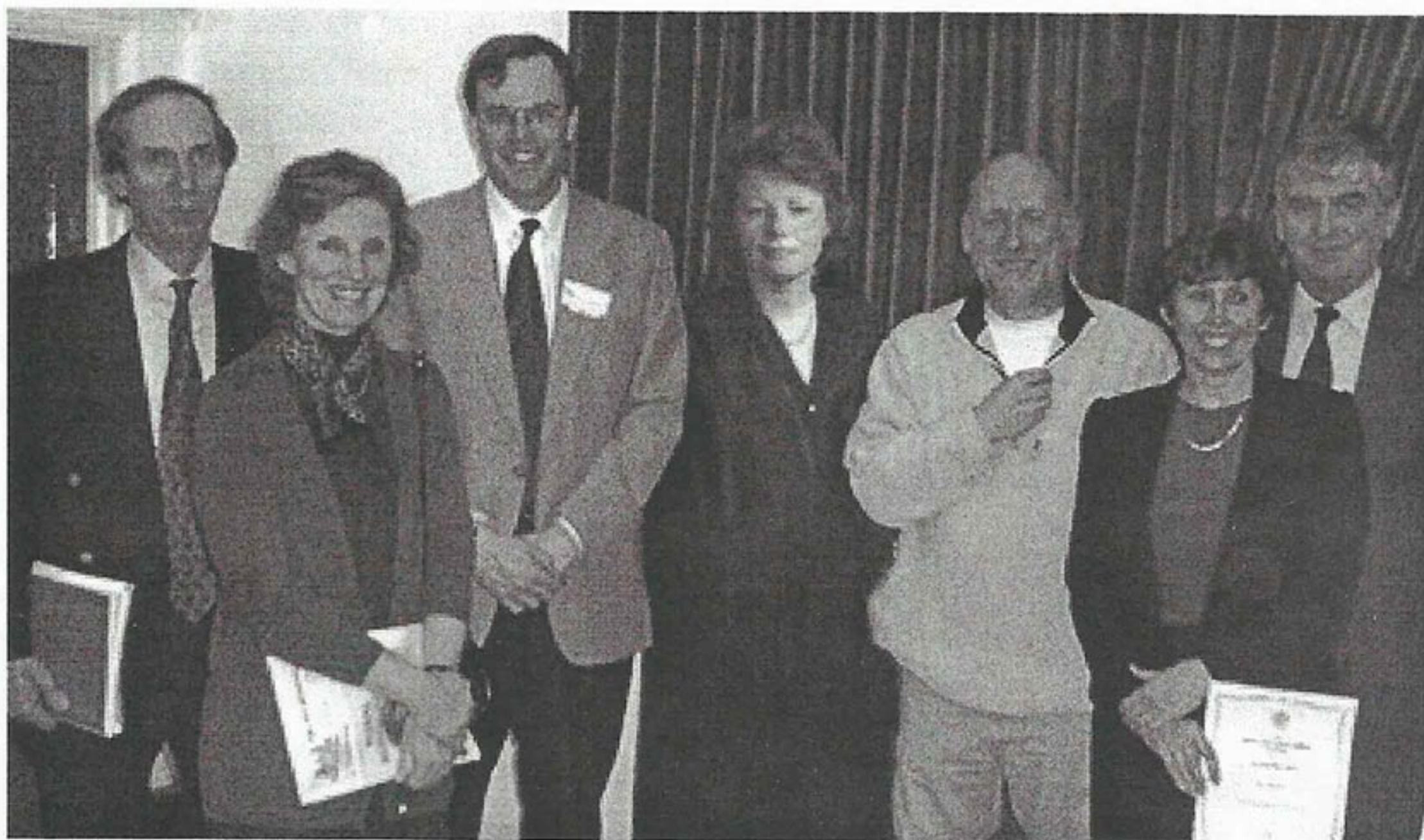


## Youngster gets top honour

Out of forty entrants Wethersfield News has won the first prize as best newcomer in the Rural Community Council of Essex Village magazine competition 2000.

The director of the RCC said. 'All the magazines have fulfilled a vitally important roll in their own community, keeping villagers informed with news, views and information particularly valuable to people new to



a community and others who live on their own'. It has always been the editorial team's intention to keep the magazine as broad and eclectic as possible and to include as much news about individuals and their activities as well as the normal parish news. This seems to have been widely accepted as a format and much appreciated by our readers. So keep the stories coming in we can't do it without your input.

The presentation was at the Great Leigh's Village Hall on February 7th followed by special guest speaker Irene Kettle, editor of the Colchester Evening Gazette. Irene gave an impressive although informal presentation without a doubt displaying her passion for journalism and enthusiasm for the smaller unfettered platform of the parish newspapers and independents. Most seats in the hall were taken by enthusiastic editorial teams and dedicated individuals. One thing that was apparent, the age of the production teams; we were one of the youngest there illustrating the need for fresh young writers with radical and interesting ideas. Writers from 10 to 110 to give a different point of view. People, who can talk about music art and sport, people who can illustrate and be creative. Researchers, historians or just enthusiastic writers. We are a microcosm of the big wide world, so let's report it and live our village life to the full.

Other winners were: Great Bently Parish News. For their monthly magazine. And West Bergholt Bulletin. For the less than monthly category.

*The editorial team: Dinie Dimsdale, David Clements, David Mangham, Richard Clubley, Charles Dimsdale, Penny Payne, Brenda Mangham and Sue Clubley, would like to thank those of you who have supported us with your contributions and indeed to all of you for your praise, criticism, ideas and sheer hard work, we know we can't do it without you!*

*We will always take articles and points of view, but let's have some from the youth of our parish after all it is your magazine so use it.*

## Come Clean

We HAD an outbreak of graffiti in the village. You will be pleased to know the culprits have come clean and cleared up.

**Well Done!**

Aslley Breat  
Parcel

Graffiti is vandalism when it is on other people's property. It is an art form in its own right, but in the correct place and with permission.

# WETHERSFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Abridged minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held at Wethersfield Village Hall on Wednesday 10th January 2001

## Hedingham Omnibuses

The Clerk reported on the present situation. Essex Police have recommended that the siting of the bus stop for the new No 16 service be changed to pick up outside the Post Office, and the Clerk has requested Hedingham Omnibuses to arrange this. As contractors to Essex County Council the matter has been referred to ECC's Contracts Planning Officer, and discussions between him and the Clerk have begun.

## Essex County Council - Transportation & Operational Services

A letter had been received indicating that the verges alongside the highway at Silver Street, opposite Meadside, belong to Essex County Council. This clarifies the ownership position in respect of car parking issues. The Clerk was asked to seek a report from BDC about the progress of the planned work to prevent car parking on the Meadside Bank.

## Braintree District Council - Stansted Airport Proposals

An invitation to attend a meeting to discuss the latest proposals had been received. The venue will be Causeway House June/July 2001 at 7.00 p.m. for 7.30 p.m. and representatives of BAA Stansted and of the Council for the Protection of Rural Essex will be present.

## Braintree District Council - Witham Technology Centre & Braintree Centre of Technology

An opportunity to obtain free computer training on a part-time basis for 9 weeks - for those not in full-time employment - is available at these two Centres. Telephone 01376 521411 (Witham) or 01376 347131 (Braintree) for more information.

## Rural Community Council of Essex - Lottery funding

A questionnaire about lottery funding for certain training events was discussed, and may be of interest to our village hall committees.

## Rural Community Council of Essex - Community Transport funding

Grants of up to £1500 are available for improving existing transport services and providing additional facilities for rural communities in Essex. The funds are for providers of community and voluntary transport - generally co-

ordinated by BDC rather than the Parish Council.

