"What" I shrieked, "are they saying?" My interlocutor, who, to be fair, was sitting a good two chairs away, wrinkled her nose. "Eh?" she yelled. "The tele," I bellowed. "Why are they whispering? They didn't use to. I mean, you never had to wonder what Cliff Michelmore was saying." She frowned. "I think he's dead now, too," she said. "What? What do you mean - too?" I asked, not unreasonably. "Well," she said, "he was married to that woman, wasn't he? Not Judith Chalmers, another one...Jean Metcalfe, that's her. And she definitely is." Quick as a flash, I seized on the flaw in this line of argument. "That's not germane," I shouted, "the point is, I can't tell what's going on. I can hear the music well enough, I just can't figure out what they're talking about." The reason for the hubbub was simple. In a desperate effort to penetrate the invisible layers of wet cotton wool behind which the cast seemed to be sheltering, we had cranked up the volume on our TV to a level at which I half expected the National Grid to cut out in offended protest. As a result, we were now enveloped in thundering orchestral chords and seat-shuddering sound-effects but still no nearer to deciphering the dialogue which we assumed must be taking place. It may as well have been in Bulgarian for all the sense we could make of it. Which was kind of spooky, because an attempt to force the set to show subtitles merely resulted in a display of impenetrable Cyrillic which could easily have been Bulgarian. Or Martian.

There was only one thing to be done and, luckily, the man of the house knew what it was. Thus it was that we found ourselves in the electronics department of a large store, enrap't by the sorial of a persuasive young man. "There are other, cheaper, sound-bars of course," he cooed, "but you'd be a fool to yourself if you skimped on quality. We sell a lot of these, you know." "Er indoors looked doubtful. "It's rather big." she said. "And won't there be wires everywhere?"

The salesman favoured me with a pitying, empathetic look. I took my cue like a pro. "Of course not!" I exclaimed "I'll simply tuck away somewhere - you won't even know it's there." By this time, I was already waving a fistful of credit cards - some of them mine - at him and the deal was as good as done. Installation, I was assured, was simplicity itself and could easily be performed by any ten-year old. Which may well be true, but as we were fresh out of ten-year olds back at La Casa, the job was instead entrusted to a rather older pair of hands, intermittently connected to an even older and rustier brain. After dexterously relocating various sofas, bookcases, tables and armchairs and following several illuminating but uninformative Internet searches, the job was pronounced as near done as it was ever going to be and we settled down in front of the box, ready for the transformation in store.

Friends, it's an eye (or possibly, ear) opener. Every last syllable, even the very breathiest, is now ours to savour. But before you rush out to equip yourself with one of these miracle cures for old-age, a word of advice: Be careful what you wish for. They don't half talk some rubbish.

**EDITORIAL**

"Welcome. All welcome. The APM meets on Mon 13th May. Chapel - 10.45am.

Details of Drivers and passengers will be circulated after the Easter break. Any queries - call Pauline Jacklin on 01223 263214.

- Sewing, Knit and Natter - meets again on the 15th May. 10.45 - 1pm at the Chapel.

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**TOFT FRIENDSHIP CLUB**

[Over 50s Club].

- The May meeting on Wednesday 15th, will be an outing by car to Elveden Courtyard.

It is suggested that we leave Toft by 10.30 - 10.45am.

Details of Drivers and passengers will be circulated after the Easter break. Any queries - call Pauline Jacklin on 01223 263214.

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**DIARY DATES**

**MONTHLY COFFEE MORNING**

Is on Monday the 20th 10.30am-12.00noon at the home of Lucy and Peter Allen, 55a High Street. Everyone welcome.

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**TOFT VILLAGE CALENDAR**

**Sewing, Knit and Natter**

- Meets again on the 15th May. Everyone welcome. Again, all welcome.

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**Le Vaudreuil**

Comberton is celebrating the 20th Anniversary of its twinning with the village of Le Vaudreuil in Normandy - near Rouen and the River Seine. The French came to Comberton for the weekend of 5-7 April, arriving on Friday evening and going off to stay with host families, not just in Comberton, but in the surrounding villages, including Coton and Cambourne.

On Saturday we had a bilingual tour of Cambridge with two Blue Badge guides. Everyone learned something about the city, and made new friends. In the evening, we held a pot-luck supper at the Village Hall with musical entertainment by groups of Combertonians, and a lot of talking and laughter.

