Paul Solon's name must inevitably assume prominence as the intention is to focus on the points he has made in his published article. The matter must be based entirely on facts that present an accurate summary without the omission of those which are inconvenient. Parishioners have a right to know. **Let then the evidence be the arbitrator.**

1] To take first references to the Environment Agency. Mr. Solon states that the work on the sluice has the approval of the Agency and that their 'licence was unconditional'. But in so writing he disguises what he knows is the view of the Agency in preferring an up-stream location. The quotations which follow from letters from the Environment Agency make this clear.

"The site visit on the 8th August 2008 indicated that the footbridge upstream of the current proposed site would be a better location as should the screen ever block there would be no increase in risk to village properties as there is sufficient available land to be used as flood storage." [15.9.08]

"We still believe that it would be advantageous for the weedscreen to be located upstream of the footbridge as mentioned in previous correspondence." [23.12.08].

"As we have previously stated a weedscreen upstream of the village would be the preferred option as any backing-up of water or bank overtopping would be on open land." [16.7.07]

2] As to Mr. Solon's statement that the project has unconditional licence, the following statements from the Environment Agency would seem to contradict this.

"If the new weedscreen is built by the parish council, it will be their responsibility to ensure it does not create a nuisance to neighbouring properties. If the council remain concerned about their legal position we suggest that they speak to their legal advisers and/or insurers." [23.12.08].

"We require a maintenance programme to illustrate that the screen and channel will be properly maintained to prevent any increase in flood risk." [5.9.08]

3] In September 2008 the Environment Agency had REFUSED the application from the parish council for work at the sluice. Consent was only subsequently given, and clearly reluctantly as the comments above show, on the grounds that there was already a poor screen at the sluice.

4] To turn now to Mr. Solon's statement that much of the advice from consultants was contradictory - this cannot be accepted.

Dating back to 2003 and 2004 four impartial consultant engineers submitted reports. All four agreed that demolition of the sluice wall was pointless. As to the placement of a weedscreen where the stream enters the village, this aspect was studied by two chartered engineers and again there was complete har-

mony. The only voice from outside which could be quoted as dissenting was a former employee of the Environment Agency, but he was not an engineer and his views were clearly not in accordance with the Environment Agency's views which are noted above. When pressed he said, significantly, we should seek advice from engineers, which was done, the outcome being as already stated.

5] In his article Paul Solon endeavours to disparage the consultants involved – “so called expert advice”.

In fact all four were chartered engineers specialising in water control and two were consultants to the county council. It would seem somewhat arrogant for a non-engineer to proclaim that some of their advice was “downright wrong”. To state as he has done that the parish council concluded that it was neither safe nor sensible to rely on this past advice is quite wrong; the consultants' reports have never been debated and such a question has never been discussed by the council, as reference to the parish minutes will verify.

With regard to the engineer now engaged, he was commissioned only to design a weedscreen for the sluice area. When I asked Paul Solon if he could be asked also to quote for a weedscreen upstream, the request was declined. Mr Thomas, the engineer, therefore had a restricted brief. Not wishing to belittle Mr. Thomas in any way, I should be interested to know the source of Paul Solon's statement that he is “one of the country's leading experts”.

6] It is interesting that Paul Solon has sought to emphasise in the first part of his article that it is the inadequacy of the culverts that causes the back-up of water at times of excessive rainfall. This is clearly so and has been the basis of efforts to demonstrate the foolishness of demolishing the sluice.

He would seem to have made a complete reversal of position on this. It was to stress and substantiate the all-important role of the culverts that W.S. Atkins, the County engineers, and other consultant engineers, confirmed my assertion that it was the limited size of the culverts which caused overflow at times of excessive rainfall, whereas the parish council “in-house” scheme was promoting a view that flow could be improved by destroying the sluice wall. This “in-house” scheme was confirmed as being wrong and, in particular, irrelevant at times of flash floods by virtue of the limited culvert size. Regretfully the report was side-lined.

7] Another interesting contradiction is that although the parish council minutes record that Michael Thomas advised that “a weedscreen at the kissing gate would not provide any benefits to the culverts” [debris from the headwaters seems to have been ignored], “and would probably cause a nuisance with increased flooding on agricultural land”, his words are translated by Mr. Solon as “a weedscreen at the upstream end of Brook Street would not be undesirable but is not essential”.

