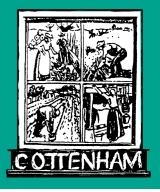
# COTTENHAM NEWSLETTER



**ISSUE NUMBER 79** 

**FEBRUARY/MARCH 2004** 

t the time of writing this editorial, I am not aware of any substantial progress in the investigation into the tragic death of Peter Stone. This momentous event has shocked the whole village. The article by the Rev Michael Hore in the special edition of the *Newsletter*, put out before Christmas, was an eloquent expression of my feelings on the event. I have had a lot of feedback from other people saying how he had captured their mood also.

Therefore, I will only seek to reiterate one of the main points he made. It is vitally important that the rumour mill, which has been very active in the village for many months now, is brought back under control. Some of the stories which have been related to me by people who ought to have known better, beggar belief.

I offered some advice in the June/July 2003 edition of the *Newsletter* which still applies now. If someone tells you of an incident you should ask them two questions. The first is did they witness it themselves – if they did not, discount it – stories grow arms and legs between tellings. If they did witness it, then ask them if they reported it to the police. If not, discount it again – if they as a witness did not bother to report it to the police then it didn't happen officially and that was their choice.

I know people are angry about all that has happened in the village since the spring of 2003. I was at the public meeting

in which the issue of planning breaches dominated the South Cambridgeshire District Council budget meeting. Passion was obvious among contributors. The events of early December make it even more vital that heads rule over hearts. So, please discount rumours and make sure that the police are aware of anything relevant that you see.

\*\*\*

One of the issues which aroused the greatest passion at the public meeting at the end of November is the issue of speeding traffic through the village and dangerous driving. There is no single source of speeding and dangerous driving in the village. Many people attributed the damage to the newly built Pound wall (opposite Shaun's Newsagents) to Travellers when this was not the case. This is a general problem which has become more acute lately.

I understand that Cambridgeshire traffic bosses have £4.5 million available to tackle the problem and that Cottenham qualifies for a share of this. A new catalogue has been produced with details of anti-speed measures, such as rumble strips, white lines, mini-roundabouts, speed cameras, interactive signs and road resurfacing. If you think that these or other measures could usefully be deployed near you, please contact a parish councillor or one of the district or county councillors.

Eddie Murphy



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## VILLAGE DIARY

#### January

30th Seniors Club, 'The history of Cambridge', a talk by Joan Last, Village College 2:30pm

#### February

- 5th Salvation Army, Coffee Morning, Salvation Army Barn, 10:00am 11:30am
- 5th Parish Council, Planning Aplication Meeting, Council Office, 7:30pm
- 11th W.I., In the steps of John Bunyan, Andrew Jackson, Village College, 7:30pm
- 13th Seniors Club, 'Jam Session', a talk by D Unwin, Village College 2:30pm
- 13th Village Society, 'Robert Fox a Huntington Scientist', a talk by Mr P Saunders, Primary School, Lambs Lane, 7:45pm
- 14th Salvation Army, Jumble Sale, Salvation Army Barn, 10:00am 11:30am
- 19th Salvation Army, Coffee Morning, Salvation Army Barn, 10:00am 11:30am
- 19th Parish Council, Planning Application Meeting, Council Office, 7:30pm
- 24th Village Design Group, AGM, Village College, 7:30pm
- 24th Parish Council Meeting, Village College, 7:30pm
- 27th Seniors Club, An afternoon of entertainment with Brenda and Bert Garner, Village College 2:30pm
- 27th Gardeners Club, AGM, Village College, 7:45pm

#### March

- 4th Salvation Army, Coffee Morning, Salvation Army Barn, 10:00am 11.30am
- 4th Parish Council, Planning Aplication Meeting, Council Office, 7:30pm
- 10th W.I., Annual supper and AGM, Village College, 6:15pm
- 12th Seniors Club, 'London', a talk by K Drake, Village College, 2:30pm
- 12th Village Society, 'The Domesday Survey of Cottenham', a talk by Mr T Doig, Primary School, Lambs Lane, 7:45pm
- 13th Salvation Army, Jumble Sale, Salvation Army Barn, 10:00am 11:30am
- 18th Salvation Army, Coffee Morning, Salvation Army Barn, 10:00am 11:30am
- 18th Parish Council, Planning Aplication Meeting, Council Office, 7:30pm
- 26th Seniors Club, 'An old fen boy', a talk by Vernon Place, Village College 2:30pm
- 27th Gardeners Club, "Garden Designing", Village College, 7:45pm
- 30th Parish Council Meeting, Village College, 7:30pm

## **SMALL ADS**

**FOR HIRE:-** Have you got a special cake to make? Then hire a tin. I have numbers 0 to 9 and also some novelty tins. £1 a day hire plus £5 refundable deposit. **Tel: Julie on 01954 200854.** 

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**2** PLY GENUINE PDQ TERMAL CREDIT/DEBIT MACHINE paper rolls 57x55x12.5 (to fitTT41 terminal) – 137 rolls in total. Brand new and unopened. Cost £130.56, will accept £65. Will split if required. Tel 01954 251666

Small Ads generated just under £23 in income during 2003. This will be donated to the Cottenham District Nurses Special Fund as it was last year.

Why not advertise in the *Newsletter!* Items for sale, announcement of family events... 5p per word, with all proceeds going to charity. Send advertisements and payment to the editors.

Cheques should be made payable to 'Cottenham Newsletter'.

## Peter Stone Memorial Fund

for the support of his family

If you would like to make a donation, please bring it to the collecting point:

The Cambridge Building Society
High Street, Cottenham

## PENSION CREDIT

Pension Credit replaces Minimum Income Guarantee (Income Support for Pensioners) and was introduced on 6 October 2003. Everyone over 60 is guaranteed an income of at least £102.10 a week for a single person; or £155.80 a week for a couple.

For the first time, people aged 65 and over who have made modest provision for their retirement may be rewarded with up to: £14.79 a week for a single person; or £19.20 a week for a couple. You may be entitled to this money if your income is less than: £139.10 a week for a single person; or £203.80 a week for a couple.

It is difficult to give specific advice on such complicated calculations, but after excluding the value of the family home, single people with savings of up to £36,500 and married couples with up to £46,000, might find it worth checking their entitlement, if their income is very low.

You may still be able to get Pension Credit if your income is higher than these amounts, if you: are severely disabled; look after someone who is severely disabled; or pay certain housing costs – e.g. mortgage interest.

