

# Village Voices

February 2021

Covering the areas of Gorefield, Guyhirn, Murrow, Parson Drove, Rings End, Thorney Toll, & Wisbech St Mary



## A NOTE FROM PENNY

Will this lockdown be over soon!! Who knows, we can only wait and hope?

We are continuing with our weekly zoom services at 10am every Sunday morning, where people can be together with either Morning Worship or a Spiritual Holy Communion service.

If you would like to join a Zoom service, please email: [churchwardens@wisbechstmarychurch.org.uk](mailto:churchwardens@wisbechstmarychurch.org.uk)

The BBC also offer us times of worship, on Radio 4 at 8.10am there is Sunday Worship and at 1.15pm there is Songs of Praise on BBC1 tv. On BBC Radio 3 at 3pm there is a Choral Evensong, which is usually a beautiful service, well worth a listen. More options are available on the Ely Diocese website, especially the opportunity to hear Bishop Dagmar's reflections, also available on You tube.

If there is something worrying you or someone you would like prayers for, please phone your churchwarden, the number will be in the contacts inside back page.

When we can go back to opening the Churches without concern here is a reminder of the times:

## CHURCHES AT YOUR SERVICE

Residents and visitors of all ages are very welcome at any of these services.

### WISBECH ST MARY & GUYHIRN CHURCH

2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays 11am Sung Eucharist for 1 hour

1<sup>st</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays Morning Worship for ¾ hour & refreshments.

### EMMANUEL CHURCH – PARSON DROVE

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday 9.15am All Age Worship & Refreshments

2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday 9.15am Holy Communion for 1 hour

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday 9.30am Breakfast Church Shared with St. Mark's for 1 hour.

### ST PAUL'S CHURCH – GOREFIELD

1<sup>st</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday 10am Sung Eucharist for 1 hour

2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays 10am Morning Worship.



## PARISH REGISTER

*In our thoughts and prayers*

*We say farewell to our friends and send love to their families:-*

**Richard Guy Nicholls**, from Parson Drove, died 13.12. 20, the funeral was on 29.12.20 at Emmanuel, Parson Drove.

**John Michael Mace**, from Gorefield, died 8.01. 21, the funeral on 20.01.21 at St Paul's, Gorefield.

**Harry Fowler**, from Wisbech St Mary, died 2.01.21, the funeral on 22. 01. 21 at Wisbech St Mary Cemetery.

**Janet Spencer**, from Gorefield, the funeral on 22.01.21 at St Paul's, Gorefield.

**Lois Brown**, from Wisbech St Mary, the funeral on 28.01.21 at Wisbech St Mary & Guyhirn Church.



## Ryk's Ramblings

The 1st of February is designated as St Brigid's day (St Bride's day). Brigid is believed to have been born in AD 452 in Ulster, and therefore before St

Patrick died. She has been called the spiritual midwife who helped bring to birth Christian Ireland, and "the most celebrated Irish woman of all time". She founded a religious community at Kildare. The Church developed through communities of monks and nuns, and her pre-eminence led to her being regarded as a second patron saint, after Patrick. Her spirituality strongly influenced the formation of the church throughout Ireland, immediately after Patrick's time. Brigid is a potent Christian symbol of womanhood. She became the guardian of the poor who worked the land, and the patron of those who study. Beautiful prayers have come down to us which reflect these traditions.

Brigid took hospitality and raised it to a divine art. Through her compassion, energy, and healing powers, everything she set her hand to in her desire to serve God increased. In her compassion, hospitality and caring for others, Brigid provides a role model for us to follow.

On St Brigid's Day each year a cross is blessed and placed in homes and outhouses as an extended prayer to ward off the dark powers of evil and hunger. This custom stems from the account of how Brigid nursed and witnessed to a pagan druid. To help make the gospel clear to him, she made a cross from rush matting.

The 1<sup>st</sup> of February is also the day of Imbolc, the Celtic season that marks the coming of the light after the dark days of winter. In Celtic lands it marks the start of the "lambing" season, but for all of us it can signal the hope that the vaccine brings, the hope for an end of the dark days of this virus as the light of "normality" returns.

God be with you keeping you and those you love safe,

Ryk



St Brigid's cross

*Our apologies to contributors for items not included this month*

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## Guyhirn Church of England Primary School and Pre-School

As we enter a new lockdown we have switched to remote learning. Live lessons are taking place from 9am -3pm and it is wonderful to see the children working well at home and interacting with staff and their friends. They also have the option to access pre-recorded teaching sessions and access to activities and tasks. Our collective worship has been taking place at the end of the school day and gives us the opportunity for reflection.

