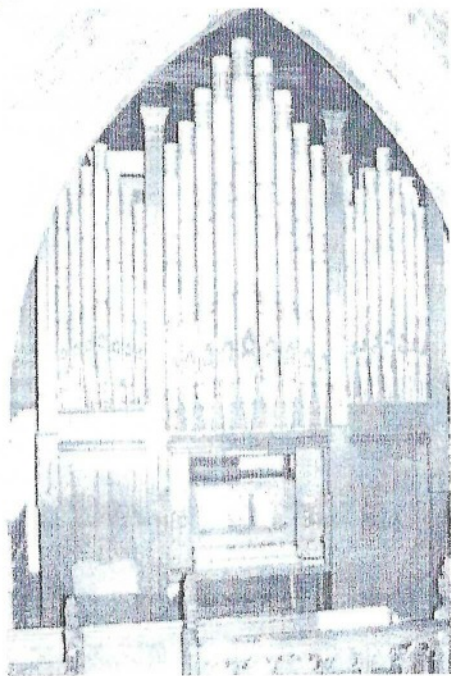


Ecton Parish Magazine



Parish Magazine

issue II

February

February is merely as long as is needed to pass the time until March.

Church Directory

Priest in Charge

The Revd Jenny Parkin
The Rectory
West Street Ecton NN6 0QF
Tel: 01604 416326

Churchwarden

Walter Barty
1 East Butterfield Court
Northampton NN3 8JG
Tel: 01604 642117

Churchwarden

Marlene Green
63 West Street
Ecton NN6 0QF
Tel: 01604 407141

PCC Secretary

Mrs Sandie Simpson
31 Bentley Close
Northampton NN3 5JS
Tel: 01604 410541

PCC Treasurer

Angela Crabtree
Barton Fields Cottage
Ecton
Tel: 01604 404777

Electoral Roll Officer

Mary Dicks
Field House
West Street, Ecton NN6 0QF
Tel: 01604 407145

Parish and Village Organisations

Bell Ringers

Contact: Colin Tinston
Tel: 01604 412233

Fellowship

Contact: Joyce Orford
Tel: 01604 414245
2nd Tuesday in month
2.30pm Village Hall

Cricket Club

Captain: Steve Wheatman
Tel: 01604 401714

Ecton Village Hall

Contact: Tony Green
Tel: 01604 407141
Booking Clerk: Marlene Green

Mums & Tots

Contact: Vicky Chapman
Tel: 01604 788748
Most Wednesdays
1.30—3.15pm Village Hall

Short Mat Bowls

Contact: Maurice Creed
Tel: 01604 407864

Lunch Club

Wednesday, monthly
Contact: Sheila Ingram 406038

Parish Council

Chairman: Ty Moffett
Tel: 01604 407474

Pre-School

Now relocated to the school
Contact: Mrs Vicki Burrows

Primary School

Head: Vicki Burrows
Tel: 01604 409213

Womens Institute

Contact: Angela Crabtree
Tel: 01604 404777

1st Tuesday in month

7.30 Village Hall

Youth Club

Contact: Margaret Tinston
Tel: 01604 412233
Margaret@ectonvillage.co.uk
Wednesday

6.30-7.30 Junior Youth Club

7.30-8.30 Senior Youth Club

Village Hall

Badgers Group

Tuesdays 5.45 - 7.15pm Village Hall
Contact: Vicky Chapman 788748 or
Nita Gill 493455

Editors Ramblings

You will see on the front cover a picture of the church organ, which is the only way you can now see it, since it was removed from the church in December.

Many thanks to Kathy Humphries for donating the everlasting jigsaw to the Christmas raffle, a raffle is not a raffle without it.

In this issue I have printed an article I found whilst reading Northamptonshire Notes and Queries dated 1886/87 (as you do) in which it tells how a village manuscript is to be found at the Massachusetts Historical Society. I have emailed for more information but have not had a reply, could be an Elgin thing, see epostmasters thoughts on page 19.

We also have a recipe for Lemon Tart (this can be found on page 12) sent by Bill Wilson and if anyone has a recipe they think worth sharing please send it to me.

There are pictures of the Great Ecton Barn Dance which raised over £700, our thanks go to Betty Cunningham and her family for organising this, and of the Ecton Christmas Party held in the village hall which raised a sum in excess of £1,000. Thanks go to Mary Dicks and her team of helpers who cooked the meals and decorated the hall to give it that Christmas atmosphere.

The quiz this month takes on a musical theme for the first time so I have made the questions fairly easy, at least it is if you have the answers as I do.

On page 4 we have a letter to the editor and as a follow on try this site

<http://www.makepovertyhistory.com/home.html>

On the back page are pictures of The Ecton Players on stage at the school hall in "Up the Garden Path" we think in the late 50's.

A question for the more elderly people of the village, opposite Rectory farm House there used to be a well, the recess in the wall still being visible, was it called Becketts Well or Town Well?

