

# CRATFIELD NEWS

September 2020



## WELCOME

A very belated, but nevertheless warm welcome to Ed, Lucy and baby Ivy who moved into Poplar Farm Silverleys Green, in February and are eagerly awaiting normality so that they can get to be involved in village life.

## REMINDER

I have been asked to remind people - if you are lighting a bonfire please be aware of the wind direction, there may be washing out or people trying to enjoy their gardens.

Chrissie Kitchen came up with a good idea for contributions from readers and kicks us off with the first article. She has just purchased a book called '**Dear NHS – 100 Stories to Say Thank You**' (all proceeds to the NHS) and thought it would be interesting to hear of your experiences, funny, poignant, dramatic.....Here is Chrissie's...

As children we played in what was known as Kitchen's Orchard in Laxfield. We loved the smell of the apples, pears and plums; we made camps with cow parsley, bike tracks and swings. As kids do we all climbed the trees, higher and higher we would go through the branches of the Bramley Apple Tree. We were scratched and the twigs sprang back in our faces, but we called it fun. Apples from this tree were collected for the cider company in Norfolk, and one large, broken crate lay abandoned at the foot of it. Each child in turn leapt, whooping with delight, from the tree landing on the sideways turned apple crate before jumping off to safety. When it came to my turn I followed suit and jumped, unfortunately the crate eased slowly, with a creaking sound, into what can only be described as the folding of an envelope. The other children all stared at me flailing around on the ground clutching my left wrist. Trying not to cry and claiming it didn't hurt, really, we trudged back to the house as my wrist dangled and swelled.

On seeing me Dad pointed to the car, "Get in." A home-made splint, small wooden plank, pillow case and safety pin was quickly applied and we were off on the long drive to Ipswich Hospital.

There I was laid on what seemed like a very large white bed with an extremely large, circular lamp above me. I was a bit scared in truth. The x-ray confirmed I had a green stick fracture, normal for my age. (Once home Dad demonstrated the fracture by snapping a green twig almost in half!) I was told to look at the lamp and see what I could see, I fell for that one, my wrist was pulled back into position before I knew it. Plaster of Paris up to the elbow was applied; they tried to make it fun whilst wrapping the plaster bandage and waiting for it to dry.

Needless to say next day at school all the kids crowded round as I proudly displayed my amulet which they all signed.

That was many moons ago, maybe over 60 years. I have broken bones since, not quite as funny, but never ever made to feel foolish. In fact I was once asked did I fall a... over t.. the sense of humour much appreciated when yes I did and it was also very painful.

Thank you NHS from Chrissie Kitchen

Now over to you, there must be many experiences worthy of telling.

Email to Suecratmag@aol.com

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## A Lesson about Life

On returning from the West Indies, I was appointed in June 1966, aged 22, as First Lieutenant (Second-in-command) of the minesweeper *HMS Winston*, refitting in Plymouth for permanent service in what was then called the Persian Gulf. We had a significant Naval Base in Bahrain, with a permanent flotilla of 7 or 8 minesweepers, on which each commission did 12 months unaccompanied service, plus a frigate on a rotating basis. The Gulf was very suitable for mining as the later Tanker War between Iraq and Iran in the 1980s proved. In those days there were no US forces out there, and in what is today the UAE, no ports or airports other than a very small RAF Base at Sharjah, next door to Dubai – one of five RAF bases in the Middle East. My Captain joined in August and we sailed in mid-September, and after short stops in Gibraltar and Malta (which I always loved), passed through the Suez Canal into the Red Sea.

My job was the day to day running of the ship of about 40 people, the administrative, catering and financial aspects, discipline and maintenance, and I was responsible for the safe operational deployment of our mine-sweeping equipment.

In those days mine-sweeping was a complex but exciting process. Very heavy wires were streamed 400 yards or so astern, with large devices taking them down to a predetermined depth and out to the sides of the ship enabling a wide path to be swept. The wires were armed with explosive cutters to cut mines' mooring wires so that they would rise to the surface and could be sunk by gunfire or recovered for analysis. In addition, a rubber-covered wire loop capable of taking a very large electric current was streamed about 3-400 yards behind the ship and finally a large, heavy acoustic hammer was towed. These last two were designed to detonate safely magnetic and acoustic "ground mines" lying on the seabed. The whole outfit weighed several tons and was towed behind the ship at about 12 mph, putting a huge strain on the wires. If something went wrong or a wire parted, it could be extremely dangerous and the wires could become very tangled and difficult to recover.<sup>1</sup>

