

51

December 1980

Out of Reach



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Tel: Cambridge 811209

"O U T O F R E A C H"

COMMUNITY - MAGAZINE

Issue No.51

December 1980

Editorial

While wondering what to write, I saw a television programme which informed us that tomorrow was "Hello Day". What a silly idea, I thought. However, upon reflection, maybe the intention behind it is not so bad. The idea of smiling at strangers seems a difficult one to English people. Perhaps it is of some significance that we refer to someone who is not known to us as a "stranger" with sinister connotations, whereas, for example, the equivalent Greek word translated means "Guest", surely indicating a more positive and well meaning attitude. The natural reserve we English have easily leads outsiders to think that we are somewhat insular, if not downright hostile! How easily though this veneer of reserve can be broken down. At Christmas time there is an unmistakeable change in the atmosphere, to which, Christians or not, we respond. It can be brought about by a simple smile, and the sure knowledge that at this time of year, the stranger, (or guest) that we meet will not misinterpret or mistrust a simple expression of goodwill.

I should like to welcome to the village Mr and Mrs CluttenBrock, who have recently moved into "White Roses". Good wishes for a speedy recovery go to Sandra Harrison and Katy Parker, two young girls who have recently had appendicitis. Also may I extend sympathy to Mrs. Sturgeon, whose husband died last month.

I wonder how many of you read Mrs. Style's letter in the "Cambridge Evening News" it is nice to see a voice from Reach recorded in the columns of the "Evening News" from time to time.

Here are two dates for your Diary - On the 10th December there will be the Over 60's Christmas Dinner at the Village Centre and on the 15th December there will be the Hospital Whist Drive and Draw at the Village Centre. - Any prizes for this event will be greatly appreciated.

I would like to thank Mr. Sargeant for his kind donation to the Magazine. Although he now lives in Fordham, he lived for many years in the village and ran the Post Office. I would like to wish him a speedy recovery after his recent operation.

May I wish you all a very Happy Christmas.

Kay Pote

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FROM THE PARENTS & FRIENDS OF THE SCHOOL.

We are holding a Christmas Beetle Drive on Friday 5th December starting at 7.15p.m. in the School.

There will be prizes for everyone and refreshments. An entertaining evening especially for the children.

As part of our special fund raising effort for the school we are organising a 100 CLUB which will start after Christmas and run for a year. If anyone wishes to join the 100 CLUB please contact the School or any parents or Committee members.

The school term finishes on Thursday 18th December and we would like to thank everyone who has helped and supported us over the past year.

SHIRE HALL TITBITS.

Sometimes my column is used to explain difficult and controversial matters, sometimes I seek opinions on a variety of subjects, sometimes I make mention of a topic of local interest - but, in December, my thoughts, as those of many, turn to the family, as we all approach one of the greatest of all Family Festivals. Birth in any family is always special and at Christmas we celebrate a very special birth which, regardless of faith, one must concede has had a profound effect on the family of man. The World is both fearful and complicated, but at Christmas and during the weeks preceeding it, there is nothing so encouraging to witness as the little children, so fearless and uncomplicated, performing their Christmas plays in Schools, singing the old carols, entertaining those who are elderly, but very young at heart, and just having an innocent and enjoyable time in their manner of celebrating a great event. Nothing controversial will come from my pen this month. I seek no view except where it is waiting to be given and my topic of local interest is merely an extension of very best wishes for a Happy Christmas from my wife and myself to all residents and friends in Bottisham, Burwell, Lode, Reach, Swaffham Prior and Swaffham Bulbeck.

Geoffrey Woollard, County
 Councillor.

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COVER THE POOL APPEAL BULLETIN.

The latest large fundraiser, a traditional Jazz Night at the Village College, was a great success on all counts. Tickets were sold out to dance to Amadeus Boldwicket's Red Hot Peppers, a local group (with close connections with BVC) which entertains fortnightly at the Black Horse, Swaffham Bulbeck. Charlie Connors, clarinet, played with the supporting group Tim Phillip's All Stars.

With raffle and a game on the side, just over £300 was raised.

