

Be my Valentine

# *What's On* OVINGTON



February 2005  
Volume 10/2

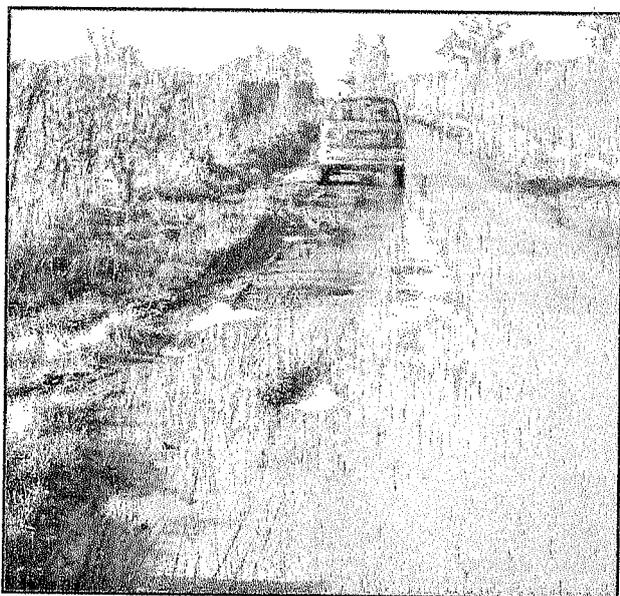
## **CABROOKE ROAD VERGES ARE TREACHEROUS**

### **Highways officer says**

### **“We’ll deal with the holes”**

Norfolk County Council highways officer Quenton Barker told WOO that he would do his best to make good the verges and holes now fringing either side of a long stretch of road between Ovington’s east end and the T junction with Caudle Springs. As our picture shows the road sides are well on the way to disintegrating. Not only is this bad for cars having to pull over to let oncoming vehicles pass but it is also a major hazard for cyclists and dog walkers.

Asked if the council would be willing to completely re-surface the road with tar and chips Mr. Barker said he would certainly give it priority when official discussions start later this year on the local road improvement and maintenance programme for 2006.



## **WOO AXED BY VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE**

At a meeting of the Village Hall Committee in November it was decided by a majority vote to ask the editors, neither of whom were present, to return *What's On - Ovington* to its old format. This will be the final issue in its new style.  
**FULL REPORT & COMMENT PAGE 4**

### **OTHER PAGES**

Reminiscences/Laurence Howe—Reflections

Parish Council Update—Crossword—Letters

Church News—Ted’s Rain Check—Ladies Group report

## Mike Pemberton

## reflections



**Christmas 2004 will be remembered for only one thing – the disaster in the Indian Ocean.** What happened was on such a grand scale that most of us were unable to comprehend the utter devastation and magnitude of it all - so many stories of tragedy and fortitude, bravery and utter hopelessness. The struggle to survive was never so evident as in the coastal villages of Sri Lanka. Last year I was there with my family in some of the worst hit places. We drove along roads that have since disappeared under tons of rubble, mud, debris and the general flotsam and jetsam of everyday human life. When I was there I visited some people outside the safety and tranquillity of our hotel. People were friendly and showed me round. I remember going into a building calling itself a hotel boarding house. Such a place, were it to exist in our country, would be closed down immediately but, somehow, there in Sri Lanka it seemed so natural, so civilised as part of a simple life style. The proprietor of the establishment took me through a dark hallway where two older men were playing cards and smoking thin cigars into a back kitchen and then beyond out to a tranquil courtyard where a goat was tethered and a few hens scratched and pecked away at some imaginary morsels. The morning sun flickered through the palms. I glanced around at what appeared to be the hotel room windows. Out of curiosity I asked him how much per night for a room. The rate was absurdly low even for this rundown pile. Then he showed me inside a room. There was a basic bedstead the sort you often see on a skip when people are turning out their houses – no bedding – apparently you bring you own – an old scarred plastic garden chair and one naked electric light bulb. I politely declined to look in the communal bathroom. I could only think the prison cells in Guantanamo Bay must have been more luxurious than this. But outside it was charming. The owner's son, a handsome Sri Lankan boy I guessed in his early twenties, showed me his own spice garden where he grew herbs and plants to sell in the local market; scratching a living in a country that was emerging from years of civil war and beginning to see a dramatic revival of the tourist trade. A couple of days later we were to experience the lethal power of the sea. That morning I went for a swim. The eddying cross current was so strong I could hardly keep my balance. Although red flags were permanently flying I knew it was doubly dangerous that morning. I told both my boys there would be no going in the sea that day and they were to stay in the swimming pools. That afternoon two boys, nine and fifteen, were swept to their deaths while the village community looked on helplessly. I asked the hotel manager why no rescue boat was launched – he said the outboard motor had conked out the season before and had not been repaired. They launched an old rowing boat but, by the time that put to sea the boys were beyond any rescue attempts. As one who witnessed the flooding on our own north coast as a schoolboy in the fifties I learned a long time ago to respect the sea. But after the heart breaking catastrophe on Sunday 26 December last I am not sure what to believe anymore.

