

Articles - [High Street Safety & Children](#) - [£2000 walk](#) - [Recycle](#) - [Churchyard Gates](#) - [Parish Council - Councillor Wanted](#) - [College Retirement](#) - [KClub Winners](#) - [LA4Y New Leader](#) - [WI Musical Evening](#) - [Floods](#) - [Playtime Help](#) - [Pool Funds](#) - [Bowls Success](#) - [WI Hildersham](#) - [Helping Hands](#) - [Clive Bush on South Africa's School](#) - [Students Summer](#) - [Roman Underworld](#) - [Bush Telegraph](#) - [Gardeners New Chair](#) - [Bridge Players](#) - [Country Diary](#) - [Christmas Bazaar](#) - [Flaxfields](#) - [Aztecs](#) - [Playgroup](#)  
Readers Write: - [Support Local Business](#) - [Donations](#) - [Rubbish Disposal](#) - [Brownies News](#) - [New Bin - Celebrated](#) - [Traffic Lives](#) - [Generosity](#)

## SAFETY ISSUES RAISED AGAIN AS PRAM IS STRUCK IN HIGH STREET [Top of Page](#)



'Are you hurt? Is the baby hurt?'

Is there any damage to the pram? Well, in that case what is the problem?'

The response of Cambridge police to her child's near miss spurred Tracey Russell to act

A BUS mounting the pavement in Linton's High Street struck the pram in which Tracey Russell was pushing her 13-month-old daughter Zoe to meet her son from the Infants School. The incident happened on the afternoon of Wednesday 4th October, which was also International Walk to School Day. The driver appeared not to notice.

"I was walking on the opposite side of the road to the Chinese take-away when a car started to pull out of the courtyard, just as the Burton's coach was coming up the High Street towards me. Instead of stopping to avoid hitting the car, the driver mounted the pavement on my side of the road to pull round it. I managed to manoeuvre the pram as close to the wall as I could but the coach's back wheel hit the wheel of the pram."

Neither Tracey nor Zoe was hurt but Tracey was badly shaken. After she had recovered from the initial shock of the accident, her distress turned to anger at the response of the police and the general apathy of people towards traffic dangers in the High Street.

Tracey phoned Cambridge police at Parkside. "The crime desk told me that I would have to make a face-to-face report at Sawston. I could not make a complaint over the phone. Sawston closes at 4pm and by then it was 4.30. I was put through to another person at Parkside, who sounded very tired and put out by my call. He said, 'Are you hurt? Is the baby hurt? Is there any damage to the pram? Well, in that case what is the problem?'' I felt upset enough when the incident happened but when I felt absolutely powerless to register my complaint, it wound me up even further. I decided to follow it up with Sawston and I'm happy to say that the treatment I received from them restored my faith in our police service."

Councillor John Batchelor contacted Burton's coaches on Tracey's behalf and suggested that she attend

October's Parish Council meetings to describe her experiences. Burton's requested that she write to them about the incident and have since sent a letter of apology.

Following advice from County Councillor Dr W. Hughes, Tracey organised a petition (Safer Roads for our Children) at the Infants School and monitored High Street traffic over ten school days. She has written to David Brace, team leader of Traffic Management at the County Council and has been granted three minutes to speak at the County Council meeting on 5th December. Tracey has also asked for another public meeting and is optimistic that this will take place, with a County Councillor present.

"If we accept traffic mounting the pavements we risk being killed again and again. Even those people who keep telling me that this has been going on for years must agree that it's time it was stopped."

## EXCERPTS FROM TRACEY'S LETTER TO THE COUNTY COUNCIL

SINCE my experience I have recorded numerous other vehicles in the High Street mounting and parking on the pavements, thus forcing prams and buggies to cross the road unnecessarily. Over the ten school days that I have monitored there are in excess of 20 such incidents taking place during peak times, mostly buses and lorries mounting the pavements...

[At the last inquiry] ... many of today's parents did not live in the village and those that did, did not have children of school age. I don't believe any of us were aware of just how dangerous the High Street is during peak times until we became involved in the school run. ...

My concern is not now so much for the protection of my own children but for those that are still walking up and down the High Street to the Infants and Junior schools. ...

If a pathway is not safe to walk our four-year-olds to school and push our babies along in their prams then you may as well take it away. At least that way we wouldn't be lulled into a false sense of security.

## **WALK SET TO BEAT £2000 TARGET** [Top of Page](#)

FOR the second year running, the Link Walk in aid of Linton Village College's twin school in Boepathutse in South Africa was a great success. In spite of a very cold wind and almost continuous rain, over 200 pupils and adults battled on through the mud to complete the six miles. Our target is to raise £2,000 and we are on course to make or beat that. The money is to be used to complete the equipping of the new science laboratory at Boepathutse and begin work on the resource centre. On behalf of the College, I would like to say thank you to all those who sponsored the walkers and particularly to those who did the walk itself. Thanks also go to Pam and John Coombes who organised things so well and to all the staff who helped.