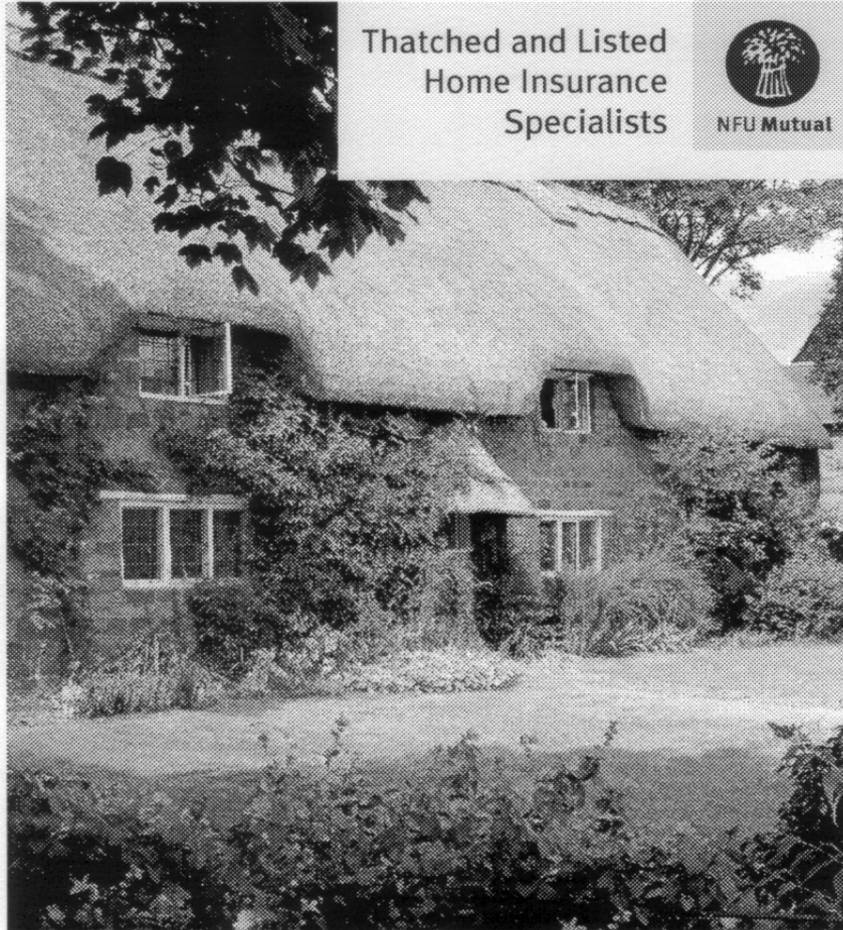
If this represents a change of view, it would take us back almost to the position I was endeavouring to make way back in 2003/4. The scheme I proposed then, and subsequently, was to have a simple sloping weedscreen bar from the retained sluice wall, with the main weedscreen at the footbridge. However, the scheme Paul Solon advocated costs some £12,000 to £15,000 for the sluice area alone, as compared with an earlier quotation in the order of £3,000 for both. Further, with the scheme Paul Solon has guided through, the Victorian Sluice – for which the South Cambs Council Conservation Officer sought preservation – has been destroyed. A vision that the ancient sluice gate and controlled water upstream could form an attractive feature in Brook Street has also been lost.

It would seem sad and to be regretted that matters have developed as they have. What was required of the parish council was that the reports of the consultant engineers should have been considered, not merely side-lined; that the advice of the Environment Agency should have been heeded and the recommended action should have been taken. What has been done cannot now be undone but lessons must be learned so that in the future such neglect would not be countenanced. Just as the Government at Westminster has to be aware of the scrutiny of the national press, local accountability through a local magazine such as the Elsworth Chronicle could well serve to focus minds in the future. If so, this endeavour will have been to some purpose. An allied way forward is for parishioners to press the council for facts relating to decisions being made or considered.