All tickets were also sold to a Junior Disco held at BVC on 14th November, which was also a great success. It proved so popular, the organisers have said they will hold another one at the end of January - £84.50 was raised.

By the time this is published, Bottisham's Midweek Group will have had their Market Stall at Newmarket on the 29th November, selling handicrafts and Home Produced goods. Many thanks for their fine effort.

Also in Newmarket on December 13th there will be a street collection for the Cover the Pool Appeal, to be repeated in Cambridge next summer.

Events now in the planning stage for the next few months are estimated to raise about £11,000 and of course the Committee is working hard on investigating grants from many sources. We hope the Sports Council will give us a grant, and we are pleased they are featuring our Appeal in the December issue of their magazine 'Sport & Recreation' as an example of selfhelp.

Many thanks to all those of you who are organising your own small scale moneyraisers!

T. McMahon.

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SWAFFHAM PRIOR COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL.

At a recent meeting of the Governors it was decided that a note of our responsibilities should be sent to our Village Magazines, as many readers may be unfamiliar with what we do.

Firstly, our name, until recently we were known as School Managers but by direction of the County Council we are now known as School Governors.

We serve as a link between the people of the Villages in the School's area and the Education Committee. Membership of the Governing body is by invitation and of the nine members, three are appointed by the County Council, three by the local Church, two by Swaffham Prior Parish Council and one by Reach Parish Council. The present Governors are Canon J.K. Byrom, Mr.E.B. Day, Mr.D.J. Fuller, Mr.H.R. Harrison, Mrs.A.M. Houston, Mr.A.P.F. Macaulay, Mr.D.V.Menzies-Kitchener, Mrs.R.E. Stinton and Coun.G.L. Woollard.

The Governors, together with Mrs.A.V. Booton, the Headmistress, meet once each term and at the Autumn Meeting appoint the Chairman and correspondent for the following year.

We have a responsibility for the upkeep of the School premises and equipment, making representations to Shire Hall where necessary. We also approve all lettings.

Governors are involved in the appointment of all teaching and non teaching staff. Selection of all suitable teaching candidates is made by Shire Hall, but no-one is appointed without the agreement of the Governors, or the Chairman acting on their behalf. This gives us the opportunity to ensure that those appointed will fit into the local community.

One of the Governors visits the School each term and reports to our meeting, and at other times the Headmistress keeps the Chairman advised of all developments within the School. The Governors aim to support the Headmistress and Staff in maintaining and where possible improving both the standard of education given to our children and also the environment in which they grow up.

Parents are invited to contact any of the Governors if they feel they can be of any help to them.

Alasdair Macaulay.
 Chairman - School Governors.

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A Christmas Story for Children

THE CHRISTMAS GIFT.

The ringing of the school bell preceeded the flurry of children, mostly in twos and threes, slithering, scurrying and sliding homewards through the snow - but Fritz left the school alone, and slowly, for he was in no hurry. Although he had no shortage of friends, there were times when he liked to be on his own to think, and on this particular afternoon, the last one of term, he had plenty to think about. It was one week before Christmas. In the small Swiss mountain village where he lived, it was the custom for each child to make a toy. On Christmas Eve the children gathered, each clutching his toy, to make the descent to the valley below the village. There was an orphanage, and it was for the children in this orphanage that the children bearing their gifts, were destined. Happy in their own close-knit community, they tried at Christmas time to brighten the lives of those children who were less fortunate than themselves. So each Christmas Eve they would place their gifts around the huge Christmas Tree at the orphanage, ready for distribution the following morning, and would join the orphans in their Christmas Party.

It was a matter of pride to produce the best possible toy. Before they were taken to the orphanage the Mayor of the village would choose the best made toy, and the child who had made it received a silver medallion on a ribbon of blue and red to keep until the following year. Fritz longed to win the medallion, but so far it had always been won by children older than himself. This year he was determined to make a wonderful toy - one better than everyone elses' - but what should he make? His father was a carpenter, so he and his sister usually made a wooden toy - with a little help from their father. The other children were full of ideas, wooden spinning tops, toy dogs and other pull-along animals, toy drums, musical boxes, skittles and games. The girls of the village, helped by their mothers, made various kinds of dolls, puppets, soft cuddly teddies, rabbits and golliwogs. As he walked Fritz suddenly decided what he would make - a set of toy wooden soldiers - nobody had made a whole set of things before. He would have to work very hard as there was only a short time left, and many of the children had already begun theirs.