## Laurence Howe

## reminiscences



**So here we are in the midst of celebrating the 40th anniversary of Winston Churchill's death.** It always seems strange to me that we should celebrate a death rather than the birth date of a national hero. Perhaps we do that as well. Since 1965 there has been so much written and spoken about our wartime prime minister. What is difficult though for any historian to deny is that he played a major part in winning the war. My grandchildren have often asked me what might have happened had the allied forces not prevailed and Germany had triumphed. And what role would Japan have played in such an eventuality. Of course we can only speculate. I am quite sure though that such a repressive regime as might have resulted would have had a limited shelf life. You only need to look at what has happened since the war to other states that have been the perpetrators of the kind of regime Hitler had in mind. If ever someone was in the right place at the right time it was Mr. Churchill as he then was. For me the war was inextricably tied in with my work on the railways. They were placed under the control of the War Office. A government directive was issued to all regional chiefs that the Military were to be given top priority. Railway workers fell into two categories.. The drivers, firemen and cleaners dealt with the engines and rolling stock while signalmen, shunters, porters and clerks handled the track and everyday logistics of running the whole system. Locomen, as the first group were called wore a stylish denim suit whilst porters were in dark blue suits with a peak cap and mandatory white collar. There are so many stories and incidents arising from those long forgotten days when all of us at home felt we were contributing to the war effort in our own individual way. Some incidents were of course tragic - others hilariously funny. I remember one night taking tea with an elderly parcels officer when 3 RAF lads walked in. They had missed their last train back to camp and asked if the goods guard would give them a lift. They had tea with us then set out to walk the 20 or so miles to Peterborough. Because it would have been a whole lot quicker they decided to walk along the track and were tragically struck and killed by the Grimsby to London fish train. An ignominious and unnecessary loss of three young lives.

# Parish council update

filed by Rod Rumsby

**R**eference was made at the last PC meeting to the repositioning of the Dog Waste bin currently located adjacent to Crown crescent. Discussions with the numerous dog walkers in the village have resulted in a choice of three new viable locations. The Chairman, after taking suitable substances to enhance his fortitude, took a spade to the existing Dog Waste bin and discovered to his delight that the foundations of said bin were not as permanent as anticipated. So the physical requirements to move the bin are within his capabilities - just!!!

Your council is now awaiting a decision from Breckland District Council as to whether the move is permissible within the terms of some ancient decree imposed by some even more ancient authority.

## Footpath to Watton

A public meeting was held in the Village Hall in early December, attended by Laura Apps-Green, Community Development Officer from BDC, to discuss what follow up action had been taken towards fulfilling the aims of the Village appraisal, conducted in 1995. The one item that remains uppermost on most Parishioners minds is that there would seem to have been little progress made towards the provision of a footpath / cycle way along the A1075 Dereham Road into Watton. The results of the appraisal highlighted the need for the path, and a subsequent survey conducted throughout the Village in 2000, emphasised this need. The PC have continually bombarded NCC, Highways, BDC, Watton Town Council and enlisted the aid of The Wayland Partnership, to get some action on the matter. The NCC Highways Department have carried out traffic and pedestrian surveys on at least two occasions, but have announced that the criteria have not been met.

## Only deaths will count

We are given to believe that we need at least 2.5 fatalities on the road before we begin to figure in their statistical records!!!! (Volunteers may NOT step forward, we are, believe it or not, rather protective towards our folk).

