

Santon Downham News

The Parish Council Newsletter for Santon Downham Villagers

January 2018 Number 33

Happy New Year to all. Well, we all survived Blue Monday! Where do these ideas come from? I know we talk a lot about the weather and we do have something of a unique climate in Santon Downham but this winter has been really strange. We haven't had much cold weather, few frosts and almost no snow, but the conditions seem to fluctuate widely from day to day. In spite of this, our native and garden plants give us some hope. Long before Christmas, we commented that the Hazel catkins had 'dropped', but then they do that early each year. Then there are the garden plants. In spite of the current bitterly cold weather, bulbs are pushing their leaves up through the winter soil. Thank goodness. Spring can't be far away. *Derek Toomer, Editor*

Forthcoming Village Events

Coffee mornings continue

Winter and spring coffee mornings continue through February and March. The next one is on 7th February at 10.30am in the Village Hall.

They have been very successful, with a healthy number of attendees. Friendly conversation and a beverage and biscuits, all for 50p.

We would love to see a few more villagers, so do come along if you are free. Don't forget to bring your own mug.

Further dates are on p4 "Dates for Your Diary".



Friendly chatter and a nice beverage, all for 50p.

Car Boot Sales

It seems a long time away, but April will be here before we know it and this year's car boot sales will commence.

The first one is on 1st April, Easter Sunday, and hopefully will be well attended. The Village Hall café will be operating, serving coffee, tea and hot chocolate, together with a huge selection of home-made cakes and bacon rolls. The café has achieved some level of fame, and quite a number of people come just for our cakes.

Hope to see you there.



Not the largest car boot sale, but probably the friendliest (and cakes and bacon rolls!).

Recent Activities

Harvest Supper

If you haven't been to a harvest supper at our church, you don't know what you are missing.



Good food, wine, and puddings to die for. Make sure you are there next year.

The evening starts with the supper - a nice salad and cold meats, and baked potato, followed by a range of desserts to die for, a free glass of wine and



What a fun way to raise money. Who would have thought that auctions were so enjoyable.

Recent Activities

Harvest Supper continued

the option to purchase more. Then the auction starts.

Now an auction may not sound much fun, but because the aim is to raise money for charity, all sorts of silly money is bid for donated foodstuffs. It becomes a game to encourage people to keep bidding higher. Great fun.

The 2017 harvest supper raised £445 net, half going to the church for maintenance, and half to a charity based in Bury St Edmunds, called Sunday Suppers, which provides food for the homeless.

Many thanks to Johny and Sally for organising the last event. Look out for the next supper in September.

Openreach Charity Run

At the end of November, a group of fit-looking athletes arrived at the Village Hall. They were to take part in a charity 10k run, organised by Openreach. The Village Hall is happy to be the venue for the occasional charity event. The disruption to the villagers is always kept to a minimum.



The pre-run warm up. Careful not to get too tired before you start.

This event was very well organised by Openreach, with good numbers of car park and route marshals. This year's main charity for the event was Link-Up, which is the newspaper for the blind. 150 runners signed up and £600 was raised for Link-Up. The whole event was enjoyed by all.

If you would like to help with such an event, email runbreckland@btinternet.com.



And they are off. Gosh there are some serious, fit and healthy participants.

New Year's Eve Party

Again, the New Year was welcomed in with an excellent party in the Village Hall. We have been holding these for at least seven years, and they just get better.

The hall was packed out with its maximum number of party-goers, over 100, and there was a delightful atmosphere with the dance floor busy all evening. It was good to see some more villagers this year.

The highlight of the evening is the superb buffet meal. The Village Hall Group, consisting of five volunteers, took two long half-day sessions to prepare it all, cooking huge joints of beef, pork and ham. The experience gained from past years helped in choosing the right sort of foods for the party. I haven't seen the dance floor so busy for so long as this year.

Of course, there is another side to this. It has to be cleared up and cleaned up. January 1st was taken for recovery, and the group turned up on the 2nd to sweep, wash and Hoover, and take the Christmas decorations down. Surprisingly, this is all part of the fun for the volunteers.

Come and join us next year, for the best party in town.



The dance floor was busier than ever this year.



What's this, a Conga already. Where do they get their energy from?

Phone Box – Defibrillator and free library

The telephone box defibrillator is satisfactorily installed. It has its own power source that keeps it battery charged. We have a rota of volunteers to regularly check that the battery in the defibrillator is fully charged. This information has to be passed to a central control area so that they know that it is ready to use if necessary.

We hope we never need to use it, but in the event of someone having a cardiac arrest it could save a life. Remember, the most important first thing is to phone the emergency services. If you then need to use the defibrillator, it instructs you as you go along, visually and audibly. Check the information in the last newsletter for details of how to access the box of the defibrillator, although the emergency services will be able to supply this information.

The library in the telephone box is being used. Do browse and borrow, or swap books. The books are changed regularly, and there are now some childrens books as well.