So deep in thought had Fritz been, that he had not noticed the developing gloom - he must hurry or it would be dark before he reached home. As he lengthened his steps to begin the steep climb

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The Christmas Gift contd...

up the mountain path, he suddenly saw to his amazement, a boy of about his own age standing a few yards in front of him on the path. He hadn't seen him coming, the other children had all gone ahead of him a long while ago. Had he appeared from the fir woods which lined the path? Fritz smiled at him as he drew closer and said "Hullo". The boy smiled but did not answer, and when Fritz looked back just after he had passed him, there was no sign of him at all. How could he have vanished from sight so quickly, wondered Fritz, it was almost as if he had imagined the whole incident. But one thing was certain, he did not live in the village, for he knew all the children well. Nevertheless, at supper time that evening he asked his parents if any new family had moved into the village, but his family said no. Later in bed that night Fritz tried to remember what the boy had looked like, but all he could remember was his very blonde hair and his smile- it was a smile unlike any other he had seen.

Early next morning, his thoughts were full of making his toy. Going to his father's workshop, he selected ten good smooth pieces of wood, which were left over from things his father had made. He was busy working on a chest of drawers, and looked up as Fritz endeavoured to sidle out of the workshop. "Would you like some help? What are you going to make this year?" he asked. "It's alright Dad, I want to do it on my own this year, if you don't mind". And Fritz went to his own room and carved away carefully at the wood, hour after hour. His family and friends became more and more curious, and teased and questioned him constantly. But his determination to keep the soldiers secret only mounted. His sister was making a wooden puppet and knitting the clothes for it, and she told him news of the things other children were making, but Fritz just smiled, which made her more exasperated than ever. For six days he chiselled at each minute intricate detail, so that when they were finished each soldier looked identical. Then he painted them. Black hats, blue jackets with gold buttons and red trousers. At last, late on the evening before Christmas Eve, Fritz put the finishing touches to his soldiers. He stood them all up in a row on his bedroom floor. How magnificent they looked, each one perfectly made. Fritz was extremely tired, but how proud he felt. He hoped that the boy who received them as a present would enjoy playing with them, and he also hoped that he would win the medallion. Surely his must be the best toy! Tomorrow he would show it to his family and friends.

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The Christmas Gift continued..

The following afternoon the children were all due to meet at the Church, ready to have their toys judged by the Mayor. Toys of every imaginable kind, size, shape and colour were displayed on tables all round the Church. What a wonderful show they made. But when Fritz lifted the lid of the wooden box which contained his soldiers, a single gasp of amazement left the lips of everyone present, and for a few moments nobody could say anything. "Oh Fritz, how lovely they are" everyone then exclaimed, "No wonder you kept them a secret, how clever you are!" And everyone agreed that he certainly deserved to win the medallion.

When the Mayor called his name forward to go to receive it, he felt his heart would burst. It was his finest hour and he felt so proud as everyone cheered and clapped him. It had been worth every bit of hard work for this moment of glory.

Now it was time for the children to line up with their gifts, to take them down to the orphanage in the valley. How the children would love their gifts! But as the children began their slow descent, Fritz holding the box of soldiers with the medallion in it, suddenly stopped in his tracks. He felt, rather than saw, a presence behind him. Turning around he found himself face to face with the blond boy of the previous week. He had been so busy since then that he had completely forgotten about him. Now as he looked into his compelling eyes he felt a strange stirring within him. "Are you coming to the orphanage?" he asked. The boy nodded agreement. "But have you no toy? Did nobody tell you of our Christmas tradition?" This time the boy shook his head sadly. Suddenly Fritz knew beyond doubt what he must do. Without stopping to think he thrust the box of soldiers into the boy's arms "Please take these" he said. Then he turned on his heels and hurried back up the mountain path, for he could not face the gaiety of the party with the other children. He struggled to fight back the tears. He must not feel regret for what after all he had been impelled to do. There had been no choice, Fritz knew. At last he fell asleep, but when he awoke the next morning he was filled with amazement, for there on his bed, was the medallion with its blue and red ribbon that he had won, and given to the blond boy. How had it got there? How could the boy have gained entry to the locked house? Fritz was bewildered. But he felt happier than he had ever felt before. And when in the ensuing days, he asked among the other children what had happened to the blond boy, they said that they had not seen him. He asked everyone in the village

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Christmas Gift contd...

but the answer was always the same - "What blond boy - we have not seen him". And Fritz also was never to see him again - but he never forgot.

