

Santon Downham News

The Parish Council Newsletter for Santon Downham Villagers

October 2012 Number 15

We seemed to have missed summer this year, but living where we do in the middle of the forest, all seasons are interesting. Mick Mackender (Chairman of the Parish Council), has given the green its last cut of the year. Part of the green is left quite long for much of the year. It is not managed as a wild flower meadow, but still has a number of attractive flowers. Some are shown on page 4. Have a look next year. In the next couple of months, the village 'entertainment' includes a talk about Yellowstone, coffee mornings, a Christmas Bazaar and a New year's party. I hope to see you there. *Derek Toomer; Editor*

Forthcoming Events

... Where the Buffalo Roam ...

An illustrated talk by Derek Toomer

'USA's Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks'. Friday 23 November 2012, 7.30pm, £2.



Back from the brink of extinction – Bison (Buffalo) roam freely in Yellowstone.

Yellowstone was the world's first National Park, created in 1872. It boasts one unique sight after another. Stunning scenery, beautiful plants and animals.

Added to this is the adjacent National Park of Grand Teton with its majestic mountains. So do come along.

Christmas Bazaar – Saturday 1 December.



What an exciting array of 'stuff' to purchase.

Tables are always in demand, so book one early for your sale of festive gifts – phone 01842 815213. If you are looking for some quality and novel gifts and stocking fillers do come along – 10am to 4pm.

Father Christmas will be there at 12 noon for younger children.

New Year's Eve Party – Monday 31 December, 7.30pm–1am, £12. Theme – A Night at the Movies



Choose your favourite movie character and come along for an entertaining night. We will be providing an excellent buffet supper as usual, and there will be a bar and disco. It will be loads of fun, so we hope to see you there.

Coffee mornings return

These proved a great success last winter. They are very undemanding – sitting around, chatting to other villagers whilst enjoying a tea or coffee and usually a biscuit or cake.



Coffee and congenial company – how pleasant.

Come to the village hall at 10.30am on 7 November, 21 November, 5 December and 19 December. If you have problems getting to the Village Hall, phone Maggy on 01842 810098. **BRING YOUR OWN MUG.**

Village News

Our printer's daughter marries

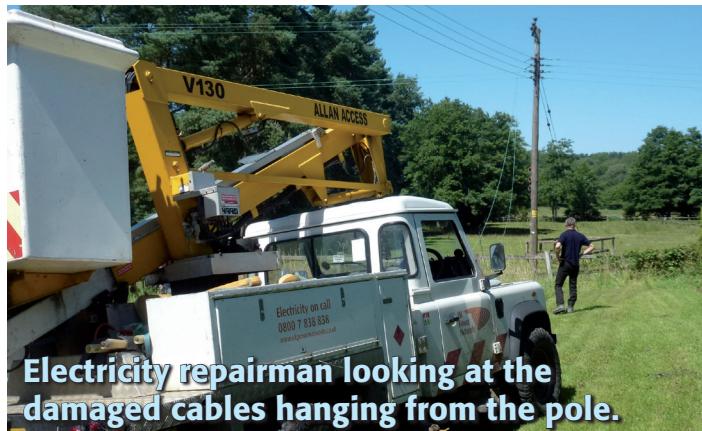
Villager John Parrington, MD of Reflex Litho, very kindly prints our newsletters. On 4 August his daughter Charlotte was married to Jeffrey Vincent in our lovely little church. We wish them well in their life together.



John, Charlotte, Jeffrey and Joan protecting themselves from the 'light drizzle', or deluge as we call it here.

Trees and electricity don't mix!

I was working in the garden in late August, when I heard what sounded like Chinese firecrackers going off, followed by an almighty whoosh. All electricity had gone off. Trees in an adjacent garden caused cables of the main powerline from Brandon to touch and burn out. Electricity workmen were soon on the scene and rejoined the broken cables - quite impressive. The power outage lasted five hours - not as bad as in 1987 (see next page).



Electricity repairman looking at the damaged cables hanging from the pole.

Church Teas

This genteel village activity continued through the summer of 2012. On sunny days, attendees enjoy themselves sitting around the graveyard; on wet days they move into the church.

This year saw rather too many wet Sundays. In spite of this, the teas raised £1,165 towards church funds. It is hoped that church teas will recommence on the first Sunday in June, running through to August. If you can help to run the teas one Sunday, or could bake a cake or two, contact Andrew Kedar on 01842 812985.



Enjoying a chat with their drinks and cake away from the rain outside.