In the Chronicle & Echo recently it was stated that the Northampton Borough Council proposes to spend £500,000 (yes, half million pounds) on improvement to the Travellers site in Lower Ecton Lane, but with no indications of what the improvements consist of, certainly no mention of expansion. Perhaps CLEAN will be informed and will do an update in the next issue.

On page 15 there is 'Parish Life around the Diocese' with one parish having a virtual walk around it!

COPY FOR THE MARCH MAGAZINE TO
COLIN TINSTON RECTORY FARM HOUSE HIGH STREET
TELEPHONE: 412233
e-mail: navigator@ectonvillage.co.uk
BY 20TH FEBRUARY

Moderation is a fatal thing. Nothing succeeds like excess.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Sir,

I have been cogitating recently on how lucky we are to live in the Western World. We have plenty of food and drink (too much for our own good sometimes), Human Rights (good for some) free credits, good housing and reasonably adequate Health and Social facilities. We should not complain, but often do, so perhaps we are expecting better times when we eventually depart this Earth and go to Heaven - maybe, but I don't know if this will be the case. Sitting on a white cloud strumming a harp all day long is not my idea of fun, I'd rather be playing golf or some other sport. Why not a large sports complex with a great golf course (no water and not too many bunkers), tennis courts, cricket pitches, etc. etc. A good game of whatever with convivial companions followed by a nice meal and perhaps some nice female company is my idea of heaven (must ask Jenny to put a word in for me!).

On the other hand, what if some of the Eastern Religions are correct and we are all re-incarnated as something or someone else? I wouldn't want to be a worm to get chopped in half, or a rat to be hated and hunted down. Maybe a cat or dog in a nice home, or a swan in a Royal Park would be nice. If it's the human form I'd like to come back a male again but a bit taller with looks like Gregory Peck and a voice like Frank Sinatra (showing my age). My worst scenario would be to be born again in a war torn underdeveloped country in Africa or the Far East, where life is a continual struggle against poverty, disease and deprecation - truly Hell on Earth for most of these people! If this is to be my fate, I hope all of you left after I've gone will continue to support Oxfam and the other Charities helping the World's poor.

I suppose the moral of this letter is that most of us in the West have a reasonably good standard of living, with plenty of opportunities to do what we want. We should, therefore, enjoy our lives whilst we can (always mindful of others) because it may not get much better in the afterlife.

B.T. Beck

Ecton Ladies

The next

"Ecton Girls Night Out"

is on Friday 25th March at 7.30pm

at the Village Hall

Tickets are £5 includes supper (bring a bottle as usual)

from Margaret Tinstonn 412233

or

Donna Harris 400101

The Ecton Fellowship

On Tuesday February 8th we are having our lunch outing to the Riverview Restaurant. Please meet outside the church if you need a lift at 12 noon.
Please let me know if you are coming. Friends welcome.

Joan Dickins

W.I. News

After an excellent evening in December being entertained by the group Voica Versa, January started on a more serious note as the evening was spent discussing the merits of the five resolutions given to all W.I.'s to debate as a first round of discussion before eventually three will go before the National AGM and finally presented to the Government.

Asthma Collection

Thank you to everyone who gave to the Asthma UK collection at Church View, £55.69 was collected. I really enjoyed doing it.

Ecton Barn Dance

Thank you also to all those who contributed in so many ways towards the very successful dance. £750 was raised for village hall funds

Betty Cunningham

22 High Street

A request for information/Pictures
Who lived there previously etc.as far back as possible
Please let the editor know

I would like to express my sincere thanks to everyone who sent cards and messages of sympathy after Millie's death and also for the support and friendship shown during her illness. I have received far too many cards and letters to reply to individually but I want you to know how much the kindness shown has meant to me.

Also my grateful thanks go to the ladies who contributed to and helped with the refreshments served after the thanks-giving service

Geoff

Jennys Page



Dear Friends,

The sheer scale of the tragedy caused by the Tsunami in Southern Asia has touched the lives of us all over the past few weeks. Record amounts of money have been donated by people from many countries. Watching the news coverage has been harrowing and it is impossible to imagine the feelings of those who have lost whole families and those who are still searching for news of their loved ones.

Every day the scale of the disaster becomes more apparent as news from the more remote areas comes in. The hardest task is still to come, that of re-building lives and communities. It is going to be a long haul. There will be need of help for a very long time and aid agencies have pledged themselves to keep going.

My prayer today is that we will continue to remember and to give generously. Also that our hearts and eyes will be opened to look around the world to other places where there is suffering. A disaster on the scale of the Tsunami cries out for our immediate response and rightly so. But let us not forget those who live and die with poverty, disease and hunger year in year out. It may not be possible to prevent the ravages of nature but it is possible to look afresh at debt relief and fair trade.

Love and prayers

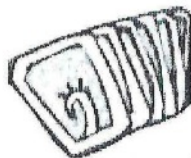
Jenny

Lent Groups

On Monday afternoons/evenings groups will be following a course called Life Attitudes, for five weeks, beginning on 14th February. If you would like to take part, ring Anne Henderson 405942 by 10th Feb.

