

The Village Link

Great Thurlow – Little Thurlow – Great Wrattling

March
2012



'If you wish to contribute an article for the next edition, or help with future distribution in Great Wrattling, please contact Caroline Togher on 783876' or you can email your article direct to the Editor at thevillagelink@tkheat.co.uk'.

Thurlow Fayre – What The Future Holds Extraordinary Meeting Called

On the 7th February the first Thurlow Fayre Committee Meeting was held, sadly only a few core members attended. The Committee would like to thank these members for their input during this year's first meeting.

Among the many topics discussed was the format of the current Fayre and changing the date of the Fayre, bringing it forward to before the schools break up for the summer holidays.

One thing that was clear from the meeting, support for this year's Fayre will be as tough as last year, putting into doubt whether the Fayre should take place this year.

An extraordinary meeting has been called for Monday 5th March at 7:30pm, Great Thurlow Village Hall. All are welcome, both committee members and the residence of the Thurlow's.

Items to be discussed; should the Fayre be cancelled this year; Splitting up the Fayre and car boot elements into two separate events and dates; The format of the Fayre and the types of attractions on the day; To hold a Barn Dance on the Saturday night prior to the Fayre on the Sunday to boost PCC funds.

Great Wrattling Joins 'The Village Link'

From March 2012, The Village Link magazine will be distributed to all households in Great Wrattling, along with the Thurlows, thanks to funding from Great Wrattling Parish Council.

'We are delighted to join this well established community newsletter and hope that you find it informative as well as an enjoyable read' they write.

The Village Link

Email: TheVillageLink@TKHeat.co.uk

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Thurlow Fayre Continued....

The Thurlow Fayre can only continue with the support of the residents of the Thurlow's. Each year a core of volunteers help organise the Fayre - days, weeks and months in advance of the event and this team needs much more help.

Last year, on the day and in the run up to the actual Fayre, we struggled to gain enough volunteers to man all of the many attractions and activities, such as selling draw tickets, providing prizes for the draw, collecting bottles for the bottle stall, help with manning the car boot, craft fair/market, tea tent, entry gates, BBQ, bar and the many side stalls.

It is no measure of luck that we pulled off another successful day, but for how much longer? Last year's Fayre raised over £4,000 for local organisations, the two churches in the Thurlow's, The Village Link, Thurlow School's, The WI..... to name but a few.

The Thurlow Fayre is very well supported on the day by visitors from outside the Thurlow's but the committee desperately need the support of everyone in the Villages for it to be a success again this year.

So if you can spare an hour on Monday 5th March at 7:30pm then please come along to the Village Hall and have your input into the planning and format of the day, a pledge of your commit to supporting the Fayre, even if that is only an hour of your time and if everyone did that then we would be in fantastic shape for this years great day.

Thank you

Thurlow Fayre Committee

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Thurlow Gardening Club News

The inaugural meeting of the Thurlow Gardening Club was a success and lots of fun. This new club holds monthly meetings on the second Friday of each month. Please see Diary Dates for more details. All are welcome. Bring along any plants or seeds you would like to swap. This is a friendly event, sharing gardening tips and advice whatever the size of garden or type of gardening you are into.

With the possibility that this year's Thurlow Fayre changing it's date, in conjunction with the Produce Show organiser we will be discussing in the next few months the categories for the show.

Tea and coffee provided and maybe a glass of wine, now what's stopping you!

Dawn Abbey

New Faces At The Cock Inn

The New Year brings a change of management at The Cock Inn, Little Thurlow, with industry veteran Symon Watts at the helm.

Bringing back a traditional character to the rustic pub, the award-winning landlord is supported by a new chef Ian Jones and the food, it is already proving popular with a full house on Valentine's Day.

Sunday lunches are top of the bill with 2 courses for £11.95 and children under 12 eat for free, making it a family-friendly option for the traditional roast with all the trimmings.

Every Wednesday is steak night, where two people can eat for £30 including a bottle of wine.

The Over 60s are also catered for with a Monday lunch deal (12th and 26th March). Two people can eat from 1pm for £11.95 and booking is required.

The highlight of March will be Mothering Sunday, where Symon is putting on a dedicated lunch on the 18th. Booking essential on 01440 783224.

Please pop in to experience the changes for yourself and visit the website www.thecockthurlow.co.uk for information.