## Local Government Commission for England

The Clerk reported on the Commission's report setting out its final recommendations for electoral arrangements in the Braintree District. He read from paragraph 157, page 42 of the report :

"We have noted Wethersfield Parish Council's view that Toppesfield shares no links with the other villages in Three Fields' ward and we have not been persuaded by the evidence supplied to combine these different communities. We remain of the view that the existing Three Fields' ward would provide the most reasonable balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria, and are content to endorse it as part of our recommendations."

## PLANNING

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| 00/01859/FUL | Thatched Cottage, Cherry Gardens,   |
| 00/01860/LBC | Braintree Road, Wethersfield  |
|              | Erection of extension   |
| 00/01871/FUL | Parkfields Farm, Beazley End, Wethersfield  |
|              | Erection of single storey extension   |
| 00/01874/FUL | Martins Nest, Braintree Road,   |
| 00/01880/LBC | Wethersfield  |
|              | Erection of two-storey extension, demolition of outbuilding and erection of two-bay garage. |
| 00/01881/FUL | Gardeners Cottage, Codhams Lane, Beazley End, Wethersfield                                  |
|              | Erection of two-storey side and rear extensions   |

## The Old Cottage, adjacent to Wethersfield Village Hall

The Clerk was asked to write to BDC about the condition of this building, which could be dangerous to children. There is also an unregistered vehicle facing the building which has been unattended for six months.

## Finchingfield/Shalford/Wethersfield Roads

The condition of these and surrounding roads due to potholes is cause for concern. The weather has been a major factor. The Clerk will write to ECC Highways, and seek a copy of their road work programme for the forthcoming year.

# Men's Club

## Forthcoming Events

### 7th. April: Disco with the TFG

What does TFG stand for? Some say Two Fat Gits, others say Two Fine Guys.

### 12th. May: Space Night

Fancy Dress party for all Treckies and Sci Fi fans. With live music, but from which planet?

### 9th. June: Club Outing to Great Yarmouth

### 21st. July: Summer party and BBQ

Put on your beach wear, don't forget your diet and get down.

### Club Competitions:

Most of the internal competitions will be played on the night see club notice board for details.



## The Ice Man Cometh

Third Professional World Class Darts Player at the Men's Club

Wethersfield men's club regularly put on events that are not only entertaining but in a world class. Alan Warner one of Britain's most famous Darts players visited



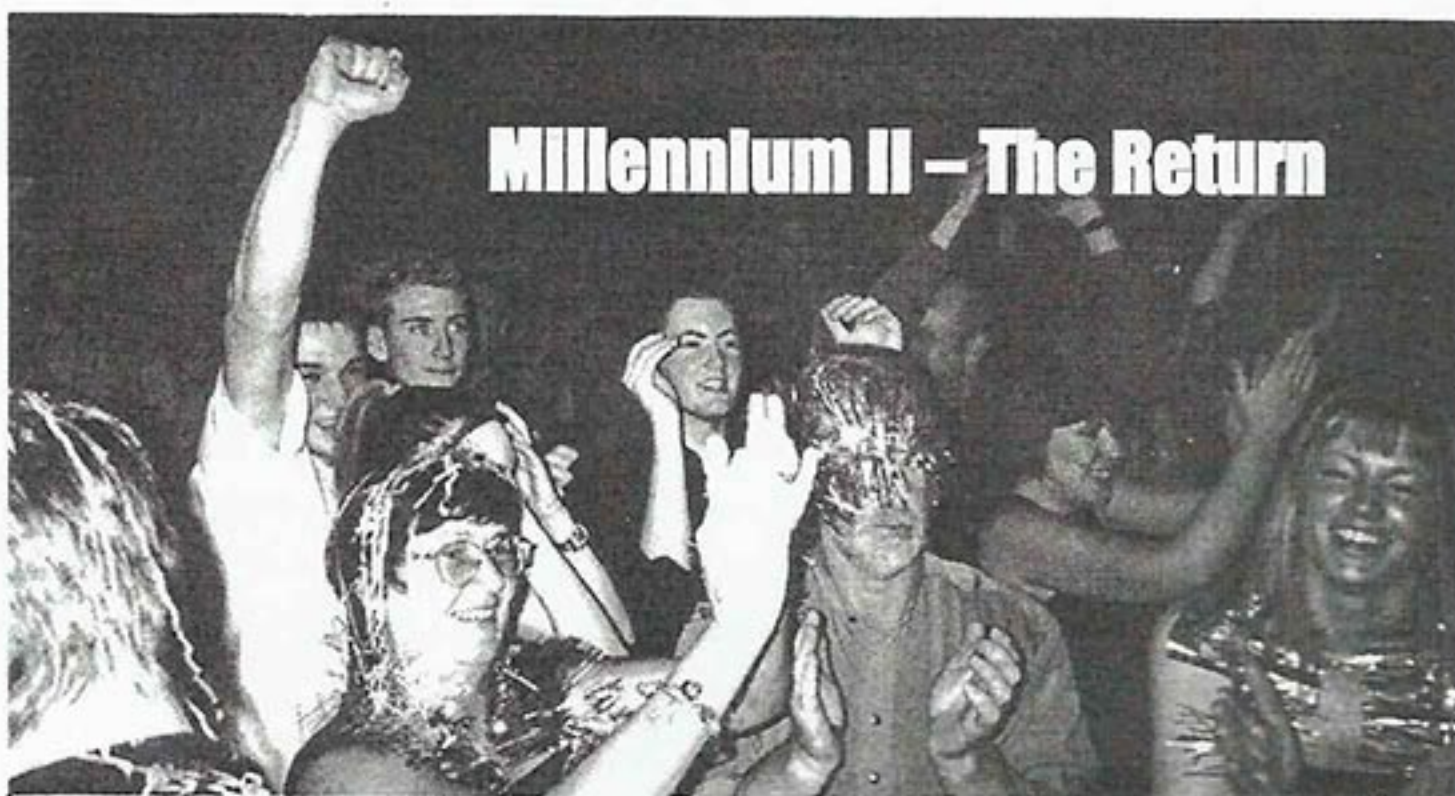
the village club on the 9th. February. He showed us how it was done and gave the members an opportunity to try and beat him at his own game.

Following in the footsteps of Rod Harrington and Jamie Harvey, PDC ranked number three Alan Harvey was playing all comers. They came from as far away as Braintree, Halstead and Hedingham to watch or to have a game against one of England's top players, known as the Ice Man. Two were successful, J Sibley and S Cook; the night was fun as well as entertaining. Colin Loyd and Al Headman, two other well-known players were also there, with the caller and the master of ceremonies also from the darts circuit. All the action was relayed on a six-foot video screen so the audience could clearly see what was being scored. The atmosphere was electric.

After Alan had played each game, he presented his competitor with a signed certificate as a memento of the night. Those watching were able to join in the quiz set by Alan, which was read out during the evening, all the questions being related to darts.

Three of darts most famous players have already been to the Men's Club and proved very successful. What price on the man himself, nine times world champion, Phil the Power Taylor, coming to the village.

Don't forget! If you don't use your club you don't know what you're missing!



True, there was controversy over the naming of such an auspicious event. There are those that say that this was the true Millennium. There are those that suggest that Jesus was born in the year 4 BC so we have already missed it. Quite honestly, who cares? Anyway, back to the event itself. The Hall was decked out gloriously with Union Flags, banners and the like. There was a bouncy slide for the less mature revellers and a bar for the even less mature still. Sound and Light was provided by the indomitable Clements family and the music supplied by the thinning **Two Fat Gits**. Perhaps they should consider a name change, how about "**Two Hansom Underweight Gentlemen**" or "**THUG**" for short?) Approximately 170 enthusiastic partygoers were present to dance the night away. There was a nasty incident when one of the "**Fat Gits**" got out of his pram because his CDs kept jumping. For an awful moment the Hall was silent as this worthy citizen lambasted the assembled throng. However, the situation calmed and - thank God - there were no further hiccoughs on the music front.