Tsunami Appeal

Thank you to everyone who helped raise £800 through the collections in church



Bridge Drive
in Ecton Village Hall
on Friday 16th February
Coffee at 10.30 for 11am start
Price is £12.50 per person
& includes lunch and glass of wine
Tickets from Margaret Tinston 412233



Valentine Supper & Song
on Saturday 12th February
Price per person is £7.50
& includes a sausage and mash supper
There will be a Bar & raffle
Tickets from
Brian Saunders
or Margaret Tinston 412233



Any donation of raffle prizes would be appreciated.



Geoff Harlott ("I wouldn't have come if I knew you were doing this")
receiving a hamper in recognition of 62 years as a bellringer in the village
church at the bellringers get together at the beginning of December

Time does not change us. It just unfolds us.

Church Cleaning Rota

Week Ending		Team	Area
February	5th	Orange	B
	12th	Red	A
	19th	Purple	B
	26th	Pink	A
March	5th	Yellow	B
Brass Cleaning			
February		Dorothy & Pat	
March		Sylvia Fraiel & Joy Wilson	

Coffee Rota

February	6th	Rita Ward & Angela Allen
	13th	Marian Gleave & Joyce Orford
	20th	Margaret Weddle & Anne Henderson
	27th	Pauline Cook & Joy Wilson
March	6th	Trudie Warner & Fiona Major

Sidespersons

February	6th	Walter Barty & John Parkin	Sylvia Saunders & Marian Gleave
	13th	David Dicks & Alice Adams	
	20th	Ken Jones & Nick Greene	Geoff Harlott & Joy Wilson
	27th	Tony & Margaret Weddle	
March	6th	Tony & Marlene Green	Sylvia Saunders & Marian Gleave

Letters & emails to the Website

Dear Sir

> *I congratulate you on your website and would you please thank Dr
> Douglas and Mrs Betty Shearing for their article*

“We Walk In Their Footsteps - A Few Of Our Predecessors”

> *This has been useful in the research into my wifes family name “JAMES”,
> it has been a delight to find a direct ancestor in Samuel & Rosanna
> JAMES(1912/1906) in such a picturesque village.*

*I/we were surprised to find this origin for the “JAMES” family; for it
> was lost to the knowledge of the family now long resident in Surrey,
> and upon visiting your lovely church found immediately the tombstone of
> the above in wonderful condition in contrast to those in Earls Barton
> Churchyard.*

> *So many thanks to all involved in the undertaking and we will visiting
> the area again shortly to glean further information back to the 1777
> listing.*

> *Yours with thanks Janet(nee-James) & John Potter (G&JMU)*

+++++

From: Lynda Newton, Westone

On the Ecton website, on the school page there is a photo of my grandmother in 1919, her name was Irene Barrick. She passed away 3 years ago aged 91. I was wondering if there is any way to purchase a copy of this photo for my father.

(In response to this the Ecton website sent a copy of the picture to Lynda Newton)

You can be proud of your website!

> I ran across it while reading about Ben Franklin - one of my favorite
historical people. What a nice village. Keep up the good work!

> Sincerely, Brian Fletcher, Sacramento, California

> Cheerio!

“There is still no cure for the common birthday.”

“Experience is one thing you can’t get for nothing.”

Church Diary

Sunday 6th February

9.30am

6.00pm

Sunday next before Lent

Parish Communion: Exodus 24. 12-18;

Psalm 2; 2 Peter 1. 16-21; Matthew 17. 1-9

Evensong

Tuesday 8th February

9.00am

Holy Communion

Wednesday 9th February

7.30am

Ash wednesday

Communion Service with Imposition of Ashes

Sunday 13th February

10.30am

First Sunday of Lent

Family Service

Tuesday 15th February

9.00am

Holy Communion

Sunday 20th February

9.30am

Second Sunday of Lent

Parish Communion: Genesis 12.1-4a

Psalm 121; Romans 4.1-5, 13-17; John 3.1-17

Evensong

6.00pm

Tuesday 22nd February

9.00am

Holy Communion

Sunday 27th February

9.30am

Third Sunday of Lent

Parish Communion: Exodus 17 1-7;

Psalm 95; Romans 5. 1-11; John 4. 5-42.

A CD REVIEW

How To Dismantle An Atomic Bomb

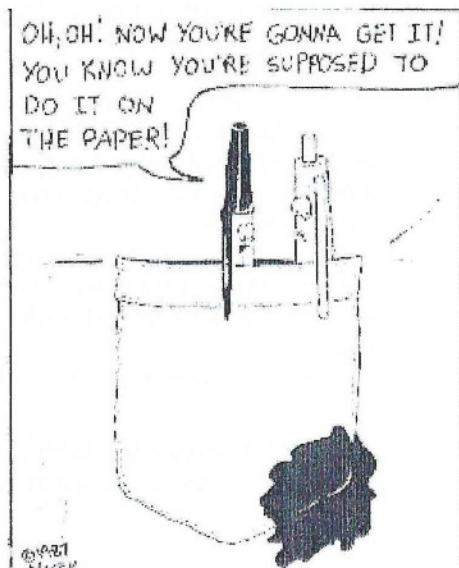
It usually only happens once in a band's career – The Beatles' *Sergeant Pepper*, Pink Floyd's *Dark Side of the Moon*, REM's *Automatic For The People*, Who's Next, Radiohead's *OK Computer* and now - U2's 'How To Dismantle An Atomic Bomb' has joined those album releases that are just so right, so perfectly judged by a band at the absolute peak of their game that every note, every lyric and every sonic nuance goes together to create a magnificent essential whole.