We have been overwhelmed by the generosity of our community who have provided the school with laptops and tablets, we are truly appreciative.



We would like to offer communication with anyone in our community who is feeling isolated or alone during the lockdown. If you are someone, or know someone that would appreciate a letter from our children please contact our school office and we will arrange this. [office@guyhirn.cambs.sch.uk](mailto:office@guyhirn.cambs.sch.uk)

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## Wisbech St Mary Open Gardens

**Can you Help?**

**We are looking for an organiser.**

The Open Gardens has been running annually for 16 years and has raised thousands of pounds for charity and been enjoyed by many visitors to the village.

Over the years the event has been organised by differing people, Jayne & Richard Walpole have organised it for the past 6 years but are now on the move and relocating to Kent to be closer to family. "We have lived in the village for 32 years and really enjoyed living here. We will miss all the friends we have made, and being part of the open gardens has been very satisfying and we are keen that the event continues."

It is not necessary to open your own garden or know much about gardening to be the organiser, just good IT and co-ordination skills. It would provide an ideal work experience for a business / marketing student.

Jayne will pass on all the information on what to do etc. Just get in touch with Jayne on 07584 341160 or email [jaynewalpole@msn.com](mailto:jaynewalpole@msn.com) if you are interested and would like further information.



### THE NORTH EAST BENEFICE FIRST DRIVE IN CAROL SERVICE



On a not too cold Sunday afternoon on the 20<sup>th</sup> December, people arrived at the Wisbech St Mary Community Centre car park ready to join in Carol Singing. People from all the villages came for a simple service of readings, carols, and prayers. Opened and closed by Rev. Ryk, with the piano played by David Stone, and the carols led by Stephanie and Simon. There were four readings, read by Simon, Ann Desborough, Michelle Gilbert, and Penny Gilbert. Huge thanks to Graham Drew who supported the plan and helped to make it all happen. Thank you too, to those who helped on the gate and with parking cars etc. THANK YOU to all who came and for their kind donations on leaving which meant we raised over £400 for the Children's Society.

**IT WAS A GOOD START TO CHRISTMAS**



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# PARSON DROVE PARISH COUNCIL

## CHAIRMAN - Councillor Gavin Booth



### Chair's Report



The Parish Council are continuing to look at ways to improve road safety at Swan Bridge junction. Therefore, the Council has put aside funds and applied to reduce the speed limit on Fen Road to 30 mph and extend the 40mph limit on Murrow Bank. This is still at an early stage and we hope that the County Council will support this proposal. The Council has also applied to install Mobile Speed Indicators Signs on the approaches to Swan Bridge. We will keep you informed of progress.

Following concerns raised by residents regarding the condition of St John the Baptist Church at Church End, the council has agreed to work with the Churches Conservation Trust to bring the Churchyard back into a good state.

The Parish Councils was successful in securing a further extension to the footpath along Sealey's Lane. It is anticipated that the works will be carried out between 25 January and 19 February 2021. A temporary prohibition of vehicles using the road will be in place, however access will be maintained to properties affected by the order. The alternative route for vehicles is via Sealey's Lane - Marshall Bank - B1166 and vice versa. The council has applied for a further extension for the next financial year.

### A47 Guyhirn Roundabout

Highways England is starting work on improvements to the Guyhirn junction between the A47 (Fen Road to South Brink) and the A141 (March Road) in February 2021 to April 2022. This is one of six projects that Highways England is doing to improve the A47 between Peterborough and Great Yarmouth as part of a £300 million-plus investment.

As part of the work at Guyhirn junction, Highways England will increase the size of the roundabout by creating two lanes on all approaches to the roundabout. This will include an additional lane over the existing carriageway on the River Nene Bridge. The changes to the junction aim to reduce congestion, improve journey times and increase safety.