The weekend was concluded with a visit to Girton College, including a wonderful exhibition of “People’s Portraits”, and a memorable lunch in Hall.

Why not take part in the ‘Entente Cordiale’ and overcome the Brexit blues! We plan to go to France 20-22 September 2019, by coach and Eurotunnel, where we stay with host families and enjoy the French way of life – join us! For more information, see www.CombertonTwinning.org.uk.

To join, contact Glynis Ellis, tel 262214, email secretary@combertontwinning.org.uk.
MINISTRY TEAM

THE CHURCH IN TOFT
St. Andrew’s Parish Church

Team Vicar:
Rev David Newton 01223 665654

Lay Minister: Barbara Preece Tel: 263466

Churchwardens:
Ann Mitchell 262516
John Quenby 263949

Methodist Church
Minister: Rev Alison Walker
01223 872862
alison.walker@methodist.org.uk

Stewards:
Diana Tebbit 01223 263557
Stephen Acklam 264055
Mrs Pat Morton 264010

Everyone is welcome to come and share in any of our services

SERVICES OF WORSHIP

SPRING FEAST

5th May 8.30 am Holy Communion - Rev Prof Michael Reiss

11.45 am Short service outside Methodist Church – Rev Alison Walker/Cathy Michell

From 3.00 pm Well-dressing, service of thanksgiving and parish tea at St Andrew’s - Rev Alison Walker/Cathy Michell

12th May 11.00 am Morning service St. Andrew’s – Sue Nelms/Rev David Newton

19th May 8.30 am Holy Communion - Rev Prof Michael Reiss

11.00am Holy Communion – Methodist Church – Rev Robert Dolman

26th May 11.00am Morning Service, St. Andrew’s – Rev Tricia Troughton

4.00 pm Bread church. Methodist Church

30th May 7.30 pm Ascension service, St Mary’s Comberton

Shorter morning prayer every Wednesday at 9.15am at St. Andrew’s – service lasts about 30 minutes and everyone, whatever your denomination, is welcome.

Dear Friends,

We were under the English Channel returning from France when I idly opened Twitter to see the sad news about the Notre Dame fire. Writing this letter the day after, it seems the basic structure is saved with only one person injured and even some of the beautiful rose windows are still in place. Ahead lies a long work of re-building or perhaps new building, that will need craftsman from across Europe and the world and will take many years, as cathedral building always does.

France is a proudly laïque (secular) country and yet scores of people gathered to watch the efforts to save the building, some also prayed and sang hymns to Mary the “our lady” of the cathedral’s name. The crowds paid tribute to the cathedral’s emotional resonance for tourists and inhabitants alike. Notre-Dame, filled with artworks as well as the beauty of the building itself and hallowed as a place of worship for centuries, still inspires tourists to find Christian faith.

Historic buildings, whether famous or not, connect us with a sense of life as it was and reassure us about the future continuity of life. The Notre-Dame fire exposed the transience of even such an iconic building, and thus moves us to reflect on what truly endures in our own lives. People have promised funds for the rebuild, so that in the centre of Paris once again, a sturdy and beautiful building can oversee and outlast each political idea.

Our public buildings all offer us this sense of connection: the social club/pub celebrates with us, the green spaces have been trampled by generations, the water from the well connects us to the past. The churches are spaces of prayer, connection and service. If you enter either building in the quiet, you feel the peace and protection not only of the walls, but also the community itself.

Our homes, our churches, our historic monuments all bear a meaning beyond the roof and walls – where is important to you, and why?

With best wishes, Alison

Sewing, Knit and Natter at the Chapel meets again on the 15th May, 10.45 - 1pm with Val showing us how to make cards for birthdays etc plus some of us knitting and others trying to master crochet. All welcome.
**Church Fete** this year is on **Saturday June 8th** beginning with lunch in the People’s Hall. The planning meeting will be held soon. If you would like to help in any way; if you would be happy to open your garden for visitors that day; if you have good ideas – please get in touch with Ann Mitchell ann@mitchella.demon.co.uk 262516, but above all **KEEP THE DATE AND COME ENJOY YET ANOTHER TOFT EXPERIENCE!**

**FUND RAISING FOR THE SOUTH AISLE ROOF & CHURCHYARD WALL**

A number of you have responded most generously to David Newton’s letter last month and we are very, very grateful.

