

Santon Downham *News*

The Parish Council Newsletter for Santon Downham Villagers
July 2010 Number 6

It's been a busy period for the renewed Parish Council and the activities in the Village Hall. In this issue of the newsletter, I want to look at some events coming up later in the year and look back at some of the recent successes. There is also the second part of the look at our church - this time looking at its history. *Derek Toomer, Editor*

Forthcoming Events

Quiz Night – 15 October, 7pm

Our quiz in January turned out to be more successful than we could have hoped for, with the hall packed full of quiz teams and the fish and chip supper being well received.

An instant straw-poll in January showed everyone to be keen on a repeat event and to include the fish and chips supper again.

The next quiz in October should be just as much fun. It is likely to get booked up, so phone 01842 815213 to reserve your table. Cost is £2 per person or £7 including fish and chips.



Quiz teams pack the hall in January

Realm of the Dragon – An illustrated talk by Derek Toomer

Friday 12 November 7.30pm

In all ways, China is an amazing country. In 1988, I visited it, not long after they had allowed foreigners back in. The trip covered large rural areas, western cities and parts of Tibet - a truly beautiful and fascinating region. This year, I revisited China, travelling in the north and east, taking in many of the well-known tourist sites. The contrast with 1988 was remarkable. My talk will cover parts of both visits - a real eye-opener.



Car Boot and Indoor Car Boot sales

The outdoor car boot sales will continue through to 3 October and then go into the Village Hall in November. The indoor car boots have proved very popular, so if you are wanting a stall, phone 01842 815213 in plenty of time.

Lunch Club

The lunch-time meals will recommence on 3 November at 12.30pm through the autumn and winter. The price will be £5.45, including tea or coffee - excellent value. These lunch-time gatherings proved to be an excellent social get-together. If you want to come along, please book the date in plenty of time - phone 01842 815213.

Annual Auction

We will be holding the next auction on 19 November at 7.30pm. This is an important fund-raising event as well as being a source of good bargains for the buyers. Further details will be in the next newsletter. In the meantime, check out the loft and spare room for saleable items.

Christmas Bazaar

This year's bazaar is scheduled for Sunday 27 November - 10am to 5pm. Stall bookings were fully subscribed last year, so book early - phone 01842 815213.



Yes, of course, Father Christmas will be at the Christmas bazaar - even earlier this year.

Recent Events and Happenings

Ride for Life – 15 May

This annual fund raising event was as popular as ever this year – and the weather was much kinder than in 2009.

Over 1,000 walkers and cyclists arrived on the Sunday and set off for sponsored walks and rides varying from three to 35 miles.

While this was happening, the village green was host to a variety of stalls and activities.

The event raises money for EACH – Eat Anglia's Children's Hospices. Money is still coming in, but already £44,000 has been raised this year. Absolutely brilliant. Next year's ride will be on Sunday 15 May. Why not take part.



Ride participants getting ready for the off

1940s Evening

July 10th was our second 1940s evening. The day before saw RAF volunteers, Parish Councillors, Village Hall Committee and villagers involved in erecting tents, setting up barbecues and preparing food. A huge thanks to Lee for getting all of the tents and organising help from the RAF volunteers and the TA volunteers.

The Saturday evening saw the arrival of the Swing Orchestra and the participants – many having gone to considerable trouble to look the part.

Another very successful event, with some of the money raised going to Help for Heroes – definitely to be repeated in 2011.



Definitely looking the part – 1940s ladies

Beautiful send off

When, very sadly, Pat Litchfield's husband Bryan died, she had already decided on the type of funeral she wanted. She decided to have the Village Hall as a meeting venue, where family and friends could gather to see the funeral cortege. And what a stunning sight it was – a Victorian horse-drawn carriage (provided by Mark Skinner Funeral Services). It didn't detract from the sadness of the occasion, but it did provide a beautiful talking point for the family and friends.



Bryan Litchfield's funeral – Victorian splendour – outside the Village Hall.

Village News

Important – Passenger Transport Survey

You will have recently received a survey form about your travel habits. You may be like many in the village who have their own transport and do not need to use the public transport. However, there are people in our village who depend on buses to take them to nearby villages and towns. It is essential that public services remain and possibly improve for these people – and who knows when it may be ourselves who have to use the buses to maintain our quality of life.

So please, spend a few minutes completing the survey form and returning it promptly.

New Parish Councillor

Mrs Veronica Moran recently stood down as Parish Councillor, after several year's service. We thank her for her involvement.



Kim Butcher

Kim Butcher, who has lived with her family in the village for over five years, loves living here and wanted to get more involved in village activities. She has been

accepted as a new Parish Councillor.

contd on p4

St Mary's Church, Santon Downham

In Newsletter No. 5, Andrew Kedar looked at the modern role of our Church in the Forest. Here, Andrew and Derek Toomer look at its history.

How old is St. Mary's Church?

This is a question frequently asked by local people, as well as visitors to the village. Some interior features of the church may suggest that it could be "Victorian" - the roof rafter, the floor tiling and some of the stained glass.



Medieval font on a Victorian tiled floor

These features were incorporated by Colonel Mackenzie in the mid 1890s. However, it is much much older. Building began circa 1100 and the nave was certainly complete by "about 1215". There may have been a Saxon church in the village, before the Normans arrived. The Domesday survey (1086) includes "a church" in the village of which there is no trace.

My guess is that St. Mary's is about 900 years old, based on two recent pieces of advice by experts.

Firstly, painted scrollwork.