The biggest difference is that U2 have done it once before – 1987's *Joshua Tree* had exactly the same effect in the 80's as this album is having today – and it is now an acknowledged classic that like the other albums mentioned above have stood the true acid test – time. If you own any of the above albums you probably take as much pleasure from listening to them today as on the day they were released.

uno, dos, tres, cuatro - Bono introduces the superb Vertigo and we're off on miraculous musical journey that unfolds with each listen and melts your heart with wonder until The Edge's last guitar chord fades away twelve stupendous tracks later. This album never puts a foot wrong and I can't (as you can tell) get enough of it. That these four Irish guys can deliver such an overwhelmingly accomplished album after 20 years together is a testament to their immense talent, taste and ability to tap into the zeitgeist.

I could go through the album track by track, but honestly there is so much here I'm still discovering it and probably will be for years. Suffice to say this album is the most important of the 21st Century so far, and if you have even a passing interest in the rock genre, then this album is essential – buy it now.

Adrian Pulford
10th January 2005



TARTE AU CITRON (LEMON TART)

(Courtesy of the Roux Brothers)

Pate Sablee (Shortbread Dough)

- 30 g ground almonds*
- 250 g plain flour, sifted*
- 140 g butter*
- 100 g icing sugar, sifted*
- 1 egg*
- a few drops of vanilla essence*

Put all the ingredients in a food processor and zap! Roll the dough into a ball, wrap in grease-proof paper or clingfilm and chill in the fridge for several hours (I often make the pastry the day before).

Tarte au Citron (Lemon Tart)

- Flan tin 22 cm minimum diameter and 3.5 cm deep*
- Shortbread dough (as above)*
- 4 lemons*
- 9 eggs*
- 375 g castor sugar*
- 300 ml double cream*
- Eggwash*
- Icing sugar to decorate*

- 1. Preheat the oven to 200 C*
- 2. Grease the flan case and place in a fridge for about 10 minutes.*
- 3. On a lightly floured surface roll out the pastry, and line the flan case with the pastry. With a sharp knife trim the pastry so that the edge is left with an upstand of 1 cm above the rim of the flan case. Rest in the fridge for 15 minutes.*
- 4. Grate the zest of the four lemons. Squeeze and strain the juice of lemons.*
- 5. Breaks eggs into a bowl and add the sugar. Beat lightly until well blended.*
- 6. Whisk cream in another bowl until slightly thickened.*
- 7. Stir lemon zest and juice into the beaten eggs. Whisk in the cream. Place in the fridge.*
- 8. Line the pastry in the flan case with greaseproof paper and fill with baking beans. Bake in a preheated oven (200 C) for 15 minutes. Remove from the oven, take out the beans and paper, brush the inside with eggwash and return to the oven for 5 minutes, lowering the oven temperature to 150 C.*
- 9. Pour the lemon filling into the flan case and bake at once at 150 C for 1 – 1 1/4 hours. When cooked, trim the edges and sieve lightly icing sugar on top of the lemon tart. On no account put the tart in the fridge; keep it at room temperature otherwise the pastry will soften.*

Best left for a minimum of four hours before serving. Enjoy the tart!

**My doctor told me to stop having intimate dinners for four.
Unless there are three other people.**

Name that Song

Lyrics taken from popular songs - Just the title needed

- 1) *I'm gonna smile and say, I hope you're feeling better," And close with love, the way that you do.*
- 2) *Well, the rain exploded with a mighty crash as we fell into the sun, And the first one said to the second one there I hope you're having fun.*
- 3) *The problem is all inside your head, she said to me
The answer is easy if you take it logically
I'd like to help you in your struggle to be free*
- 4) *And although it's always crowded,
You still can find some room.*
- 5) *Your eyes are burning holes through me
I'm gasoline
I'm burnin' clean*
- 6) *Once I get you up there, where the air is rarefied*
- 7) *My mother was a tailor
She sewed these new blue jeans*
- 8) *You led me away from home
Just to save you from being alone*
- 9) *Steve walks warily down the street,
With the brim pulled way down low*
- 10) *As time goes by I probably will
Meet a girl and fall in love*
- 11) *When I first saw you
With your smile so tender*
- 12) *Touch, like an angel
Like velvet to my skin*

THE VILLAGE BOOK IS
AVAILABLE FROM
SHEILA INGRAM 406038
FOR £10.00

January Lottery Results

David Cross	£50
Sue Bush	£10
Tony David	£10
Judith Monteiro	£10
Rita Ward	£10
Fred Wallis	£10

"One thing you can't recycle is wasted time."