Laura was very helpful and has subsequently come up with some ideas for funding the scheme, (another criteria mentioned by Highways of course was "No money") scheme,

These will be presented at the next PC meeting on 26th January 2005 at 7.30pm in the Village-Hall. There were several serious walkers and cyclists in the audience and they all agreed that the situation on that road is getting more serious by the minute. It was felt by all that as more people are taking to walking the highways and by-ways, partly through encouragement by central government, ("leave the car at home"), partly through health reasons, and not forgetting the Wayland Partnerships country walks initiative, immediate action is needed. Watch this space, your Parish Council will continue to pursue this matter come hell or high water"

[please note:- the above final sentiment was the choice of the Chairman and may not be shared by all councillors]

## VILLAGE RESTAURANT NOW RECOGNISED BY MICHELIN RED GUIDE

Following its outstanding performance in this year's Good Food Guide placing it in Norfolk's top three, The Café at Brovey Lair has been acknowledged and included in the Michelin Guide published last month.

## Tsunami Radio Auction

By pledging a table and overnight stay the restaurant raised £330.00 in a day's auction organised and broadcast last month over Broadland 102, mid-Norfolk's commercial radio station. Businesses across the county made generous donations and the final sum raised was in excess of £28,000.

## SAGTNRE BUT TURE

**A reader sent us this e-mail. Read it quickly and you will be amazed how much you understand.**

"I cdnuolt blveiee taht I cluod aulacly uesdnatnrd waht I was rdanieg. The phaonmneal pweor of the hmuan mnid. Aoccdrnig to rscheearch at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it deosn't mtttaer inwaht oredr the ltteers in a wrod are, the olny iprmoatnt tihg is taht the frist and lsat ltteer be in the rghit pclae. The rset can be a taotl mses and you can sitll raed it wouthit a porbelm. Tihs is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe. Amzanig huh? Yaeh, and I awlyas thought slpeling was ipmoranttt"

## From the EDITORS

The Village Hall Committee (VHC) has decided it would like to see What's On, Ovington (WOO) restored to its original format. This is rather like Rupert Murdoch telling the editor of The Times that unless he reinstates the broad sheet with no pictures and births, marriages and deaths filling the front page (as it was before the war) he will close it down. So, by a majority vote, the new WOO is to be "dumped" by the VHC after publishing only six issues in its revised format. Some people will applaud this decision while others, perhaps more circumspect, will look upon it as a censorious act by traditionalists determined to maintain the status quo. Many readers have congratulated WOO's editors in taking what was virtually notice board pulp and turning it into more of an entertaining read. It provided several writers with the opportunity to tell us about their experiences and in some cases to amuse their readers.

Perhaps the changes made were too radical and articles a touch controversial for some readers who prefer things to remain comfortable and, and above all, unchallenging.

So a plot was hatched to oust both WOOs editors while their backs were turned. Like lambs to the slaughter it was their own "night of the nine knives". Members of the VHC were provided with an opportunity to vote for a return to the old style WOO when both its editors were absent from a recent meeting – so unable to defend their publication. What is even more puzzling is that it was assumed WOO's editors would agree to the directive. A lot of work has gone into producing the paper by both editors who gave their time freely.

Ovington is, by comparison to the rest of the Wayland family, a tiny community. The fact that it can even find enough people to sit on its committees is a credit to those who give up their time willingly for the community.

By the way, it may be of interest that several people outside Ovington were so taken with the new look WOO they asked to be put on the mailing list. They and, we suspect, a fair number of other readers, will be disappointed with the VHC's decision although it may not quite be the end of the story. The suggestion that the editors might like to continue with their own independent publication (and at their own

## Church News

### Diary dates

30 April 2005 – Breckland Harmony will be giving a concert in the Church at 7.30 p.m. followed by refreshments in the Village Hall. More details in either March or April issues of What's On.

1 October 2005 – A return visit of the Norwich Barbershop Singers performing in the Church at 7.30 p.m. More details later.

### Rotas for Febraury

- 6th No service at Ovington  
 13th Parish Communion at 9.00 a.m.  
 Lessons Mr C Springford, Mr R Hardy  
 Steward Mr R Hardy  
 20th Evensong at 3.00 p.m.  
 Lesson Mrs P Westwood  
 Steward Mrs P Westwood  
 27th Parish Communion 9.00 a.m.  
 Lessons Mr R Malton,  
 Mrs P Westwood  
 Steward Mrs P Lovewell  
 There are no flowers during lent.