P.S. The popular Supper Club & Live Music Nights will be returning in April at The Cock Inn.

1st Burrough Green Brownies

1st Burrough Green Brownies meet weekly in Brinkley during the school term.
For girls aged seven to ten.

Sleeping Beauty Pantomime

The girls hard work paid off, they put on two fantastic performances of Sleeping Beauty for family and friends on Saturday 4th February at West Wrattling Village Hall. They received a great deal of applause as well as a lot of laughter throughout.

We received some very generous gifts from all the brownies parents which enabled us to put together a great raffle, lucky winners went home with baskets of lovely food and edible treats.

With tickets sales and our raffle we raised the amazing amount of just over £300.00 which is being shared for the benefit the charity 'Love in Action' and our units funds. For the last 3 years the brownies have collected Sainsbury's vouchers to obtain sport equipment for a primary school in Kasaka, Uganda. The charity is now trying to fund the build of a secondary school. Representatives from Love in Action visited one of our units meeting last year to thank the girls for the sports equipment. They brought a film of the school and the children who performed a thank you song to the Brownies. To find out more about this life changing charity, go to: www.loveuganda.com

If anyone would like more information, or would like to register a girl who is not yet 7 please contact:

Margaret Whalley 01638 716939

Womens Institute Report

Thurlow WI met on the 14th February on what has become known as Bird Night. As there were more visitors than members present it was decided to defer business to a later date and concentrate on our speaker Dr Jeremy Mynott. Jeremy had recently visited Russia and

as always entertained with his account of the journey with its usual hiccups, this time running out of fuel. He is very impressed by the way Russians help each other at such times and their hospitality. Jeremy had travelled down part of the river Volga taking some excellent slides of birds around the area, some of which were seen for the first time even by him.

He described the huge swamps, which are a haven for birds and the huge frogs which provide them with food. We saw the huge steppes which this time were covered with flowers. President Ann Tipper when thanking him asked him to keep travelling so that we could enjoy more of his talks in the future.

A larger raffle than usual saw prizes evenly distributed between visitors and members. Next month we are due to learn all about the making of a Gypsy Caravan and the search for a horse to pull it. Tuesday 13th March 7:30pm Village Hall, visitors welcome.

Iris Eley – Little Thurlow Reporter



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Neighbourhood Watch

The Great Wratting Neighbourhood Watch Scheme is once again up and running. Linda Reading, the Scheme co-ordinator, together with a team of volunteers are now making progress to contact all households in the village and to collect contact details from villagers who wish to be included in the Scheme. For more information contact Linda on 783376.

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Thurlow Estate Farms Limited

Now that the snow has gone and the ground is starting to dry out again, the farms have been able to apply nitrogen to the oil seed rape to encourage growth.

The pigeons, as always, are feeding on the fresh shoots of the OSR and winter bean crops as they emerge. The battle to control the pigeon population is ongoing with the use of bangers, rockets and gas guns. The Farm spends a lot of time on control in late winter and early spring but without effective control, pigeons can soon ruin a young crop.

Calving is progressing well with only 8 cows left to calve. Unfortunately one of the cows died during calving but luckily we managed to save the calf. All the team at the Thurlow Farm are taking turns feeding the orphan and I'm glad to report that he is doing really well. Once they have all calved the cows will be turned out to pasture in the nearby meadows.

The final bits of hedging and ditching works are being done before the cut off point of the 29th February. This is to ensure that the smaller birds' habitat is not disturbed during their nesting season. Once the fledglings have left the nest in mid summer, we are able to resume hedge cutting on the 15th September.

Thurlow Woodlands

The Thurlow Woodlands team have moved back to Balsham Wood to undertake a further area of coppicing. The idea behind coppicing is to generate a renewable source of firewood by cutting the multiple stems off the stool (or base) of the tree which will then encourage regrowth for coppicing again in 30-40 years time.

Further first thinnings are also taking place to ensure that the newer woods have the best chance to grow straight and tall.

Please be aware that Firewood deliveries will cease as of the 1st March this year so please do call the Estate Office if you would like to order a load of firewood on 01440 783 661 before then. We do however take log orders throughout the year so you can book a load of logs now to be delivered in July when we recommence deliveries.

Thurlow Estate Management Limited

The cold temperatures last week (it was recorded at -16 °C by one farm worker, can anyone beat that?) meant that we have had a spate of burst water pipes throughout the Estate which the maintenance team finally got on top of at the end of last week.