As the year goes on we plan to have a number of fund-raising events – if you have any bright ideas or would like to run something for us - please do get in touch

Ann Mitchell & John Quenby
Treasurer: at 40 School Lane

Donations can be given as a cheque to Toft PCC and given to Ann or John or put through the door of no. 40 or can be done electronically to sort code 30-91-56; acc. no; 02251476

Whichever method you use please indicate it is for the Restoration Fund.

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**1st BARTON GUIDES**

We are currently recruiting Guides for 1st Barton Guides. We meet in Barton village on Monday evenings in term-time. We are open to girls age 10 to 14. You don’t have to have been a Rainbow or Brownie before. Our catchment area is Barton, Bourn, Coton, Camberton, Eversdens, Granchester, Harlton, Haslingfield, Kingston and Toft.

Please contact Fox and Mole on 1stbartonguides@gmail.com
Or phone 07889 271166 for more information.

Joining information is on the Girlguiding website

https://www.girlguiding.org.uk/what-we-do/guides-10-14/

Our Guides love outdoor adventures, camping, crafts, art, cooking and dance. Our programme is planned using ideas from our girls. Last term our activities included a night hike, learning emergency procedures (in the dark), decorating cakes to take to the Cambridge Women’s Refuge and ice skating at the North Pole. This term we have cooked sweet things and learnt knots for camping and making friendship bracelets. We also had a film night and taster session for girls interested in joining. Next term we will do more outside, using the playing field and having occasional meetings off-site. We are currently planning our camping activities for this season. We would particularly encourage new families to get in touch now, so that your girls can be included in our plans.

Come and join us for a taster session.

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**1st BARTON RANGERS**

If you are 14 to 18 and would like to come and try out Rangers for an evening, please contact Heather and Ellen on 1stbartonrangers@gmail.com. We meet once a month in Toft but are flexible around members’ availability. You don't need to have been a Guide to be a Ranger.

Joining information is on the Girlguiding website

https://www.girlguiding.org.uk/what-we-do/rangers/all-about-rangers/
TOFT SOCIAL CLUB NEWS
FRIDAY 10TH MAY: FOOD ON FRIDAY

We are returning in May to our very popular Friday evening single course meal which will be available from 7.00 pm onwards. The menu is lasagna or vegetarian pasta option both with a crisp mediterranean mixed salad. As food is on a ‘first-come-first-served’ basis, please arrive early to avoid hunger and disappointment! Come along for a sociable evening out!

SATURDAY 18th MAY: FILM NIGHT:
“THE OLD MAN AND THE GUN”

This is reported to be to be Robert Redford’s last film as an actor. Redford plays Forrest Tucker, who aged 70 makes an audacious escape from San Quentin, conducting an unprecedented string of heists that confound authorities and enchant the public. Wrapped up in the pursuit are detective John Hunt, who becomes captivated with Forrest's commitment to his craft, and a woman who loves him in spite of his chosen profession. A well-told story brought to life by a beautifully matched cast,

Film Club members free. Non-members pay a £2.50 nightly membership fee at the door.
Doors open at 8.00pm, film starts at 8.15 promptly.

SATURDAY 25th MAY: LIVE MUSIC NIGHT

Join us from 8.00pm at our regular “Live Music Night” where local musicians gather to play a wide variety of music and songs. The evening is very informal and we invite you to come along to listen to the music, meet new people and chat with friends. The Social Club bar will be open with an extensive range of real ales, lagers, wines, spirits and soft drinks all at value for money prices.

OTHER DATES FOR YOUR DIARY
(Doors open at 8.00 pm, 7.30 pm on Sundays)

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<td>5th and 19th May</td>
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<td>Thursday Bingo</td>
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Your Committee is: Richard Fletcher (Chairman), Martin Sebborn (Vice Chairman), Gill Collett (Treasurer), Paul Hercus (Secretary), Koran Collett, Sonia Cox, Ron Gouldstone, Katrina Holmes, Brian Roberts, Roger Thorogood and Angela Unsworth,

www.toftsocialclub.org.uk

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK: https://www.facebook.com/ToftSocial
Toft Parish Council
Clerk: Mrs Gail Stoehr (clerk@tpc.toft.org.uk)
30 West Drive
Highfields Caldecote
Cambridge, CB23 7NY   Tel: 01954 210241

Councillors   Phone   E-mail

Chairman:
Martin   263663   cllr.yeadon@tpc.toft.org.uk
Yeadon
James   07500 018949   cllr.mcniven@tpc.toft.org.uk
McNiven
Elaine Miles   262255   cllr.miles@tpc.toft.org.uk
Tricia Ellis-
Evans   263477   cllr.ellis-evans@tpc.toft.org.uk
Andy Tall   07984796273   cllr.tall@tpc.toft.org.uk
Lluis Borrell   01223264611   cllr.borrell@toft.org.uk

The PC met on 1st April.