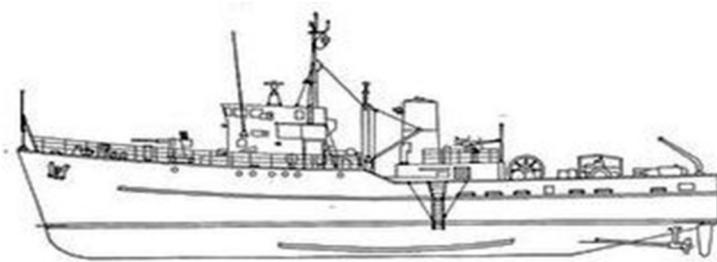
Once in the Red Sea, the Captain decided that we should exercise streaming, operating and recovering all this equipment, before we joined the Ninth Mine Countermeasures Squadron in Bahrain. Accordingly, I took my small team to the sweep-deck and, as we progressed towards Aden, we painstakingly streamed all our gear, and I trained the team in our main operational task and the vital safety precautions. So far so good.

Some hours later we started to recover everything and I found I had made a small error in streaming the gear which led to some tangling of wires and great difficulty, given the strain the wires were under, in sorting out the muddle and getting everything inboard safely, without injuring anyone or

damaging anything. It took us about three hours and left us with a new task the next day of re-streaming the wires to stretch them and remove any kinks.

When all was shipshape, I went to the bridge, tired and very hungry, to apologise to the Captain and explained what had happened. He had just been sitting on the bridge watching the sunset, the flying fish and catching up on official correspondence. He listened to me, commiserated and expressed satisfaction that all was well, no people or equipment had been damaged and we were still on schedule. Then he said “A very good rule in life, Jeremy, is never to put anything over the stern until you know how you are going to get it back.” As years went by I watched our national attempts to dispose of nuclear waste that we had not thought about as we built nuclear power stations and submarines, our experience of starting military action in Iraq, Bosnia, Afghanistan, Libya and finding it difficult to escape even 20 years later; even recently trying to get out of lock-down. I realised he had taught me a valuable rule of life. If you think about it, you may see that it is applicable to all sorts of things.

### **Jeremy Blackham**



<sup>1</sup>If anyone wants to know more about mine-sweeping, I shall be delighted to provide a private tutorial!

MICHAEL OLIVER

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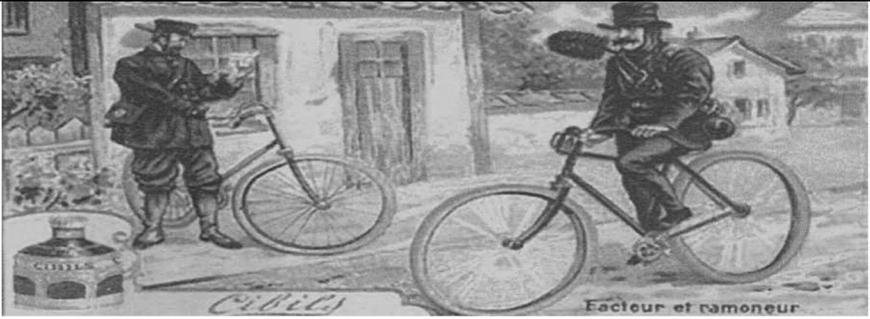
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## Watch your Ps in Qs

The lockdown eased and the day came when I could venture out of my Cratfield haven. I felt an agoraphobic twinge as the outside world, in the form of a train, pulled in to Diss Station. But the plastic glove I had nervously donned in readiness to open the door with was redundant. It took only the lightest touch of a button and I was soon relaxing in my seat, my beetroot sandwiches, hand sanitizer, disposable masks and gloves stowed safely beside me. I was the sole occupant of my carriage all the way to London. Liverpool Street was sparsely populated; most of its outlets were closed and Hamilton Hall – the baroque Wetherspoons that cheerily dominates its upper reaches - was shuttered, silent and empty.

I had to continue my journey to my destination on the South Coast from Victoria. I had elected to catch the number 11 bus from Liverpool Street Station, rather than risk the noxious fumes of the underground. In Covid struck London the number 11, unencumbered by traffic, gives a matchless tour through the centre of town, through the City, past Theatreland and Trafalgar Square via Horse Guards Parade and the Houses of Parliament.