Clive Bush

## **CALLING RECYCLISTS** [Top of Page](#)

THE old blue paper bank has been removed and replaced with two smaller green ones which stand at the far end of the row of recycling banks. The Village Custodian has had a terrible time recently picking up bags of papers that have been left where the old bank stood and carrying them to the new ones. Your help would be much appreciated.

Parish Council

## **CHURCHYARD GATES ARE TO BE REPLACED** [Top of Page](#)

YOU may have noticed that the two churchyard gates have been removed. They have not been used for a good many years, but now they have gone to be repaired. On their return and reconnected to their cast iron gateposts they should be able to close.

Like all churchyards, Linton's is a very special and hallowed space, sometimes referred to as 'God's acre'. The Monday Gang have continued the excellent work done by previous churchyard gardeners, and we have an area of natural beauty and hallowed memories to match any in the county.

It is a busy thoroughfare, especially at weekends and at the beginning and end of the school day. From first light dog walkers take their dogs through, often off the lead. Cyclists walk, but often cycle, their bikes through. Some cycle across the grass.

If the two gates are closed, but open at the touch, it will remind everyone that the churchyard is an area set apart, yet open to all. I urge all dog owners please to keep their dogs on the lead and to clear up if they foul the grass.

Those who cycle straight through with scarcely a thought will need to dismount if the gates are closed, and walk through as they should. Consideration of the dead and the living is an important element in good citizenship.

Our churchyard is a precious community amenity. All of us wish to preserve the beauty and tranquillity we find there.

If you find the gates closed, remember that you are entering a piece of history, where generations of Linton people lie buried and where still today and tomorrow the ashes of those cremated are laid to rest.

We owe it to them, as much as to each other, to remember where we are.

Julian Thomson

## **The PARISH COUNCIL [Top of Page](#)**

Parish Council's October meetings - Reported by GRAHAM POTTER

AT both meetings this month Mrs Tracey Russell spoke about traffic conditions in the High Street in public participation sessions. The Council gave their backing each time. The Council are looking into the extension of the tarmac path from Granta Leys to Kingfisher Walk. It was reported that the cemetery pond area has not been kept clear of weeds. The fence is once again covered despite an effort to rectify the problems. This and other matters are to be raised with the council contractor.

Some play equipment in the adventure playground has become unusable and has not been repaired as full council approval is needed due to cost. Further improvements to existing equipment are still being looked into. No request was made for an election, so after due notice the Council will co-opt someone to fill the vacancy of Parish Councillor at the meeting on 16th November. One application has already been received.

The County Councillor reported that speed management is being looked into as there is money available for improvements, e.g. cameras and warning signs. The island on the by-pass needs repairing and will have traffic lights during the repairs. The District Councillor reported on a homeless review; the District Council is now responsible for homeless 16-18 year olds. The problem of vehicles on the Roman Road is being looked into. Linton Action for Youth has a new leader.

The Millennium Arts Project is to distribute a postcard pack to each house in Linton. The ATC are to be approached to help with deliveries. The Council is disappointed that despite all the warnings given of water level problems at the Hundred Houses site, the residents of Chalklands still face problems. Someone had at last been found to replace the Clapper Stile.

## **YOUR COUNCIL NEEDS YOU [Top of Page](#)**

THE Parish Council is looking for a volunteer to fill the vacancy left by the resignation of Mike Ballentine. Mike was Chairman of the Finance Committee for almost two years. His departure leaves a gap among our numbers.

There will not be an election so the Council can co-opt a replacement but to do that we need people to put their names forward and bring our numbers back up to fifteen.

Being a Parish Councillor is not particularly onerous. There are two evening Council meetings a month. No particular qualifications are needed – just a willingness to serve the community and enthusiasm for improving the quality of life in Linton. Whoever is co-opted will have just over two years to serve before the next election.

If you would be willing to join us, please contact the Parish Clerk, Gill Barker % 891001, or call in at the office to put your name forward.

Dr Brian Cox has been voted in as new Finance Committee Chairman.  
Mike Gee

## **COLLEGE STAFF TAKE ACTIVE RETIREMENT** [Top of Page](#)



Mr Martin and Mr Collard celebrate with their wives

THE new school year started without two familiar faces following the retirement of Linton Village College Deputy Head Garth Collard and Head of English Chris Martin. Between them they gave the College over 50 years of their working lives and made a huge contribution to the success that we currently enjoy. Over a hundred invited guests attended the farewell buffet at the College and very much enjoyed hearing Mr Collard's and Mr Martin's parting words. The future is bright for both ex-colleagues. Mr Martin is a well known educational author and is much in demand and Mr Collard begins a new career in the field of educational consultancy. We all wish them well over the coming years and look forward to staying in touch. Clive Bush

## **K-CLUB WINNERS SET FOR BUMPER PRIZES** [Top of Page](#)

THE third year of the K-Club got off to a flying start with a membership of almost 360. This will allow us to maintain the same prize pay-out at £2,320 – £85 per month and a bumper £1,300 in September.