To start with two regular pleas: Please trim hedges before they obstruct the pathways around the village, they can make it very difficult for wheel chairs and buggies. Secondly we are still looking for an additional Councillor to join us. Please ask any Councillor about the opportunity.

The PC agreed, in principle, to installing a new baby swing on the rec. Quotes are to be gathered before the final agreement.

The PC agreed to carry out it's annual walkabout on Saturday 6th April. This gives the Council an opportunity to review the condition of the village assets and to consider maintenance needs. It also agreed to consider the need, or not, for a village litter pick.

The date for the Annual Parish Meeting was set for 13th May at 7-00. At this meeting the Chair will give a report on what the PC has achieved during the year along with a finance report. It also gives residents an opportunity to give the PC their views on their priorities and suggestions for improvements to the village.

The PC considered a planning application for a variation on an existing approval.

Cllr Tall reported on some of the data gathered from the speed monitor. The good news is that most drivers do drive within the speed limit. Unfortunately not all and a maximum speed of 66mph was recorded, with over 40 vehicles exceeding 50mph during the month.

The Ramblers Association is leading a project to record all footpaths particuarly footpaths that may become lost. Cllr Miles is reviewing our local footpaths to capture any that may be of interest.

Could you be our next Community Champion?

We're looking for volunteers to join our team of community champions across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

As part of their voluntary activities, community champions support and participate in local initiatives and campaigns, helping to spread the word to local communities about keeping safe. They make a huge contribution to the Service and help work towards the vision for a safe community where there are no preventable deaths or injuries in fires or other emergencies.

Champions cover everything from fire safety in the home, to road and water safety, including:

Attending local events – Representing CFRS at events, such as school fetes, school presentations and community festivals.
Community fire station open days – Helping out at events and sharing safety advice.
Community fire safety campaigns – Targeted activities to coincide with safety themes, such as electrical appliance safety and cooking safety.

Community champions receive training as part of the role to help develop their skills. The opportunity also gives volunteers the opportunity to enhance their CVs, make new friends and improve their knowledge of the work undertaken by CFRS. No previous qualifications or specific skills are needed to become a community champion and CFRS is always seeking people from diverse backgrounds.

If you would like to find out more about the role of a community champion visit www.cambsfire.gov.uk.
Toft Spring Feast is just a few days away …

Saturday 4th & Sunday 5th May 2019

This year, as every year, we have a full programme of events, with something for all ages and interests. Our theme for 2019 is “Voices of Toft: Memories & Music”. We celebrate the memories of Toft people and places from the past as preserved in the extensive village sound, photo and video archives, as well as making music over the weekend.

There are the usual traditional Spring Feast events such as the Parish Walk and Picnic and the Maypole on Sunday, and the village exhibitions and tea-parties.

At the Saturday morning exhibition in the Methodist Chapel there will be tea, coffee and music in the garden, as well as a bit of free-and-easy folk-singing led by Robin Walker, Director of Music of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.

At the afternoon tea-party in the People’s Hall (free entry), there’s another exhibition and a video will be shown bringing to light words and images from the village archives, accompanied by a brief talk about recordings made in Toft over the years. It will be a chance to see and hear recordings never before made public.

On Saturday evening come with the whole family to the Spring Feast Ceilidh at the People’s Hall at 7.30pm. We’ve made it to start a bit earlier than usual Toft events so that all ages can join in. We have booked a great band and a caller, so you don’t need any previous experience of ceilidh dancing. Tickets, £8 adults, £4 under-16s, on sale at Toft Shop and Toft Social Club.

We do need volunteers to help at some of the events, so please contact Mike McCarthy at mactoft@aol.com, tel. 262523, or just let me know directly.

A complete programme of times and places for all the events has been delivered to every house in Toft.