The Pension Service will fill in a form for you over the phone (Tel. 0800 991234, Textphone 0800 1690133), Monday – Friday 8am – 8pm, Saturdays 9am – 1pm. They will then send you the completed form to check and sign. Your local Citizens Advice Bureau can also help you with your application.

Information provided by Cambridge Citizens Advice Bureau

## **TOY LIBRARY**

2003 was a successful and busy year for Cottenham Toy Library. We ran several very popular events including the Teddy Bears' Picnic, Table Top Sale and Toy Sale. We received a kind donation from Ridgeons which enabled us to buy a larger shed to house our toys. Several new helpers joined us and their support is much appreciated. If you feel you could offer us some help either regularly or occasionally, please give Lesley a ring on the number below.

There will be several events in 2004 which you may wish to put in your diary now. The Table Top sale will be on 6 March, our first cake stall will take place on 3 April and the Teddy Bears' Picnic will be on 7 July. Don't forget that our sessions are the first and third Thursday every month in the Barn behind the Salvation Army. Do come along and take a look at the new toys we have purchased including the popular Geomag. Once you have paid your annual membership, all refreshments are free and Sue Head organises a craft activity each session.

For more information ring Lesley Popple on (01954) 203412.

Liz Hewitt.

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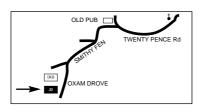
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## LOCAL SUCCESS

A Cottenham-based arts magazine publisher was shortlisted in a fierce competition for the prestigious Visa Business Card Award for Enterprise at Parcelforce Worldwide's Small Business 'Oscars' in London recently.

Husband and wife team Brian Whitehead and Liz Hill, directors of Arts Intelligence Limited, met the competition and the judging panel for the first time at a black-tie awards ceremony at The London Studios, hosted by Nigel Griffiths MP, Minister for Small Business, and broadcaster Michael Buerk.

Pipped to the winning post by a company called AddMaster UK Limited, Brian Whitehead said: 'Getting into the top three in the UK final has given everyone at Arts Intelligence a huge boost. Of course I am disappointed that we didn't win, but we have learnt a lot from entering the awards because it's like giving the business an MOT. It passed with flying colours so we look forward to trying again next year.'

Professor Ted Fuller, from the University of Teesside Business School and chair of the judging process, said: 'Arts Intelligence Limited is an excellent example of a well managed small business with a great future. Some 4,500 small businesses across the UK entered the awards scheme and this company has shown that it is one of the best.'

Vanessa Leeson, Managing Director, Parcelforce Worldwide said: 'Businesses like Arts Intelligence Limited are the backbone of the UK and we believe these awards are an excellent way to recognise the contribution small businesses make to the economy, an incredible 30 per cent of the UK gross domestic product.'



Iain Currie of VISA, Liz Hill and Brian Whitehead of Arts Intelligence, and Ted Fuller of Teesside University.

## YOU CAN HELP

Let us help with the post-Christmas clearout and consider SOFA before disposing of your unwanted household items. Cambridge SOFA is a not-for-profit voluntary organisation which offers a free collection service for unwanted furniture, household and electrical items. All donated items are passed on at affordable price to those most in need in the local community.

We also need volunteers to help us transform empty rooms into cosy homes. If you have a few hours to spare and can offer help in the store or on the van we would like to know! Expenses, training, social events and lots of fun in return for your time!

For further information on donating or purchasing items or volunteering please call SOFA on 01223 576535.

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## **SMITHY FEN**

South Cambridgeshire District Council has taken enforcement action against all unauthorised traveller sites in Cottenham.

Enforcement and stop notices have been served on all encampments and works which are material breaches of planning regulations. It is a criminal offence to carry out work in breach of these planning notices. However, this has not prevented the sites remaining occupied. The Council understands that this is of great concern to local people. Cottenham district councillors, together with Cottenham Parish Council, have done everything possible to put this point of view across to South Cambridgeshire District Council.

Enforcing the planning system is not straightforward, since those in breach have the right of appeal, and special exemption from the normal planning rules is made for travellers to allow them to live in the countryside. In addition, human rights legislation is an issue which has to be taken into account. Four traveller families were given permission to stay on land by a Government inspector at an appeal in October as a result of Human Rights concerns. The Council was disappointed to lose this appeal against its enforcement action.

Nevertheless, the Council is continuing to pursue the other outstanding enforcement breaches. In a subsequent appeal the inspector agreed that action taken by the Council should be upheld and that the travellers must comply with the enforcement and stop notices and leave the land.

Further planning inquiries against unauthorised travellers' sites are scheduled for the New Year, and the Council will do everything it can to achieve a successful outcome and uphold the enforcement action. The Council will continue to work closely with Cottenham's district councillors, the Parish Council and the Police. Advice is being sought about law and order issues from the Police so that South Cambridgeshire District Council can properly exercise its responsibilities under the Prevention of Crime and Disorder Act.

In view of the local concerns that it was not doing enough, the Council employed a legal expert to see if there was anything extra we could do, to speed up the process and be more effective. The Council effectively opened its books to scrutiny for this health check, and the verdict was that we're doing as much as we reasonably can. In addition the Council has set up an advisory panel to help guide the Development and Conservation Control Committee in its decisions on travellers' applications. The Travellers Consultative Group will work with other agencies which have a role to play in travellers' matters, such as the Police and County Council. It should also help facilitate action, which has been another area of concern for local people.

Gareth Jones, Deputy Planning Director, South Cambridgeshire District Council.



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## PRIMARY SCHOOL PTA

As soon as your child joins Cottenham Primary School, you are automatically a member of the PTA.

The PTA is a fundraising body and some parents help to organise events – these people are on the PTA committee. This year, Howard Chadwick is the Chairman and Catherine Snelson the secretary – there are many other committee members including teachers, support staff and parents. The committee meets every half term.

Many parents help us in other ways – by supporting our events, contributing prizes and helping at events by selling tickets and manning stalls.

Our events include quiz nights, winter and summer fairs, firework displays and discos for the children. In 2002/3 we raised over £10,000 for the school. This was used to buy computers, staging and lighting.

In 2003/4 we are raising money to support a major project - the refurbishment of the outdoor area.

The PTA also funds the school swimming pool and is responsible for its use out of school hours.

#### Can you help?

If you think you would like to help, you can contact Catherine or Howard through the school office. We would be delighted to welcome new members on to the committee or onto our list of willing helpers.

We are looking forward to working with you and raising lots of money for the school.