A cheque for £1,700 will be presented to Linton Action for Youth. Not only will this cover many of the Drop-In Centre's running costs, but it will also demonstrate a strong local commitment to this worthy cause, which is so important for external fund-raising. Linton Action for Youth would like to thank all those who have supported the K-Club with their membership and wish them luck in the many prize draws to come.

The result of the first monthly draw in the new K-Club year was:

1st (£50)-(No.122); 2nd (£25)-(No.155);3rd (£10)-(No.053)

Peter Dixon

## **NEW LEADER FOR LA4Y** [Top of Page](#)

JOHN Starr left us in September to take up a senior post with the Essex Youth Service. We wish him every success in his new post. It has been encouraging to note that a number of excellent candidates have applied to be John's replacement. It says much about the progress that LA4Y has made that the job of leading the project is seen as being so attractive to professional youth workers.

We are delighted to announce that Liz Govier has accepted our offer to take on the leadership of LA4Y. Liz has been with us since the beginning, starting the Drop-In centre with Glyn Morley back in 1998. She has been very active in the parenting and support side of LA4Y and this is something we want to develop

much more in the future.

The continuing success of LA4Y is dependent on having quality professional leadership. Liz will be taking us forward into the next phase of our development.

The one drawback in promoting Liz is that it still leaves us short of staff, so we are looking to appoint another youth worker. In the meantime, Jim Kimber, Mike Sanderson and from time to time John Starr are holding the fort.

If you want to contact LA4Y the number of the Drop-In centre is % 891345. If there is no one on duty you can leave a message on the answer phone. To find out more about our work do join us at 7.30pm on Wednesday 22nd November at the Drop-In centre, where we will be holding our AGM.

John Batchelor

## **MUSICAL EVENING AT THE WI** [Top of Page](#)

THIRTY-six members were welcomed to the meeting. Members who have not previously entered the draw for a bursary of £200 for Denman College (WI Residential Adult Education College), were invited to put their names forward next month. Members have organised a display in the cabinet in the Linton Library until the end of November, to provide information about the Women's Institute and encourage new members to join. It is hoped that two teams will be taking part in the Quiz Night, which is being organised by the Cambridge Federation of Women's Institutes at Cottenham Village College on 6th October.

Members were greatly entertained by the evening's speaker, Quintus Benziger, Director of Music at St Mary's School, Cambridge, who gave a history of musical instruments, illustrated by taped excerpts and instruments he had brought along. He explained the reasons why the harpsichord had given way to the piano, demonstrating the different qualities of both instruments; likewise for the viols and the modern violin.

After refreshments, Clare Neville and Tricia Lewis read out their winning entries from the poetry and prose reading competition at the Spring Council Meeting. A tombola took place during the evening.

The speaker at next month's meeting will be a police representative on "Personal protection and crime prevention." Visitors are welcome.

Anne Parry-Smith

## **WE SHOULD SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESSES** [Top of Page](#)

Dear Editor,

I am writing in response to Mr Stapleton's letter in the September issue. As a resident of Market Lane, who Mr Stapleton has concerns for, I feel that I am able to respond to put another viewpoint forward.

The loss of the facilities at Barclays Bank is huge. There are many who do not have access to Saffron Walden and Haverhill, except by bus. These tend to be those that can least afford the expense, including the elderly. Oh I (and I am sure many others) would love to have a mobile bank – let's start a petition!

As to the Post Office moving to this end of the village, I can't agree less with Mr Stapleton. Prior to Mr Stapleton moving to the village, this facility was located at our end of the village for many years. If it means the provision is kept – and possibly improved – all well and good.

Surely we should all wish that our village will continue to offer as many facilities as possible. Mr Stapleton should remember that he moved here with the bank next door, so why now object to another village amenity?

Perhaps he would be happier if we all – including himself – had all the village facilities closed. Then we could go to other places for a newspaper, a loaf of bread or a pint of milk, maybe en route to the bank! After all, all our village shops cause traffic problems for someone.

I personally believe that Linton is a growing community and as such we should support local businesses. They provide us with services and we are lucky to keep them, no matter where in the village. They are enjoyed by the majority and make life so much easier for all – even those with a car.

Please let us appreciate what we have and we might keep them here in Linton.

Name and address supplied

## **DONATIONS HELP CARE CENTRES** [Top of Page](#)

Dear Editor

I would like to thank Tower View for their contribution on the death of Percy Manning, and Rivey Way and Rivey Close for their contribution for Tony Rickett. They both lived in Linton most of their life.