Don’t miss what will be a great couple of days. See you there.
Internet Club

Presentation of the Community Award, 19 March 2019. From left to right: Carol Vorderman MBE; Dr Andrew Harter CBE DL, High Sheriff of Cambridgeshire; Katherine James; Jane Tebbit; Ms Lily Bacon DL; Jake Tebbit

On 19 March, Jane and Jake Tebbit and Katherine James attended a presentation of The High Sheriff of Cambridgeshire Community Awards at the William Gates Computer Centre (University of Cambridge). We were representing Toft’s Internet Club – just one of a large number of other voluntary groups working across Cambridgeshire to help people, both young and old, in a variety of ways. We were also there on behalf of the late Nick Nicholson who, as Vice Chairman of the Toft People’s Hall, so ably submitted our original submission to the Community Fund.

As a consequence, we now have financial resources to help run our Internet Club. However, we are currently taking a break from meetings until Monday 20 May (please note the change in the day, which from then will be the 1st and 3rd Mondays of the month – unless that happens to fall on a Bank Holiday, in which case we shall not be meeting). Time (2–4pm) and venue (Toft People’s Hall) as usual.

In the meantime Jane and I will go shopping on behalf of the Club. Initially we aim to buy at least a couple of tablets and a robust ‘workhorse’ printer, which should all be up and running by our next meeting.

You may notice that we’re also publicising the existence of the Toft Internet Club in surrounding villages. We’re very keen that more people should join the group, both ‘novices’ and those who are more adept with technology, who can share their know-how in simple fashion. The printer will be for the use of anyone living in Toft (A3 posters, photos, correspondence...), for a small fee (to offset running costs – we will give more details later about how the printer can be used by individuals). We hope the tablets will encourage new members to come and see how technology is something to be used and enjoyed – without anxiety!

Do come to our next meeting and see what goes on – we offer a very warm welcome to all.

Katherine and Jane

We need your recipes!

The IW and Lot Meadow are planning the production of a Toft recipe booklet to celebrate Apple Day later this year. We’re looking for recipes – ideally old ‘family’ recipes – that include locally grown fruits such as are growing in the Meadow: apples (all varieties), pears, plums, greengages, crab-apples, sloes etc. They can be for soups, starters, salads, main meals, puddings, cakes, jams, drinks... whatever you make that the family loves to eat or drink.

The booklet will present some reflections of Lot Meadow, including images that were submitted for the Lot Meadow Challenge last year. Please let us have your contributions, so that we can preserve those old recipes for future generations – and perhaps, too, inspire some new young cooks!

Your recipes can be provided by email (Word or pdf format) or handwritten. We would ask that recipes should not be taken from currently published books (Nigella, Jamie, Delia etc.) – we don’t wish knowingly to infringe copyright. (Mrs Beeton would be fine – though her ingredients could be tricky to source!)
If you’re able to state how many people your recipe caters for, that will be helpful. It would be good too to include some vegetarian/vegan/gluten-free and other non-allergen recipes. Please include your name when submitting your recipe (even if you don’t want your name published – in which case please state that on your submission).

Recipes should be sent by the end of May 2019 to: katherine@jameskj.plus.com, or delivered to 7 Eversden Close, Toft (tel: 01223 263651). If you have any queries, do please ask!
Comberton Library

Opening Hours:
Monday: 10am – 1pm, Wednesday: 10am – 1pm, 2pm -5pm, Friday: 2pm – 5pm, Saturday: 10am – 1pm

Are you aware that we have two computers and a scanner at Comberton Library available for public use? From 1st April computer use is completely free. Printing is also available at 20p per page for A4 black and white copies and 75p per page for colour. If you already have a Cambridgeshire Library card you can call in during our opening hours, or book in advance, to use a computer. If you are not a library member, please ask the library staff about obtaining a library card to enable you to have computer access.

During the May half-term holiday we are holding an event on Wednesday 29th May, 2.30 – 4.00 pm to celebrate Elmer’s 30th birthday.

On Friday 31st May, 10.30 -11.30 am, we are delighted to be welcoming Rachel Riley, author and illustrator, to the library to share with us her children’s book ‘Exploring Cambridge’.

Do put these dates in your diary and come along with your children to take part, only £1.00 per child, accompany adults free.

Upcoming Rhymetime sessions: 13th May, 3rd & 17th June (10.30 -11.00 am). The session on 3rd June will be a special Pyjamarama Rhymetime, so do come along in your pyjamas for some rhyming fun! Please note that although these sessions are aimed at very young children we welcome older siblings and pre-schoolers who enjoy singing too!

The library will be closed on the Bank Holiday Mondays, 6th and 27th May.

[Comberton Library is situated in the Village College campus with car parking available and is Wheelchair-friendly and fully accessible for all.]