The troops were still on guard on Horse Guards Parade – I noticed that neither the horses nor riders wore masks. The familiar London buildings overlooked forlorn, depleted pavements. All the theatres were dark – the hoardings outside advertising shows were sad memorials of a lost time. The atmosphere was sad and a touch foreboding. Things felt far from dangerous and yet unease was in the air. The glorious crowds of London were reduced to scatterings of people - some were masked and suspicious, some seemed dangerously insouciant.

It was all so quiet that I arrived at Victoria Station in plenty of time for a visit to the loo. I was relieved to see it was open as I was not sure how many public loos would be open in the new Covid world.

I joined a long, socially spaced, solemn queue of men at the entrance of the gaping mouth of the subterranean facilities. Its guardian was a large uniformed fellow, face masked by an intimidating visor. Perhaps I had been living in the shadow of the plague for too long, but the looming attendant put me in mind of a gatekeeper to the Underworld. And just like such a guardian he seemed to ask each man a question as he came to the front of the queue. Dependent on their answer some cruised smoothly through the portal with a beatific smile, but many were left to languish uneasily in line, maybe to wait for all eternity.

‘Not everyone will be saved.’ I found myself thinking.

What would the question be?

I found that I had edged to the front of the queue. There was, I thought, a slightly theatrical pause and then the fell doorman spoke to me. Not in the rumbling sepulchral tones I had half expected but in a pleasant baritone. The question was something I had not been asked since I was about eight.

‘Do you want a wee wee?’

'Yes,' I said and glided through carefree.

## **Nigel Cousins**

As summer draws towards its end, I wanted to mention a fine but rather unsung English poet. I first "met" **John Clare** when I was 14. Clare was born in Northamptonshire in 1793 into a family of farm labouring folk. He left the village school at 12, became an agricultural labourer and tried other things too, first as a pub pot-boy, then living with gypsies and eventually found himself on parish relief. He started to write poetry in his late teens in an effort to keep his parents from eviction from their tied cottage and has become recognised as the greatest English poet from what were once known as "the labouring classes." He is certainly one of the finest poets of English rural life and landscape, and of its destruction which he deplored, at that time largely caused by the enclosure system. He had a real gift for noticing those lovely small details which make country life so interesting and fulfilling.

Sadly, he spent the last three decades before his death at the age of 71 in mental asylums, although he continued to write powerful poetry whilst he was incarcerated. Here he is, writing a sonnet on summer. As you read it, remember that he was educated at the village school and left when he was only 12, and perhaps you will marvel at the language.

"I love to see the summer beaming forth  
And white wool sack clouds sailing to the north.  
I love to see the wild flowers come again  
And mare blobs stain with gold the meadow drain  
And water lilies whiten on the floods  
Where reed clumps rustle like a wind-shook wood  
Where from her hiding place the Moor Hen pushes  
And seeks her flag nest floating in bull rushes.  
I like the willow leaning half way o'er  
The clear deep lake to stand upon its shore.  
I love the hay grass when the flower head swings  
To summer winds, and insects happy wings  
That sport about the meadow the bright day  
And see bright beetles in the clear lake play"

## **Jeremy Blackham**

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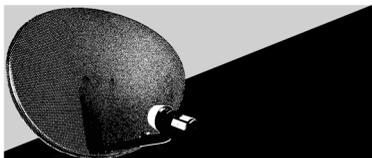
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## **VILLAGE HALL UPDATE – SEPTEMBER**

The Village Hall Committee were very excited to hold their first meeting since January (not really, but there is no other way to 'jazz it up') so to anyone who wondered why there was a large circle of generously spaced out chairs on the green outside the village hall one evening it was for the committee meeting (and not a druid convention or modern art installation of a Cratfield version of Stonehenge)

Natalie Lloyd-Evans gave a précis (which was actually quite long as it needed to be very detailed) of all the current government advice along with information from ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England - which gives advice and guidance on Village Halls for users and committees) on the level of in-depth cleaning, signage, and 'people management' that any event would require. The committee voted that unfortunately we would have to postpone the remaining events for the rest of this year – unless things change. This will primarily mean the Photographic Competition, Christmas Fair and a Macmillan Coffee morning, which will also join the list of postponed events that we hope to be able to hold throughout 2021.

### **Photographic Competition**

We are all desperate to get back to some sort of 'normal' (whatever that will entail) but sadly we have to postpone the photographic competition to 2021 - watch out for a new date as soon as it is known. The categories will remain the same – Suffolk Transport, Black & White Cratfield, Suffolk Skylines and the fun category – Suffolk Seaside.