In all, I collected £210, £105 for each. Percy Manning's went to The Children's Hospice and Tony Rickett's went to Papworth Hospital.

Once again, thank you all very much. Julie Hilliard

## **LET'S NOT RUBBISH THIS IDEA** [Top of Page](#)

Dear Editor,

I live here in Linton caring for my mother-in-law who has been very ill, but well on the mend now. And while here I like to read your Linton News letters.

In your August paper there was a piece about rubbish dumping down the lanes and places. So I thought I would write and tell you what they do in the village I come from, which is Chapel St Leonards, Skegness, Lincs., and it seems to work very well.

They have two council dust carts in our car park, every second Saturday, and people can take any rubbish they have, garden rubbish, old furniture, etc. The carts are there from 9 to 11.30am.

It's just a suggestion and I wondered if it might work here if there's somewhere carts could park.

Mrs C Giles

## **GOOD NEWS FROM THE BROWNIES** [Top of Page](#)

Dear Editor,

Wednesday Brownies would like to thank everyone who helped with our Jumble Sale. We made the grand total of £385.

And also, with the help of the Linton News, we have got two new helpers.

Daphne Brazier Carole Thexton

## **A 'BIN' THANK YOU** [Top of Page](#)

Dear Editor,

What a great boon it is to be able to dispose of junk mail locally since the new bins have arrived in the car park.

After the facility was withdrawn from Sainsbury's at Haverhill, I often found myself with a loaded car boot until I got to Cambridge Sainsbury's, which was the only other collection point I knew of.

May I say a big Thank You to the Parish Council for organising the bins, thus saving me the time and the environment my petrol fumes.

## **CELEBRATED IN STYLE** [Top of Page](#)

Dear Editor,

I would like to thank all my fellow residents, friends and relations for their cards and kind wishes sent during my recent illness. May I also thank everyone that helped me celebrate my 80th birthday in such grand style at a recent celebration lunch held at the Crown Inn. Particular thanks to my nephew and his wife (Jacquie and Ian Wilson) and the staff at the Crown who made the day go so smoothly.

Mrs Irene Binks

## **REWARD FOR WRITING CASE** [Top of Page](#)

Mr ERNEST Sired, of Colchester, lost a writing case containing a Sheaffer fountain pen in the area of the Social Centre on Saturday 23rd September.

Mr Sired is devastated by the loss of the pen, which was a present from his wife, who died recently, and is appealing to Linton residents for help. The writing case is made of mid-brown vinyl, with a zip fastener. Also inside the case was a postcard addressed to Mr Sired. If you can offer Mr Sired any information, please contact him directly or contact the [editor](#). Mr Sired is happy to offer an "elegant reward" to anyone helping him recover the case and pen. LNT

## **SECONDS SAVED SAVE LIVES** [Top of Page](#)

Dear Editor,

We are writing to express our heartfelt thanks to our friends, neighbours, paramedics and police for their kind assistance following our daughter Charlotte's unfortunate road accident on Friday 13th October.

The ritual of attempting to safely join the seemingly endless stream of lemmings evacuating Haverhill paid its toll, although in Charlotte's case it was mercifully only metal that was damaged.

The police are aware that the majority of motorists travelling along the A1307 only adhere to the 40mph speed limit if they are unfortunate enough to be hindered by vehicles slowing to turn into our village. If criteria based on road traffic fatalities determines capital expenditure for such things as traffic calming, traffic lights and pedestrian crossings, can all we motorists show consideration to others and slow down to a safe speed?

This costs nothing, save just a few seconds of our time and the result could be a life preserved.

Jacquie and Ian Wilson

## **THANKS FOR YOUR GENEROSITY** [Top of Page](#)

Dear Editor,

I would like to sincerely thank all those who gave so generously to the Royal Air Forces Association Wings Appeal. A sum of just over £300 was raised. A special thank you must go to the Linton Air Training Corps and other helpers.

If anyone would like to assist with the collection next year, please contact me, the organiser Mr L Kidman

Dear Editor,

The Macmillan Coffee Morning held on 29th September at Flaxfields raised the overwhelming sum of £286. May the residents thank all those who attended and helped make the morning so successful.

Jacquie Wilson

## **FLOODS** [Top of Page](#)



Fine weather for ducks and small boys of all ages

HEAVY rain made water levels rise throughout the county last month. Over the weekend of 21st-22nd October, the ford at Mill Lane became impassable to traffic—although some people enjoyed the novelty of paddling on the footbridge.

## **CAN YOU HELP AT PLAYTIME?** [Top of Page](#)

OVER the summer, the Parish Council have been trying to ensure that the play equipment at the Cathodeon Centre is available for general use outside the hours that the Playgroup and OSCA Club use it. We have done this by asking for volunteers to open and shut the gates on some evenings and at weekends. This has resulted in a volunteer group of just myself for some weeks now.