THE END.

Kay Pote.

A Letter received from Mr.C.F.Sargeant to the Villagers of Reach.

I hope that you will give me a little space in your Magazine so that I can thank the good people who were so kind as to send me a very nice Box of Fresh Fruit, whilst I was in Newmarket General Hospital. It was a very nice thought and I do thank them very much, also thanks to Cannn Byrom for bringing them and for visiting me on several occasions.

Signed.... C.F. Sargeant.

BOTTISHAM VILLAGE COLLEGE.

The BVC Christmas Fair will be held on Saturday 29th November at 2.30p.m. at the College. The Fair will be opened by Althea Braithwaite who will also be signing her Dinosaur Books. There will be stalls, Christmas gifts and competitions and Father Christmas will also be in attendance.

POPPY APPEAL COLLECTION.

The Reach Village collection amounted to £29.33 in the tins and in the Church the collection was £6.30.

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FROM THE VICAR.

About this time of the year the clergy are apt to break out in solemn warnings to remember the real meaning of Christmas beneath all the tinsel. So, as one of those simple folk who are hopelessly turned on by tinsel, as we call it, I thought you might like to read some remarks putting the other side of the picture, and which may help to prevent us becoming schizophrenic about Christmas. I marked them last June in a remarkable book called The Pot and the Knife, by John Drury (SCM £2.95; pp.86-88). They bring you my wishes for a Christmas made happy by thought and prayer and rest, gaiety and peace, and some costly act of generosity to someone in need.

'Christmas has been widely and popularly developed in myth: particularly that part of it which might seem to have been left out so far - Christmas as the presence of God in the World. Father Christmas comes on to the scene. In origin he is a folk-figure of Northern Mythology. An old pagan elf, his head wreathed in holly and mistletoe, he brought the yule log and the steaming bowl. So, but younger, he appears in Dickens' A Christmas Carol as the spirit of Christmas present, dressed in green, holding a flaming torch and surrounded by heaps of food and drink. He secured his place in unofficial Christian celebration by being absorbed into St. Nicholas (the patron Saint of children) and by going to America, whence he returned as the figure known in England today, dressed in red on his reindeer sleigh with his sack of toys (Santa Claus is the American version of St. Nicholas). As such he comes annually to the serious Christian as one whom it would be unnecessarily severe to exclude and yet presenting an uncomfortable problem. The Christian is supposed to believe in a Father-God in Heaven. As we have seen, he does so with an (embarrassment) betrayed in his refusal to be literal and call him the father in the sky. He believes more strongly, that whatever this divinity's home ground (which is scarcely the phrase anyhow), he has made himself accessible in our World by means of a strange birth and a life spent in gifts of grace to those who could accept them as children, the 'little ones' whose lives he cheered with effective traces of his elusive presence. Are such beliefs mocked, all too pointedly, or somewhere, somehow confirmed by Father Christmas? He is another embodiment of the religious imagination with precisely the features which theologians and secularists mock in the popular Christian version: old, benign and airborne. He squeezes down the chimney like a baby down the birth passage, to come into ordinary rooms and distribute presents. He is gone before anyone sees him. As a matter of fact, mothers and fathers do the solid bit of his

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business, the providential giving, for him and for their children and one another:

a Divinity so odd (as Auden put it)
 He lets the Adam whom he made
 Perform the Acts of God.