The PTA Committee

### NATURAL CAUSES

This year's Cottenham Theatre Workshop (CTW) spring play will be 'Natural Causes', a black farce by Eric Chappell, to be performed at the Village College from Wednesday 14th April to Saturday 17th April 2004 at 7.45 p.m.

CTW set very high standards for themselves in all their productions, and the Spring play is no exception. Last year's play, 'Visiting Hour', had a cast of thousands; this year we have a cast of just five. 'Natural Causes' is a black comedy at its blackest and best. It is a long time since CTW have done a production based on mistaken identities, switched glasses of poison and marital infidelity! In fact, come to think of it, we've never done such a production!

Tickets (£6.00 and £5.00 concessions) will be available nearer the time from our Box Office (01954 252693). Do come along and support your local theatre company!

CTW are a very friendly group and always looking for new faces and talents, not only on the stage but backstage, front of house, lights etc. In fact all departments have to operate smoothly to ensure a successful production. If anyone would like to know more about this production or about CTW generally, do please contact the director Sue MacDonald on 01954 252329 or sue.macdonald@tesco.net.

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## **PARISH PLAN**

During September 2003, every household in Cottenham received a questionnaire relating to the Parish Plan. I am very grateful to the many volunteers who helped to deliver and collect the completed questionnaires.

MAKE A SPLASH!

The next Village College Swimming Pool AGM will be at 7:30pm on April 20 at the Village College. All are welcome, wine and nibbles and the chance to have your say about how the pool is run for all residents of the Fen Edge Patch. More details at www.cottenhampool.org.uk

The pool was a great facility to have in the village over the long hot summer of 2003. We hope that it will go from strength to strength as a crucial village resource and maybe you can help us to achieve that.

VILLAGE DESIGN GROUP

The AGM of Cottenham Village Design Group will be held on 24 February at 7:30pm in the Lecture room at the Village College. The talk will be on the Cambridge Collection as it relates to design. The speaker, to be confirmed, will draw on material from the Cambridge Collection using maps, books and journals which relate to Cottenham. There will be special emphasis on the buildings of the village. The talk will end with a display of old photos of Cottenham. The meeting is free and wine will be served. Donations welcome. If you require further details contact Jennie Blood Smyth on jenniebs@waitrose.com or phone on 01954 251650. We look forward to seeing you.

Of the 2214 questionnaires delivered, a total of 1334 were actually completed. This represents a 60% return rate, which I am told is a very good return as questionnaires go. All of the completed returns have now been sent to a company who are analysing them and will produce a report on their findings.

When the draft report has been finalised the village will be informed of the results of the questionnaire. It is at this stage that the real work begins: drawing up action plans that meet the needs and address the concerns of the village.

I would like to thank all members of the Village Plan Committee and the many volunteers who have made this enterprise possible, and not least, all the residents of Cottenham who took part in the questionnaire survey.

Tony Nicholas

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## **TOP BRASS!**

PRIME BRASS, the well-known brass group, will give a concert in All Saints' Church in Cottenham on Saturday 7th February 2004 at 7:30pm. Those many people who've attended any of their many concerts will vouch that you will have an excellent evening of dazzling playing and great entertainment.

This time, the concert will end with a wonderful major piece of music by the local composer, John Rutter. It is his Gloria. It is written for choir, eight brass instruments and a battery of percussion. Those who've heard it before try not to miss a performance. If you haven't heard it, you're in for quite a treat. Tickets can be bought at the door on the night.

On a similar note but further in the future, Soham Comrades Band, Champions of Cambridgeshire since 1994 and East Anglia's leading Brass Band will play a concert in Cottenham Village College on Saturday 28th February 2004 at 7:30pm. Tickets will be available on the door and priced at £6 and £4 for concessions.

## Reflections... – by Moyra A. Borg

Here's a bit of sad news. In October my little, old, long-haired, tortoiseshell cat Star had to be put to sleep. Bless her little furry bits, she was 21 years old. This meant that she was born in the year I passed my driving test, 1982! 'Ah, but she's had a good innings!', everyone said. One of our human years is supposed to be equivalent to 7 cat years. 21 multiplied by 7 is equivalent to 147 years, so Star indeed was in her dotage.

Poor Star had a growth at the back of her throat so I just had to say to the vet 'Do it now please' and Star just nodded off quickly. I tried to be brave. This was tough though. It's a reminder of our own mortality to lose a pet. I then came home to Jade whose name is now 'Totally Devoted To You!' Jade wouldn't leave me alone for long and needed lots of fuss. I think she is probably still missing Star. I adopted both of them from Wood Green in February 1998 and they both came from the same 'owner'.

\*\*\*

Oh no I'm hungry again! You can't be! I am! Ravenous again! What did you have for your supper an hour ago? Rice. Rice? Yes, rice. Now I would like some PUDDING! Mmm... Squishy, runny, Ambrosia Splat! chocolate custard! You big baby! No wonder you have hardly any teeth left! Well... it cheers me up and it does me less harm than booze or cigarettes and it costs a lot less, so Splat! it is for me! The trouble is I need at least two Splats to feel my yearnings for chocolate begin to be assuaged! Talking to ourselves again are we?!

continued on next page

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Now.... *Oh no, up comes another idea*. I think that there ought to be a 'Return Things to Owners Day' every year, a system whereby things could be returned anonymously, as the person who borrowed the item several years ago could a) have forgotten who they were borrowed from or b) be so embarrassed that they daren't face the owner! This would help me both ways as I am terrible at remembering to return books and tapes.

I must have lent someone my car battery charger about 10 years ago and now it is nowhere to be seen. I have no idea who I lent it to and I probably don't even need my battery charger but I know that someone somewhere probably has a bit of a guilty conscience. My fun with the said battery charger could have lost me my taxi, as I plugged it in to the mains and fixed the clips onto the car's battery which I hadn't disconnected from the car. When I told people how I 'recharged my battery' people's eyes turned to saucers. I hastily stopped doing this I might add! Moyra! You should have stayed behind at school and studied physics!

\*\*\*

For the record, I did do something brave in 2003. I sang a Maltese Christmas carol solo and unaccompanied by music in a Cottenham pub!! The little dog hid behind the pub landlord. EEK! Never again Moyra! Well actually I leapt up and hid in the Ladies and sang in there as the echo made it sound more bearable! I also played my new wooden descant recorder along with a Folk Group in Whittlesford. Very informal it was and the notes I didn't know I just left out!