It has been suggested, therefore, that I should appeal for members of the public to volunteer to operate a rota system for the opening and locking of the gates over the winter. If no one comes forward then the whole idea will be shelved until next spring.

The opening times would be from 9am until dusk each weekday, except days on which the Library is open until 8pm. Weekend opening times would be from 10 am until dusk. If you can help, please contact the Parish Clerk, Gill Barker, on 891001.

## **GIFT BOOSTS POOL FUNDS** [Top of Page](#)

THE Linton Area Pool Project has received an encouraging response to the questionnaire which accompanied last month's edition of the Linton News. The Steering Committee does need as comprehensive a picture as possible of your thoughts and needs, however, and has extended the deadline for receipt of the completed questionnaire to Friday, 17th November. Please do take a few minutes to complete the questionnaire, and return it to any of the following addresses: 7 The Grove, 98 Chalklands, 16 Fairfield Way, 5 Crossways, 1 Wheat-sheaf Way.

In the meantime, we are delighted to acknowledge with many thanks a gift of £1,000 from the Parish Council. The money will be deposited in the Pool Project Trust account, which is now being established, and will be vital to our efforts to raise more money and, in time and once we have evidence of local need and support for the Pool, to make a fresh application for funds from the National Lottery.

One well-tryed and relatively painless way of donating to a worthy cause, of course, is by monthly standing order. We are now beginning to receive regular donations from people in this way, and if you feel you would like to join them then our Honorary Treasurer, Tim Richardson (27 Finchams Close, Linton CB1 6ND, (890921) will be delighted to hear from you!



## **SUCCESS CROWNS END OF BOWLS SEASON** [Top of Page](#)

Autumn, and the end of another bowling season. We had a very good last friendly match against Wickhambrook on Sunday 24th September. We won on all rinks but everyone, including the visitors, thoroughly enjoyed the game, which is what it is all about.

Betty Meeks, Brian Beavis and Derek Dimmock were chosen to represent the club in the Steeple Bumpstead league end of season match, when a representative team from each division plays another divisional team. Our members had the highest score for their team and were awarded a Millennium Gold Prize.

Finally, advance notice of the Christmas Party to be held at 7.30pm in the pavilion on Friday 15th December. All members welcome. Please make a note in your diaries now.

## **HILDERSHAM WI NEWS** [Top of Page](#)

Mrs KAY Curtis gave a most interesting talk to Hildersham WI entitled 'Skeletons in your Cupboard'. She told of her investigation into her own family background with sometimes surprising discoveries. She explained how genealogical information can be gleaned from many different sources and gave helpful advice on just how to approach this fascinating research.

## **HELPING HANDS** [Top of Page](#)

FROM 1st November, the telephone numbers for Linton Transport are as follows: 890121 (call first), 892139, 893959.

## **A DIFFERENT WORLD** [Top of Page](#)

Clive Bush continues his impressions of South Africa

SOMETIMES the paradoxes of South Africa make me work hard to understand the mistakes I make with my prejudices and assumptions. We visit a "cultural village" which advertises itself as "real Africa". There is a rather dingy bar, a very smart and comfortable lounge and a small, pleasant restaurant. Of course there is also a gift shop though it is very cheap. The village stands near the top of a biblical hill, dry and boulder strewn, where the foliage is barely green and feels like leather. All around stretch the fringes of two townships and a settlement, appropriately called Hebron. Shacks line the rutted track to the village; the same predictable, corrugated tin and plywood shacks with sad looking women sitting in the dusty yards. Children play among the rubble that lines the track. At the village itself are traditional huts, dancing areas, a cattle kraal and cooking spaces, all beautifully constructed and decorated in tribal patterns. Our guide explains the history of their shapes and colours.

Suddenly I am surprised to see a group of young men sitting round a fire and dressed as hunters. They ignore us and chat to each other in Zulu. Outside a hut a young Zulu woman in traditional dress is grinding meal. She demonstrates the process for us and gives us some maize beer from a wooden bowl. At the main Zulu hut, a young chief sits with his women, greets us traditionally and welcomes us in. Of course it is all contrived, but very professionally done.

We gather in the meeting hall and the same young people that we have seen come running in with a burst of sound and colour. They are magnificently dressed in Zulu dancing costumes and they dance their wild, complex dances to the pounding rhythm of a single drum for more than half an hour without pause. The level of skill and stamina amazes me. At the end I ask the owner of the village from which drama school or music and dance college he has poached them. He looks at me as if I am deranged – a look I am getting used to here – and tells me they are from the shacks; they are kids whose parents cannot afford to send them to school and who have approached him offering to help with his project. He pays them a little from his own pocket now and again and visitors usually throw them coins.