Alan Farrow

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OBITUARY



ANNA SMITH neé Schmocker
27.05.1919 – 24.03.2009

Anna Elisabeth Schmocker was born in Goldswil, near Interlaken in Switzerland. She was one of six children born to Robert and Rosa, and the great great grand-daughter of Melchoir Anderegg – the pioneer mountain guide, famous for the first ascents of many prominent mountains.

Anna had an idyllic but hard childhood, and often told romantic stories of family life, of skating, skiing, tobogganing, walking in the mountains, and watching the Orient Express stop in Interlaken on its way to Budapest. At the age of 16 she travelled to the French speaking part of Switzerland to live as an au pair in the family of a Doctor in order to improve her French. When she returned to Interlaken she gained employment as a shop assistant in a wood carving shop. The shop owner was impressed with her work and language skills and encouraged her to travel to England to learn English, so that she could speak fluently with his wealthy English customers.

She obtained a visa, and at the age of 19 travelled on 3 January 1938 from Interlaken via Dieppe to Newhaven and on to Eastbourne where her elder sister Rosa was already living. Anna took a position as a cook/general in the household of Sir James and Lady Smith, a diplomat, who had returned from India. When Sir James was recalled to India, Anna was asked to travel with them, but decided to stay in England, as by now her younger sister Regina had also arrived in Eastbourne. She found new employment with Mrs Colvin, a widow of independent means, and stayed with her for the next 10 years. Whilst here, the Second World War broke out, and Eastbourne was severely bombed – Anna became a member of the fire fighting party for Eastbourne Borough Council, and also helped out at the local hospital reading and writing correspondence for the wounded French Canadian soldiers. In August 1940 the bombing was so severe that Mrs Colvin and Anna evacuated to Hillcrest House, Elsworth for a few months, where she met Fred. Anna returned to Eastbourne and had a long distance courtship with Fred spanning 8 years. In 1946 she returned home for two months to see her parents – it was to be her last visit to Switzerland – as shortly after her return to England her mother died.

On 2 October 1948 Anna and Fred were married, and moved into a small cottage in Cotterell's Lane. Their family was complete when their two daughters, Stella and Shona, were born. Fred and Anna decided it was time to move, and saved hard to design and build a house on the small holding already owned by Fred; the house became ready for occupation in 1964. Anna was a homemaker – who enjoyed doing everything for her family – she was an excellent cook, dressmaker, knitter and embroiderer. She also enjoyed entertaining her Swiss relatives and friends on their many visits to Elsworth. In her early 80's she devoted 3 years to nursing Fred, who had become frail, and despite the hardships was determined she would care for him at home. At the age of 89 she still spoke fluent pure Swiss-German, was managing the house, and carrying out household duties, as well as cooking meals and gardening.

Everyone who met Anna found her to be sweet, gentle, kind and always helpful. She was a devoted and loving mother, self-less, reliable, wise, generous, hardworking and honest, and is sorely missed by all those who knew her.

OBITUARY



DOROTHY BIENEK 1929 – 2009

Dorothy was 27 years of age when she came to Elsworth as a young wife and mother, and was to live here for the remaining $\frac{3}{4}$ of her life. She was born in Bolton where her father was a school-teacher. Throughout her life she retained an interest in Bolton Wanderers football team and spoke with enthusiasm about Tom Lawton, an immediate post-war football hero who played for Bolton and England. She was clearly a very clever girl and won a place at London University at Queen Mary College, where she read English. This was at a time when only four in one hundred school-leavers went to university, compared with some 40% today.

After graduating Dorothy remained in London, where she met Paul who had settled in England after demobilisation from the Polish army. The circumstances were somewhat unusual – Paul was doing electrical work in the attic above Dorothy’s room when his foot slipped off a floor joist and appeared through Dorothy’s ceiling. Paul went down to apologise, and so they became acquainted. Love and marriage followed and their elder son Kasio was born in London where they had set up home.

In 1956 they moved to Elsworth and the family grew by another three children – Jad, Julian and Alex. In 1969 Dorothy was appointed secretary at Elsworth School and remained in this position until her retirement in 1989. Being Dorothy she was more than a secretary – she was renowned for her ability to create wonderful costumes for the school plays out of scraps of material, backed by a deft hand with the sewing machine and a vivid imagination. While at the school, Betty Childerley, then a teacher at the school, introduced Dorothy to a local history group, and local history was to remain an absorbing interest throughout her life. Her knowledge of Latin and ability to read Old English made her an asset to the Public Record Office for whom she did much voluntary work deciphering old wills. She branched out to researching her own family and then to the history of Elsworth and produced a fascinating booklet that was very well received. She had an historical article in the Elsworth Chronicle as recently as July this year.