This, by the way, is how I got thrown out of the Latin choir at my church! A source of tremendous grief to me as I loved

singing out Pater Noster (Our Father... the Lord's Prayer) at my church. I thought I had a good ear so wasn't really doing sight reading. I don't think that I can sight read to be honest. You can cheat yes, but only for so long. When you get given a part which is second Alto, have to sing with very quiet second Alto singers and you have to sing different words and notes to the First Altos and Sopranos, then my dear you get caught out!!

### THINK HEALTH

Made a New Year Resolution yet? Why not Make Time for health and think seriously about applying to join a Patient and Public Forum? A community based Forum is being established for every one of the 574 English NHS and Primary Care Trusts whose primary roles are to:

- Obtain views from local communities about health services and make recommendations and reports
- Examine, report and make recommendations on the range and day to day delivery of health services
- Influence the design of and access to NHS services
- Provide advice and information to patients and carers about services.

Forums will work together to share experiences and to address common issues. They will be supported by Forum Support Organisations, independent of the NHS, who will use their considerable knowledge, experience and existing contacts within the communities. Locally, the FSO for the areas of East Cambridgeshire, Fenland, Huntingdon, King's Lynn, Peterborough and West Norfolk is Cambridgeshire ACRE. The FSO Team is based at E-space North, 181 Wisbech Road, Littleport, Ely, CB6 1RA, telephone 01353 865351

If you really can make time for health why not give them a call. While they cannot sign you up direct, they know someone who can. Go on, be a voice for health.



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### REVENGE IS SWEET

Matt slung his sports bag over his shoulder and moved towards the door. 'I'm not very happy about it, Jim,' he said, 'he's a nice bloke really'. Jim shrugged. 'Needs must when the devil drives,' he said philosophically, 'it's time he had a taste of his own medicine,' and opening the door to the pool he waved to the lone swimmer. 'See you in the bar, Bill,' he called and followed Matt out of the changing room.

Bill (Bouncing Bill to his friends due to his being almost as wide as he was tall) pulled himself out of the water and waddled to the changing room. Standing under the gushing shower, humming loudly and vigorously rubbing frothy shampoo into his hair, he didn't hear the changing room door open or notice his towel slither silently from the shower rail. It was only after feeling all round the rail and on the floor and finally peering through half-shut, smarting eyes that he realised it wasn't there. 'Damn,' he said, 'I'm sure I brought it with me.' Shaking off as much water as he could, he dripped his way into the changing room.

There was no sign of his towel, his clothes were missing, even his swimming trunks had gone. All that remained was a brown paper parcel and a pair of black wellington boots. He smiled ruefully as he realised what was happening. Matt and Jim were having him on. A dedicated practical joker himself he wasn't annoyed. 'I can take it as well as give it,' he said aloud and began opening the parcel. Inside was a Santa Claus coat and a long, white, cotton wool beard. A note pinned to the jacket read 'Ho ho ho, hee hee hee, this time the joke is not on me'.

'The devils,' he muttered, 'I can't go out in this.' He looked around, maybe they had hidden his things somewhere, but

after searching every inch of the changing room, including the lavatory cisterns, he began to feel rather worried, not to mention decidedly chilly. He put his arms into the Santa Claus jacket. It was about two sizes too small and barely reached mid-thigh and as he tried to fasten it he heard an ominous splitting sound as the back seam started to give. He had no choice. He would have to go like this to the bar and find Matt and Jim. This was his penance for all the stupid pranks he had played on them.

Opening the door and peering both ways, he crept out along the corridor to the bar. Bending, trying to see through the keyhole, Billy didn't hear the door to the ladies room open and when a voice suddenly said 'Hello Cheeky,' he spun round startled to face the two grinning young women. 'Gosh Brenda, Christmas is early this year,' said one, and they both fell about laughing. Bill sidled, crabwise, along the wall and, jerking up the bar on the emergency exit, he stepped out into the alley, glad of the cool air on his burning face.

The alley led on to the High Street which was alive with late night Christmas shoppers. 'What on earth am I going to do?' he groaned. He saw a bus go by but decided he couldn't face that, and then he saw the taxis at the rank opposite. That was it, a taxi. It would take him straight to his door, all he had to do was get across the road. He waited for the green man to show and made a run for it across the pedestrian crossing, dodging shoppers, clutching his jacket across his front.

Ignoring the shouts and whistles, he wrenched open the door of the first taxi and leapt in, sinking back into the seat with relief. The driver turned and looked at him in disbelief.

continued on next page

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'What's all this then?,' he asked. Billy leaned forward. 'Look, mate,' he said, 'someone's played this trick on me, I just need to get home and...' His voice trailed off as the cabby jerked his thumb towards the door. 'Out' he said, and as Billy started to protest he jumped out of the cab, pulled open the door and grabbed Billy by the wrists. 'OUT,' he said again louder. 'I'm not having any weirdos in my cab' and he dragged Billy out into the street. There was an approving cheer from the watching crowd as the red jacket came away in two halves leaving Billy with just his beard and his wellies.

Grabbing the beard and twanging his ears with the elastic, he held the cotton wool in front of him like a fig leaf, and sprinted for the first door he could see. A young woman shrieked and leapt out, leaving her bags behind, and Billy stood alone in the glass fronted lift, surrounded by fairy lights, holding his beard to the fore, as he rose majestically up the front of the Department Store to the delight of the watchers, whose number had multiplied to the point where the traffic could no longer move.

Arriving at the fourth floor the lift doors opened and Billy sidled past two gaping shop assistants and entered the Toy Department. Dodging from one display to another he made his way to the rear of the shop and, looking around like a cornered animal, he spotted a door marked 'Staff Only'. Darting through, he found himself in a cloakroom with, 'bless the Lord', a row of coats hanging on pegs. Sorting through, Billy found a large black mac. which fitted quite well. 'My kind of girl' he thought. He belted the mac round his waist and, finding a spotted headscarf in the pocket, he tied it round his

head. 'If its good enough for the Queen it's good enough for me,' he said to his reflection.

Taking a deep breath, he sauntered back across the shop and went down the stairs rather than using the lift, reasoning that he could cut across the Food Hall and exit the shop by the side entrance and so avoid the High Street. The automatic doors to the Food Hall opened for him and he stepped through. Immediately a bell rang loudly and everyone stopped what they were doing and turned to look at him. 'Oh what now,' he cried in anguish. A man in a smart, pinstriped suit walked briskly over to him. 'Congratulations Madam', he said. You are our 1000th customer this week and you win our Christmas prize of £500 plus our special hamper. Who should we make the cheque payable to?'