Outside the light is fading fast and the sky is blue with the smoke of cooking fires. As we leave I see a

group of tired young people in scruffy, dirty clothes, walking away over the rocks towards the tin shacks on the hillside. They carry plastic shopping bags from one of which protrudes a flash of Zulu colour. The dancers are going home. I call to them and give them everything I have in my pockets – about three pounds.

## LOCAL STUDENT'S SUMMER OF GIVING [Top of Page](#)



Christina and Davina who have no washing facilities at home, shower at the centre

### **Hadstock's Kate Bibbey spent last summer in Mexico, working with some of the world's poorest children. She tells us about her moving experiences**

On the 30th June I flew out of London Heathrow bound for Oaxaca, Mexico. This journey signified both the culmination of six months of hard preparatory work and the start of a fantastic two and a half months...

As a second year student at the University of Edinburgh I had heard a lot about the University society H.E.L.P. (also a registered Scottish charity) from friends who had gone abroad on placements the previous year. The charity (run entirely by student volunteers) sends groups of students around the world every summer and at Easter to support already existing projects. Although the charity is run from Edinburgh University it is open to students from across the UK and students from other universities make up about 20% of the students that join the projects. Having decided to be a co-ordinator of a project rather than a volunteer I went through a selection process and due to my linguistic ability with Spanish I was fortunate to be given my first choice of country and project: working with street children in Oaxaca, Mexico. In January 2000 I chose a group of ten volunteers through application forms and then informal interviews and we then set about the task of fundraising. We raised over £5,000 by organising a single large event.

The centre known as "Centro de Esperanza Infantil" formerly became a charity seven years ago. The seed was sown when its founder Jodi Bauman had come to Oaxaca on holiday from the States. She was so appalled at the number of children that were working in the streets selling chewing gum that she felt drawn as a Christian to do something to help. She began meeting the families and becoming friends with them and her training as a nurse allowed her to help them practically with medical problems. After a short while she began to personally fund the school expenses of a few children so that they could go to school. Whereas their parents cannot read, write or in the vast majority of cases, speak Spanish, these children are given the chance to integrate into society and to therefore command respect. For four years Jodi would

visit Oaxaca for 6 weeks at a time and then return to the States for a couple of months to be with her husband, children and grandchildren. On each subsequent visit to Oaxaca she would sponsor more and more children through school as she persuaded family and friends to help her to help the children.

Today the "Centro de Esperanza Infantil" is the office of a registered charity called Oaxaca Street Children/Grassroots. The charity's main objective is to aid children that want to go to school to get the education they deserve. Needless to say there are always far more children waiting for sponsors than the other way around. Each child has a sponsor who pays \$100 per year (about £65) for a primary age child and \$175 per year (about £140) for a secondary aged child. This pays for two sets of uniforms, one pair of shoes, a pair of trainers, a rucksack, utensils and the subscription fee. Due to the small size of the charity and the large number of volunteers 100% of money donated goes directly to the child unlike almost all other charities that run 'sponsorship' programs for disadvantaged children.

The centre itself has a medical room, a dining room (from where they provide a hot meal at lunchtime, for which many of the children come daily), a kindergarten and a library. My role was so varied that to describe a typical day would be impossible. Generally my time was split between home studies (the socio-economic study that we do to determine if a family is suitable to join the program) and taking children to the uniform shop to buy their uniform. Towards the end, I became the administrator for the procedure of matching new 'godparents' to children, and deciding which children needed help most urgently. One of my most interesting tasks was visiting the families in their homes for various reasons. One particular day I had to take some new children on the program back to their house. I remember vividly being struck by how well dressed they were... the little girl was dressed in a beautiful dress with frills and her hair was neatly put in bunches. The little boy was wearing cute little shorts and a smart T-shirt. We were walking along a beautiful street with cobbles and beautifully presented if not terribly large houses, all the while I was wondering if they really merited our assistance. We arrived at a little arch at the end of the road and went through. In front of us was a small area of wasteland (about half the size of a tennis court), around which were the homes of ten families. Each family had one room; the walls were made out of aluminum. The area in the middle was shared between the families as a garden for all the animals and children (mainly chickens and dogs) as well as kitchen, toilet and tap for water. Although I had seen many families that lived like this, what struck me about this was that it was in the heart of the beautiful little streets of the 'old town' and yet it was totally hidden. I was shocked that there was such poverty so close to where I lived and yet I had known nothing about it. Most of the children have one 'Sunday best' outfit for church and special occasions. Ironically this is what they wear when they come to ask for help from us. A wonderful example of human pride and honest innocence that I doubt you would find at the social benefits office in this country.