Looking forward, the plans for the renovation of 9 separate houses on the Estate are in the last stages of preparation and will be sent out to tender shortly on the basis that work will commence on these in early April. Once renovated, they will be available to rent and details will follow in due course.

Editors note.... Tim reports at 3.20am on the night of the frosts, it measured -17.2 Celsius on Crown Hill! Amazing!

Properties to let

Currently there are no residential properties to let on the Thurlow Estate, however if you are interested in being notified of properties coming up in the future please call.

For more information, please contact the Estate Office (01440 783661)

Thurlow Hunt

Due to adverse weather conditions, the Cambridge Hunt with the Enfield Chase Point to Point meeting that was scheduled for 5th February was cancelled. While this was a huge disappointment for all concerned, the good news is that it has been rescheduled for the 28th April - please put this in your diary.

Other notable dates for your racing calendar are as follows:

1. Saturday 3rd March – Thurlow Hunt Point to Point.
2. Saturday 31st March – Puckeridge Hunt Point to Point.

The hunting season is drawing to a close with the last meet scheduled for the 15th March at The Kennels.

The Hunt Supporters Annual Dinner will be held at Hall Barn on the 9th March, for information and tickets please contact Sue Davies-Scourfield on 01440 783868.

Finally the Hunt Ball this year will be held at Chilford Hall on the 24th March, details and tickets can be obtained from Mrs V. Vestey on 01440 783217.

Thurlow Shoot

Now that the shooting season has drawn to a close, the game strips that provide cover and food for the birds throughout the shooting season have been topped and the farms will start to plough in the stalks and husks, in preparation for the new crop to be drilled in May time.

Most of the feed hoppers and water drinkers have now been rounded up and washed down/sterilised before being stored up before they are put back out in the summer.

Pest control continues as always with particular attention being paid to the rats and the pigeons which are both very active at this time of year. Control of the rat population is particularly important as they are carriers of disease.

The next few months are the only time of year that the gamekeeper and his dogs get a chance to wind down and take a well deserved rest as the whole cycle starts again.

AND FINALLY.....

In a court in Tralee, deep in County Kerry, Ireland, this conversation is reported to have taken place:

Lawyer: 'At the scene of the accident, Mr O'Brien, did you tell the Garda officer that you had never felt better in your life?'

O'Brien the old farmer: 'That's right, sir.'

Lawyer: 'Well then, Mr O'Brien, how is it that you are now claiming you were seriously injured when my client's car hit your cart?'

O'Brien the farmer: 'When the Garda arrived, he went over to my horse, who had a broken leg, and shot him. Then he went over to Darcy, my dog, who was badly hurt, and shot him. When he asked me how I felt, I just thought under the circumstances, it was a wise choice of words to say I've never felt better in my life.'

Nature Note

We had a really old spell back in the middle of February and my outside thermometer went down to -15C one night, which is quite unusual for these parts. All that snow did have a lovely pristine beauty, though, and I had some fun identifying the tracks made by various animals

and birds as they skittered over the crusty, frozen surface. It was easy to pick out the rabbit footmarks criss-crossing each other everywhere, and on the open fields the straighter, more deliberate courses taken by hare and fox. Nearer the copses there were clusters of the characteristic footprints of pheasant too, with the marks made by the trailing tail usually quite visible, and close by the river one could make out the curious fat-toed prints of moorhen (as if they were wearing snow shoes a size too large). I was wandering around with my head bent, inspecting the ground like this when I saw out of the corner of my eye at the edge of one woodland a small heap of dead leaves. As I got close to it I was just asking myself why it wasn't covered by snow, like everything else in this winter wonderland, when the pile of leaves formed itself into the shape of a bird and took off in a rapid, twisting flight through the trees. Woodcock! I very rarely see those here so it was quite a thrill. They are probably not that uncommon in the woods in winter but they are so beautifully camouflaged to look like – well, a pile of dead leaves – that you can almost step on them without seeing them. They in turn rely on their invisibility cloaks and sit tight till the last moment so you probably walk right past many of them without ever realising it. The trick of the camouflage in their case is that the plumage is variegated with a broken pattern of rusty-brown, grey and black marbling that merges perfectly with the woodland floor in winter – as long as there is no snow! In fact when they are sitting tight the most visible feature is the big black watchful eye. These eyes are another miracle of design: they are set so far back in the head that woodcocks have an all round 360 degree field of view and that means they are rarely surprised from behind by predators like foxes. The eyes are also large so that they gather what light there is, as they need to since the woodcock is one of those