YOU THINK THE WEATHER IS BAD HERE THEN LOOK AT

Anadyr, the capital of **Chukotka** in north-east Russia

Chukotka peninsula is separated from the United States by the Bering straight and is the Russian territory closest to the Unites States

The word "Chukotka" was formed from the Russian name of an ancient tribe, "Chukchi" (they call themselves Lyg'oravetlan). The word "Chukchi", is derived from "Chauchi", that is "rich with reindeers", and is known since the time of Dezhnev's reports 350 years ago. Thus, the name "Chukotka" itself is full of content and means "an area inhabited by reindeer people, Chukchi".

Anadyr the capitol has a population of about 13,000 and has been facing daily power cuts, as its local authorities desperately hunt for cash to run life-sustaining basic services. As the Arctic winter sets in, power is being shut off daily for four hours a time, endangering winter food stores. Even the gas supplies cut out when the electricity goes off.

Wind from the N (010 degrees) at 11 MPH (10 KT)

Visibility greater than 7 mile(s)

Sky conditions clear

Temperature -23 F (-31 C)

Windchill -45 F (-43 C)

Dew Point -27 F (-33 C)

Relative Humidity 82%

Pressure (altimeter) 30.12 in. Hg (1020 hPa)

The old and poor are trapped. "Today, one in every five residents is a pensioner. It is necessary to encourage their movement to the country's southern regions in order to release funds to support the able-bodied population." Only very few people presently benefit from relocation aid packages designed to help migrants buy new homes or ship their belongings to new homes in Central Russia. And those who are leaving are the descendants of the original privileged Russian immigrants.

Like the old, the indigenous peoples of the region are being left behind to make the best of what is left of their traditional ways of life and work, as reindeer herders and fishermen. These arctic rural communities, where the average lifespan is just 45 years, are plagued by tuberculosis, parasitic infections, alcoholism and unemployment.

For your next holiday here's how to get there

Bering Air www.beringair.com offers charter flights from Nome in Alaska to Provideniya on either a Piper Navahoe, taking 80 minutes or a Beach King Air 200, taking 60 minutes. Flights are weather dependent and each airplane carries nine passengers. There are from one to three Aeroflot a week from Provideniya to Anadyr depending upon the season.

However there are no hotels in Provideniya or surrounding area

Other Parish's

Silent prayer walk

Three groups from Billing parish took part in three silent prayer walks (short, medium and long) after a short commissioning service one Sunday. They took prayer cards giving details of places for prayer such as schools, shops, community buildings and homes. Those unable to walk met in the church for a PowerPoint "virtual walk" through the parish, with pictures of places to pray for.

Church yard rotting (for good!)

The hard working gardeners of St Luke's Duston prize-winning church yard have introduced six compost bins and three log and brushwood stacks to rot down their waste, avoid the need for bonfires and provide a home for bugs and fungi.

They have also built what they claim is a unique two-storey pond (because they couldn't get the old one out), using hollow "rocks" for frogs and toads. A fernery and a gravel garden were added last year, and they hope to train a young Turkey fig to climb an arch. It's worth a visit when you're in Northampton - even in winter.

The Bible - be part of the non-stop reading team

St Benedict's Church, Northampton will be reading the whole of the Bible from start to finish. This act of Christian witness starts at 00.01 hours on Wednesday 11 May and ends in time for the morning service at 10am on Sunday 15 May, Pentecost Sunday.

Everyone is invited to join in reading one or more of the 15 minute slots, or to come and listen. Light refreshments will be available. Details from Marion Angus on 01604 701731, or email marionangus@meangus.fsnet.co.uk

THE PARISH COUNCIL AT A RECENT MEETING DISCUSSED THE PROBLEM OF VANDALISM IN ECTON, PARTICULARLY ON THE PLAYING FIELD.

DURING THE PAST FEW MONTHS LARGE AMOUNTS OF BROKEN GLASS HAS BEEN STREWN AROUND THE PLAYING FIELD WHICH AS APPRECIATED BY IT'S EXISTANCE COULD CAUSE A SERIOUS INJURY TO ANYBODY USING THE PLAYING FIELD. THIS HAS RESULTED IN THE PARISH COUNCIL HAVING TO USE PARISH PRECEPT MONEY, WHICH HAD BEEN SET ASIDE FOR OTHER PURPOSES. THE PARISH PRECEPT IS MONEY NEEDED BY THE PARISH COUNCIL TO PAY FOR SERVICES THROUGHOUT THE VILLAGE e.g. STREET LIGHTING, PLAYING FIELD MAINTENANCE AND GRASS MOWING, BUS SHELTERS, INSURANCE, ETC., ETC. THE PRECEPT FOR 2004/05 IS £8,490.00. IF MONEY HAS TO BE USED FOR CLEARING GLASS FOLLOWING ACTS OF VANDALISM THEN THE PARISH COUNCIL WILL NEED TO INCREASE THE PRECEPT FOR 2005/06. ANY INCREASE WILL RESULT IN THE COUNCIL TAX BEING INCREASED TO COVER THE COST. FOR EVERY EXTRA £100 RAISED BY THE PARISH PRECEPT, IT WILL COST EACH HOUSEHOLD AN ADDITIONAL 0.34P PER YEAR. THIS IS OF COURSE IN ADDITION TO ANY COUNCIL TAX INCREASES MADE BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL, WELLINGBOROUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL AND THE POLICE. THE PARISH COUNCIL, THEREFORE, URGE PARISHIONERS TO BE VIGILANT AND REPORT ANY ACTS OF VANDALISM IMMEDIATELY TO THE POLICE: TEL:01933 440333. A FOLLOW-UP CALL TO A MEMBER OF THE PARISH COUNCIL WOULD ALSO BE VERY MUCH APPRECIATED (During sociable hours, please).