### Be a CHESS Volunteer

Cambs Acre are looking for volunteers to help deliver the Cambridgeshire Home Energy Support Service over the next 2 years. The aim is to help people on low incomes, who could be struggling with their energy costs. The volunteers will be "eyes and ears" of the project. The volunteers will simply refer people to CHESS who may need support. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please complete the following online form:

Register as a volunteer here -

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/CHESSvolunteer/>

### Councillor Contacts

Chairman - Cllr Gavin Booth .....01945 701157  
Vice Chairman - Cllr Peter Spriggs .....01945 700548  
Cllr John Hunt .....01945 700070  
Cllr Christine Killingworth .....01945 700744  
Cllr Pam Williams .....01945 701047  
Cllr Richard Fowler .....01945 700892  
Clerk - Please contact the Chair

FDC Cllr Sarah Bligh.....01945 450184  
FDC Cllr Gavin Booth.....01945 701157  
CCC Cllr Simon King.....07939 696322

### Helping Hands - COVID Support



The world as we knew it changed in 2020. During the last year we have been running a support group working with FACT and Surgeries to supply food and medications to the elderly and more vulnerable of our community. Councillor Gavin Booth and his team of volunteers have been a lifeline to many people. If you need any help

with prescriptions please call Gavin on 01945 701157. Ideally, speak to Gavin a couple days before it is needed.

[Theclerk@parsondrove.net](mailto:Theclerk@parsondrove.net)

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## Entries from John Peck's February 1827 Diary

We have jumped from John's mid-thirties to his forties. Will the last 5 years have made a difference? From what I read, February is going to be bitter month. Snow and very sharp frosts. Do not skate to Peterborough as you may have to walk home(6 to 6 1/2 hrs) PCH.

February 1. (MARGIN NOTE; Killed pig, 23st.) Attended a North Side meeting to consult the proportion of the £15,000 to be found by that district towards the new Nene Scheme, when it was recommended to tax the whole Hundred of Wisbech with an equal acre rate. Adjourned to Friday, 9<sup>th</sup> inst. 11 to 3.

February 2. Dressing oats in P.D. barn; drew 10 sheep from coleseed for London. Attended a Leverington and Parson Drove meeting, to consult on the same measures as yesterday, and the same resolutions were agreed to. Chosen as one on the Committee to confer with other districts on the subject. Adjourned to 9<sup>th</sup> inst.

February 3. A sharp rime frost. At Wisbech sold Mr. Pate 10 qr. wheat at 53/- per qr. Oats according to weight from £12 to £15 per last; some for seed sold at 16/- per coomb. Beans if good at 50/- per qr. Took in stack of wheat to thrash with machine.

February 4. Another sharp frost. Rode to my brother Joseph Peck's to dine and spend the day, his son John being one year old. Home from there by 8 o'clock. On Friday, at the Wisbech St. Mary's land-letting, Mssrs. Ream & J. Peck hired for me seventeen acres of land near Bell's Mill Bridge to mow & take the hay off, rent £37. (ADDED NOTE: Same I had 1828 at £26"15"0.) By so doing I shall be enabled to graze more at home.

February 5. A sharp rime frost. Took the sheep from 20a. coleseed, all but 20; put in 11a. Town 122, sent 17 shearlings to the land hired at St. Mary's, 6 tups to bottom of 6a. Began to machine a stack of wheat, own hands and horses, machine 6d. per coomb.

February 6. Finished machining the wheat, yield 57c. Attended a Tydd and Newton meeting to consult on the New River business, which terminated like the others by sending a Committee to confer with other districts on the subject.

February 7. Sent load wheat to Wisbech. Walked to Tydd Fen. Short, horse, dying from the effect of last summer's drought, I should judge, for he has never done well since. Mr. Ulyat has lost two. Many head of cattle are now dying, supposed from same cause.

February 8. The Committees of the several districts met this day at the Shire Hall, Wisbech, to adjust the proportion of the several sums to be paid by the different districts. A long and tedious discussion took place, but nothing determined on; adjourned.

February 9. Met again at the Shire Hall, Wisbech, and after a long series of arguments, (for all parties were anxious to get off with paying as little as possible), came to the following conclusion, that the £15,000 be raised by an equal acre rate in each district. The sums are as follows, viz., Wisbech North Side, £4,350 (6485 acres); Leverington and Parson Drove, £3,430 (5109 acres), and Wisbech South Side, £880 (1750 acres), making a total of £15,000. The foundation for adjusting these sums was on a calculation of the expense each district had been at for the last seven years.

February 10. Wisbech Market very dull. A numerous meeting at the Shire Hall, to petition Parliament against any alteration of the Corn Laws, which it is much feared they are about to do. At Dr. Frazer's.

February 11. A sharp frost continues to the great injury of vegetation, the coleseed being near done, and too early to hope for grass.