On another note... we have also found a way of updating the photographic boards using a Velcro receptive fabric and Velcro 'dots' on the back of the mounts used for the exhibition. This will save a huge amount of time in hanging the exhibition and makes excellent use of the very sturdy boards made by Geoff Moore. The committee had looked into replacing the boards previously, but the quality was no-where near as sturdy and the cost quite prohibitive for something only used once/possibly twice a year so this is an excellent alternative.

### **Calendar 2020**

With the photographic competition postponed to 2021 this would also have meant that the Calendar would not happen this year. However, we still have the advertisers 'on board' and a lot of villagers find the calendars handy presents for friends and family abroad as they are very easy to post. We are going to proceed with the Calendar – but without the photographic competition winners to be used in the calendar we have opted for '**Old Cratfield**' as the theme. If you have ANY photos of '**Old Cratfield**' – be it events, parties, houses, village characters, street scenes, local landscapes and so on please do put them forward – we hope to use as many as possible!

You can submit hard copies of photos via Rebecca Sannick's post box (Bell View Farm, on the corner of Manse Lane and Bell Green – opposite Bell Corner holiday cottage) the post box is behind the picket fence to the left of the gate.

You can also submit e mail versions of any images you have to [cratfieldvillagehall@gmail.com](mailto:cratfieldvillagehall@gmail.com) . With hardcopies please include your name and address so we can return them, with all entries please also give the photo a title or let us know what it represents. Cut off date for entries is 30th September.

### **Covid-19 Grant**

We are pleased to announce we are in receipt of a £10,000 retail, hospitality and leisure grant which was made available to village halls from local government – all village halls were eligible and could apply. Our Village Hall turns 91 this year so the plan is to spend this grant to help preserve the Village Hall for a further 91 years (hopefully!) There are a few small jobs, such as upgrading the strip lights to LED's, updating the overhead heaters (they only seem to operate on 'Napalm' or 'off'), potentially replacing some floor coverings and so on. The main project we hope to cover from this grant is to replace the black cladding on the exterior. Over the years as the hall has been extended and adapted, windows and doors moved etc, 'infills' have been constructed. Despite regular maintenance and treatment, a lot of the timber is starting to fail. We are therefore looking at various options of replacement cladding – timber or sympathetic composite and will let you know how this progresses.

### **Village Hall AGM**

12<sup>th</sup> November – open forum 7.15 – 7.30pm, followed by the Annual General Meeting of the Village Hall Committee.

The open forum is a chance for anyone to ask questions regarding the running and management of the village hall – along with suggesting any events or improvements they would like to see. After the open forum, only the Committee can attend the AGM.

Many thanks to Nigel Cousins for his time on the committee – however he has decided to step down and we thank him for all his input. If you would like to join the committee, or find out more about what it entails please contact us on [cratfieldvillagehall@gmail.com](mailto:cratfieldvillagehall@gmail.com) .

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## Newfoundland Story finds me a new relative – Just 2 miles away!

The late George Weight of Gozo, Malta was an avid family genealogist and I met him in the 90's. He stayed with my father once and they both paid me a surprise visit, so George could photograph me for his records. Somewhere in the George Weight archives, there is a picture of an unshaven and hungover young lad, who was embarrassed to be photographed in such a state!

\* \* \* \* \*

Tony and Chrissie Underwood live in Swan Green, which is just over 2 miles away from Model Farm. Your editor, Sue, put Tony and I in touch, because – having read my Newfoundland story in the Cratfield News – he was interested to see that my surname 'Weight' was the same as his wife's maiden name.

Tony had previously made some research into the Weight family on behalf of his wife, Chrissie, and he had various documents. When we spoke, I said, "I have some historical documents too, from a George Weight of Gozo – where is your information from?" Tony's reply was, "George Weight of Gozo!" The chances of Chrissie and I being related increased massively at this point!

Tony then kindly delivered everything he had and I dusted off the information that I had received from George Weight, decades ago. Tony's information was much more comprehensive than mine, but I had some information that Tony didn't have – so together, the records combined into quite a valuable library.

The hunt was now on to find Chrissie's, and my, common ancestor!

Firstly, I wanted to make sure that all my records were complete, and in a hunt around the house, I also unearthed some amazing finds, including a cricketing medal dated 1909 that belonged to Great Uncle Vic (who left his Newfoundland university studies to serve in WWI – he died at Ypres, aged 21) and a cigarette case, inscribed in 1925, that was my grandfather's. I also found a photograph I never knew existed: the one and only photograph I have of me (aged about 3) with my mother (long story...).