Youth Club Programme

February	2nd	Junior	crafts/social	Village Hall
		Senior	Resonate-Intro	Village Hall
	9th	Junior	games/social	Village Hall
		Senior	Football League	Benham
	16th	Junior	Closed for half term	
		Senior	Closed for half term	
	23rd	Junior	games/social	Village Hall
		Senior	Resonate	Village Hall
March	2nd	Junior	crafts/games	Village Hall
		Senior	Resonate	Village Hall

Church Bell Ringing

Learners sessions continue on a Wednesday evening at 7.30pm

If you would like to give it a try

Ring Colin Tinston 412233

or just come along

Each country we travel is a world of it's own.

Not one the same, not one a clone.

Yet, there is a constant as we travel throughout.

In each village or city, it's there without doubt.

There in the center with pride it stands tall

And rings out with love to all it does call.

The time is told when each quarter does pass

But there's more to their ring, much more that will last.

It's the love for the Lord for first it was built,

To ring out with joy and not to cause guilt.

They beckon, they shout come worship, come pray.

In union thank the Lord for creating this day.

The church bells, the church bells will ring in my heart

And their message will stay long after we depart.

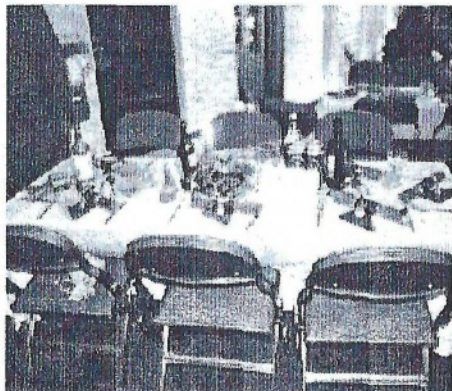
For the Lord they do sound, for the Lord they do ring.

I will spend my whole life to the Lord I will sing.

Pictures from the Ecton barn dance



The Christmas Party at the Village Hall



The following extracts are all from "Northamptonshire Notes & Queries" Vol. 11 published in 1888 by The Dryden Press.

The Ancestors of Benjamin Franklin

"The Boston Daily Courier of April 10 [1857], in an account of the annual meeting of the Massachusetts Historical Society, on the previous day, gives the following very interesting account of an old MS. relating to the ancestors of Benjamin Franklin, in the parish of Ecton, in this county.

The Hon. Edward Everett in a very eloquent manner presented to the society a rare English manuscript, which he had received from the celebrated Thomas Carlyle, containing memorandums relating to the Franklin family in England, previous to their removal to America. He spoke in substance as follows:- I felt strongly impelled, Mr. President, to say a few words by way of seconding the resolution so appropriately moved and so handsomely supported by Governor Washburn; . . . I rise only, therefore, at this somewhat late hour of the morning, to offer to the acceptance of the society, through you, what I am confident you will regard as an interesting relic, viz., the original manuscript record book of the small tithes of the parish of Ecton, Northamptonshire, England, from 1640 to about 1700, the parish, I need not tell you, Sir, where the family of Benjamin Franklin has been established for several generations previous to the emigration of his father to Boston in 1682. This venerable relic had, it seems, been found in Northamptonshire by Mr. Wake, an English gentleman, who presented it to Mr. Thomas Carlyle. Mr. Carlyle, justly presuming that it would be of greater interest in this country than it could have been in England, sent it to me, leaving the disposal of it to my discretion. I immediately determined, after having it suitably bound, to present it to the Historical Society, deeming this body, as the oldest historical society in the United States, and established too in the city where Franklin was born, to be the proper place of deposit for a document of some interest in reference to his family. Mr. Carlyle sent me the manuscript, by the hands of his friend, the eminent artist, Mr. Samuel Lawrence, with a letter bearing date 2d December, 1853, which, owing to accidental circumstances, did not reach me till November of the following year. I have, with Mr. Carlyle's permission, had the portion of this interesting and characteristic letter, which relates to the manuscript, copied into one of the blank pages, in the following terms:-