On Monday morning Matt found an envelope on his doormat. Inside was a page from the local newspaper showing a picture of a large woman wearing a mack and headscarf, holding aloft a cheque and pointing to a large hamper. Underneath, someone had scrawled 'Ho ho ho, hee hee hee, this time the joke is DEFINITELY not on me'. Matt couldn't help smiling. 'Good old Billy.'

Arriving at work Matt found on his desk a card saying 'Great stuff, get you back in the New Year. Meanwhile, I have a large hamper and £500 to spend. Why don't you and the lads join me for Christmas? Billy.'

June Stevenson



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# DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' NOTES

#### Planning Contraventions, Smithy Fen

At our request Gareth Jones, Deputy Development Services Director at South Cambridgeshire District Council, has contributed an article to this edition of the *Newsletter* explaining the Council's actions. Since the contraventions started nearly a year ago, we have continuously urged the Council to take the strongest possible action to deal with them, and that remains our approach. Recently, we presented a motion to the Council inviting it to reaffirm that it will make every effort to deal with the breaches of planning control and will call upon and co-operate with other agencies to address antisocial behaviour. The motion was overwhelmingly adopted with no votes against, and action is being taken on a number of fronts to ensure that it is backed up in practical terms.

Many people find it difficult to accept the lengthiness and complexity of the planning process which local authorities have to go through in order to enforce planning law. Virtually everything a Council does in planning can be appealed by an applicant or someone against whom enforcement action is being taken. These appeals are normally made to 'The Secretary of State'. This does not mean that the actual Secretary of State hears or decides the appeal in person. What happens is that the Planning Inspectorate appoints a Planning Inspector who is a senior independent planning professional from outside the area who hears the appeal on behalf of the Secretary of State and then makes an independent decision on the basis of the evidence and the law. An Inspector's decision can only be challenged in the High Court – and then only if it can be shown that he or she has ignored or misunderstood the law. The system is rather like

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38 LAMBS LANE, COTTENHAM, CAMBRIDGE, CB4 8TA TEL & FAX: 01954 204376 MOBILE: 07939 513088 or 07799 673765 aspects of the justice system where a prosecution may be brought in the name of the Crown, but it is not the Queen who personally decides the verdict!

At Smithy Fen we have now had one appeal decision which went against the Council and two which the Council won. While it is frustrating to be faced with very different decisions affecting the same area, this does at least emphasize the independence of the different inspectors who heard the appeals.

#### **Home Improvement Agency**

This provides assistance to help residents who own their property or are private tenants and who need to adapt it or have extra facilities installed on account of infirmity or disability. Some help may also be available for certain categories of renovation work. The nature of the help depends on the personal circumstances of the applicant and the nature of the property. For more information phone the agency on 01223 724139 or email: home.imp.agency@scambs.gov.uk

#### Kitchen Waste Bins

At the moment the licences for the new wheeled bin refuse collection system do not allow kitchen waste to be disposed of in the green wheeled bin. However, this is expected to change shortly. To enable residents to separate food waste more easily once this change has taken place, the Council will be organizing free distributions of kitchen waste bins from points throughout the district. When details are finalized they will be publicized through South Cambs News and the local press.

#### Contacting us

We continue to hold 'surgeries' on the first Friday of each month from 6 to 6:30pm in Rampton Village Hall, and on the third Friday of each month from 5:30 to 6:30pm in the Community Room at Franklin Gardens, off Lyles Road. Alternatively we are always happy to be contacted at home (details on back cover) or we can arrange to visit you.

Apologies that recurrent computer problems during the autumn may have meant that Councillor Collinson has not been contactable by email. Hopefully the problem is finally resolved at last, but for urgent concerns a telephone call or letter is probably best, as it is not susceptible to the technical problems that can disrupt email.

Rex Collinson, Tony Nicholas District Counciliors



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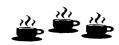


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### **BIRD REPORT**

December and January are always times for reviewing the past year and making plans for the new year.

We may have enjoyed the warm, dry summer but for birds it has meant a bad year. There has been a shortage of caterpillars, slugs and snails, and lawns have been so hard that it has been impossible for birds to reach worms. So it has been a bad breeding season for thrushes, long-tailed tits, chiffchaffs, great tits and reed buntings. It has also been hard for blackbirds, wrens, dunnocks, and bullfinches. Have you noticed this?

However, seed-eaters have done well, particularly greenfinches and chaffinches.

For a long time the Long Drove Lagoon was almost dry, so that many of the regular birds – gulls, swans, ducks and waders – have been absent.

And what about the new year? We have been told this winter, again and again, that, as a nation, we are overweight and not getting enough exercise. So why not combine some bird watching with some winter walking? A walk along Broad Lane, along the Lode to Rampton will provide plenty to see. There are nearly always chaffinches and greenfinches and pied wagtails near the industrial estate. There are moorhens, coots and gulls on the pond; herons and swans on the lode; lapwings, pheasants and skylarks in the fields; and in Rampton Spinney there are magpies, jays, woodpeckers, tits, fieldfares, and redwings. Of course you won't see them all in one day, but no doubt you will see other birds as well. It's just a question of looking and listening.

And while you are on this walk, can you spot Haddenham windmill, Stretham windmill, churches at Willingham, Stretham and, of course, Ely Cathedral?

Jasper Kay

### TIME FLIES

Do you remember when a week seemed a long time and a whole year to your next birthday seemed such a long, long time away? When 1 retired, 1 thought that time would slow down a little but NO, time goes just racing ahead! I could almost swear that there are now only eleven months from one Christmas to the next. The millenium is already past by four years. I remember when 1 wondered whether I would still be alive in 2000 – and here I am going strong.

Which brings me to the Autumn Show. These winter nights are just the time to plan (and start) the craft events which you are going to enter in 2004. Don't delay – Saturday September 11 will be here before you can blink. One thing surprised us last year. We didn't have many entries for computer generated pictures, in spite of thinking we were being up-to-date (and that it is fun to do). We are going to keep it one more year. If we don't have many entries this will be your last opportunity to show us how skilfully you use a computer. By special request, we are bringing back a Lego or similar medium model. Watch out for news of a completely new section for a group entry.

And keep the date free. If no one makes an effort, the event cannot take place. Put Saturday 11 September, The Autumn Show in your diary now.