February 12. To the ploughmen at Harrold; ploughing down manure for beans. Walked round P.D. Fen; the late sharp frosts have had a bad effect on the appearance of the grass and wheat. In the evening read *Reminiscences of M. Kelly. (Michael Kelly, Irish singer(Tenor) 25 Dec 1762(Dublin) – 9 Oct 1826(Margate) of the Kings Theatre and Theatre Royal, Drury Lane London).*

February 13. Another frost, with snow. Begun to give some of the sheep oil-cake with chaff; it is said 1 pound of cake per day will keep them in a thriving condition. Cake is now 10 guineas per ton, which will be for cake 8d. per head per week; the experiment is worth trying, in a season like this. (Note; the sheep did well, and the wool at Clip Day most excellent.)

February 14. A sharp frost and the ground covered with snow. Rode to Tydd Fen; carting brinks earth there. Dined at Mr. Culy's with J. Ream & Jos Peck, and home from there at 9 o'clock.

February 15. Frost with snow. Began to plough 6a. P.D. Fen for beans. Attended a Turnpike Meeting at Wisbech, when the renewal of the Act was agreed on. Note; the first Act for Wisbech & Chatteris Turnpike was got in 1765.

February 16. Severe frost and snow. Drew 6 sheep from coleseed for London. Exchanged a fat sow for a cow and calf and drew 5/- in cash. Sold a fat pig to Mr. Jones at 6/3 per stone. More snow fell in the afternoon, covering the ground about 3 inches deep.

February 17. Sharp piercing frost; stock of all kinds in great distress. At Wisbech Market sold Mr. Pate 20 qr. wheat at 52/- and 10 qr. beans at 50/- per qr. The scanty supply of the latter article fully accounts for the price, many hundred acres not producing the seed again, and what few comes to market are full of holes, eaten by some insect when in the green state as it is supposed. Old men say they never remember the like before.

February 18. A dreadful sharp frost, with cold wind from the east. Went to church this morning, spent the rest of the day at home. This has indeed been a cutting week; the frost has been so severe, the grass appears seared up. Ploughing and field-work suspended - but summer will come.

February 19. A still sharper frost, with piercing wind from the east. Carpenter making sheep troughs to give them corn and oil-cake, the coleseed being near done and the grass not yet come. Sold pig to Mr. Oldfield at 6/6 per stone; killed one for self weight 27st.6lb.

February 20. Another sharp frost. Sent hay, corn and oil-cake to all the sheep. Cutting willows at 20a., the first from trees of my own planting on my own land. Rode to Wisbech and paid Mr. Jackson £50 on account of Mr. John Taylor. Saw by the papers Lord Liverpool is seriously ill, at which farmers rejoice, he having pledged himself to bring forward the question about altering the Corn Laws on Monday next.

February 21. Sharp frost still continues; skated to Peterborough on the Great River. Dined at the Talbot, 9 in company. Started for home at 4 o'clock; owing to the sun thawing the ice, forced to walk home, where I arrived at half past 10 o'clock.

(FRONT LEAVES;- Skated in a party to Peterborough, dined at the Talbot and started for home at 4 o'clock when the power of the sun had so weakened the ice it was found not practicable to skate, so with one consent we agreed to walk home and arrived there at ½ past 10. Remember, never skate so far from home so late in the season.)

February 22. A small frost. Skated to my brother Joseph's, he having the misfortune to put his ankle out of the way; found it going on alright. Dined at home, and round amongst the sheep in the afternoon. John wrote letter to his Grandmama.

Continued overleaf.....

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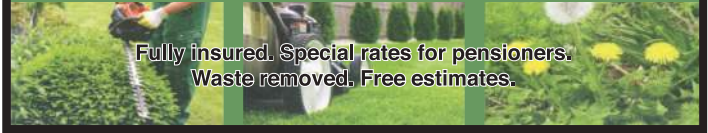
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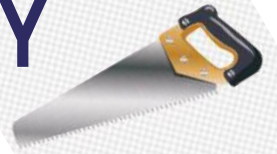
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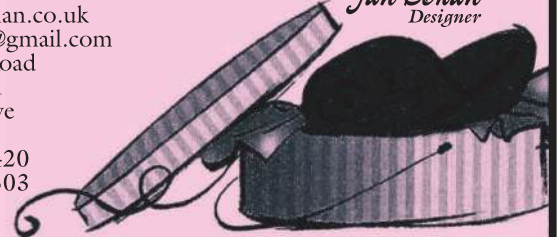
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Continued from John Peck.....

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**Would like to read and learn more? Why not join the John Peck Society at their AGM, Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> April, when Diane Carlton Smith will give a talk on the plague.** Afterwards as always, you can chat with your friends whilst enjoying the usual refreshments. Please note this meeting is dependent on the COVID restriction at the time.