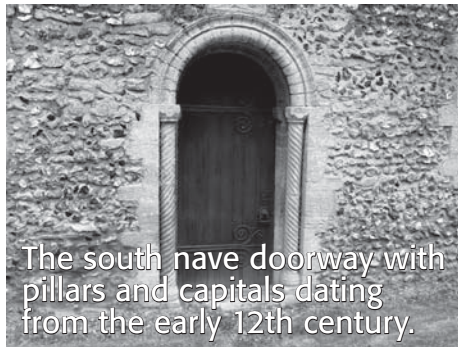


Painted 13th century scrollwork in a niche in the nave

High in the nave on the south wall, above the Mackenzie Memorial is a niche. In this niche is a small piece of dark red painting, in a scroll shape. About 10 years ago, I intercepted an

expert in wall painting, who was taking photographs of the scroll. He was certain that this scroll was painted "circa 1215, plus or minus 20 years".

Secondly, the nave door pillars.



The south nave doorway with pillars and capitals dating from the early 12th century.

Five years ago, by appointment, an expert from "The Corpus of Romanesque Sculpture" visited St. Mary's to look at all carved stonework. He found that the pillars supporting the South Doorway of the Nave are fairly unique, and can be dated to "the 1120s to 1130s".

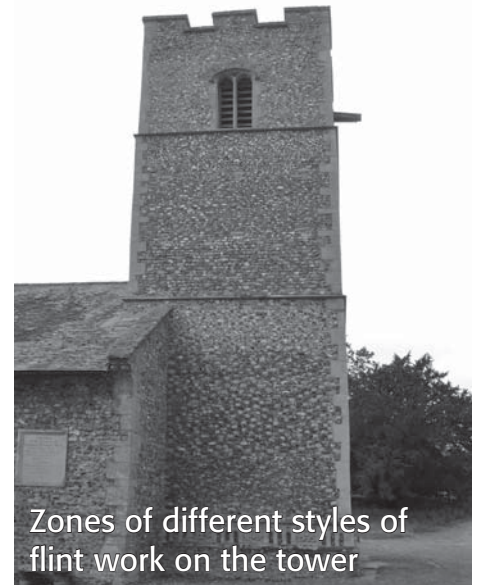
The pillars (capitals) of the north (Porch) doorway are similar, but the Arch was probably modified later.

He also suggested that the carved stone (lion) above the South Nave Door is also "circa 1100", but may have been a later addition to the outer wall.



The 'lion' stone above the south nave door dates from 1100

Another distinctive part of the church which can be accurately dated is the tower. Several local people bequeathed money in their will for a tower, which took 40 years to build (1460 to 1500). Look at the various styles of flintwork as you progress higher up the edifice.



Zones of different styles of flint work on the tower

There are many other interesting features in the church. The small lancet window in the south nave wall has a distinctive early round arch to the inside which has then been modified to form a pointed arch on the outside.



Inner round arch window in to south nave wall

The inner north porch door has a very simple appearance with equally simple hinges, but it is far older than other doors, probably dating from about 1450.



Medieval door in the north porch

Do take the opportunity to visit our beautiful 'Church in the Forest'.

Dates for Your Diary

(In the Village Hall, unless stated otherwise)

2010

Sunday 5th September	Car Boot Sale	8am to 1pm	
Sunday 3rd October	Car Boot Sale	8am to 1pm	
Friday 15th October	Quiz Night (with fish and chips supper)	7pm	£2/£7
Wednesday 3rd November	Lunch Club	12.30pm	£5.45
Sunday 7th November	Indoor Car Boot Sale	10am to 2pm	
Friday 12th November	Realm of the Dragon <i>Illustrated talk about China by Derek Toomer</i>	7.30pm	£2
Friday 19th November	Auction Evening	7.30pm	
Sunday 21st November	Shef's Lunch	12.30pm	
Saturday 27th November	Xmas Bazaar	10am to 5pm	
Sunday 5th December	Indoor Car Boot Sale	10am to 2pm	
Wednesday 8th December	Lunch Club Xmas Meal	12.30pm	tba
Friday 31st December	New Year Party	Details later	

Village News – contd

Spring Cleaning

The hall chairs, carpets and walls were looking rather stained and dowdy, so members of the Parish Council and Village Hall Committee recently put in a lot of effort to clean everything. Thanks to all involved.



Lots of elbow grease certainly paid off

Speeding through the village

At the Suffolk Constabulary Street Briefs meeting on 20th of June, some residents raised the problem of speeding through the village. In response, they came to the village on 28 June at the end of the afternoon armed with a speed gun. They caught 33 drivers exceeding the 30 mph speed limit. None were prosecuted, just warned.

It is not necessarily villagers who are responsible, but we all ought to be aware trying to keep Santon Downham a safe place.

Motorbikes

On the topic of 'vehicles', we are all aware that there are many instances of motorbikes being used on forest tracks. Many of these may come from outside the village, but the warning is to all such bikers. It is illegal and the police are quite willing to take severe action if they catch anyone.

Santon Downham Weather

Having reported on our unusual weather in *Santon Downham News* no. 4, the weather records continue. In early May, BBC's Look East Weather said Santon Downham was the coldest overnight in East Anglia. On 12 May, a friend phoned from Northumberland to say that on the national weather, Santon Downham was the coldest overnight with -4°C (other than somewhere in Scotland with -5°C).

Then on 22 May, we had the mother of all storms – the worst in East Anglia according to Look East.

Village websites

Don't forget to look at our two websites relating to the village, maintained by Tim Kaye.

www.santondownhamcentre.co.uk;

www.santondownham.org

For the Love of Flowers

An exhibition of work from East Anglian Artists
The Edmund Gallery, Angel Hill Bury St. Edmunds
13-18 August 10am to 4pm

Photographs by *Derek Toomer*

This Newsletter is compiled and produced by *Derek Toomer (Ed)* and *Sylvia East*

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