There may not have been much to report on this excellent event but the next major happening in Wethersfield is the **Annual Cricket Club Quiz** to be held in March. Last year this sporting jamboree descended into scenes of controversy and shame - the question master requiring a Police escort to leave the building. Your intrepid newshound will be there in person to bring up to the minute reports on all the action.

NightLife.

# Letters:

Dear sirs

It is hoped that the recent notice in the church porch concerning the maintenance of the churchyard, has been read by interested parties, and useful comments made to assist and carry out this new look to the grave yard.

It is a commendable scheme. The sad problem of neglect has overshadowed the village and caused distress to those whose loved ones rest there.

Would it not be prudent to suggest that a wider pathway is always kept mown, to give easier access to the lower part of the graveyard 'the conservation area', and that a shredder might be a useful piece of equipment to deal with branches and woody material, solving the problem of the unsightly rubbish heap. The bark chippings could be sold to offset the cost.

Angela

Dear sir

First I would like to send my appreciation to the team for taking so much effort in producing such an imaginative and attractive local news production.

With regards to the proposed skate park area for the young people of Wethersfield. For the most part I agree with Mrs. Deacon's letter in the last issue. However as a pensioner I remember that as teenagers we were more occupied in serving in the forces. Men women and children were being killed, maimed, losing homes and future prospects, in order that the teenagers of today, are in a position to complain, 'Why doesn't someone do something for me'.

In the word of a famous politician, they may ask, 'What can I do for myself?'

Come on whiners, create, or join in an effort to provide, the facilities you require. The library is able to assist in providing all necessary information.

Name and address supplied.

I am most grateful to David Platt for his letter concerning Wethersfield Churchyard, and especially for his offer to roll his sleeves up and tackle the situation. Complainants are not hard to find, willing volunteers are!

The state of the graveyard is a continuing concern to all, but it is not as simple a matter as some might think; therefore I would like to take this opportunity to clear a few false ideas.

Firstly, we must all thank the stalwart few, who spent last year battling against the unprecedented grass growth. Without their efforts we would have had a total jungle. It is difficult to realise just how large an area has to be covered until you are actually trudging behind a mower. A country churchyard has to fulfil a range of expectations. Naturally, the newly-bereaved generally want to see a neat and tidy appearance, but we should not think that this should be like an urban lawn cemetery; much of our rural village life has been destroyed by urbanisation, and the Parochial Church Council are not willing to see the churchyard go down the same route. There are also nature considerations. A churchyard is often the only site in a community where a whole range of wildlife can flourish, and there is a considerable movement towards building this aspect into churchyard planning. It is also important to consider the Churchyard Regulations. These are imposed on us by the Diocesan Chancellor and have the force of law. They cover a whole range of issues ranging from the size, wording and type of gravestone, right down to the flowers that can be put on a grave. Sadly we regularly see innocent contraventions of these regulations, and it is only good fortune that we have not experienced the dreadful upsets seen in other places. Please, if you are recently bereaved, take time to check out what is allowed, and save needless additional heartache.

Attempting to balance all these issues, the PCC, together with wildlife advisors, has drawn up a Churchyard Management Policy. It takes on board keeping the present burial area (east of the main path) in a respectable condition, whilst allowing other parts to take on varying degrees of "wildness". The plan may be seen in the Church Porch, and should be consulted by anyone helping in the churchyard so that all our efforts can be directed towards a common end. Finally, do respond to David's call; the more volunteers, the lighter the load. And when the team is established, I will be pleased to go through the Policy with you and explain as best I can, what can and can't be legally done.

Roy Threadgold (Churchwarden)

## C.R.E.A.M.E.R. FUND Winning formula

The combination of a local good cause and good, wholesome comfort food proved a winning formula in Weathersfield in early March. Members of the local Conservative branch put on a Fun and Favorite Food evening at the village hall in aid of the C.R.E.A.M.E.R. fund, raising money to buy medical equipment for Freshwell Health Center in Finchingfield. Fund officers Mr. Chris Blewett and Mrs. Iris Jealous outlined the formation, aims and continuing work of the fund. A supper of Bangers 'n' Mash and salad, followed by spotted dick and custard. After a generous raffle the evening's profit of around £500 was handed over to the fund officers. And a good time was had by all.

**A note for your diary - the Easter Raffle at the Freshwell Health Center will take place from Monday 9th April until mid day on Thursday 12th April. Raffle prizes would be most appreciated.**

I thought you might like to know that a magnificent £20,958.63 was raised last year and I would like to take the opportunity on behalf of the Committee of the CREAMER Fund to thank you all for your support and your contributions, which have been raised in many and various ways. Collecting tins in the Health Centre, books £228.13, Jig Saws £35.49 and Voluntary Cars donations £167.67 so you can see that every little helps.

The total expenditure for the year was £8,916.28 this includes running costs, £1,127.34, equipment purchases £7,715.14 and administration costs £23.80. You may be aware X-Ray facilities have been envisaged for some time and have now been ordered. The CREAMER Fund has donated £2,700 towards the cost. The facilities at the Health Centre benefit the whole Community but without all

# THE THREE FIELDS PARISH CLUSTER

Excerpts from the MINUTES of the meeting held at Wethersfield Parish Hall, Wednesday, 22nd November 2000

Representatives from Finchingfield, Wethersfield and Great Bardfield as well as Braintree District Council, attended this meeting.

## Weak bridges in the locality

Recent weight restrictions on some local bridges has presented problems for grain and other heavy delivery vehicles serving farms in the area, particularly near Toppesfield, Sampford and Castle Hedingham.

There has been an update by Essex County Council and a number of the subject bridges (excepting the Nunnery Bridge at Castle Hedingham) have been given exemptions for agricultural, refuse collection and emergency vehicles, as well as buses. A number of objections to the weight restrictions have been received by ECC. The early indication is that funding is likely to be significantly increased, but details of finance and which bridges will be included is not known. The BDC officers advised objectors to make representation to ECC without delay before priorities for this work are set.

Local bridges with current weight limitations are:

Sible Hedingham - Alderford Road Bridge

Great Yeldham - Stone Bridge

Gestingthorpe - Gestingthorpe Bridge

Liston - House Bridge

Castle Hedingham - Nunnery Bridge

Glemsford - West Mill Bridge

Toppesfield - Cust Hall Bridge

Ulting - Bumfords Bridge

Colne Engaine - Langley Mill Bridge

Stoke by Clare - Stoke by Clare Bridge

Colne Engaine - Overshot Mill Bridge

Witham - Blue Mills Bridge

## Planning Applications

There has been a recent case in Finchingfield where a telecommunications mast erection had been approved by BDC without any opportunity for the Parish Council to consult, despite objections from both Great Bardfield and Finchingfield.

Peter Crofts said that this was a particular case and not a general issue. He agreed that there had been a lack of communication - having had no comment from Finchingfield PC by the deadline date, it had been assumed that there was no objection. In reply to John Finbow, he explained the procedure and recent experience with local masts and mentioned that it is most important for parish councils to voice any local concerns, however small, to the District Council within the planning timescale. There is a particular problem with the erection of telecommunications masts in rural areas and the Government is likely to tighten the planning controls on these masts.

## BRAINTREE DISTRICT COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

A report on the activities of the Partnership was given, and the subject of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders was discussed. They are not favoured or used by Essex Police in rural areas except as a last resort. They are considered to be over burdensome and bureaucratic. SEAMS, the mediation service, are seen to be more effective, particularly with neighbour disputes. Essex Police find that the new Harassment Act is a useful tool.