Mr. Lawrence carries for me a little packet to your address: A strange old brown MS., which never thought of travelling out of its native parish, but which now, so curious are the vicissitudes and growths of things, finds its real home on your side of the Atlantic, and in your hands first of all. The poor MS. is an old Tithes-Book of the parish of Ecton, in Northamptonshire, from about 1640 to almost 1700, and contains, I perceive, various scattered faint indications of the civil war time, which are not without interest; but the thing which should raise it above all tithes-books yet heard of is, that it contains actual notices, in that fashion, of the ancestors of Benjamin Franklin - blacksmiths in that parish! Here they are - their forge hammers yet going - renting so many "yard-lands" of Northamptonshire church-soil - keeping so many sheep, &c. &c. - little conscious that one of the demigods was about to proceed out of them. I flatter myself these old plaster-cast representations of the very form and pressure of the primeval (or at least prior-eva!) Franklins will be interesting in America; there is the very stamp (as it were) of the black knuckles, of their hob-nailed shoes, strongly preserved to us, in hardened clay, and now indestructible, if we take any care of it.

In the interior of the parcel are the necessary further indications of its history. I am very happy now to give up this MS. to your piety - such being the best dictate of my own piety upon the subject. To your wise keeping and wise disposal I now surrender it; and it is you that have it on your conscience hereafter, not I. I lost no time in thanking Mr. Carlyle for sending me this interesting document. I informed him of the use that I proposed to make of it, and that an opportunity would probably occur of bringing it to the public notice, on occasion of the inauguration of the statue of Franklin, which was already in anticipation. I placed it in your hands, Mr. President, at the proper time for that purpose, rejoicing to have it in my power to contribute in this way, however slightly, to the materials of the admiral address delivered by you on that occasion. In reply to my letter of acknowledgment, in which I had asked Mr. Carlyle's permission to publish his part of the correspondence between us, he addressed a second letter to me dated 22d December, 1854, of which I have caused the following extract to be copied also in one of the blank leaves:-

All is right with this matter of the old Tithes-book; and I am heartily pleased to find that it so pleases you, and is to have such honors as you indicate. A poor half-foolish and yet partly very serious and worthy old object has been rescued from its vague wanderings over cosmos and chaos, and at length helped into its right place in the creation; for which small mercy let us be thankful, and wish only that, in bigger cases (of which in nature there are so many, and of such a tragical sort,) the same perfect service could always be done! Alas! alas!

Memories of Franklin

"Every summer during his stay in England, Franklin, accompanied by his son, spent a few weeks in travelling. A most agreeable tour was that of 1758, when he visited the University of Cambridge, and received the most flattering attention from the chancellor, the vice-chancellor, and the heads of the colleges. From Cambridge he went to the counties where his ancestors had lived, and sought out living relations of his own and of his wife. He found at Wellingborough a female cousin, so aged that she could distinctly remember his father's leaving England for America seventy-three years before. She received her American relative with hearty welcome, old as she was. He discovered another cousin a happy and venerable old maid, 'a good, clever woman,' he wrote, 'but poor, though vastly contented with her situation, and very cheerful.' She gave him some of his uncle Benjamin's old letters to read, with their pious rhymings and acrostics, in which occurred allusions to himself and his sister Jane when they were children. Continuing their journey, father and son reached Ecton, where so many successive Franklins had plied the blacksmith's hammer. They found that the farm of thirty acres had been sold to strangers. The old stone cottage of their ancestors was used for a school, but was still called the Franklin House. Many relations and connections they hunted up, most of them old and poor, but endowed with the inestimable gift of making the best of their lot. They copied tombstones; they examined the parish register; they heard the chime of bells play which Uncle Thomas had caused to be purchased for the quaint old Ecton church seventy years before; and examined other evidences of his worth and public spirit. Having paid due honour to the memorials of their race, not neglecting to visit many lowly connections of Mrs. Franklin, they returned to London."

What pleasant and agreeable reading is the above to any one that loves to muse over such interesting reminiscences of past days in Northamptonshire! How vividly does it conjure up in our minds the lowly contentment of the poor about the middle of the last century!

Has Ecton Lost its Marbles?

Why should the Ecton tax collector's account book of 1646 end up in the Massachusetts Historical society? They claim that this valuable document was just wandering, neglected around Northamptonshire until Mass Hist decided to remove it to a civilised society where it would be kept safely.

Does this sound familiar? Didn't Lord Elgin say something vaguely similar about a few bits that were falling off of the Parthenon?

Ecton could accept its loss as quirky historic fact, or lift this charming veneer to see if the body will withstand closer scrutiny. Benjamin Franklin, scientist, inventor, statesman, founding father of the United States of America - what was really in the heart and mind of the man who came to Ecton in 1758? It is known that whilst here he had a good look at and for the property that had belonged to his family. Less known to the residents of Ecton is that during that visit he gave a lecture to Birmingham's elite Lunar Society - as he "wished to improve and increase Acquaintance among Persons of Influence".