## PUBLIC FOOTPATH SIGN VANDALISED

An official wooden footpath sign opposite the Wood's property on Carbrooke Road has been vandalised. The Woods mended the sign after it was broken. This was followed by fairly explicit instruction written in felt tip pen and a few days later the sign board was removed altogether. Only a solitary upright post remains.

expense) was well meant but totally ill judged. However, it can be revealed they are now in discussions with an outside source to produce an on-line version of their own publication. Hopefully this will provide writers with a platform for their views and anecdotes outside the jurisdiction of a controlling organisation.

**It is fair to point out this article is written by WOO's current editors and in no way represents the views of the Village Hall Committee. Any further correspondence relating to this issue should be sent to the Village Hall.**

# Diary for February

1st	
At 7.30 pm	Village Hall AGM
2nd	
at 7.45 pm	Garden Club
7th	
At 1.45 pm	Bowls Club
14th	
At 1.45 pm	Bowls Club
14th	
All day	Valentine's Day
15th	
At 7.30 pm	Ladies Group
21st and 28th	
At 1.45 pm	Bowls

## GARDENING CLUB

On 2nd February at 7.45 pm in the Village Hall, David Mason will give a talk on "Wild Life of the Brecklands".

A future talk on the 2nd March will be by Carol Chittock and will be about hedgehogs. Should be fascinating—worth coming out of hibernation for.

## RAINFALL FIGURES FOR DECEMBER

**2004— 32.5 millimetres**

**2003— 61 millimetres**

**1994— 65.5 millimetres**

Rainfall figures for January will be much higher than last month which was an unusually dry and reasonably mild December. Both months have been characterised by very high and prolonged winds that whistle across my garden. I can't help feeling the worst of the winter is still to come. The evenings are a little lighter, though as I write this it has just begun to snow.

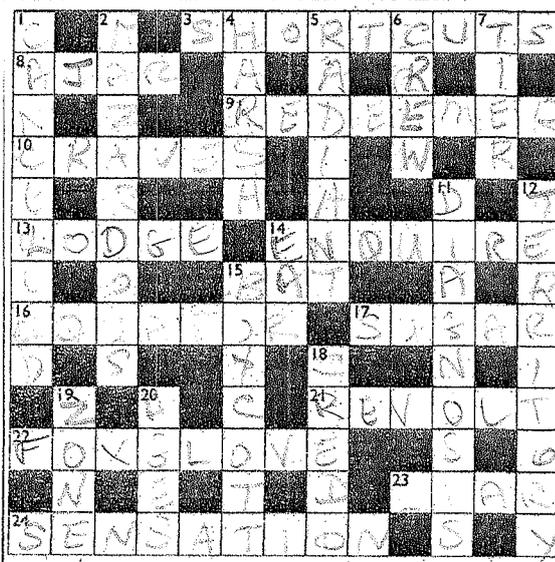
**2004— 18th and 29th 10mm**

**2003— 21st/16mm— 13th/15mm**

**1994— 16th/17mm—14th/10mm**

Measured and compiled by Ted Bowman

## EASY CROSSWORD No.6



### ACROSS

- 3 Time-saving practices (9)
- 8 Slightly open (4)
- 9 Saviour (8)
- 10 Hungers for (6)
- 13 Masonic group (5)
- 14 Ask (7)
- 15 Flying mammal (3)
- 16 Imaginary line around Earth (7)
- 17 Sweetener (5)
- 21 Rebellion (6)
- 22 Flower with tall spikes (8)
- 23 Untruthful person (4)
- 24 Feeling, perception (9)

### DOWN

- 1 Called off (9)
- 2 Dangerous (9)
- 4 Severe (5)
- 5 Glowing (7)
- 6 Ship's company (4)
- 7 Layer(4)
- 11 Opinion after examination (9)
- 12 Tract of land, district (9)
- 14 Organ of hearing (3)
- 15 Refuse to attend (7)
- 18 Statement of beliefs (5)
- 19 Specified area (4)
- 20 A long time (4)

### Last month's answers –

Across:3 Shortcuts, 8 Ajar, 9 Redeemer, 10 Craves, 13 Lodge,14 Enquire, 15 Bat, 16 Equator,17 Sugar, 21 Revolt, 22 Foxglove, 23 Liar, 24 Sensation.