## PROGRESS ON YOUTH ISSUES

The Cyber Café in Spa Road, Witham has been very successful. BDC are supporting a similar facility in Braintree, but it is difficult to find suitable premises in the villages. A mobile facility (similar to a mobile library van) is planned in conjunction with the ECC Youth Service, providing audio, video and Internet access. Tony Hayward suggested that while the mobile café is commendable, more permanent one-stop shops would be valuable. Lack of public transport has been identified as the principle problem for teenagers. There is a shortage of buses, and a need for bus links into villages such as Cornish Hall End. Peter Crofts stated that BDC are putting even more money into community transport over this year and next, including four new bus services. ECC subsidises a number of routes, but more are known to be needed. ECC are endeavouring to prioritise the demand for transport based on levels of deprivation, and Peter advises Parish Councils to lobby ECC. The Rural White Paper may include reference to transport matters. Peter mentioned a 'Polybus' trial, which the ECC are to run in Braintree, but this is an urban project using DETR funds. Tony Hayward mentioned the new Transport Partnership Board in Braintree, which is inviting membership from Parish Council representatives.

## STANSTED AIRPORT

The latest consultation documents on expanding the Airport beyond 15 million passengers per annum are now published, and BDC will be considering its response at the November Strategy Committee meeting.

## BUILDING ON FLOOD PLAIN

A number of members asked about where the responsibility lies for ensuring that property building on flood plain areas is not allowed. Peter Crofts said that BDC almost always refused planning permission in such cases. There are fundamental criteria, which are followed, and BDC are provided with details of flood plain areas by the Environment Agency. He said that recent events had concentrated the minds of all parties involved.

## FLOODING ON BY-ROADS

The meeting discussed recent problems, and it was felt that ECC Highways should ensure that gullies and gullies are kept clear and the Environment Agency could do more work on trimming river banks and improving drainage. It was proposed that a letter to these agencies be sent from each parish.

## FLY-TIPPING AT NORTHEYS FARM ENTRANCE

Wethersfield/Finchingfield border. Peter Tattersley reminded the

# Rainbows & Brownies Update

## 1st Wethersfield Rainbows

A few Rainbows came on the Colchester Zoo trip to meet Father Christmas, and all thoroughly enjoyed the day, despite the cold. We had a very good turnout at the Toy Service, and the girls sang "Away in a Manger" with such great gusto that they were persuaded to sing it again at the Brownie Concert. We said goodbye to Maisie and Isobel, who have moved away, and to Mary and Lucy as they go on to Brownies. This term we have welcomed Freddie as a new Rainbow.

## 1st Wethersfield Brownies

A number of Brownies enjoyed a trip to Colchester Zoo to meet Father Christmas. This was a District outing, and, in total, two coach loads of Brownies, Rainbows and Guides went. I would like to thank my little group of hand bell ringers for their playing at the three church Carol Services. They did very well. Fourteen Brownies took their Jester's Badge at a concert performed before parents at the end of term, during which they performed a play, sung, danced, played the recorder, did gymnastics and recited poetry. We then sadly said goodbye to Daisy and Louise as they move on. This term we have welcomed Mary and Lucy as they come up from Rainbows.

Cherry Threadgold (Brown Owl)  
Sarah Pilgrim (Snowy Owl)

## Right Royal Jumble

Royal British Legion Wethersfield and Shalford Branch

We are holding our JUMBLE SALE on Saturday the 7th April 2001 at 2.00 pm in Shalford Village Hall in aid of Branch Benevolent Funds. All donations of bric-a-brac, cakes, plants jumble, etc are most welcome and can be collected, if one of the following is contacted. Or take to Shalford Village Hall after 9.30am on the Saturday - Admission 20 pence.

Wethersfield J. Chapman - 850837, Shalford F. Monk - 851103, F. Morton - 850626, P. Rawlinson - 850075

THANKING YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

## Royal British Legion Report

Wethersfield and Shalford Branch

There seems to be some misconception about belonging to the Royal British Legion and as we have a local branch I thought it would be of general interest to describe the workings, plus the advantages of joining our branch.

The Legion exists to promote the welfare of those who have served or are serving in H.M. forces and their spouses and dependants, it is a registered charity, non party political, non sectarian, democratic organisation managed at national, county and branch level by elected members.

Legion benevolence extends to all members of the serving and ex-service community, not just those who belong to the organisation.

Non service personnel can join as associate members and benefits for them as well as ordinary members include favourable insurance rates, master card with low APR and no annual charge, access to nearly 900 legion clubs and a free magazine every other month.

Many service families are entitled to a wide range of benefits and services provided by the Legion, which also cares for service spouses and dependants including resettlement training at its college and halls of residence in Wiltshire. Convalescence can be provided at one of three care homes and short breaks for those caring for the elderly and disabled are available at one of seven residential homes.

Money is needed to carry out these objectives and fundraising is a priority. Funds raised are used where it is clearly established that need exists, the main source being the poppy appeal.

The Wethersfield and Shalford branch was formed in 1930 and now has 55 members including seven ladies. The majority are local with a few coming from outlying villages. Money is raised at an annual jumble sale at Shalford (April 7th. this year), an autumn coffee morning at Wethersfield and the organising and collection of money for the poppy appeal, which raised over £1,300 last year. On previous years one of our members went on the 'Pedal to Paris' ride, raising over a thousand pounds!

More members are needed to keep these activities going. I feel the main reason for joining is a belief in what the Legion stands for and we can all assist by giving up time for the poppy appeal and other fund raising. We also need to bring to the attention of the branch committee any local service men, women or their dependants who may need help.

By joining our branch your subscription, currently eight pounds a year, helps those in need. The future of the Legion depends on new members coming forward.

Anyone wanting further details, please contact the branch secretary Peter Morton telephone 01371 850 626

## Wethersfield Diary Dates . . . .

### MARCH

MEN'S CLUB	Club Dinner Wethersfield Village Hall	10th.	pm
The DOG	Quiz Night	11th.	7pm
Gardener's Club	Wethersfield Village Hall	16th.	8pm
The DOG	Dave Howman plays	16th.	8pm
British Legion	Branch Dinner The Grange, Shalford	21st.	
Parish Council	Public meeting Wethersfield Village Hall	21st.	7.45pm
The DOG	Quiz Night	25th.	7pm
Floral Arts	Wethersfield Village Hall	28th.	8pm
Pre School	Jumble Sale Wethersfield Village Hall	31st.	11am

### APRIL

Wine Club	Wethersfield Village Hall	6th.	pm
HISTORY SOC.	Wethersfield Village Hall	11th.	8pm
British Legion	Jumble Sale Shalford Village Hall	7th.	2pm
MEN'S CLUB	Disco with TFG	7th.	8pm
The TAVERN	Tom and Den Entertain	14th.	8.30pm
Parish Council	Public meeting Wethersfield Village Hall	18th.	7.45pm
Gardener's Club	Wethersfield Village Hall	20th.	8pm
Floral Arts	Wethersfield Village Hall	25th.	8pm

### MAY

HISTORY SOC.	Wethersfield Village Hall	10th.	8pm
MEN'S CLUB	Fancy Dress Space Night	12th.	8pm
Parish Council	Public meeting Wethersfield Village Hall	16th.	7.45pm
Gardener's Club	Wethersfield Village Hall	18th.	8pm
Floral Arts	Wethersfield Village Hall	30th.	8pm

FUN DAY will be on the 14 July this year

The Petanque Court is ready for use on the village field. Boule can be borrowed from Bill Norman or David Clements. This is a free service and can be used at any time.

On the 11th. October Richard Hagen will be visiting us from Massachusetts USA. Richard is a 'Ghost Hunter' and spends much of his time in this part of Essex. Your first opportunity to meet him will be at the HISTORY SOCIETY MEETING at 8 pm. in the village hall.