Village Outing to the Sandringham Estate

Date: Tuesday, 9 July 2019

The ever-popular annual Toft village outing this year takes us to the Sandringham Estate, HM the Queen’s country retreat in Norfolk, “the private home of four generations of British monarchs since 1862” (official description). Tickets for the trip will include transport, morning coffee on arrival and entry to the house and extensive gardens. At the special discount rate of £24 per head, you won’t get a better bargain this year. As usual, we will leave Toft at around 8.30 and have you back here by 6pm.

The outing is proving very popular so please avoid disappointment by booking now. To make a booking, contact Mike McCarthy at mactoft@aol.com, tel. 262523, or Pauline Jacklin at pauline.jacklin@btinternet.com, tel. 263214.
Cambridge Gliding Centre Open Day,
Sunday 5th May, 10am - 4pm.

Come and visit Gransden Lodge Airfield to find out about the sport of gliding. All welcome. Discounted trial gliding lessons with our qualified instructors will be available using a choice of winch launch, aerotow or motor glider. Call the office on 01767 677077 to book your flight in advance or just turn up on the day. Refreshments. Free admission. Free talks about gliding and static displays.

Airfield entrance on the B1046 between Little Gransden & Longstowe, opposite Gransden Lodge Farm (enter SG19 3EB into your SatNav).

More information online: http://www.camgliding.uk/ or via Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/CambridgeGlidingCentre/
Another poem which was submitted into The Lot Meadow Challenge Last year.

THE SHIELD BUG - (also called the Stink Bug)

Walking round Lot Meadow, a photo I did need
The trusty camera round my neck would undertake the deed
There were dragonflies a plenty, a host of bumble bees
Flocks of goldfinch flew between the thistles and the trees

But nothing would stay still for long, I couldn’t get a shot
The hours went by, the sun went down, and nothing had I got!
So what surprise there was in store, an absolute delight
To see you resting on a twig, not rushing round in flight

But perching on a temporary home for all the world to see
And innocently making the perfect shot for me
Proud to be an insect, a bug in fancy green
And as I looked, I said out loud, "you funny looking thing"

What a thundering great big shield you carry on your back
Is it there for show, or will it save you from attack?
You certainly aren’t too nervous, you show no sign of fear
I come a little closer, bending down to peer

I smile, and then I chuckle, at your somewhat humorous face
I must appear gigantic from within your narrow space
Am I right in thinking that you’re posing there by chance
Waiting for a female mate - hoping for romance?

Your bug-sized eyes are checking that you look your very best
And now I see the reason, four ladybirds no less
They too are hovering all around looking quite the sight
The annual ball for ugly bugs is happening tonight

I hope you find a partner, but as you know quite well
On times, it’s said, you do emit a rather dreadful smell
So while you perch there handsome, and feeling rather smug
Don’t forget, my little friend, you’re quite a stinky bug

However, I am desperate for a photo in my hand
So sit there while I take a snap, I’m sure it will be grand
And here we go, the photograph I’ve tried to take all day
Is in the frame, then suddenly, the stinker flew away!

Val Sinclair
Claire Nicholson & Cambridge Cycling Club present

BIKES & ‘BIKE STUFF’
CHARITY SALE
In memory of Nick Nicholson

TOFT PEOPLE’S HALL, CB23 2RE
SATURDAY 11TH MAY 10.30 - 12.30
2 bikes to be auctioned
Sale of various bicycle parts & etc.,
books on cycling & Nick’s art work.
Coffee/Tea & cake

All proceeds to Arthur Rank Hospice
Find a bargain or just drop in for coffee & cake!
Many folklore customs date back to the Dark Ages, when the ancient Celts divided their year by four major festivals. The Beltane festival had particular significance to the Celts as it represented the first day of summer and was celebrated with bonfires to welcome in the new season. Still celebrated today, we perhaps know Beltane better as May 1st, or May Day, the start of summer and the growing season.

Down through the centuries May Day has been associated with fun, revelry and perhaps most important of all, fertility. The day would be marked with village folk cavorting round the maypole, the selection of the May Queen and the dancing figure of “Jack-in-the-Green” at the head of the procession. Jack is thought to be a relic from pagan times when our ancient ancestors worshipped trees and is still seen remembered in pub names as the “Green Man”.

The May Day festivities all but vanished for some years following the Civil War when Cromwell and his Puritans took control of the country in 1645. Describing maypole dancing as ‘a heathenish vanity’, legislation was passed which saw the banning of village maypoles throughout the country. Dancing did not return to village greens until the restoration of Charles II, ‘The Merry Monarch’.