But Dorothy was very much of the family and home, being a superb baker, cook, embroiderer, lace-maker and homemaker. She was also involved in village affairs, being secretary of the W.I. until ill health caused her to give up. Dorothy will be sadly missed. To the family she was a loving wife, mother, grandmother; to family and friends a loyal, thoroughly dependable person who was always willing to help where she could. All who speak of her do so in such warm terms – she was a good neighbour and friend; she was modest; she always spoke well of people; she was known for her thoughtfulness, kindness and helpfulness to others. All who knew gained enormously from being with her.

ELSWORTH, KNAPWELL & CONINGTON W.I.

After the summer break we had a most interesting talk in September about the R.N.I.B., which is funded entirely by voluntary contributions.

In October we were delighted to welcome six new members to our meeting at which we were transported back to the “Forties” – a time of austerity, but some managed to evade rationing. We learned that Mrs Stollery’s sister accidentally joined the queue for bananas [only available to pregnant women] and returned home with her “treasure” – quite a surprise to her family!

We are holding our November meeting at the Cambridge Federation H.Q. at Girton. This purpose-built building, which has won several awards for its many sustainable features, was opened in 2006 by The Earl of Wessex. The December Christmas Party is always great fun and in January we are appropriately “visiting Alaska”.

Our monthly meetings are held in Elsworth School on the second Wednesday of each month. Visitors are always welcome – except at the Christmas Party!

Isobel Farrow [tel. 267472]

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MEADOW MUTTS MAYHEM!!!

Woof, Woof.....Nellie French here - reporting on the Meadow Mutts Dog show that was held in the village earlier this month. All of us canines had a great time - strutting our stuff, winning prizes and clearing up after the BBQ which was organized by some gallant humans from the school ESFA Committee.

Although the weather was a bit chilly - which probably put some of the humans off - we had doggy entrants from as far afield as Stevenage!

By the end of the day we were all dog tired but satisfied with ourselves as we had managed to raise around £900 which all goes towards the school building fund.

So thanks goes to all the humans involved but most of all to the dogs - we all had a howling good time....see you all around the reservoir.....good sniffing!!!

Nellie French (alias Alice French)

Nellie



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Papworth Hospital Carol Service at Ely Cathedral

A carol service is held every year at Ely Cathedral in support of Papworth Hospital, and tickets are now on sale for Friday, 18th December. There will be a performance by professional soprano soloist Kate Woolf, and also the Ely Cathedral Octagon Singers. Readings are given by representatives from across the hospital, and the evening is a very uplifting celebration of Christmas and the hospital's pioneering work.

Everyone is welcome to attend, so please do come and join us for the evening. Tickets are £10 and £15 each, available from the charity office on 01480 364237.

ELSWORTH SPORTS CLUB

The beginning of September saw the end of the cricket season and the beginning of that of football, with table tennis league matches starting at the end of that month.

Although the summer saw better weather than last year with all matches played, both cricket teams had disappointing results on the field. Playing in the CCC Junior League Division 2B the first team finished last, losing all 16 matches. Unavailability of some players certainly contributed to that and we hope for better results next summer. The second team played in Division 4B of the same league and finished the season in 7th place, winning three of their fourteen matches. Hopefully with most players available next season and given reasonable weather we will enjoy better results.

As the football season is in the early days the league tables mean little at this stage, but having again won promotion the first team is now playing in the CFA BIS League Division 1B and at the time of writing has won one and drawn three of their four matches, placing the team sixth of thirteen. Their only loss so far was to Wisbech St.Mary's Reserves in the Junior Cup, and that by the odd goal of five. The reserve team, after their debut season last year, is now established in the league and is playing in CFA BIS Division 5C. To date the team has played four matches, drawing one and losing three, placing the team tenth of thirteen teams.