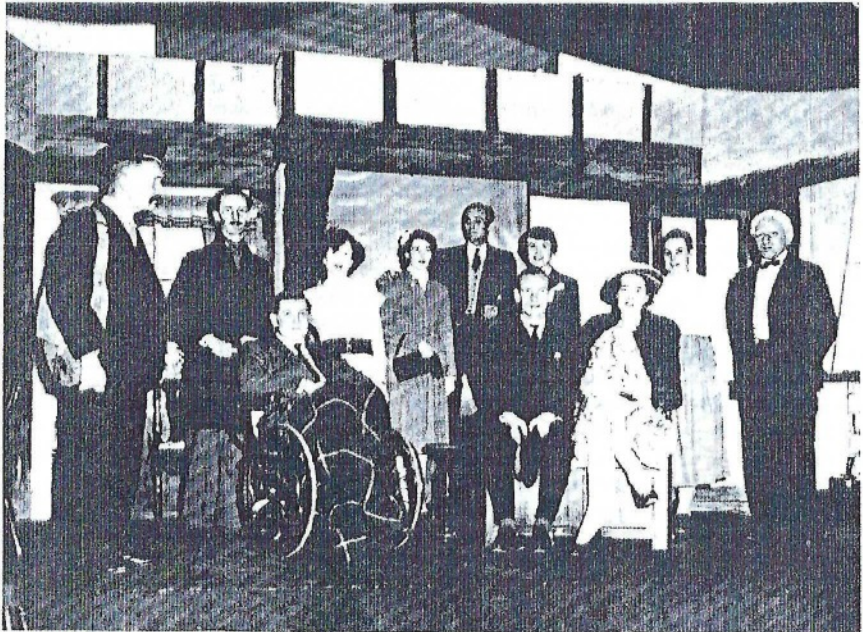
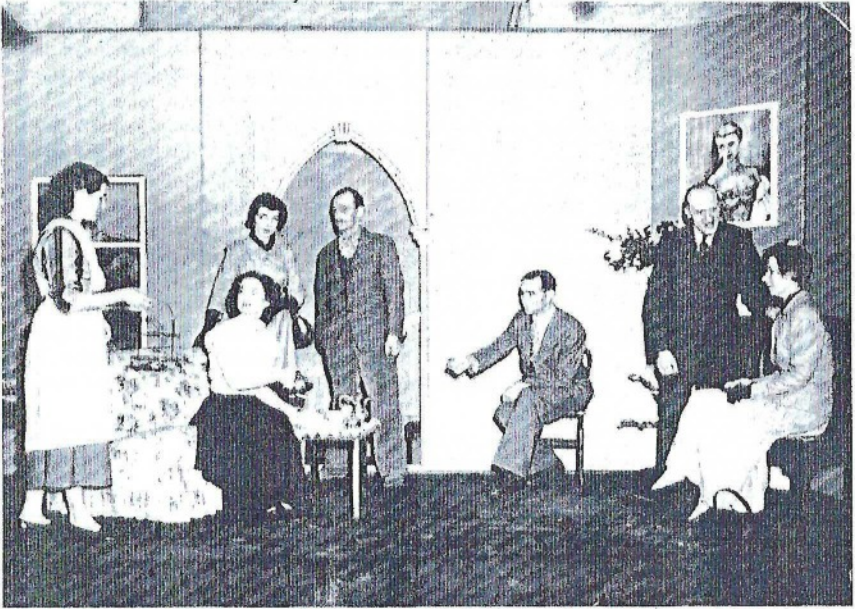
Besides lecturing on his famed Electricity, one of the principles he espoused was the virtues of "fresh air, advocating flinging wide your casement and baring all to the breezes". What was he hoping to accomplish here? Meeting and greeting the great and the good and then using his standing in the scientific community to encourage them to stand naked in their windows? Could he really have been laughing at the good burghers of Birmingham? Should we be looking for evidence of old headlines like "Lunar Society moons at Birmingham"? A very different picture of Benjamin Franklin begins to emerge. Not so much your benevolent scientist/statesman, but a scheming politician wishing to insinuate himself into the upper echelons of English society while all the time despising them with envy, unable to resist making laughing stock of them behind their backs! It is well documented that he loved Ecton, but was there any love lost between him and England?

This was a man with hidden agendas. Some time after his visit to Ecton he went to live at the French Court - where he spent years building up a network of spies to allow the French King to finance America's war against England! Maybe he wanted Ecton for himself.

Could this document be the definitive piece of evidence? The Mass Hist Soc claim that they wanted to present their beloved founding father, Benjamin Franklin with some references to his ancestors. But was this clever spy still scheming? Obsessively following an audited paper trail that might lead him to claim property in his beloved Ecton? When you have eliminated all other possibilities, Sherlock Holmes instructed, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the answer.

Epostmaster

"Up the Garden Path"
by the Ecton Players



List of players

Alexander Cunningham, Mary Hager, Arthur Simpson, Harry Mallard, Terry Streeton, Audrey Rands, Margery Pinney, Doreen Pain, Walter Brain. It was produced by Miss Sylvia Brain.