'crepuscular' species that is most active in the gloaming at dusk and dawn. They do breed in Breckland and if you go to the right place on a summer evening you can witness their remarkable territorial display called 'roding', when the male bird flies slowly round the edge of its territory – beating the bounds, as you might say – uttering a weird croaking noise like an aerial frog, followed by a high penetrating twisik call. A magic bird all round, in fact.

Jeremy Mynott

Parish Council News

Little Thurlow Parish Council's February meeting was attended by six Councillors and three members of the public as well as PC Sinclair and CC Midwood. Councillors were pleased to note that the bus service had resumed in the village although they had not received an official notification of this. The "Unsuitable for HGVs" sign in Church Road is to be resited at the junction with the B1061 and two similar signs will be attached to the "20's Plenty" sign on Pound Green. It is hoped that representatives of the Parish Council will be able to attend the next St Edmundsbury Rural South SNT Community Priority Setting meeting to express concerns about speeding traffic through the village. The Parish Council will also be represented at a Training Session "How to influence planning decisions" which is being held at St. Edmundsbury BC. Residents should be aware that there is still an ongoing trend of metal thefts in the area, especially from motor vehicles and outhouses. Catalytic converters are also being targeted.

Full Minutes of Meetings are displayed on the Parish Council Notice Board. The next meeting will be on Tuesday 20th March 2012, 7.30pm at Thurlow Village Hall, see Notice Board for Agenda. Members of the Public are always welcome.

M. Hawkins, Parish Clerk

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Diary Dates

	Date	Day	Time	Event	Location	Information
March	9 th	Fri	18:30 - 20:30	Thurlow Gardeners Club New Event Please Support!	The Meadows, Broad Road, Little Thurlow	Dawn 783646 or just turn up on the day!
	18 th	Sun		Mothers Day		
	29 th	Thu	19:30	Parish Council Meeting Great Wratting	Kufena, Withersfield Road	
	31 st	Sat		Joint Great & Little Thurlow Village Litter Pick Volunteers Wanted All equipment provided and will be available from Mungo Lodge, Little Thurlow.	Your Village	Contact Kevin Beal on 01440 783644 for more details
April	1 st	Sun		Joint Great & Little Thurlow Village Litter Pick Volunteers Wanted All equipment provided and will be available from Mungo Lodge, Little Thurlow.	Your Village	Contact Kevin Beal on 01440 783644 for more details
May	11 th	Fri	20:00	Casino Night Egg Roulette In aid of the Thurlow Churches	The Cock Inn	Tim & Kevin 783654
	17 th	Thu		The Annual Great Wratting Village Meeting	The Parish Room, St Mary's Church	

Monthly Church Service Rota

Date	Day	Time/Event	Time/Event	Time/Event	Time/Event
2 nd Mar	Fri	Lent Hunger Lunch Please contact Kathy and Steve on 01440710225			
4 th Mar	Sun Lent 2	9:30 Kedington Family Holy Communion	11:00 Great Bradley Holy Communion		
9 th Mar	Fri	Lent Hunger Lunch Please contact Kathy and Steve on 01440710225			
11 th Mar	Sun Lent 3	9:30 Barnardiston Holy Communion	9:30 Kedington Service of the Word	11:00 Great Thurlow Holy Communion	11:00 Great Wrating Service of the Word
16 th Mar	Fri	Lent Hunger Lunch Please contact Kathy and Steve on 01440710225			
18 th Mar	Sun Lent 4	10:00 Mothering Sunday Kedington Benefice Holy Communion			
23 rd Mar	Fri	Lent Hunger Lunch Please contact Kathy and Steve on 01440710225			
25 th Mar	Sun Lent 5	8:00 Kedington Holy Communion (said)	9:30 Little Thurlow Holy Communion	11:00 Great Wrating Holy Communion	18:00 Kedington Evensong
30 th Mar	Fri	Lent Hunger Lunch Please contact Kathy and Steve on 01440710225			
2/3/4 Apr	Mon Tue Wed	18:00 Little Wrating Compline			
5/6 Apr	Thu Fri	19:30 Kedington Maundy Thursday Holy Communion	14:00-1500 Good Friday Kedington Devotional		