As with football, the table tennis season has recently got under way with Elsworth again entering three teams in the Ely league. To date the first team has played and won two matches in the first division whilst the second team has lost its opening two matches in the same division. The third team, comprising mainly junior players, is in Division 2 and at the time of writing its most recent result was a creditable draw.

Carpet bowls continues to flourish on Wednesday afternoons from 2 pm and any new player would be made welcome – likewise the whist drives and bridge sessions which take place on Friday evenings at 7.30 pm, alternating fortnightly. For dates of these sessions please see posters displayed in the village.

For further information of the football section, please contact Mark Brading on 01480 383303 and for cricket or table tennis contact Bill Knibbs on 01954 267266

Roger Fensom

JUBILEE CLUB

The club is open to everyone in Elsworth and surrounding villages. Most meetings take place on the first Thursday of the month in Elsworth School Hall from 2.30 pm to 4.30 pm. We have a speaker or entertainment, afternoon tea and a raffle.

We have had day trips to Sandringham and Southwold this year, and enjoy a New Year lunch at The George & Dragon in January.

Please come along when you can, you will certainly know people there and will be made most welcome. For more information call Betty Simcock on 01954 267470.

Betty Simcock

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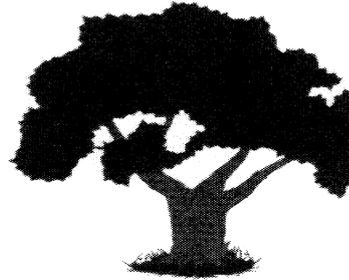
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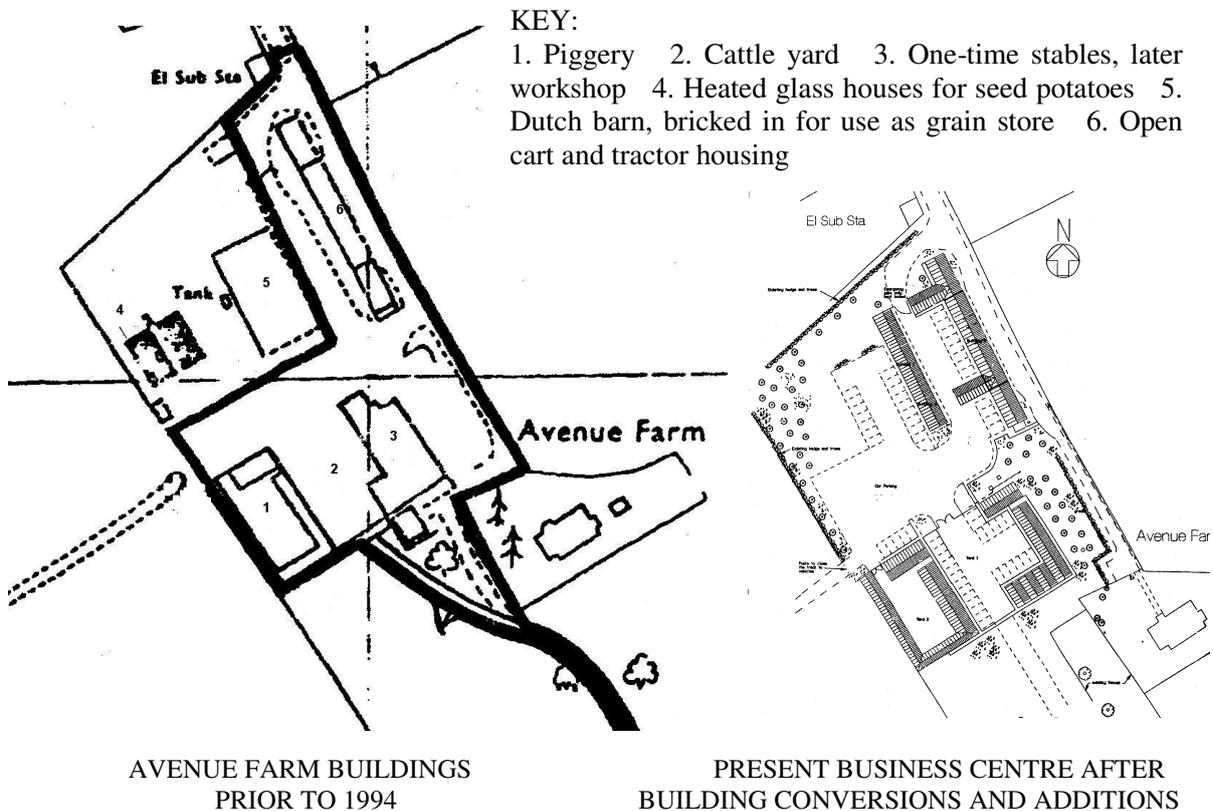
LIGHT INDUSTRIES IN ELSWORTH