Working with the children and visiting many of their homes during the 'home studies' I learnt much. Although many live in abject poverty they are a very happy people. I marvelled at how families with grave financial problems, who were unable at times to feed their ten children, let alone clothe them, could be so genuinely happy and content. The family and the community is of great importance and whilst the state is of virtually no use, those who are in dire need are supported very effectively by their families and friends. Coming from a very rich nation I feel privileged to have had such an experience. My eyes have been opened to another way of life, one where money and social status are of little consequence, a society in which the people do not aspire to having more money or possessions. More important are friendships and love. My experience in Mexico was a humbling one, I know I have much to learn and hope that I never forget the true essence of happiness that these people so obviously possess.

If you would like further information about the charity please call Kate on (01223), 892030 or visit [www.oaxacastreetchildren.org](http://www.oaxacastreetchildren.org) or email [streetchildren@spersoaxaca.com.mx](mailto:streetchildren@spersoaxaca.com.mx).

## **PUPILS GET TO GRIPS WITH ROMAN UNDERWORLD** [Top of Page](#)

SINCE September, the feet of Year 6 pupils at Linton Heights Junior School have hardly touched the ground! To support the National Curriculum studies, their class teachers, Mrs Barbara Corpe and Mr Paul Belzar, have organised a series of events and visits. Early on in the term the pupils were visited by Mestrius, a genuine Roman soldier. Adorned in a hand-crafted uniform, he was able to answer accurately

any question thrown at him by the eager students, including "What does a Roman soldier wear under his uniform?" As part of the pupils' National Curriculum project on Invaders and Settlers, they spent a day at West Stow Anglo-Saxon village, which allowed pupils first-hand experience of what it would have been like to live in those dark times.

The myth that all scientists are men in white coats carrying clipboards was well and truly dispelled when a team of seven female and one male scientist from Cambridge University led some workshops in the school. They concentrated on electricity and magnetism and the pupils produced (among other things) a burglar alarm and roses and bubbles frozen with liquid nitrogen.

As an extra-curricular activity, Year 6 have been given the responsibility of monitoring the growth and welfare of 40 new incubated chicks. Twenty-five of these adorable creatures will be making their home permanently at the Heights.

The rest of the school have also been busy. Early on in the term, storyteller James Campbell enthralled Years 3 and 4 with a tapestry of tales about toothless tigers, nine-headed monsters and a microwave oven that croaked like a frog. And from 6th to 10th November, the Heights is holding Maths Week for all the pupils to celebrate Maths Year 2000.

The School Governors this year have each been linked with one class as a 'Governor Friend'. With regular visits, as well as email messages from the pupils, the governors are going to have their fingers on the pulse when it comes to the work and progress being achieved in classrooms at the Heights. If you have children at the Heights, find out who their Governor Friend is. He or she will be pleased to listen to any opinions or further comments you may have.

Further information about Linton Heights is available on the school's website, [www.lintonheights.cambs.sch.uk](http://www.lintonheights.cambs.sch.uk) Or telephone the Heights on 892210.

## **THE BUSH TELEGRAPH** [Top of Page](#)

I heard an item on the radio the other morning. One of our esteemed peers was attempting to draw the attention of the House of Lords to a crisis in teacher recruitment. The spokesperson for the Government responded that crisis was hardly the word; we had a bit of a problem in some subjects in some areas but it was a relatively minor issue. So what are we to make of Croydon LEA sending four headteachers to Australia to interview and recruit staff? Are the six other London Boroughs planning similar recruitment tours also hopelessly overreacting? What about the school in Corby on a four day week because they can't staff the timetable? If we don't actually have a crisis yet, one is heading our way fast. The Director of Education Data Services estimates acceptances on to post-graduate training courses will be 1,500 less than required in spite of 'golden hellos' and a national campaign which has cost millions. He could have added that the drop-out rate for such courses is currently running at 15%. Even at LVC, nationally recognised as a successful school, we have had great difficulty recruiting staff in some areas.

So what is the problem? This risks sounding like another winge but it is too important to remain unsaid. Society in general (and here I include some parents) simply does not value this job. It's too easy for some people to despatch children to school and let teachers do the rest – until they disagree with what teachers or the school have done; then the school is often denigrated. This damages morale and if you add to it a 50+ hour week, relatively low starting pay for graduates and the constant demand to improve performance, you begin to see the extent of the problem. I have a pile of rude and unpleasant letters addressed to teachers, all implying that the member of staff is failing. These are not complaints or criticisms. No sensible organisation ever rejects those. What they show is that teaching is just not valued by those people. We must change this attitude and quickly, so that teaching again becomes the highly valued career path we all need it to be. Clive Bush, Principal