The Rector Writes

One of the programmes I used to love to watch on the television was “Yes, Minister” and its sequel “Yes, Prime Minister”. In fact I have two books, supposedly containing the diaries of “Jim Hacker”. Edited by Jonathan Lynn and Anthony Jay, the two books tell the story behind each individual programme. In an episode entitled ‘Party Games’, the entry in the diary for December 9th recounts the tale of a “frightful misunderstanding”. Sir Humphrey comes in to see Jim and informs him that their relationship is “approaching the point of irreversible bifurcation, and ... in the propinquity of its ultimate regrettable termination”. Jim, of course, fails to understand, and asks for clarification, so Humphrey replies that he (Humphrey) is on his way out. He continues in terms of accepting what he has in store and passing on “to pastures new, perhaps greener, to put oneself finally at the service of one who is greater than any of us”. The misunderstanding deepens, as Jim expresses his regret and asks if his wife knows, and then how long he has been given. Just a few weeks, he is told. Jim thinks that Humphrey is being very brave. Humphrey replies, “Well, I am a little anxious, I must admit – one is always frightened of the unknown, but I have faith. Somehow I’ll muddle through.” It transpires that Humphrey has been appointed as Secretary of the Cabinet, but not before Jim has burst into tears and said how sorry he is. Obviously Jim had misinterpreted Humphrey’s words and thought that he had suddenly received news of his impending departure from this world.

As I write this in mid-February we are in the midst of a cold snap which came as a bit of shock after the mild weather earlier in the winter. The temperature outside now is just a few degrees warmer. The shadows, though,

are long and the sun, when we see it, remains low in the sky. The trees are still as bare as ever. It would be nice to think that the worst of the winter weather is over, but who knows? My garden is alive with lots of different birds. It may be fun to watch from the house, but going on out there is something much more serious, a real battle for survival. The smaller and more agile birds are helping themselves to peanuts and sunflower seeds from the feeders whilst the larger birds devour the seed on the bird table and the ground. Some of the larger birds envy the agility of the smaller ones, and wait in ambush on nearby branches or on the ground below to consume anything which might happen to fall from the other bird’s beak. In the more severe weather the local wildlife struggles to find enough food to survive. It’s a matter of life and death.

There is also a battle going on for survival in the world, a struggle which for many is all too real. Our television brings us daily reports of the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan, and our hearts go out to those who have relatives fighting out there. At the same time we see the devastation caused by natural disasters such as earthquakes and floods. Closer to home, for a number of families recent weeks have brought the sadness of the loss of a loved one. We report in this issue the funerals of several people across our benefice in recent weeks. We extend our prayerful sympathy to those who mourn the loss of a loved one.

These may be long dark days, but Spring is on its way. February saw the beginning of Lent on Ash Wednesday. The word ‘Lent’ reminds us that the days are lengthening. The birds will sense this and begin to build their nests. Soon the twigs, apparently dead, will be bursting with new life, and the bulbs which have lain hidden for months, will bring forth new shoots and pretty Spring flowers. We look forward through

Lent to the joy of Easter, with its message of resurrection. Jesus dies on the cross, and is miraculously brought to life again by God. As death was not the end of the story for Jesus, so too we believe it will not be the end of the story for us. If life for us seems hard, remember life was hard for Jesus: hard words, hard wood, hard nails. He never promised that life would be easy, and he told those who followed him that they were in for a rough time: he told each of them to take up his cross. The cross was the most horrific instrument of torture and death, reserved only for the worst of criminals, but Jesus is able to transform that into the most powerful symbol of life. Out of what seems like the tragedy of defeat and death Jesus brings the joy of victory and new life.

Many years ago I came across this little rhyme, which an elderly lady had written into her 'commonplace book' and which her family asked me to read at her funeral: "God hath not promised skies always blue, flower-strewn pathways all our life through. God hath not promised sun without rain, joy without sorrow, peace without pain. But God hath promised strength for the day, rest for the labour, light for the way, grace for the trials, help from above, unending sympathy, undying love".