Harvest Supper

The annual Harvest Supper was held in the church on the evening of Tuesday 11 September. Thirty-six people attended, including four guests (the Reverends Laurence and Margaret Whitford and Mr and Mrs Peter Cox). After a pleasant meal, the "produce" given for the Harvest Festival was auctioned.



Jonny McIrvine working the crowd well to raise money from the produce auction.

The net income for the evening (from sale of tickets, donations and the auction) was £393. The East Anglian Air Ambulance was given £132 and WaterAid (an international charity) also received £132. The remainder was retained by the church for future repairs. *Andrew Kedar*

It's that bus again

A red Routemaster bus featured in the last newsletter as it ferried a wedding group to the village hall for their reception. It appeared again mid October for the wedding of Gareth and Becky in our church.



The red bus awaits the married couple, as confetti appears from on high

Do you remember the 15th October 1987?

Now a quarter of a century ago, on Thursday 15th October came the “English Hurricane”. A few hours before the storm broke, the weather forecaster Michael Fish announced:

“Earlier today, apparently a woman rang the BBC and said that she had heard there was a hurricane on the way. Well, if you’re watching, don’t worry, there isn’t!”



England's worst storm

That night, the worst storm to hit England since 1703, arrived in the south, and damaged, or brought down an estimated 15 million trees, including six of the seven famous oak trees in Sevenoaks, and historic trees in Kew Gardens and other famous sites. Eighteen people died. In the Channel Islands, wind speeds reached 110 mph, and even in London, there were gusts in excess of 90 mph. Here in East Anglia, it didn't blow quite so hard - there were gusts of 60-70 mph.



How did Santon Downham fare?

On the following morning the noise of the wind through the trees was frightening. I went out just before 7am to walk the dog down Route 17 (the Military Road). Large branches of the Douglas Fir trees were crashing down all around, and so I promptly returned home. By now, a very large Oak branch had fallen across my neighbour's garage

roof. Another Oak tree fell partly across the road nearby.

Santon Downham was cut off from the Thetford to Brandon road (B1107) in both directions. Access to the A134, Mundford to Thetford road, was also blocked. Fallen branches had damaged both the main electricity supply lines to the village and so there was no power! What a mess!

Beginning the clear-up

The wind took several hours to abate on the 16th, and for damage assessment to begin. We were more fortunate than most villages - the Forestry Commission in 1987 still had its own men and machinery here in the yard. They set about unblocking the roads of the large fallen trees and branches, and so we had limited access to the Thetford to Brandon road later that day. But still a strange weekend.



Unrelated misery?

To add to the misery for some, on Monday 19th, the Stock Market “crashed” by about a third of its value. It settled down again by the end of October, but was about 20% below the value on 15th October. The winds were felt in “The City”, but I don’t think there was any link between the winds and the Stock Market!

Powerless

Full electrical power was not reconnected to the village until 21st October - nearly six days after it was cut. What a relief that was, but Margaret and I were fortunate, having installed a bottled-gas hob in the kitchen a few weeks previously. Many folks were not so lucky and the loss of frozen food didn’t help!

Everyone living here when the storm hit will probably never forget the weekend of 15th to 17th October 1987 and the five days without electricity. Only once in three centuries have we had such a storm in southern England. *Andrew Kedar*

Dates for Your Diary

(In the Village Hall, unless stated otherwise)

2012

Sunday 4th November	Car Boot Sale	8am to 1pm
Wednesday 7th November	Coffee morning	10.30am to 12 noon 50p
Wednesday 21st November	Coffee morning	10.30am to 12 noon 50p
Friday 23rd November	<i>USA's Grand Teton and Yellowstone, National Parks</i> by Derek Toomer	7.30pm £2
Saturday 1st December	Xmas Bazaar	10am to 4pm
Wednesday 5th December	Coffee morning	10.30am to 12 noon 50p
Wednesday 19th December	Coffee morning	10.30am to 12 noon 50p
Saturday 31st December	New Year's Eve Party	7.30pm to 1am £12

Village News

Wild flowers from our village green



Fund-raising cycle ride

About 15 Brandon & District Rotarians and friends took part in the sponsored Bike Ride from Brandon to Swaffham recently and discovered hills they were not aware of on previous car journeys. 'Pit stops' were made at several pubs along the route and Swaffham Rotarians provided tea and some delicious home-made cakes at the final destination. Over £1,250 was raised for the Wheel Power charity and we would like to thank the public for their generosity. *Jason Whichelow*



A brilliant effort! Well done to all participants.

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**

Photographs by *Derek Toomer*

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

Santon Downham News is sponsored by Reflex Litho, Printers, St Helens Way, Thetford, Norfolk IP24 1HG, Tel: 01842 754600. Contact them for all of your printing requirements.