\*\*\*\*\*

## GOREFIELD SCHOOL Lockdown 3

So here we go again! We were looking forward to welcoming all our children back after the Christmas break but this was sadly not to be.

The Government has 'closed' all schools including Primary Schools. However, to say that Gorefield is closed is not quite true. We have half of all our children in school, because they fit the category of children who are entitled to attend school in lockdown. This means that all our staff have been extremely busy preparing and delivering learning to the children who are in school and those who are having to learn remotely. I have to say that both staff and pupils have responded amazingly well to this new situation. We have all been getting to grips with new technology which is enabling good quality learning both at home and at school. However, none of this would work without the support of parents and carers. They are doing an amazing job, many under difficult circumstances, with several children working at home and not enough devices or poor internet connections.

*Well done to all parents and carers and thank you for your support.*

**Penguins Class** The Penguin class, those in school and those now learning at home, have coped brilliantly with the changes at the start of the term. We have begun our Superhero topic thinking about what it takes to be a Superhero, by reading lots of stories, and will go on to learn about real life superheroes, which seems even more appropriate at this time. The children are as enthusiastic about their learning as they were at the beginning of the year and continue to thrive. Go Penguins!

### Robins Class

It has been a different start to term than we were hoping for in Robins class. A dressing up day at school turned into children sending in pictures of themselves wearing their fruit and vegetable costumes at home. All the children have had a great start to their home learning. They have all been tuning into live lessons via zoom, helping to keep the learning as 'normal' as we can. I am amazed by, and really proud of the enthusiasm and drive that they are all showing to their learning.

### Owls Class

Since we returned to school in January, the children have adapted amazingly quickly to the new routines in the classroom. We see our home learners every day on Zoom and they are working extremely hard on the same lessons as we are doing in class. I am pleased to say that Owls, whether at home or in class, are continuing to be motivated as we move forwards with our normal curriculum. Our topic is 'Chocolate' and we have started to learn about the story of this delicious treat.

### Eagles Class

We are so proud of our pupils and how well they have accepted the sudden schooling changes. The children of Critical workers in Eagles class have been working very hard in school every day, they are following our normal daily timetable. Eagles, who working at home, are completing the same work, and are checking in daily via Zoom calls with the headteacher who is ensuring that they are all happy and understand the tasks for the day. We are all really enjoying researching our new topic for this term - 'The Titanic' - and reading 'Kaspar' by Michael Morpurgo which is about a handsome black cat from Russia - the only cat to survive the Titanic.

We are so proud of everyone and grateful to the full team at Gorefield. Stay Safe everyone.

\*\*\*\*\*



## Gorefield in the Past

Plough Monday has been celebrated in Gorefield in the Past. In the School Log books there is a brief entry which mentions some attendance by pupils at a service in the church in the late 1800's. Plough Monday is always the first Monday after Twelfth night. (Epiphany)



Arthur Gagen ploughing with a crawler

The day traditionally saw the resumption of work after the Christmas period in some areas, particularly in northern England and the East of England. The customs observed on Plough Monday varied by region, but a common feature was for a plough to be hauled from house to house in a procession, collecting money. They were often accompanied by musicians, an old woman or a boy dressed as an old woman, called the "Bessy," and a man in the role of the "fool." 'Plough Pudding' is a boiled suet pudding, containing meat and onions. It is from Norfolk and is eaten on Plough Monday.



The nearest celebrations of this festival in this region is the famous Whittlesea Straw Bear Festival which this year has sadly had to be cancelled.

To mark the occasion of Plough Monday, some pictures of ploughing in the village in the past.



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Find Us



## February Report

With another and unexpected lockdown to the start of the spring term, Alderman Payne have once again stepped up to make sure our pupils receive continued and quality teaching across the year groups! Not only are we well equipped for online teaching using Tapestry, Class Dojo, and Google Classrooms, (not forgetting Zoom which has brought us together), but we have also had a tremendous turnout of children participating in these lessons! So, a huge thank you goes out to all pupils, parents, and staff for not only your support during this unusual and challenging time but your positivity which is challenging us all! Well done everybody, keep calm, keep kind and keep going!!