## The Strawberry Tree

at 30 Hereward Way, Wethersfield

**Gifts and Crafts  
Household Items  
Plants  
Haberdashery etc.**

Opening Times

Monday - Saturday 10.00am - 11.30am

(or any time after hours if I am at home)

Come along and see what we have to offer

(profits to be donated to the CREAMER fund)

## SMALL ADS COLUMN

There has been no further take up yet for this column.

In future issues we will only include it if we are sent details that you would like us to insert.

# Artist With Green Fingers

Gordon and Muriel Carter have lived in their cosy Saffron Garden's home since 1953, the year it was built. Muriel is very much a local girl, having lived in the village all her life and Gordon from more distant shores - Halstead!

Gordon is a very talented artist and examples of this gift are displayed all around the walls of their home - oil paintings of local beauty spots, scenes from favourite holiday destinations - Lake District, Bournemouth and Cornwall a particular favourite of both of them.

Gordon was educated at Earls Colne Grammar School and he remembers 'clashing with my art teacher over my artistic ability' - regularly coming bottom of the class in the subject. He was so determined to prove his teacher wrong that he worked hard at his technique and soon came at the top of the class.

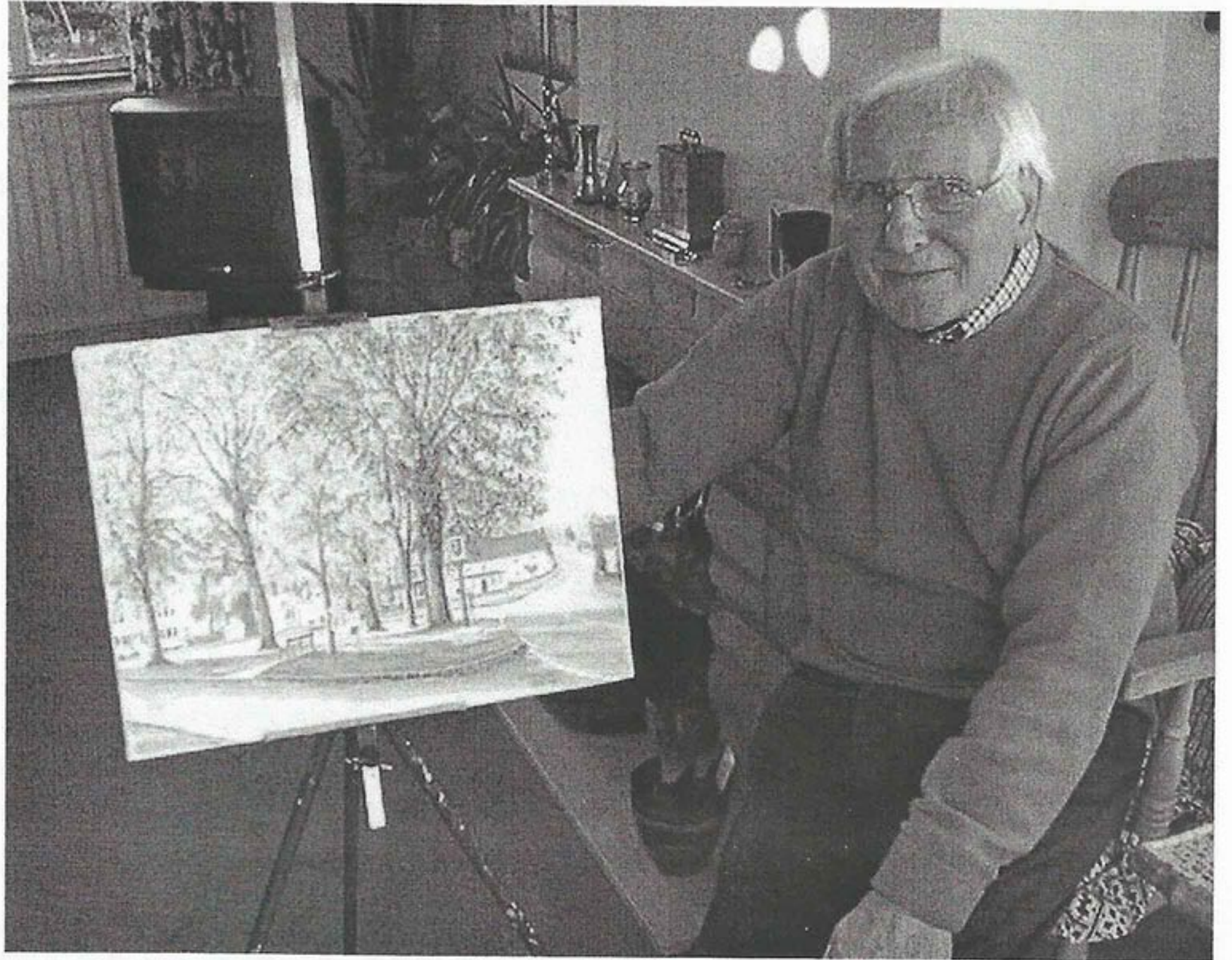
After leaving school, he joined Crittalls in Braintree and trained as a draughtsman. The War interrupted this career and he was sent abroad to Burma and Sri Lanka to serve as a signaller, transcribing messages sent in morse code. The days were long and conditions very primitive in their jungle hut, but Gordon used his artistic talent to good advantage by producing home-made greetings cards for his mates to send home. He still has the pen and ink drawings of the 'signals hut' and head and shoulder sketches of the local natives - a reminder of those days.

He now paints in the comfort of his home and his work has been exhibited at Braintree in the Town Hall and White Hart and in Finchingfield. Gordon also contributed drawings for the book 'Wethersfield 2000'

Gordon's artistic talents also extend to his garden, a corner plot much admired by passers-by.

The garden was originally a piece of land covered in rubble and is now a very natural 'cottage-garden' style area. He built the fish pond as far back as 1953 and Gordon comments 'that it has never sprung a leak in all that time, fingers crossed of course!' The many shrubs and trees were grown from scratch and the grape vine in the conservatory is now 30 years old.

Green fingers and artistic ability certainly run through the family - Gordon's father was a keen vegetable gardener and Howard, Gordon's son, also an accomplished artist is currently using his woodworking skills to build a violin.



## Odd Odes

*From the late Stan Smith.*



W e had a goat  
with a cast-iron throat  
But it never used to bite us  
Father's boots it chewed  
And the goat we slewed  
For it died of 'pendicius'