Brenda Ward

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## NO GRAIN, NO GAIN

Inevitably, following an unusually dry autumn the winter is wet. The rain has launched a carpet of blackgrass across many of the planted fields, potentially resulting in more than a 50% yield loss if not controlled (weeds compete for the same light, water and nutrient as the crop). On some fields it is difficult to tell whether the crop is grass, wheat or even beans. Each blackgrass plant has the potential to produce 2,000 seeds, and subsequently 2,000 plants, and many years of problems. Blackgrass is a bane for the traditional heavy land arable farmer.

Not surprisingly, most crops planted this autumn have been sprayed, or are about to be sprayed, with herbicide to control the blackgrass. Great care is taken to match weed size, crop size, soil conditions and weed population with choice and rate of weed killer. The worst problems tend to be where cultivations, far from killing the weeds, have transplanted large uncontrollable weeds to different places in the fields.

Without herbicides much of the heavier land around Cottenham would have to return to dairying, with the quaint re-introduction of dairy cows walking down the High Street twice a day (obviously during rush hour so the traffic is not slowed) for milking. The better, free draining land (with less blackgrass) could return to fruit trees, flowers and soft fruit, making use of the local migrant labour. Speed of delivery to ensure maximum shelf life is of ever greater importance and would be simultaneously dealt with (outside of the rush hour) much to everyone's satisfaction by the same workforce.

Oilseed rape (would anyone notice if we sold it as winter greens or purple sprouting broccoli?) is the shock of the season. While large areas of crop failed because of the dry weather, the mild conditions and rain have allowed other backward crops to survive even where failure was expected. The problem now is pigeons eating the new crops where the surviving plants are no more than a single mouthful. It is nearly a full time job to keep them off.

The last remaining sugar beet is being harvested with a few clamps (heaps) on concrete pads ready for moving to the factory to extract the sugar. Any sign of frost and the heaps are covered with straw or quilts to prevent damage. The sugar percentage in the harvested root is high this year at over 20%. The percentage sugar content of sugar beet is similar to the percentage in sugar cane.

The last of the potatoes are in store. It was disappointing to see the soil disguising the bruised and blemished potatoes in the market compared with the quality potatoes available at the greengrocers, produced and selected with care and attention. However, it is probably cheaper to give the crop a mud pack as used to occur even more frequently, than worry about care during harvest and storage.

Any heavy land destined for spring crops is being ploughed to reduce the risk of damaging the soil structure. As always the first task is to ensure that the drainage systems are working well. Some of these systems are still in place from the 19th century, although more drainage was encouraged by

continued on next page

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continued from previous page

Government grants as little as 20 years ago (along with field amalgamation). Drainage is increasingly difficult to maintain where so many ditches are untended. Lack of drainage delays planting (with loss of yield), increases the period of weed germination (making weeds more difficult to control) and increases root disease (making the crop more susceptible to drought).

December and January are the main shooting months. Whatever your views on shooting it is impressive to see how diverse the environment is on farms where shooting is important. You can spot the shooting estates from the layout of the woods on any long journey. In Germany, in order to own a gun it is necessary to sit a written exam which includes not only safety issues but detailed understanding of the ecology of the Countryside. A similar system might, perhaps, be worth introducing here.

An old, tatty, tear-stained copy of the Cottenham Newsletter warning about wheat shortages and high prices has finally reached, by some circuitous route, the heady heights of the EU bureaucracy. And, in the week before Christmas, with a slash of the pen, the politicians have reduced the area of set aside (the land that has to be taken out of production to reduce production) from 10% to 5% with the objectives of increasing wheat production and lowering prices. Sadly, 1) Wheat is planted in September and October, 2) If the US BSE outbreak reduces consumption of beef, as it did in the UK, less wheat will be used in animal feed, more effectively increasing stocks.

Once you have identified the sound of one hand clapping, debate the question of whether higher prices are good news even if you have nothing left to sell. I suppose the answer is probably not, because everyone will increase production (half the world will be able to afford fertiliser and fungicide in addition to seed) and the high prices will be gone. But having sold this year's crop, it is definitely a matter of - no grain, no gain.

Couch Potato [surely Couch Grass! – Ed.]

## **INDONESIA** ON THE HILL!

Every February Haddenham hosts a multi-cultural festival. Over the years they have been visited by artists and performers from Peru, Japan and Africa. This February, having previously involved large countries and even continents, Haddenham Galleries is focusing on one small village in Bali, Indonesia. Ubud has for the past century been a home to groups of brilliant painters, potters, batik and textile artists. As part of Indonesia Live Festival, the Gallery will be exhibiting paintings by six Indonesian artists, as well as contemporary sculptures, ceramics and batiks. The adjoining Ethnic Gallery will exhibit, for sale, a renowned collection of traditional textiles and artefacts from the archipelago.

The festival will also include batik workshops and a dance workshop for adults and young people. There will be talks and discussions on the artists of Ubud and on traditional textiles. Three days of workshops for children on gamelan music and shadow puppets, and on February 14th, at The Arkenstall Centre, a major evening performance of gamelan music and dance by Naga Mas (Golden Dragon) who will be working in the village running workshops for adults and children for four days.

For details and tickets to workshops and performances: Contact: Haddenham Galleries, 20 High Street, Haddenham tel:01353 749188



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## PARISH COUNCIL

November and December Council meetings included the following matters :

Clerk to the Parish – Peter Sanderson has decided to retire after over 30 years in office. We thank him for his significant contribution to the life of the community over such a long period, and wish him and his wife, Shirley, many years of happy retirement. The Council is of course seeking a new Clerk, so if you are interested in this important post please contact any Parish Councillor. In the meantime, Mr Eric Smith (currently Clerk to Rampton and Longstanton Parish Councils) has agreed to 'hold the fort' on a part-time basis. Although his contact details are published on the back page, please help to spread the load by contacting your nearest Parish Councillor (see accompanying list) in the first instance if you need to raise an issue.

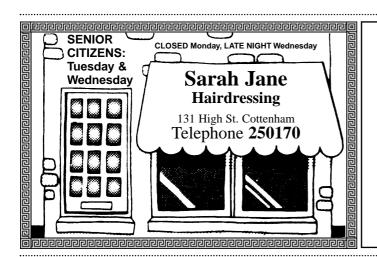
Elsewhere in this *Newsletter*, you will find an appreciation of Peter and all his hard work over the years, much of it over and above the requirements of the job. It is a great pity that this level of commitment does not seem to prevail elsewhere in the community. When we invited (via notice boards and this *Newsletter*) applications from people interested in becoming a member to fill a vacancy on the Council, we received only TWO applicants from a community whose population is approaching 6000! If this is the level of support we can expect going forward, the future gives considerable cause for concern. Come on, Cottenham, surely you can do better than that!

Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) – You will have seen in the Special Edition of the Newsletter issued in December, reference to Steve Gilbey our new PCSO. He will be with us for the foreseeable future, and will support our Community Beat Officer, PC Ed McNeill. He will be that vital link between the community and the police, targeting low level crime such as anti-social behaviour, vandalism, graffiti, and dog fouling. He will also deal with problems such as abandoned vehicles and litter, thereby giving our police officers more time to focus on core tasks and serious crime. Please give him your support.

**Litter** – There have been numerous complaints about the significant amount of litter in certain areas of the village, such as around the Green, outside the Fish & Chip Shop, and in the vicinity of the Spar Shop. A plea to everyone, adults and youngsters alike, please use the litter bins provided or simply take your litter home. We should take a pride in our village, and how it is seen by those visiting or passing through.

While we are on the subject, we are about to lose another faithful servant, Jock Duncan, who has decided to retire from his position as Village Pinder. You may ask 'What is a Pinder?' Apparently, in medieval times, the Pinder was responsible for rounding up stray cattle. These days the job is perhaps less exciting but no less important: Jock has been maintaining the bus shelters and emptying the public

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litter bins for many years, and we thank him for his years of service.

**Brenda Gautrey Way Estate** – Work was carried out in December in the open space areas by tree surgeons and land-scapers. The Council will be carrying out an inspection to ensure that the area is in a suitable condition to be taken over by the Parish.

**Pound Wall Damage** – Just when we thought the saga of the Village Pound was over, serious damage was caused to the brand new wall when a private car mounted the pavement in the early hours of 12th November. Happily the cost of repairs will be met by insurance.

**Bus Stop** – The residents of 213, High Street have requested that consideration be given to moving the bus stop from outside their home to further up the High Street. This has now been agreed by the relevant agencies.

Emergency Access – We are pleased to report that the developers of Tenison Manor have submitted plans to improve the emergency access between the High Street and Tenison Manor between the doctors' surgery and the Salvation Army Hall. We have made a number of comments and look forward to a satisfactory conclusion.

**Speeding in Histon Road** – Complaints have been received of many vehicles still travelling considerably above the speed limit when coming into the village from Histon despite the flashing 30 mph sign and other measures that were put in place to discourage speeding. Please remember that the whole of the village, including Histon Road, has a speed limit of 30 mph. All vehicle drivers are asked to adhere to the limit for the safety of all, and we have referred the matter to the Police – don't forget, there will be an enhanced Police presence in the village in the coming weeks, so if it applies to you, BE WARNED.

#### Cottenham Parish Council Members

Pauline Allen	35, Dunstal Field	201651
Dennis Buckley	350, High Street	250646
Robert Clarke	12, Lambs Lane	250443
Rex Collinson	20, Rampton Road	251377
Pat Fox	49, Victory Way	200671
Hugh Gautrey	81, Rooks Street	251886

Paula Johnson	36, Lee Close	252114
Alan Leeks	25, Dunstal Field	250061
David Mudd	23, The Linnets	251765
Tony Nicholas	77, Pelham Way	301314
David Norman	160, High Street	250917
Paul Smith	Lockspit Hall Farm, Smithy Fen	252578
David Warham	28, High Street	250575
Tim Wotherspoon	Three Horse Shoes, High Street	252108

# **COTTENHAM CHARITIES**

Cottenham Charities received endowments from various benefactors, as far back as the late 17th century, for the relief of the poor in the Parish. Over the years the principal use of the endowment income has been to support the almshouses and to provide Christmas vouchers for pensioners.

The Trustees realised the difficulty and intrusiveness of assessing people's needs and therefore in previous years gave vouchers to all applicants. The value of the voucher is fixed by the endowment income divided by the number of applicants and has become progressively smaller as the applications increase.

A decision was taken this year to target the vouchers towards the intended beneficiaries as directed by the scheme agreed with the Charity Commissioners in 1970. The Scheme states that the purpose of the endowments is to "relieve residents of the Parish of Cottenham who are in condition of need, hardship or distress", so the Trustees directed the funds to those on low income to reduce the number of vouchers and increase their individual value. This year the Government has created the Pension Credit that is designed to top up Pensioners on low income and this gave the Trustees a level of income they could target for the vouchers.

The Trustees hope that those who have an income above this level, who might previously have received vouchers, will understand the new distribution objectives.

There may be others on low income in the Parish whom the Trustees could assist and they can contact the Trustees by letter through the Hon. Sec. at 62, Lyles Road.



### **AMY JONES**

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# PETER SANDERSON — PUBLIC SERVANT EXTRAORDINARY

Although I know he won't thank us for it, the Parish Council is unanimous that Peter Sanderson's retirement as Parish Clerk should not pass without comment on an outstanding career of public service.

He became our Parish Clerk 30 years ago, which makes him the longest serving Clerk in Cambridgeshire. Attention to detail and an insistence on good practice have combined with an encyclopaedic knowledge of the village and its residents to support successive Chairmen and Parish Councils in a way that is probably irreplaceable. Until recently he was also Clerk to a number of village-based Charities. In carrying out these duties he always enjoyed the unstinting support of his wife Shirley, whose contribution behind the scenes must also be recognised.

Peter has been serving his country and his community since he joined the Army in 1953 at the tender age of 17, serving in the Guards Independent Parachute Company and taking part in the airborne operations in Egypt during the Suez crisis. A short time after leaving the Army, he became a policeman, serving for seven years in uniform and a number of years in a civilian capacity. This was followed by ten years with the Cambridgeshire Schools Library Service operating the Council's mobile library. He also served as a part time Retained Fireman in Cottenham. Between 1980 and 1999 he turned his hobby into a business and ran a successful Fuchsia nursery. Typically, he used even this activity to benefit the community. His annual fuchsia shows in July each year from 1989 onwards raised over £10,000 for various charities, the principal beneficiary being MAGPAS (Mid Anglia General

Practitioner Accident Service). When he bred a new variety he named it MAGPAS after his favourite charity and has since had a variety named after him in recognition of his contribution to fuchsia growing.