Down: 1 Cancelled, 2 Hazardous, 4 Harsh, 5 Radiant, 6 Crew, 7 Tier, 11 Diagnosis, 12 Territory, 14 Ear,15 Boycott, 18 Credo, 19 Zone,20 Ages.

Since we'll not be back next month here are the answers to the Crossword above:

Across: 3 Shortcuts, 8 Ajar, 9 Redeemer, 10 Craves, 13 Lodge,14 Enquire, 15 Bat, 16 Equator, 17 Sugar, 21 Revolt, 22 Foxglove,23 Liar, 24 Sensation.  
Down: 1 Cancelled, 2 Hazardous, 4 Harsh, 5 Radiant, 6 Crew, 7 Tier,11 Diagnosis, 12 Territory, 14 Ear,15 Boycott, 18 Credo, 19 Zone,20 Ages.

## January Lottery Winners

1st— Nick Sproston

£10

2nd—John Ayris

£5

## LADIES' GROUP

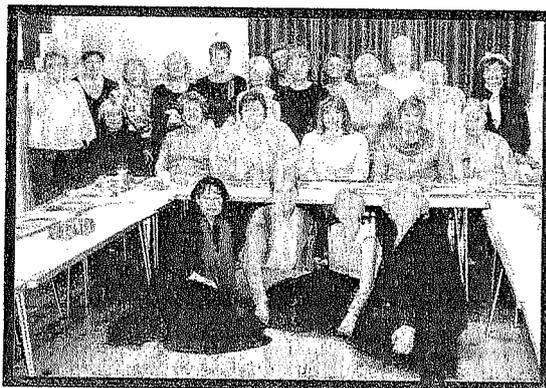
The photo shows members of the Ladies Group who attended the Christmas get-together, where we all enjoyed a tasty Chinese meal with more traditional mince pies to follow (courtesy of Daphne and Margaret).

A thoroughly enjoyable evening!

The new committee has been busy arranging a new a varied programme for 2005, which started off with a fascinating talk by our Rev'd Canon Miar Talbot about her recent visit to Nepal. The next meeting on February 15 will include a talk by Mrs Jan Godfrey about the Wayland Partnership, its work so far and plans for the future.

The competition for the month is to complete your own version of the well known rhyme -  
Roses are red, Violets are blue..... so come on ladies, its up to you!

We are very pleased we have had some new members join during the last year, but we are always happy to see more new faces. The meetings are open to all ladies in the village (and close by) and are held in the village hall at 7.45 pm on the third Tuesday of the month.




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Tuesday 1st February 2005

## THE OVINGTON VILLAGE HALL

Annual General Meeting  
At 7.30 in the Village Hall

Every resident of Ovington is invited to attend. The Ovington Village Hall is one of the most historic buildings in Breckland and without your support, which was magnificent last year at the fete, at Christmas and other events, it would not survive. There is a nationwide initiative to preserve our village halls particularly those of intrinsic historical value like ours. Please come along if only to hear how the committee and the hall itself have performed in 2004. Everyone will be warmly welcomed and if you think you may have something to contribute to the hall's future you may want to stand for election. It is more than likely there will be a vacancy or two so this could provide you with an opportunity to have your say and bring some ideas to the party. See you on Tuesday.

*Here are three dates for your diary. A Quiz n' Chips evening is booked for St Georges Day-26th April. Our summer fete this year will be held at the hall on Saturday 11th June with the Christmas Bazaar scheduled for 3rd December.*

## Letter to the Editors

20 January 2005

Sirs,

I would like to congratulate Sam Scott and Partner and Wayne Butler and Partner for completing two very big projects and turning run down buildings which were an eyesore in the village into homes of which they can be proud. As I drive through the village every morning it cheers me no end to see what all their hard work has achieved. I know from conversations with other villagers that I am not alone in thinking how both houses have smartened up the whole village. So thanks to both couples, you should be very proud.

Lyndia Lewis, Thorborough, Church Road.