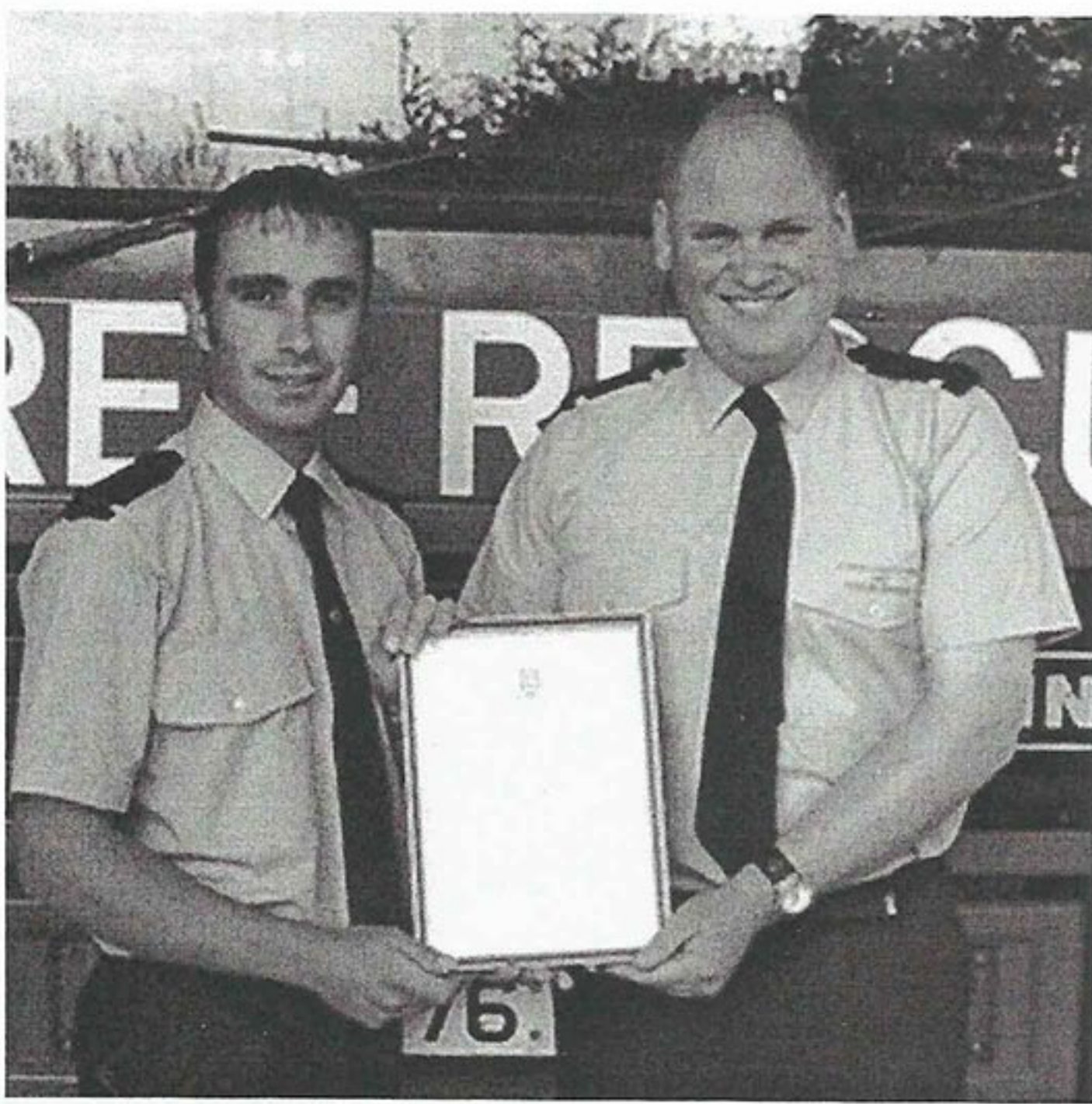
That goat had whiskers that touched the floor  
And with it the kiddies made next door  
The finest laces you ever saw...

---

Stan at 90 years couldn't remember the  
rest of the rhyme!

And that, as one might say, just about ties it up!

# A 24 Year Record For The Fire Service



The year 2000 saw our Fire Service called out 127 times, a figure not exceeded since 1976. The records for the last 2 months give an indication of the large variety of incidences dealt with from our local station.

The most serious incident occurred on the Hedingham Road at the Mushroom Farm on the 23rd November. A vehicle driving towards Hedingham hit the front of a bus belonging to the Hedingham Omnibus Company. The driver was trapped in his vehicle and was eventually cut free by our local fire fighters and was then airlifted to hospital by the air ambulance service. Thankfully the driver suffered no more than a badly broken leg. His letter thanking the rescue services pays tribute to their skill in assisting him.

The Fire Station diary entry also shows calls to attend the Shalford refuse disposal site on 4 consecutive days in mid November. This was in response to calls from members of the public when they saw the methane gas disposal flame burning. Apparently it normally burns with a clear flame. On these occasions, probably because of variation in gas pressure, it was obvious to the naked eye.

Chimney fires accounted for a further 6 calls which were interspersed with a similar number of road traffic accident responses.

**On Christmas Day the firemen were part of a 5 pump team attending an accident at Rayne. A car left the A120 and landed on top of a single storey house extension igniting the fuel in the ruptured tank as it did so.**

---

## Welcome to Simon

Simon Binks must be congratulated on qualifying to join the permanent crew as a Fire Fighter having completed his training under the watchful eye of Howard Wright. Simon, a painter and decorator by trade, lives with his wife in Finchingfield.



## CRIME

Despite the fact that Wethersfield men's club is conspicuous by its lack of presence, it is underground and surrounded by private property, yet it still manages to be plagued by the criminal element in our society. On Monday 18th. September at 5.20am the club was broken into and after cutting the telephone lines, disabling the external alarms with foam and knocking the internal ones off the wall the person or persons unknown proceeded to destroy anything that had money in it. They escaped undetected until the steward arrived to bottle up later that morning. Nobody apparently heard or saw anything at the time of the burglary. The police were called and forensics brought in, but as yet there have been no arrests.

This is the second time this has happened with many similarities to the first crime. Perhaps it is a coincidence that our pavilion sheds have all been broken in to recently and Castle Hedingham's playing field has had its mowers and field maintenance equipment stolen. Sadly this probably means that we as a community need to be a little more vigilant when it comes to locking up our property, obviously criminals have an idea where the best pickings are to be found and are acting on that information.



# DIARY OF A GENTLEWOMAN

*Continuing the story of 'Angela' a child's Nurse at St Mary's in Great Maplestead.*

When I was a young girl, children born out of wedlock, unwanted babies and orphans had no real place in our society. With few private homes willing to take them on and no national health system, the care of these poor unfortunate infants was left to charity and the care of nuns.

My account continues of my experiences St. Mary's Great Maplestead in the late 1940s, run by nuns, funded by charity, surrounded by a high brick wall and resembling a prison.

St. Mary's was divided into three wards:

**Bethany** A single large room for twelve babies up to a year old. Cots lined the walls and the space around the fireplace was for bathing and feeding. The children's kitchen was nearby as was a sluice for all napkins (nappies), which were boiled after rinsing by hand in cold water.

The ward for small toddlers contained twenty children from one year to three years. They all slept in cots in one dormitory with a bathroom nearby with their dining room and playroom downstairs.

**Big Toddlers** were kept in a very noisy section. Some of the older children were strong, robust and boisterous. When the small toddlers were old enough usually around 3 years old, they were moved up to the big toddlers ward and were overawed at first with the noise and activity. These children had never received discipline from a father figure, but we were never allowed to smack or punish them, some had to be restrained, as they were destructive and often ransacked the rooms of staff.

An outside area provided a space to let off steam and had simple play equipment, including water and sand play. All toys were shared.

The toilets were primitive, only chamber pots were provided for the children who had never seen a lavatory. We were discouraged from having favourites, but I recall one little girl who I was allowed to take out for an afternoon. On declaring that she needed to go to the toilet, was totally bewildered by the prospect of using a conventional lavatory I eventually calmed her down by providing a child's potty to her great relief, and mine.

There was a great amount of domestic work carried out by the nurses. Chairs, tables and floors needed scrubbing down after every meal. No child had its own wardrobe and clothing had to be allotted every day when it returned from the laundry.

The only men the children saw were a very old odd job man and the priest, father Kenny. Matron presided at lunch, on the top table with sister and the staff nurses. Other staff like 'Ovey' head of laundry, Miss Walton a tiny lady who was a seamstress and a massive kindhearted Scottish lady, Miss Legge, who was in charge of the domestics, took it in turn to join the staff table. Woe betides anyone who sneezed, it was not allowed! Neither was any contact to be made by knife and fork to plate.

Breakfast was simple, probably porridge, our mid-day meal was substantial and tea was a riot. When the bell sounded there was a mad rush to grab a piece of bread and you were very lucky if you had a teacup with a handle. A glass for tea was quite normal.

1948 came around, with new ideas on children's welfare, and for the first time, if a nurse had a special interest in a child they were allowed outside the grounds; a visit to Halstead became possible. There had to be no favourites each child had to receive the same amount of love, care and attention.