In Cambridgeshire there were various May Day traditions. Melbourn children gathered peagles or paigles (cowslips) with which to decorate themselves. A maypole was erected on the Green and hawthorn (May flower) boughs (an old symbol of romance and protection) hung on house doors. A procession of dancers, made their way through the village to the maypole led by Jack in the Green, played by the local chimney sweep, who walked with a framework of boughs, sporting his sweep’s top hat.

In Over, young men picked bunches of May-tree blossom and pushed them through the windows of young village girls, singing:

“Arise, arise my pretty fair maid and take your May bush in,  
For in the morn it may be gone and you will say I brought you none”

This draws on the lyrics of the traditional Cambridgeshire May Carol which is now sung during annual Toft Spring Feast maypole dancing.

In many Cambridgeshire villages, girls carried prettily dressed dolls on May Day, showing them to people in return for money or sweets. May Dolling continued in some parts of East Anglia until the 1960’s. The preparation of a special May Doll was a feature of several village celebrations including those of Toft. An old resident of Toft in a 1937 interview recalled in their youth how “two hoops were bent over and decorated with pagles, may blossom and ribbons as a garland”. A well-dressed doll was placed inside and then the garland and doll covered with a white cloth. A rope stretched across the road between two trees was used to then suspend the doll and its garland above the road. On May Day morning the village girls gathered at the spot and the rope was lowered when anyone passed by and money requested for the showing of the doll. As the cloth was removed the children chanted;

“The first of May is garland day so please remember the garland.  
It only comes but once a year, so please remember the garland”.

Both Percy Rogers of Comberton Road and May Tebbit told a similar story to Jake Tebbit in his 1970 interviews but the garland was being taken door to door in their recollections.

Maypole dancing was re-introduced to Toft in the 1990’s and in more recent times the parading of a doll and a garland dressed with field flowers has also been revived. During the annual Spring Feast maypole dancing is followed by the May garland being paraded from the maypole to the Church well where water is drawn and the assembled audience “blessed” before moving on to a Feast service in the Church.

1Eastern Counties Folklore Society.
Heidi-Hi!

Your M.P. writes…

Since my last newsletter, the twists and turns in the Brexit debate have continued apace. The Prime Minister’s withdrawal agreement was rejected by Parliament for a second time, Article 50 has been extended (briefly) and MPs have finally been allowed to express their own views on a range of possible outcomes, having originally been denied that opportunity. By the time you read this, the situation will have inevitably changed again! Although limited space prevents me from providing a more detailed explanation here, I have been providing rolling updates on my website so that constituents are up to date at all times – especially about the votes I am casting on their behalf. If you have not already taken a look, please do take a minute to have a look at the updates – www.heidiallen.co.uk

By way of headlines, I will never support “no deal,” I don’t believe the Prime Minister’s negotiated deal is good enough and I will continue to support my constituents having the final say on any deal, versus remaining in the EU.

I know the votes I cast will not always meet with universal approval, but I give you my assurance that I will exercise my duties with the utmost seriousness and always act in the best interests of my constituents and country throughout these turbulent times.

Away from Brexit, there’s still the day job to do as I continue to focus on issues affecting South Cambridgeshire. I know that many communities are concerned about hare coursing and its devastating impact. On the 5th March, I met with the Prime Minister’s Special Advisor on Environment, Lord Randall, to make the case for new and improved legislation to deal with this scourge. Along with the Police and Crime Commissioner and Superintendent James Sutherland, I outlined my concerns that hare coursing was not only increasing but that the measures for dealing with it had ceased to be effective.

Lord Randall agreed to look for legislative and other opportunities to bring about change, including the possibility of sentencing guidelines for courts and increasing the penalties available to them.

Cambridgeshire Police has a dedicated Rural Crime Action Team which does an excellent job but it is clear that both the police and the courts lack the powers to deal with hare coursing.

The police are having to rely on legislation from the nineteenth century to bring prosecutions and without sentencing guidelines for the courts and increased penalties, all too often the legislation does not provide an effective deterrent. I was pleased that Lord Randall was so prepared to listen to our concerns and work with us to bring an end to hare coursing and the increased levels of crime associated with it.

I am determined to bring about the positive change that is needed and I will provide an update in future newsletters.