On the northern side of Boxworth Road [on your left as you drive out] a cluster of light-coloured single storey buildings may be seen behind a thick hedge. These constitute Castle Acres, a small light industrial complex on land owned by the Franklin Trust. Many, particularly the more recent inhabitants in the village, will have passed by many times without knowing their purpose, but perhaps wondering. Recently the writer - AWF - was privileged to visit and was impressed by the splendid setting, with delightful views over open countryside. Two firms were visited on the site - Gardasoft Vision, specialising on electronic quality control, and Elsworth Metal, which is engaged in cutting and coating steel strips for packaging purposes.

Activities and the way of life at Castle Acres of to-day contrast markedly with that of some 65 to 70 years ago when the site was in use as a prisoner-of-war camp. Memories of that period from two guards were contained in the Elsworth Chronicle of December 1992 and might be recalled by readers here at that time. During the war years when the camp was in existence, many of the 250 prisoners - all categorised as well-behaved and trustworthy - would make their way by bicycle at 8.30 am to farms in the area, returning to the camp in the evening. The roads of Elsworth at 8.30 am must have been rather like Cambridge in term-time when masses of students fill certain roads as they peddle to the first lectures of the day.

West of the village centre the light-industrial site of Avenue Farm is more recent. This site has had an interesting change of use. Formerly a complex of farm buildings, these, which even include pig-houses, have been transformed into spacious and delightful accommodation without the complex losing its exterior rural charm. Recognition of its success in this respect was marked by a design award presentation in 1997.

Many of the firms at Avenue Farm are involved in activities of a high tech nature although not all - of the latter there is the administrative hub of a nationwide brick and concrete company and nearby the office of a company specialising in a wide range of paving work for domestic and commercial customers. Then there is a company specialising in bespoke design of glasshouses. The high tech/computer based companies range over a broad area of expertise, encompassing wireless and electronic control systems; graphic design; the application of health and safety regulations to complex commercial premises, to note a few. Altogether it would seem a happy thriving community in an environment of peace and charm.



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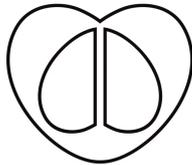
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There are countless ways you can get involved and sustain the life-changing work carried out. You could attend an event or organise one of your own, make a donation, purchase our charity goods or even join our lottery. For more information, please visit our website www.papworthhospitalcharity.org.uk or call us on 01480 364237.

Replacing your flat roof? Don't fall flat on your face!

When replacing or repairing your flat roof, make sure you don't use a contractor who is either unaware or unprepared to meet the recently revised Part L of the Building Regulations or you could fall foul of the law, have to replace the non-compliant work and be left with a hefty bill.

It is really important to ensure that all work to your home complies with the Building Regulations as the penalties for failing to do so include substantial fines – and the responsibility ultimately rests with the person ordering the work.

Why the changes? Home energy use is responsible for 27 per cent of UK carbon dioxide emissions, which contribute to climate change. The Government has introduced requirements intended to make buildings more energy efficient by reducing CO2 emissions by 2010. Most of this reduction will have to come from improvements to existing homes and now includes the replacement of flat roofs under 'Renovation of Thermal Elements'.

When work is carried out to your property, opportunities often arise for efficiency improvements at little extra cost. Which is why it makes good sense to choose a product such as RubberBond EPDM FleeceBack to replace, and not repair, your flat roof. During the replacement, The Rubber Roofing Company complies with the new building regulations by including the relevant upgrade to insulation levels required by the Government and makes all the necessary arrangements with local councils so that homeowners have the correct documentation. Please note that without this documentation you may face difficulties refinancing or selling your property.

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