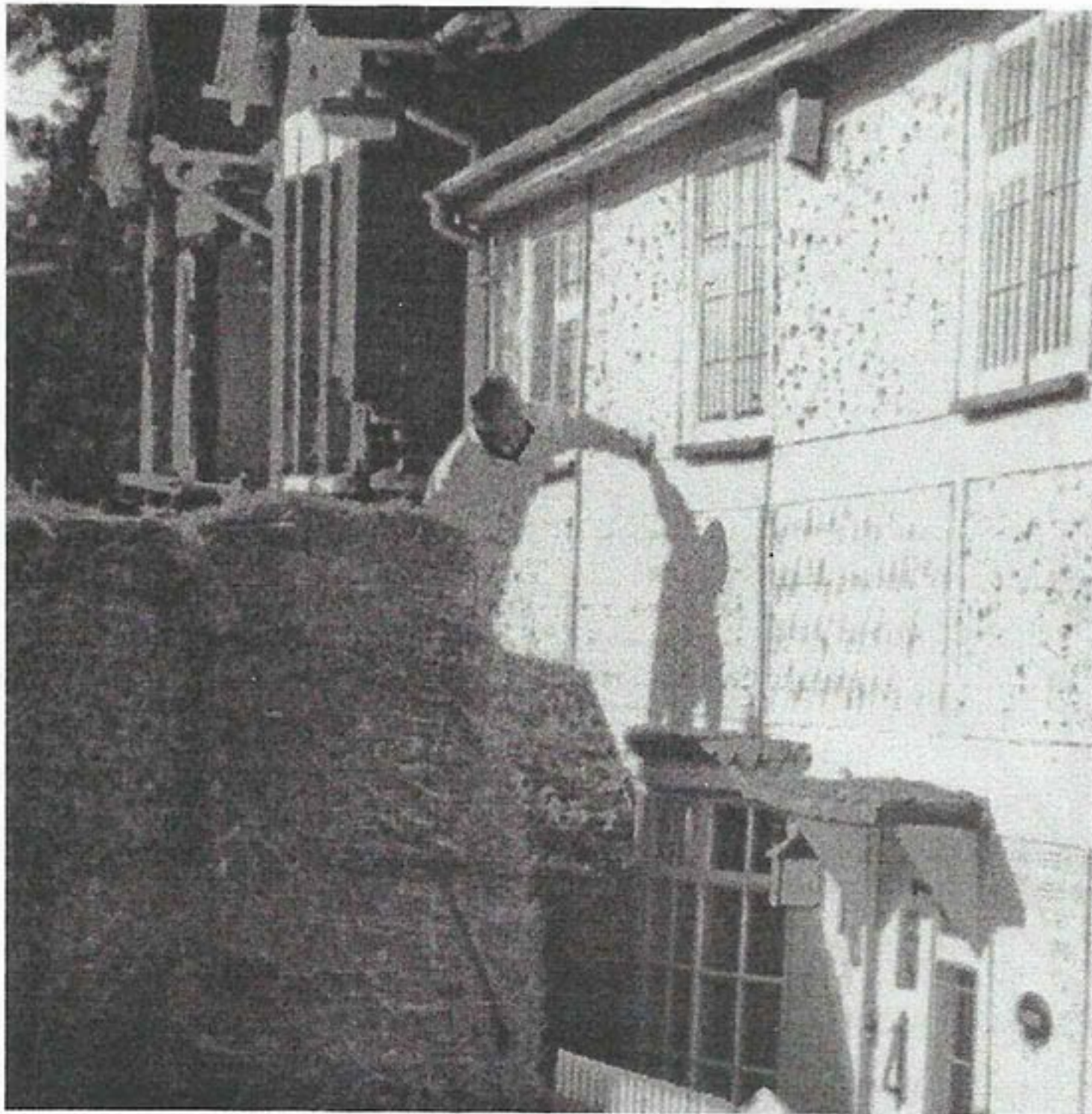
Susan was a girl with wiry hair, a hard rasping voice, was very serious and a loner. She tried to pronounce my name, which came out as 'Allah' (Angela). I can still hear this echoing down the long corridors whenever she saw me. Going on a bus was a new experience for her as was walking through a busy street with so many people. On reaching my home she found my blind father, who wore dark glasses, rather daunting. We had tea and then started the long walk back through the town and the journey back to St. Mary's. Her vocabulary was limited, but when asked if she had enjoyed herself she murmured 'ness'.

The years have flown by, and I often wonder what the children have made of their lives, for now most would be in their fifties, and if they remembered the nurses who cherished them. Never a mummy myself, I have been Mummy to many and that is satisfying.