## **GARDENERS ELECT NEW CHAIRMAN** [Top of Page](#)

THE Gardening Club's AGM was held on 10th October, attended by 30 members. Judy Nightingale, who has been Chairman for nine years, decided to stand down this year and Alex Todd was voted in to replace her. The Club has already benefited from Alex's expertise in all things technical so we're sure his talents

extend to being an excellent Chairman. Leslie Allison and Ron Pitkin were welcomed as new committee members. The meeting was followed by refreshments and the chance to buy plants and produce. Thanks to all those who donated items for sale. The talk next month on 14th November will be Pruning and Care of Fruit Trees by Ian Pitcairn. We look forward to seeing all current members, and new members and visitors will be very welcome. Don't forget to bring along your gardening queries—someone is sure to know the answer! Gloria Fidler ☐ 891800

## **A BIG HAND FOR LINTON'S BRIDGE PLAYERS** [Top of Page](#)

THE Linton Bridge Club has established itself as a popular and friendly venue in the last six months, meeting at 7pm on Friday in the Community Rooms at the Library. A heat of the Millennium Competition was held and three successful pairs took part in the Cambs and Hunts Final. Tref Taylor and Pat Low, Joan Stanton and Carl de Vries, and Joan and Les Taylor earned English Bridge Union master points. Three to five tables have taken part in duplicate bridge or teams regularly. New members are always very welcome – why not come along as a guest? Please ring Bill Penfold on ☐ 892805 if you want more information or are interested in joining our club. We will make every effort to ensure that if you come, you will play.

## **LINTON COUNTRY DIARY by Olwen Williams** [Top of Page](#)

Sunday 22nd October 2000 Illustrated by Maureen Williams

A wild, wet season has already swept leaves from the branches, so that autumn colours of red and brown cover the pavements and fill the ditches. The rain has topped up the river to overflowing, in places converting the water meadows to a swimming pool for ducks. For a couple of weeks, a row of walnut trees provided a bonanza: enough for the squirrels and jays to tuck away for the winter with a surplus for the enterprising treasure seeker. Roasted with red peppers and courgettes: delicious!

Not much sign yet of winter birds, though an osprey was seen on several occasions around Cambridge in the middle of September. Check [www.cambridgebirdclub.org.uk](http://www.cambridgebirdclub.org.uk) for up-to-date information about bird sightings.

It was good to find that on Sundays, the Cambridge market is given over to local produce, much of it organic. Fish, meat and vegetables vie with craft stalls, home-made cakes, soap and perfumes, flowers and plants. One stall had an irresistible selection of decorative gourds, all shades of green, yellow, orange, red and cream; in every combination of round or long, straight or curved, smooth or knobbly.

In my last diary, I suggested that all households would be able to make some bread, should the need arise, but I am told this is not so! So here is a recipe: for the simplest soda bread, mix a pound of plain flour with a teaspoon each of salt and bicarbonate of soda, two tablespoons of cooking oil and half a pint of milk.

Make into a round loaf, score the top with a knife so that it can crack open, and bake at 200°C for about 35 minutes. Semi-skimmed milk freezes quite well and the rest will keep indefinitely in the cupboard, as will dried yeast if you get adventurous.

## **CHRISTMAS BAZAAR** [Top of Page](#)

St MARY'S traditional Christmas Bazaar takes place at 2pm on Saturday 2nd December in the Infants School. There will be a wide range of stalls, including cakes, preserves, toys and games, plants, books, tapes and CDs and gifts of all kinds, in fact everything you may need for Christmas, including wrapping paper and even the odd bottle or two. So do come along, bring the children to meet Father Christmas, enjoy a cup of tea and buy your presents here in Linton!

## **FLAXFIELDS ON THE MOVE** [Top of Page](#)

COME and join Flaxfields for a trip to Thursford's Christmas Spectacular on Thursday 30th November.

We will leave Linton at 2.00pm, drive to Brandon for a fish and chip tea, and arrive at Thursford at 6.15pm in time for the 7.00pm performance. We will return to Linton at approximately 11.15pm. For an all inclusive price of £28.00 per person, a deposit of £10.00 will secure your seat. Apply to Jacquie Wilson ☐ 893477 or 0850 755269.

## **AZTECS OFF THE BALL** [Top of Page](#)

LINTON Aztecs will be holding a Hen Night on Friday 17th November at Linton Football Club Pavilion. Tickets are £10 each and available from Jackie Johnson ☐ 01799 584557.

We will also be holding a New Year's dance at the Village College on 31st December. Dancing to Snowy's Disco and a karaoke as well. Tickets will be £10 each if bought before 17th December, £12 after that. Contact Peter ☐ 891273.

## **TODDLE OFF TO PLAYGROUP** [Top of Page](#)

BORED toddler, new baby, new to the village? The Granta Playgroup toddler group sessions run on Mondays and Tuesdays for children up to three and on Thursdays for pre-playgroup children from 18 months. This session is more structured and includes art activities and a story. Sessions are 10-11.30am and take place in the Youth Centre at the Village College, during term.

[Top of Page](#)

[Next](#)