'...when religion gets out of the hands of its officials and flourishes in shops and houses, they are likely to feel that, though they hoped for something like this to happen, it was not exactly this that they had in mind. They divert attention from Christmas Trees and Father Christmas and fix it on the serious, the "historical" centre which is the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ. The absurdly fanciful and indulgent nature of Father Christmas invites sympathy for such efforts from any serious Christian person. But then his centre is also wrapped in imaginative story, which has to be recognised as such. And then the wrapping is apparently not exactly accidental or dispensable for, whatever the centre is, mythical tales of some kind seem to be needed to present it. Besides which, an unwrapped present is immediately recognised as short on tender loving care. When the myth of Father Christmas is played against the myth of divine incarnation, we are made conscious that it is kinds of myth, in the first instance, that we are dealing with.... Both our myths reach the point of fulfilment, without which they are pointlessly tall stories, when someone gives something to somebody else and it is given and taken as an instance of the gift of self which makes selfhood. That is, as far as Christians know, God.'

J.K.B.

FROM THE CHURCHES.

Worship in December - St. Mary's and Reach.

2nd St. Andrew

8.00a.m. Holy Communion (St. Mary's)

7th Advent 11

8.00a.m. Holy Communion (Reach)
 9.30 a.m. Matins and Eucharist (St. Mary's)
 6.30 p.m. Evenson (Reach)

11th 7.0 p.m. School Carol Service (St. Mary's)

14th Advent 11

9.30 a.m. Parish Communion (St. Mary's)
 11.00 a.m. Family Communion (Reach)
 6.30 p.m. Evensong (St. Mary's)

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9.30 a.m. Parish Communion (St. Mary's)
11.00 a.m. Family Communion (Reach)
3.30 p.m. Carols (Reach)
6.30 p.m. Carols (St. Mary's)

11.30 p.m. Midnight Mass (St. Mary's)

8.30 a.m. Holy Communion (Reach)
10.00 a.m. Children's Carols followed by Family Eucharist
(St. Mary's)
4.00 p.m. Evensong (St. Mary's)

10.00 a.m. Holy Communion (St. Mary's)

8.00 a.m. Holy Communion (St. Mary's)

9.30 a.m. Parish Communion (St. Mary's)
11.00 a.m. Children's Eucharist (Reach)
6.30 p.m. Evensong (St. Mary's)

22nd October Stanley Eustace Sturgeon, 36 Great Lane, Reach
aged 82.

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The following is a Post Script to Geoffrey Woollard's Shire Hall Titbits

Since writing my regular piece for OUT OF REACH, I have handed in my resignation, on a matter of principle, from the County Council. I am, therefore, no longer your County Councillor. As any who know me well can testify, such a decision caused a lot of heart-searching and was not taken lightly. I must state, however, that, having fought for certain priorities (and therefore, against certain other priorities and unwanted increases in our Rates) for over six years, winning some arguments and losing others, I got to the point where the frustrations inherent in our democratic local government system became too great for this ex-Councillor to bear. I could not continue to work alongside those who would countenance damaging cuts in essential services, who could countenance the retention of the County Farms Estate and, because of the financial consequences, could vote for an additional amount on the Rates to make up the difference between what was needed and what monies were available. I might add that the frustrations at Shire Hall were, for me, heavily counterbalanced by the friendship and kindnesses consistently received from the people of my late electoral division. For this I give thanks.

My understanding of the situation is that, as we are so close to the date (May 7th 1981) when a new Council is elected, it will not be necessary to hold a bye-election to fill the vacancy created by my retirement. If I am correct, clearly there will be a 'gap' during which Reach will not have representation. I am available, as an ex-Councillor, to help former Constituents with problems and/or to channel complaints and queries to the appropriate quarters. This is purely on a 'caretaker' basis until the new Council takes over and, of course, is on the undertaking that I do not now have the influence and authority that an elected person holds. I will be carrying on with various School Governorships until replaced by the Authority.

Geoffrey Woollard.

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Try this Russian dish for a quick way of using some of that left over turkey.

1 lb cherries, stoned
2 ozs raisins
 $\frac{1}{4}$ pint water
1 Tablespoon sugar
1 Teaspoon white vinegar
pinch of mixed spice.

Heat 2 ozs butter in a saucepan and gently cook 2 lbs of turkey slices. Cover the slices with enough Madeira to cover. Serve on a hot dish with the cherry sauce. (Chicken can be served in the same way)

-13-