Father in heaven, you gave your Son Jesus Christ to suffering and to death on the Cross and raised him to life in glory. Grant us a patient faith in time of darkness, and strengthen our hearts with the knowledge of your love, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Stourhead Benefice – Rev. Derek Hollis

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The Village Link Welcomes Great Wrattling

I was approached some months ago by the Great Wrattling Parish Council with a view to joining the distribution and readership of The Village Link.

Following a number of discussions, as Editor of The Village Link may I extend a warm welcome to all the residents of Great Wrattling and I hope you enjoy this monthly publication as much as the readership in the Thurlow's.

If you want to tell your friends and family about The Village Link it can be viewed each month online at www.littlethurlow.org.

Kevin Crowson - Editor

This page has not been intentionally left blank, I have simply run out of articles to print!

So, could I please, please ask for your support and hopefully receive more articles than I will know what to do with next month.

Deadline date, as always, 15th of the month.

Editor

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INFORMATION FOR RESIDENTS. This is a brief guide, intended especially for newcomers to the villages, with information about the facilities and services available locally and some useful telephone numbers and addresses.

Services and Societies in our Parishes	Telephone
Thurlow Village Stores and Post Office – Naomi Sharrod	01440 783214
Thurlow News – Naomi Sharrod	01440 783923
Thurlow Garage – Ray Sharrod	01440 783248
The Cock Inn – Giles and Janie Reardon-Smith	01440 783224
Plumbing Services – TKHeat – Kevin Crowson	07966 208794 01440 783654
Parish Clerk – Little Thurlow – Molly Hawkins	01440 783259
Parish Clerk – Great Thurlow – Diana Allin	01440 783560
Thurlow CEVC School – Roz Bunting, Head Teacher	01440 783281
Thurlow Pre-School – Helen Frost (thurlowpreschool@hotmail.co.uk.)	01440 783688
Thurlow Mother and Toddlers – Claire Yallop and Helen Morley	01440 783975
Thurlow Fayre – Janice Klimcke and Diana Allin	01440 783626 01440 783560
Thurlow Sports Club Secretary – Allan Loveday	01440 707416
Thurlow Village Hall Committee – Janice Klimcke	01440 783626
Thurlow Village Hall Bookings – Diana Allin	01440 783560
Woodcraft Folk – Activities for ages 5-13 – Diana Allin	01440 783560
Thurlow Womens Institute – President Ann Tipper	01440 783090

Emergency	Telephone
Police Response – any officer, non emergency	101
Police Response – Emergency	999
Suffolk Fire Service	01284 558888
EDF (Electricity) 24 hour Emergency helpline	0800 783883
Anglian Water 24 hour Emergency Helpline (water/sewage)	08457 145145
British Telecom 24 hour fault reporting	0800 800151
Floodline 24 hour with recorded update	0845 9881188
In case of disaster or village is cut off, go to Thurlow Village Hall. Key Holder is Diana Allin – 89a Hill House, Great Thurlow	01440 783560

Copy deadline, as always is the 15th of the month.

[View The Village Link online at www.littlethurlow.org](http://www.littlethurlow.org)

Community Contacts	Telephone
Churches – Stourhead Benefice – Rev. Derek Hollis	01440 763066
Haverhill Social Services	01440 764949
Haverhill Citizens Advice Bureau	01440 704012
St Edmundsbury Borough Council Planning	01284 763233
District Councillor – Robert Clifton-Brown	01440 783562
St Edmundsbury Borough Council	01284 763233
St Edmundsbury Borough Council (Haverhill office)	01440 702271
County Councillor – Jane Midwood	01440 821428
Suffolk County Council General Enquiries	08456 066067
Age Concern – Mary Hilton	01440 783649
Thurlow Estate – Tim Barling, Estate Agent	01440 783661
Thurlow Estate – Tom Duffin, Assistant to Estate Agent	
Libraries – Haverhill	01440 702638
Libraries – Bury St Edmunds	01284 352545
A mobile library visits the villages on alternate Mondays stopping at Sowley Green 11.30-11.40am, 109 Bury Road, Great Thurlow 11.45-12.10pm and Little Thurlow Green, 1 Coronation Villas 12.45-1.00pm.	
Suffolk Radio – BBC FM 103.9 or 104.6	01473 250000
Refuse Collection	01284 757320
Every Friday early morning – Black bin on week one, blue and brown bin week two alternating	
Environmental Health and Pest Control	01284 757084