# PROPERTY VIEW

## BURSTING INTO THE MILLENNIUM



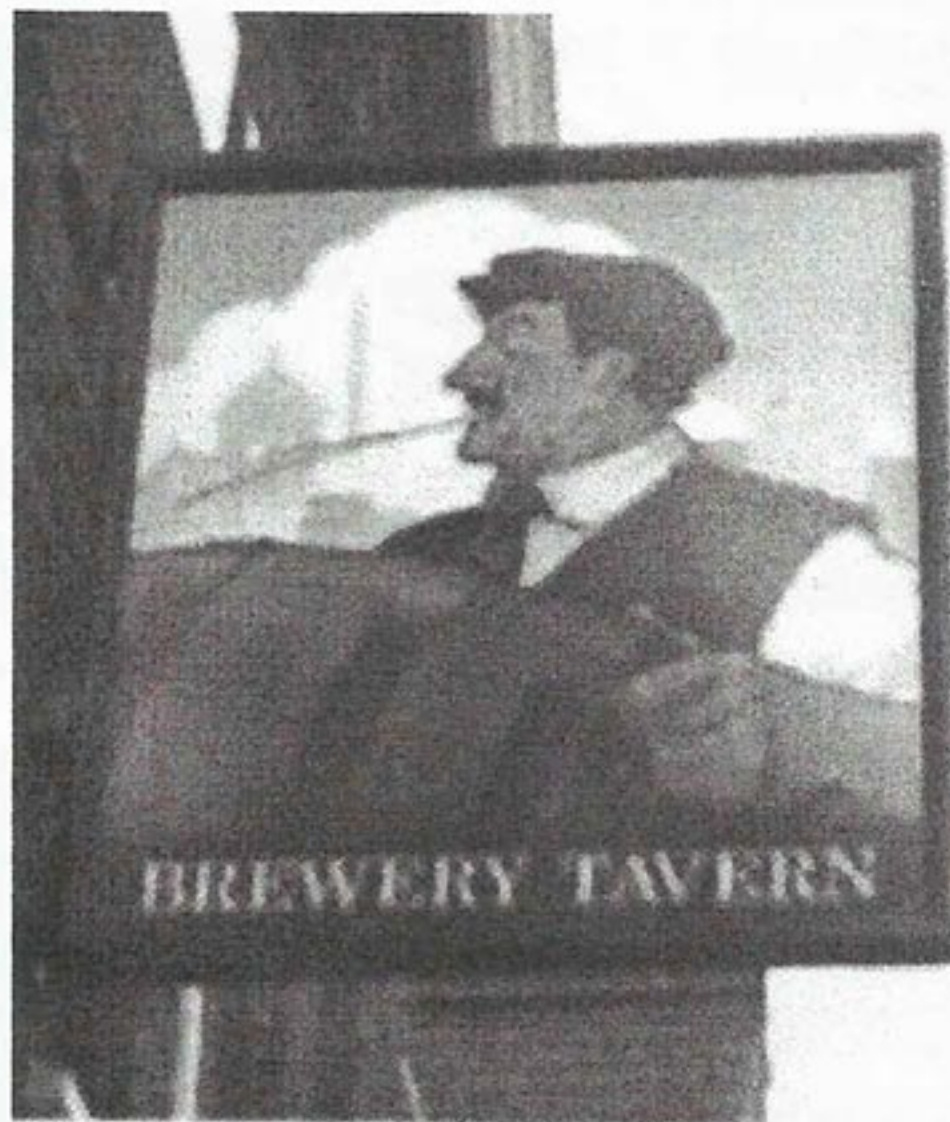
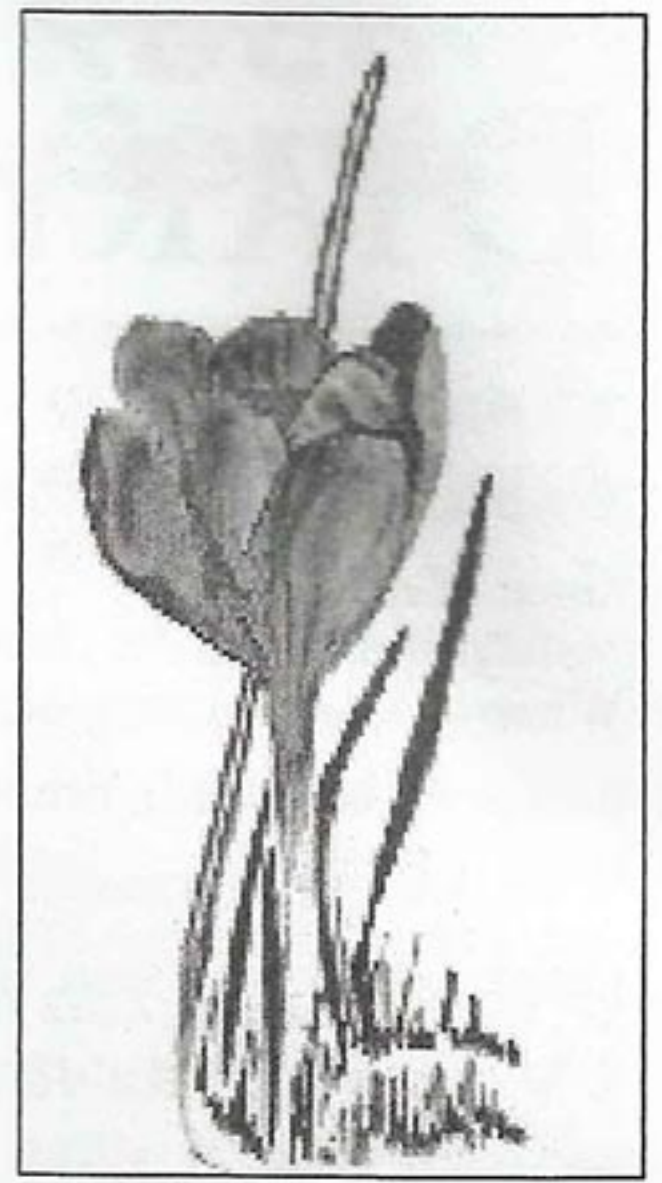
Well here we are again, another new year. I have to say that if the first ten days or so are anything to go by, we have got off to a very lively start. Lettings in the village have been quite prominent with a great deal of interest being shown. However a word of caution if you are a Landlord. Please ensure, if you have any vacant property, that there is a level of heat switched on so that burst pipes or water tanks are avoided. I have heard of two cases recently in the village where tenants or indeed owners of property have been away and pipes have burst or tanks have failed causing untold damage. In fact in one case it was so bad that the property had to be vacated whilst repairs are carried out. I do not wish to be alarmist but it can and does happen.

The property market has shown early signs of movement but prices have remained firm so far. Applicants wishing to register seem to have a good idea of what they are looking for and in some cases they have been looking for quite some time, preferring to live in rented

accommodation whilst looking. We are sometimes asked if vendors will adjust the purchase price in order to minimize Stamp Duty. I have no doubt many if not all of you are aware that Stamp Duty jumps to 3% over £250,000 and we are asked if say, £12,000 could be shown as 'fixtures and fittings'. The answer is 'yes' it can be done but one might need to justify this course of action to the Inland Revenue and, in order to do that, you might well have to swear on Oath that the value really is £12,000. I understand all transfer documents are seen by the revenue and they will have an extremely good idea of what the value of the property is. It is of course a criminal offence to defraud the Revenue. The other potential problem with apportioning the price in

this way is of course that if you were having a mortgage you would need to declare the cost of the property to the mortgage lender. Therefore if you were hoping to obtain a 95% mortgage then you may have inadvertently shot yourself in the foot.

Finally I gather that according to recently published Land Registry figures, the volume of sales during the year 2000 decreased by 6% whilst the number of re mortgages increased by some 38%.



**SIGN OF THE TIMES (WHAT STRAW ?)**



# Telling Their Time 2

Wethersfield History Society 8th February 2001

This was yet another well prepared presentation by this local group; Derek Norman spoke of times past in the parish assisted by a number of excellent readers

In the days before public transport and easy access to the town, Wethersfield had many visiting traders and a thriving economic structure.

Connie Elsdon, formerly Connie Suckling, sadly now past away, was born at Scots End in 1908 she left school at 13 and went into domestic work at Nortoffs for Mrs Byford and after that went up to London with Lady Flannery at Chester Place, in the middle of the City near Hyde Park.

She recalled some of the traders she met during her early life in the village, at an interview just before she died.

'I can always remember the days before electricity father used to grow celery, and that was the time when you scrubbed the celery, I can see that now with the lamp alight and all that celery on the table'.

'Then old Diddy Thoroughood used to come around with Winkles for Sunday tea. He used to come from Braintree in a pony and trap with the Sunday newspapers. He was a dealer. He used to buy rabbit skins and everything. And he used to have Winkles and sometimes, as a treat,

father would buy a pint of Winkles'.

'Diddy used to buy the rabbit skins, sometimes he would give us children a balloon or a fish in a jam jar for them. If we could catch a mole we would get sixpence for that. In dry weather they used to come to the surface. We used to sell ours to Mr Martin. They used to make them into Moleskin coats. Lady Flannery had one made. I remember she had this beautiful coat, all in tiny pieces, like patchwork'.

'Mr. Howe used to bring the daily paper. He used to cycle. He never brought it before dinner time, but he was regular as clockwork, rain or shine, for sixpence a week and we never paid delivery'.

'Then there was the old boy who used to come round with the sausages. He was from Bardfield and I have never tasted a sausage like it since. They were lovely. He came from Bardfield and they were christened Bardfield Old boys. He used to have Pork and Beef sausages and I used to have 3lbs of beef ones every week and they were delicious. We used to fry them all and make sandwiches with them. The whole family took sandwiches and we always had them for Sunday morning breakfast'.

The story was they took the recipe to the grave. They never told their secret. They used to come round with a big basket. A dear little short man he was always on the beam, with a snow-white cloth and a big basket. A snowy cloth? Nowadays they wouldn't let him do it. They would say it wasn't hygienic'. *Original research Penny Payne.*



Connie's father, Samson Suckling.



Connie Elsdon in her ATS days.

## • • • • • POLICE REPORT • • • • •

We visited the Shalford Police Station last week to hear from Sergeant Bell about the crime levels within Wethersfield in the last two months. Ignoring traffic accidents we can report that nothing happened. This is obviously very good news for the community at large. There has recently been published the findings of an Audit Commission report on police performance for the 1999 / 2000 period. Of the 38 English police forces only five had a lower crime rate than Essex, who suffered at a rate of 67 per 1000 head of population against a national average of 90.4. Burglary at 9.9 Incidence per 1000 was half the national average. The detection rate for all crimes is marginally better at 29.7% than the previous year with a violent crime detection rate of almost 80%.

The most startling figure is for road traffic accidents involving death or Injury, 6585 last year. This was slightly up on the previous year but the number of fatalities at 86 was 20% lower than 1999. Having learnt of these figures it is not difficult to see why speed enforcement and road safety in general consumes so much of our police forces time and resources.