### Brain game ideas to do at home...

#### Set up an obstacle course

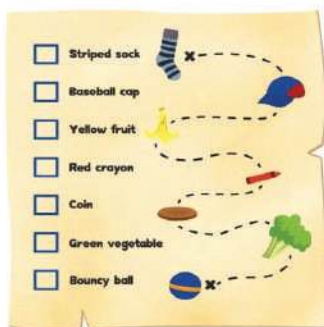
You could use pillows, cushions, chairs, tables, sofas, storage boxes, string, paper, balls or hula hoops. A typical course includes something to walk on, crawl under, crawl through, jump, throw, solve a riddle – the possibilities are endless! This activity is great for enhancing gross motor skills, visual perception, motor planning, coordination, problem solving, critical thinking and language skills. Adapt a course for older children with riddles and puzzles to pass through instead of obstacles.

#### Scavenger Hunt

Scavenger hunts can be easily customised and can keep children and adults occupied for hours! Maybe extend the game with family or friends via a video call and make it a dress up event to make it more exciting! Here's an example of a themed scavenger hunt.



#### Treasure Checklist



#### Tease your brain with puzzles!

Puzzles can be for the whole family! They are a great way to develop your child's spatial perception, coordination, problem solving, cognitive skills and fine motor skills – proving puzzles to be awesome

games for brain development. There are many different kinds to choose from: tangrams and board puzzles for younger children, and older ones (including adults) can indulge in scrabble, sudoku, crosswords, logic puzzles and even Rubik's cubes! If in doubt, just google it!

We look forward to welcoming everyone back to school when we get the go ahead but for now, keep learning, be active and stay safe!

Hopefully with the increased Covid 19 vaccinations the dreadful spread of the disease will be curbed. Then we can look forward to meeting with our friends and family once again, and enjoy attending our clubs, societies, and groups. As a family historian I am aware that our country has faced dark days before. But we have always overcome and moved on to good days. So, I look forward with a positive attitude.

#### HOW TIMES HAVE CHANGED

The NHS has been at the centre of our attention in the past year with the Covid 19 pressures, and now the vaccinations. What would we do without it?

Well, we did have to manage without it, before it was established in 1947. Everyone had to pay for the services of doctors, nurses and midwives. There were many kitchen cupboard cures and remedies for our illnesses. In the days when you had to pay to see the doctor, it was important to have a range of trusted remedies for everyday illnesses: honey and lemon for coughs; goose grease and brown paper poultices for a bad chest; burnt toast for tummy aches – all had their place.

A link to what we are being told now about keeping places well ventilated. In the past the advice was 'Open your windows both top and bottom the fresh air rushes in at the bottom, while the foul escapes at the top. This is called letting your friend in and expelling your enemy!' Dandelion root boiled in water was given for a sluggish state of the liver. Onions were used frequently as a cure for ailments. Cut an onion in half and rub it on chilblains. For baldness rub onions frequently on the parts needed. Children were told various of things to do for their bumps and bruises. Put vinegar on it! I remember falling down a bank into a bed of stinging nettles, my grandmother put me in a bath full of vinegar and warm water to sooth the pain. Comfrey helped to soothe bumps and bruises. Dock leaves spat on and rubbed onto stings. Blue bag rubbed on bee strings. When all else fails 'Kiss it better'. Coming from a beekeeper's family I still use the Honey & lemon in hot water remedy for sore throats and coughs.

At schools during the war years, children lined up to be given a spoonful of cod liver oil and of malt. Sometimes it was combined by the brand name of Virol making it more acceptable to the taste.



To save time the same spoon would be used for every child! Rosehip syrup was another remedy to keep colds at bay. Pocket money could be earned by collecting the rosehips from the hedgerows.

The fruit would be taken to school and weighed; the child would be paid according to the weight of rosehips collected. Another favourite was a 'hot toddy' a mixture including whisky which is still a favourite.

Scientists have made an important discovery regarding avoiding winter colds. The researchers at Pennsylvania University found that happy people are three times less likely to succumb to a cold. So remember, laughter is by far the best medicine!

#### OUR HELP & RESEARCH SESSIONS & MEETINGS

One of our researchers has been helping a gentleman find out about his two uncles, who served in the Great War. One died in 1918 the other in 1920, finding their military records gave an insight to their service years. If you would like help researching your family just give Bridget Hunter a call on 01945 587723.