Earlier this month, I visited Long Road Sixth Form (pictured) and Cambridge Academy of Science and Technology to talk about my role as an MP.

It’s fair to say that I was kept on my toes by a demanding audience! I answered questions about my decision to leave the Conservative Party, Brexit (of course!), how to heal divisions in society, education funding, Donald Trump and the possible outcome of the next general election….to name but a few!

From sixth form students to our youngest pupils, I was particularly moved by the story of five year old George, who has been leading the fight against litter in Duxford and gathering litter whilst donning a superhero cape!

I was so inspired by his commitment to the local environment that I joined him and other residents of Duxford for some litter picking one Saturday morning.

George is a great reminder of how local action on the ground can bring about positive change in our villages – well done George!

A sure sign that spring has sprung is the annual Thriplow Daffodil Weekend!

I visited on the Sunday, the sun was shining, the sausage sarnies were great and everyone was having a great time. If you’ve never visited, I’d recommend you make it a must next year. For my (cat owning) sins, I was called on to provide my “expertise” to judge the Family Fun Dog Show!

As I arrived in Thriplow, I couldn’t help but notice that after a busy and serious week in a Brexit dominated Westminster, residents had been able to keep their good humour with their choice of road signs for the event! Well done to everybody involved in such a successful weekend!

If there is anything you would like to talk to me about, my upcoming surgeries are:

“By appointment surgery” will be on Thursday 2nd May, 3-5pm at my office in Hardwick. For an appointment, please call my office on 01223 830037.

“Drop in” surgery will be on Saturday 8th June, 10.30-12.30pm at Woodview Farm Café, Mill Hill, Potton Road, Gamlingay SG19 3LW. No appointment necessary.

In the meantime, if you would like to contact me, please email heidi.allen.mp@parliament.uk or call my office on 01223 830037.

See you next month!
Wheelie Bin Collections For May
(N.B. These dates may be subject to change)

Black Bin:
Thurs 2nd May
Weds 15th May
Thurs 30th May

Blue/Green Bin:
Thurs 9th May
Weds 22nd May

Advertisements are published quarterly. Copy for inclusion in the next available edition of the Calendar must reach us by 17th July 2019 at the very latest. Advertisements will NOT be published unless full payment has been received in advance. Please note: We are currently unable to accept PDF file types. Quarter-page adverts MUST be Portrait-style, half-page adverts MUST be Landscape-style. In the first instance, advertisers should contact Pat Gouldstone at: calendadorstellotft@gmail.com to discuss their requirements.

Cambridgeshire County Council is currently carrying out a stakeholder survey to find out your thoughts about our Highways Service and Street Lighting Service.

The aim of the questions included in these surveys is to gain your opinion in order to ensure we continue to monitor our performance and where possible improve our future service delivery.

You can find the Highways Service survey at https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/N3UFW/

You can find the Street Lighting Service survey at https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/BO6ZG/

The deadline for completing both surveys is 31 May 2019.

If you have any questions regarding the surveys, please feel free to contact Michael Richards, Business and Performance Manager at Michael.Richards@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

USEFUL PHONE NUMBERS
Alcoholics Anonymous: 0845 769 7555
Anglian Water (for sewage): 0845 145 145
Ashcroft Veterinary Surgery: 01954 210250
Bourn GPs’ Surgery: 01954 719313
Cambridge AIDS help-line: (01223) 508805
Cambs County Council: 0345 045 5200
Cambridge Dial a Ride 01223 506335
Cambridge Water: 01223 706050
Care Network Cambridgeshire 01954 211919.
Citizens Advice Bureau: 0844 848 7979
Comberton GPs’ Surgery: 01223 262500
Comberton Village College: 01223 262503
County Councillor: 07402351821
CVC Community Education: 01223 264721
District Councillor: 01954 210040
Household Waste/Pest Control: 0345 045 0063
Lifespan Health Care, Family and Child Team: 01223 264460
Member of Parliament: Phone 01223 830037
Meridian Primary School: 01223 262423
Police: 101 (Emergencies: 999)
(Local Beat Officer is PCSO Sam Kennedy)
Road/Pothole Reporting: 0345 045 5212
Street Lighting: 0800 7838 247
Street Cleaning: 03450 450 063
South Cambs District Council: 03450 450 500
South Cambs Fire and Rescue: 01480 444 500
Toft Car Scheme: 262814. If no reply 262708
Trading Standards: 0345 0455206
UK Power Networks (Emergencies): 0800 31 63 105

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