Flowers in our Church

We often receive compliments on the flowers inside the church. Of course, for the big Festivals: Christmas, Lent and Harvest we do go to town, but we also like to welcome visitors with seasonal arrangements throughout the year.



The Flower Team is a small group made up from both members of the congregation and villagers and we are looking for new volunteers to swell our ranks.

Could you spare a couple of hours, two or three times a year? We would love for you to join us. You don't need any special training, just the willingness to have a go (help and guidance will always be given if requested).

If you are interested or would like to know more, please get in touch – Debbie: 01842 811666; or Margaret: 01842 812985.

Andrew Kedar came across this story about a 'ghost' in one of our churches and thought we might like to read it.

A ghost story of All Saints Church at Santon

It is said that a man who was working in the harvest field suffered from extreme heat and expressed his intention of going to St Helen's Well to get water to drink. His companions endeavoured to dissuade him from drinking icy-cold water in his heated condition, but he was obstinate, went to the spring and drank until he died. His spirit thereupon haunted the pit in which the spring was situated.

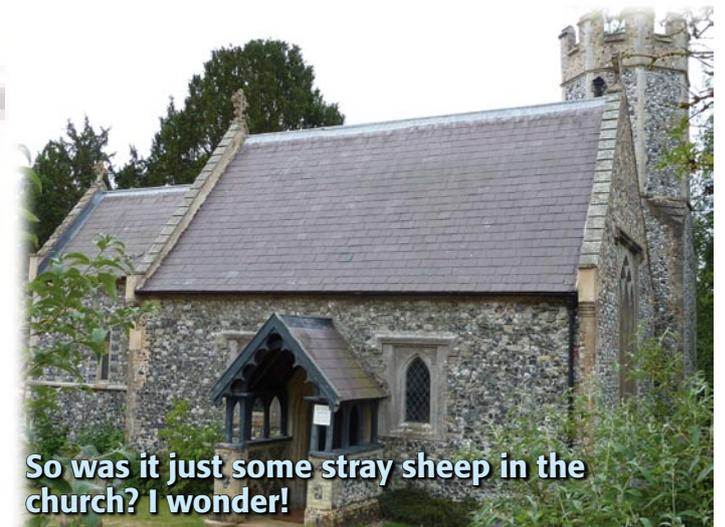
Some years later a Santon labourer was in Thetford and after a long call at the "Half Moon" – a public house pulled down many years ago – he returned to Santon, and passing by St Helen's Well thought he saw another kind of spirit. He ran as well and as fast as he could until he came to Santon Church, where a harbour of refuge presented itself. At that time the church was in a very bad repair, and there was a hole in the wall big enough for a man to crawl through. Into this he went and sheltering in the pitch dark interior, began to hear spirits moving. Then one brushed up against him, and the bell started to toll his death knell.

He spent the rest of the night in abject fear, was found in a semi-conscious condition in the morning, and it was weeks before he recovered

from his fright. The explanation was simple. Some sheep had crawled into the church by the same hole through which he had obtained entrance, and these represented the spirits, while tolling the bell was caused by one of them becoming entangled in the bell rope.

(This story is taken from the book by W. G. Clarke – "In Breckland Wilds")

This is a fascinating book. Look out for it in second-hand bookshops. Ed.



So was it just some stray sheep in the church? I wonder!

Dates for Your Diary

(In the Village Hall, unless stated otherwise)

2018

Wednesday 7th February	Coffee Morning	10.30am to 12 noon	50p
Wednesday 21st February	Coffee Morning	10.30am to 12 noon	50p
Wednesday 7th March	Coffee Morning	10.30am to 12 noon	50p
Wednesday 21st March	Coffee Morning	10.30am to 12 noon	50p
Sunday 1st April	Car Boot Sale	8am to 1pm	
Sunday 6th May	Car Boot Sale	8am to 1pm	
Sunday 3rd June	Car Boot Sale	8am to 1pm	
Sunday 1st July	Car Boot Sale	8am to 1pm	

Parish Council Meetings

(In the Village Hall)

Monday 12th February, 2018	Parish Council Meeting	7pm
Monday 16th April, 2018	Parish Council Meeting	7pm
Monday 11th June, 2018	Parish Council Meeting	7pm

Village News

Alien invaders

Every year, a strange thing happens in our house. Sometime in autumn, we notice some dark objects behind the edge of the curtain in our upstairs bedroom. Closer examination reveals them to be Ladybirds. There are about 50-100 at each end of the curtain rail. They are quite variable in colour, with few of them looking exactly like the garden Ladybirds. They clearly have found a cosy place to overwinter. They must arrive through the fanlight window, but we never see them flying or crawling in. How on earth do they know where to go, when they probably don't survive from one year to the next?

During the winter the group remains there, but occasionally one or two fall off and crawl around the bedroom. So what happens to them? Sometime

in early spring, they disappear. They presumably find their way out through the fanlight. Just as we never see them arriving we never see them leaving through the open window. Very strange!



Closer examination reveals them to be Ladybirds of various types.



Dozens of dark bodies appear behind the curtain every autumn and then disappear in spring.

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 **New version**

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