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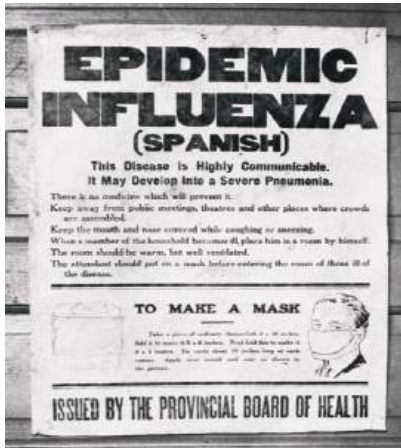
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## Interesting and Curious Facts of Yesteryear

Unusual, fascinating and sometimes amusing, by the author of "Wisbech's Secret Princess," Chris Donald

### PANDEMIC



This time 100 years ago we were just getting over the worst pandemic that the 20<sup>th</sup> century has ever known it was the Spanish flu although it did not come from Spain. It was to claim somewhere between 50 to 100 million people world wide. More than the total amount of people who died in the first World War.

It had started in 1917. The Spanish flu was air borne and it quickly spread to this country. The troops fighting the first World War were coming back home from the trenches in Northern France bringing the disease with them. They had been living in terrible conditions and their immune systems were low. They had put up with malnutrition and poor hygiene and were easy targets for the virus. They came to this country in crowded trains, boats and buses, and brought it with them, spreading it to all parts of the country.

At the time of writing this article nearly 94 thousand people have died in this country from Coronavirus but the death toll from the Spanish flu was 228 thousand.

It came in two waves, the second being far more deadly than the first. At first people went down with no more than a sore throat, headache and fever. But, the second mutation was far more powerful and affected young people up to the age of thirty. A person could be healthy at breakfast time and be dead by tea time. It affected the whole body with the patient finally dying of strangulation, gasping for breath.

Medicine was far less advanced than it is now. Now, patients are automatically given oxygen and antibiotics. And, although the principle of vaccination was about, it didn't really take off until the second World War.

Doctors and nurses worked to breaking point and hospitals were quickly overwhelmed and, sadly, there was little they could do as there were no treatments for flu and no antibiotics to treat pneumonia. Medicine wasn't as developed as now and they just didn't have medicines to treat the virus.

The public were warned about coughing and sneezing, but people believed that smoking would ward off the virus. Other remedies consisted of drinking cocoa three times a day or having porridge every morning.

In the countryside, people travelled together huddled up in

the back of a cart to go from the villages to Wisbech market. In those days there were few cars and most people relied on a horse and cart. Being in close proximity helped carry the virus from person to person. There was no compulsory wearing of masks or visors.

In Cambridgeshire, all the elementary schools, County Boy's schools and County Girl's Schools were closed. Theatres and cinemas were closed to children. In Wisbech the cinema was called The Electric Theatre and had been open since 1910. It was quite big, holding 450 seats. There was also a theatre in Alexandra Road but it was being used as a military hospital. Pubs stayed open, some churches shut, and streets were sprayed with disinfectant.

There was a shortage of undertakers and grave diggers which meant that some dead people had a long wait before being buried.

The saddest story in Wisbech was about a young man, Arthur Duffield. He was born 1893 in London but at the age of seven his family moved to Walsoken and then to Wisbech. At sixteen he started learning the trade of boot and shoe maker in Norfolk Street. When the first World war started he was 23 and joined the army and was sent to the Balkans. Despite the atrocities of war he survived only to go ill six weeks before the end of the fighting. He was admitted to hospital with Spanish flu and nine days later he was dead. The war didn't kill him but the virus did. His grave is in Greece.

But it wasn't all bad, in 1921 you could go into a pub and have a pint of beer for seven old pennies, that is equivalent to 85 pence in today's money. Not bad!

Until the next article,

Take care,

Look after your mind and body.

### Invitation to tender for services relating to Annual grounds and asset maintenance in the Parish of Wisbech St. Mary

Wisbech St. Mary Parish Council is seeking tenders for the annual maintenance of Parish-owned land and assets for the year 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022

The Parish Council has a duty of care to keep its public open spaces and assets as safe, clean, and tidy as is practicable and cost effective. This tender opportunity is for Bus Shelters, Memorials, Planters, and small grass areas.

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#### Discretionary Extension Contract Years

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(Discretion of the Council)

Third Year contract period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024  
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#### TENDER SUBMISSION

Your completed tender submission must be received by The Clerk to the Council by

**1pm on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2021.**

Tenders received after the closing time and date will not be considered.

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# Murrow Primary Academy

## January/February 2021

Wow, what a start to the new year!

This term has definitely started differently with children, parents and staff adapting to life in another Lockdown.

The children continue to learn either from home or in school (critical worker children). Teachers are setting work daily for the children to complete either online or in books. This is then marked and responded to. We have managed to make it work as best we can.