Health and Wellbeing	Telephone
Doctors – The Christmas Maltings and Clements Practice	08444 773543
Doctors – Selby Practice	01440 702010
Doctors – Stourhead Medical Practice	01440 761177
Chemist – Boots, Haverhill	01440 702058
Chemist – Sainsburys Pharmacy	01440 708043
Chemist – The Co—operative Pharmacy	01440 702079
Hospital – West Suffolk (Bury St Edmunds)	01284 713000
Hospital – West Suffolk Accident and Emergency	01284 713333
Hospital – Addenbrookes (Cambridge)	01223 245151
Vets – Swayne and Partners (Haverhill)	01440 702007
Vets – Lida Vets (Newmarket)	01638 560000
Vets – Hawkedon Veterinary Surgery	01284 789428

Great Wratting Parish Council Contacts	Telephone
Chair – Gavin Acheson	01440 783515
Vice-chair – Phil Stainer	01440 786462
Councillor – Linda Reading	01440 783376
Councillor – Petra Stephenson	01440 783384
Councillor – Caroline Togher	01440 783876
Parish Clerk – Jayne Whittaker gtwrattingpc@btinternet.com	07795007523
The Parish Council currently has two vacancies. If you would like information about joining Great Wratting Parish Council, please contact the Parish Clerk. www.parish-council.com/greatwrattingparishcouncil	

St Mary's Church Great Wratting Church Wardens	Telephone
Simon Corbett	01440 783698
Ben Stanton	01440 783103

Ben Smith 1926 – 2011 A Personal Memory

I shall never forget listening to Ben Smith telling me of the terrifying experience our old yellow Labrador Sam had given him as he had been trying to deliver the Parish Magazine to our cottage one day while we were out.

“Oi upset yoor aud dawg of a Thursdee” he said. “Oi was tryin' to deliver The Benefice, and oi couldn't find yoor letter box. Oi looked up and down an' could'n see it; so oi knocked on the door an' yoor awd dawg! How he baarked! Moi how 'ee baarked!”

This was really good news to us, as Sam, (second hand and six years old when he came to live with us), had always given us the impression he was totally mute, and likely to welcome a burglar with open paws! Ben's description was sounding more like a near encounter with The Hound of The Baskivilles!

“So oi went around the back” Ben continued, “but hoi fallowed moi through the house, and when oi got to the back door, moi goodness! Oh 'ow ee baarked agin!”

Ben had a beautiful soft Suffolk lilt, a bit similar, though not the same, as the Dorset accent I had as a youngster but have sadly lost through the years. I have often said that listening to Ben was like listening to Beethoven: you may have heard it before, you may even know what is coming, but you are happy to listen to it again. His was not a dialect, nor was it that contrived sound of Bernard Matthews' Norfolk in his turkey adverts, but a gentle sound: when you heard Ben there was no doubt where his roots were buried. They were deep in the Suffolk land, and in Great Wratting in particular.

And my Goodness! How the village will miss him!

Although everyone seemed to think Ben had been in Great Wratting for ever and ever, he was not actually born in the village. He was born across the other side of the main road in Kedington.

One of eleven children he was only 14 when WW II broke out, and so spent the war as a teenager. Like many in those days, he left Kedington School at 14.

Ben first went to work for Frank Sainsbury at Blunt Hall. Sadly the beautiful old Blunt Hall was pulled down to make way for the Meat Factory, now called Vion Works, an act of vandalism that surely would not be allowed today.

As far as Ben's remaining family can tell, his main job at Blunt Hall was scaring off the rooks that plagued the rather extensive gardens; and so it was until at eighteen he would have been "called up" like every other boy of that age, and he joined the Army. I gather Ben was in one of the Tank Corps, and served in France and Germany. It was the only time he did not live within a mile of Great Wrattling.

Ben married Hazel in Great Wrattling Church in 1950 and they lived in a cottage in Calford Green. They moved to Great Wrattling shortly after Ann married Keith Roberts in 1953, when Ben joined them as a general farm worker at Hall Farm. Ann mainly remembers Ben whistling away loudly as he went about his duties. For Ben was generally a happy soul when he was given a job and left to get on with it in his own way. Ben was very much "his own man", and liked to do things his way...indeed there was no other! How often did Keith have to ask Ann "Is it Ben or I who is in charge of Hall Farm"?