There is a saying: 'If something needs doing, find a busy man', and it's Peter's contributions to the village over and above the office of Parish Clerk that deserve a special mention. The Ladybird Pre-School in Cottenham opened in 1992 in purpose-made buildings erected by the Parish Council. It now provides quality early education for over 100 local children and has received glowing reviews from OFSTED. Its existence is very largely due to Peter's vision and energy in the early days. He was also a prime mover and organiser for a number of major community events over the years: the 1977 Silver Jubilee Celebrations (a week-long event), the Parish Council Centenary in 1994, the VE Day 50th anniversary the following year, and of course the very successful Golden Jubilee celebrations last year. He would be the first to point out that hundreds of people contributed to those events, but those who were closely involved know just how much of their success was down to Peter Sanderson.

I'm sure the whole community, and especially those thousands of people who have benefited directly and indirectly from all his hard work over the years, will join me in wishing Peter a long and happy retirement. Knowing him as I do, I doubt it will be an idle one!

David Norman Chairman. Cottenham Parish Council



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# LETTERS to the Editors

#### Dear Editor

Cambridgeshire is a thriving county and as a result in the next few years tens of thousands of houses will be built within a radius of 10 miles of Cottenham. Sadly, as always the infrastructure needed to support these new inhabitants is lagging the building of the dwellings. Nowhere is this more noticeable than on Cottenham High Street. Between 8:15am and 9:00am the traffic on the high street is nose to tail as the B1049 now acts as a main access route from Ely, Haddenham etc. to the Histon Vision Park, North Cambridge and the Science Park.

As a pedestrian resident of Margett Street, it is impossible to cross the High Street on the way to school without some kind hearted motorist stopping of their own volition and letting us cross at the island by the Cottenham Club. There has to be a better way.

I note that Oakington has a similar problem and, as a result, has had a Pelican crossing installed by the school. Thus I feel it is now time that the Pelican found a home in Cottenham. This crossing, the zebra by the post office and possibly the crossing near the village college demand such treatment. In addition traffic calming using sleeping policemen would also be suitable either on the crossing or a short distance away as the club crossing is blind in at least one direction, and traffic needs to be encouraged to slow down in preparation for being brought to a halt. I note that the sleeping policemen

near the college do an excellent job of slowing down all but the most determined speedster.

Traffic will only become more of a problem as Cambridgeshire grows. Let us sort this out now, pro actively, before someone is seriously hurt.

Julian White.

An open letter to the coordinator and drivers of the Cottenham Care Car service.

I would like, as a regular user of the Care Car service, to say a big thank you for your kind and helpful services throughout the year. You take me and many people like me shopping, to meet friends and relatives and other essential trips. I know that there is a great deal of appreciation amongst us for your kindness. Once again, a big thank you to you all.

A regular user.

### June Crane

June (Margaret) Crane passed away unexpectedly, although peacefully on Saturday October 25 2003. June was a well known and much liked member of our community, having run the local newsagents for 27 years before taking early retirement. Mr. Jim Crane would like to express his sincere gratitude to all those people who sent donations to Cambridge Cancer Research. Donations in memory of June amounted to £445.

# ARTICLES, DATES AND ADVERTISEMENTS

E-mail, PC floppy disk and paper submissions are all welcome. Please contact the Editor if you have any questions. Dates of events to be advertised in the next issue (No. 80) should span the last week of March and the months of April and May.

Letters for publication may be sent to the Editors, and should include the name and address of the sender, although this may be omitted from publication if requested. Please keep correspondence short and topical. Please note that the Editors may use their discretion regarding publication, and their decision is final. The views expressed by correspondents and other contributors are their own and are not necessarily shared by the Editors.



# FOR NEXT ISSUE 25th FEBRUARY

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Contact Peter Robertson on 01954 200080

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Police	Community Beat Officer	01223 358966
	Central Control	01480 456111
Doctors	Dr. Julie Gould, 188 High Street	250079
	Dr. M. Grande, 42 Telegraph Street	
Community Nurses	Answerphone or between 1.00 – 2.00 pm	
	Co-ordinator, 10.00 am – 4.00 pm	
	Mrs. M. Gilbey, 45 Victory Way	
	Carol Grange	
	Mr. Faber, Old Telephone Exchange, 40 Margett Street	
Chemist	Co-operative Pharmacy Cottenham, 222 High Street	250556
Chiropodist	J.R. Kain, 13 Pelham Close	251143
Osteopath	R.J. Giddings, Oakington Road, Girton	01223 237459
Veterinary Surgeon	R. Hughes-Parry, 66 High Street	252122
Schools	Cottenham Village College and Community Office	288944
	County Primary, Lambs Lane	250227
Under Ones Group		
Pre-School	Ladybirds Pre-School, Recreation Ground	250891
Out of School Club	,	250025
Council Offices	South Cambs. District Council	01223 443000
	Cambridgeshire County Council	01223 717111
Parish Council	Acting Clerk – E Smith, 34 Histon Road	252208
District Councillors	Rex Collinson, 20 Rampton Road. e-mail: rex@rcollinson.fsnet.co.uk	251377
	Tony Nicholas 77 Pelham Way. e-mail: janicholas@genie.co.uk	201314
County Councillor	Peter Stroude, e-mail: peter@stroude.fsbusiness.co.uk	780008
British Red Cross	Cambridge Office	01223 354434
Citizens Advice	CAB, 72/74 Newmarket Road, Cambridge	08701 264010
Social Services	Histon Team	01223 718011
NSPCC	Cottenham Area Team, Peterborough	01733 558245
RSPCA	Area Number, Peterborough	0870 5555999
Samaritans	Cambridge Centre	01223 364455
Railway Station	Cambridge, Passenger Enquiries	0845 7484950
	TOPS Driving School	
Taxi	Pegasus Taxi	261324
Library	Margett Street	273322
Library Doorstep Service	Hilary Firth	01223 718358
Parish Church	The Rectory, 6 High Street	250454
	Jeff Boyden, 72 Lyles Road	
Catholic Church	Fr David Paul, St Lawrences Church, 91 Milton Road, Cambridge	01223 704640
	The Rev'd. Cynthia Hardiman, Wesley House, 250 High Street	
Salvation Army	Majors Ian and Barbara Fawcett, 15 Pelham Close	250524
Royal British Legion	Matthew Baldry, 123 Coolidge Gardens. e-mail:matthew.baldry@tesco.	net 202797
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