Children have been sending in some amazing work – keep it up. There have been zoom calls to the children to keep in touch, videos put online to assist with their work and constant support in these strange and difficult times. Parents are so supportive.

Daily suggestions for physical exercise have been posted online as its very important to stay fit and healthy. Remember the Daily Mile, Joe Wicks and Cosmic Yoga are just a few to have a go at.

Some of our little ones are going into the Woodland area and this week are making binoculars so that they can take part in the RSPB great bird watch – exciting.

Things may be a little different but as a Team we continue to work together.

Murrow Primary Academy would like to thank all of the children, parents and staff for their continued support.



## News from St Paul's Gorefield

As well as having a collection at St Paul's Church Gorefield, for the food bank at Harvest time, it was decided that it would be a great idea to do it again for Christmas.

The response was amazing and on the 14th December it was wonderful to deliver a car boot full of goodies. Thanks for all your donations, they were very gratefully received.



Last term the scouts were given an issue of "The

Scouter" from the 1940s - the old scout monthly magazine is full of useful information, and in particular, *how and what* the scouts were up to during those times. The scouts found the articles about how the scout movement was assisting the war effort interesting, and the role of honour, a bit sombre. It is a bleak reminder of how different things were during the war, and how much responsibility young people were given.



We would never dream of asking the young people to do the things that they did during the war, but the scouting ethos is still the same, and although a very different movement exists today there are the same feelings and emotions for all of us. Hopefully, everyone who is a scout or has ever been involved in the movement can remember the promise and law that we all take, and in particular the last part of the promise *"to help other people and keep the scout law"* and the 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> laws *"a scout has courage in all difficulties, and a scout has self-respect and respect for others"*.

We are back to online meetings until we are told otherwise and continue to come up with new and invigorating ways to help and entertain the young people.

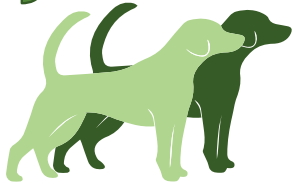
Visit [www.15thwisbechscouts.org](http://www.15thwisbechscouts.org) for more information about Beavers, Cubs and Scouts and how you can become involved. #skillsforlife

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## Following on from December 2020 article by Steve Hirst

Gorefield resident Steve Hirst told in December the story of his family's move from the wilds of west London to the peace of Gorefield, which he blamed on his wife's and daughter's enthusiasm for Pig Dyke Molly. In case there are any readers who haven't been fortunate enough to see us, here is a bit about Pig Dyke Molly.

Molly dancing is a bit like the fenland version of Morris dancing, but far more sophisticated and subtle...in our view anyway! No sticks, bells or hankies are used, but dances are based loosely on country dance patterns, and encourage creative interpretations. Molly dancing is believed to have originated when farm labourers were out of work and money during the winter, and they would go and dance or sing to the local squire and gentry for food, drink or cash. Myth says if they did not receive any gratuity, they would drag the plough across the lawn. They would dress in whatever fancy dress they could find – including cross-dressing, wearing animal heads, and face paint.

Pig Dyke Molly has taken this old tradition by the scruff of the neck and brought it up to date, with a striking visual appearance and vibrant dancing style, coupled with superb and unique music. We aim to entertain above all, dancing with we hope vigour and energy, and creating complex patterns for three to eight (or more) dancers. We base our dances and music on what we know of what used to happen, but have twisted that with a modern approach. We wear striking and "colourful" black and white costumes, individual to each dancer, and enjoy getting creative with black and white patterned face paint. Original and energising music is central to our performances, and most of our tunes were written for the team by its musicians.

The group has an age range between eight and 80, with a very broad variety of women and men with very differing professions and backgrounds who come together for their sheer love of dancing, entertainment and sociability. We have spread Molly dancing across the globe, performing at several Saint Patrick's days across in Ireland, in Bourges and Nimes in France, in Greece and twice in America.

Over the Christmas and New Year period Pig Dyke members usually take part in various activities, including carol singing in Peterborough, and dancing on New Year's Eve in every pub, party or other venue who accept them in the Whittlesey area. All the money collected from these two events is donated to Macmillan Cancer Care. Each year Pig Dyke Molly raises in excess of £1000 and we

estimate that over the years they have donated about £18,000 to this charity. Sadly we haven't been able to do this – or anything else –



this winter, but we plan to do twice as well next year. When the world returns to something like normal, we are desperate to meet again and entertain you when and where we can.

For more information see [www.pigdyke.co.uk](http://www.pigdyke.co.uk)

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