Ben especially liked driving the combined harvester. Perhaps it reminded him of his days with the army's tanks, though I am not sure he actually was a tank driver. He was particularly pleased one day when one of the attendant tractor drivers was none other than his former senior officer in the Tank Regiment! Ben's sense of power and seniority now that HE was giving the orders was palpable, and he related the story to me many times.

After Keith died, Ben found a job at Risbridge Hospital as gardener and kitchen porter, but left in February 1991 when he reached 65. Shortly after that he took up a part time job working for Edmund Vestey. Ben took particular pride in the Rolls Royce, which he polished often, and occasionally drove. I remember him telling me how Mr Vestey would drive his Rolls to Stansted Airport with Ben as the passenger, and Mr Vestey would ask Ben to take the car back to Thurlow while he, Mr Vestey, caught a plane to Brazil or wherever.

Ben noted that if driving "a Lord" about (well, yes, an exaggeration, but he was a relative of one!) was a great honour, what was being driven about by one? Then those who knew Ben's driving skills may have thought that perhaps Mr Vestey was the wiser man: however I did not puncture his illusions.

Yet Ben will always be remembered in Great Wrattling for the many unpaid duties he undertook for the village in general, and St Mary's Church in particular. Ben was a Sidesman, a Church Warden and de facto unpaid Verger for St Mary's. He would turn on the heaters ahead of services and meetings (of particular value to us on the Parish Council on Winter nights), and was great hand at helping to raise money for the church.

Ben was well ahead of the Red Cross et al, in many ways. Long before they got the idea of sending out unrequested raffle tickets in the post, Ben would always drop off a few books of raffle tickets to everyone in the village ahead of Great Wrattling Fête...knowing full well that most people would simply buy the books themselves, there being precious little hope of selling them in the village, as Ben would have been there first.

Nor can anyone forget how Ben could wheedle bottles of wines and spirits out of villagers for his bottle stall. Any thought of palming Ben off with the odd bottle of short dated HP soon evaporated as he regaled one as to how so-and-so had donated this bottle of Finest Gin, and another a bottle of Five Star Brandy or even yet

another a 10 Year Old Single Malt! By the time he had finished, a bottle of First Class Merlot seemed short change by comparison.

It was a variation of a technique Ben had developed while collecting alms in St Mary's. The Rev Eley mentioned that the collection plate seemed to be getting lighter each week. Ben, in addition to his own more modest donation, is said to have slipped in a crisp £20 note before he passed the plate around during the final Hymn. The 10 or 50p pieces began to look a wee bit Scrooge-like, and donations were soon greatly enhanced by an embarrassed congregation. Ben however always counted the takings at the end of the service, so was able to retrieve his note for further use the following Sunday. It is said that this note made many such visits to the church. It was a technique that never failed.

Ben also helped run a sweepstake they called "Little Ernie" to raise money for St Mary's Church Tower, along with others including Keith Roberts, Jim Tulloch and I believe Keith Stevenson. They would meet up in The Wrating Red Lion to draw the winners, as this was not only a good "public place" in which to demonstrate that there was no cheating, it also meant that there was effectively "a captive audience" to whom a few more tickets might be sold.

But Ben didn't just spend his time extracting money from others. Ben is almost certainly best remembered in Great Wrating for all the work he did himself for the village. Ben was always there when something needed doing, whether it was putting up the bunting for the fête, running a stall at the fête, or running the children around in the farm cart at the fête (now stopped on Health and Safety grounds!!!). I remember Ben helping in the Annual Spring Clean collecting up the bags of the rubbish on a tractor and trailer.



For many years Ben was a Parish Councillor and also on the PCC, and also along with his neighbour Jesse Bowyers, he looked after the church yard, cutting the grass, and helping with the topiary, until Jesse died and "Clint" Walker took it on. Ben cut the grass outside Hall Farm, giving it the appearance of a Village Green...which it is not: it belongs to Thurlow Estates. Before this, Ann Roberts says it had generally been a repository for beet and/or any old machinery that the farm did not immediately require. Seeing it as an eyesore in the heart of the village, Ann got Keith to clear it and set Ben to cutting it; a task which he did till he was too ill to do it any more.

We remember Ben for all of these things he did, but most of all I remember him bringing round The Benefice News, and stopping for a natter about all that was happening in the village. Which is where we came in, and that is what I personally shall miss so much.

Phil Stainer