The George Weight information we have is all in text and not laid out in the traditional 'family tree' format, so I started to design trees (using lines and boxes) for both Chrissie's and my sides of the family, in the hope that they might join up at some point. *(We have to be related because both our ancestors come from Gloucestershire, there is the unusual spelling of our surnames – and the fact that we have both received information from the family genealogist! It'd be nice to see it on paper though...)*

Firstly, I was able to trace Chrissie's ancestors all the way back to 1560. Frederick Weight (1828-1901) became interested in Mormonism and emigrated to the U.S. *(The story of his emigration is both dramatic and tragic; it's a story in itself, which may appear in a separate issue...)* His brothers and sisters and his parents followed him – all except one brother, Alfred (1826 – 1890), who stayed behind - and his line eventually led to Chrissie Weight (now Underwood).

A late-night Internet search revealed some fascinating articles about the Frederick Weight story, and an American gentleman by the name of 'Shirl' Weight was thanked for his information at the end of one of them. One Facebook search later, a 'friending' with Shirl, and I was allowed onto the official Weight/Mormon genealogy website!

Genealogy is very important to Mormons- so I was to discover - so their computerised records are exhaustive, and they go right back to pre-emigration days in the U.K., hence my being able to piece together Chrissie's ancestral line comparatively easily.

At around 1560, records tend to peter out for a number of reasons: It wasn't until

The Reformation (1517 – 1648) that literacy improved, so handwriting may not have actually been in common use in the early 1500s – and any records that *have* survived over the centuries may well have been exposed to damp damage and any number of other risks.

How did I get on with my family line and the early Weights from Gloucestershire? Can I prove, for once and for all, that Chrissie and I are related? Tune in next month for another thrilling episode!

## **Andrew Weight**

The following account was prompted by a message from **Donna Goose** who thought villagers may find it of interest that there is a rather large piece of Cratfield in Parliament Square in London.

It may not be common knowledge, especially to newer members of our community, that the statue of Winston Churchill which stands in Parliament Square was actually sculpted in Cratfield, in the barn at 'Coppings', Tongs Lane. The creator was Ivor Roberts-Jones a very talented twentieth century British public sculptor.

He was born in Oswestry in 1913, from 1932 to 1934 he studied as a painter at Goldsmiths College of Art, but after 18 months he decided he wanted to be a sculptor and in 1934 won a scholarship to study sculpture at the traditional Royal Academy School. He completed his studies in 1939 and on the outbreak of war volunteered for the British Army. He was demobbed in late 1945 and a year later was fortunate to find work as a part-time tutor in modelling at Goldsmiths. In 1964 he was promoted to become Head of Sculpture in the Goldsmiths Faculty of Fine Art. He held the post until he retired in July 1978.

In 1970 he was short-listed for the prestigious memorial to Sir Winston Churchill in Parliament Square, he secured the commission in March 1971 and the 9ft high statue was unveiled in November 1973. Many further diverse public commissions followed over the next decade.

Roberts-Jones died in 1996 at Shimpling in Norfolk whilst working on a 3m high bronze group '*Policeman mourning a Dead Colleague*' for the planned National Police Memorial on Horse Guards in London and a new statue of Winston Churchill for Prague's Third District.

I'm not sure for how long Roberts-Jones lived at Coppings, but the late Tim and Gillian Harvey who bought the house from him told how the roof of the barn had to be removed to get the statue out. Left behind in the barn after he moved, the Harveys found a full-sized plaster maquette of the head of the statue. When the Harveys moved away from their beloved home they wanted the maquette to be secure so they arranged for it to be housed in the 'Laxfield and District Museum' along with a signed self-portrait of the sculptor and a biography.

So when the museum is able to re-open why not go along and see for yourself.  
Sue Eade

## **100 Club – update**

100 Club draw held at Cratfield Village Hall Committee Meeting on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> of August

**April 1<sup>st</sup>** Carole Loades No: 17 £15.00, Ann Bedford No: 75 £10.00

Robert King No: 80 £5.00.

**May 1<sup>st</sup>** Simon Woolward No: 77 £15.00, Molly Matthews No: 10 £10.00

Mary Cousin No: 39 £5.00.

**June 1<sup>st</sup>** Michael Hargood No: 22 £15.00, 2nd Linzi Elford No: 45 £10.00

3<sup>rd</sup> Lesley King No: 85 £5.00

Congratulations to all the above winners.

**Renewal Form for the year July 2020 to June 2021 inside the Cratfield Magazine.** (July / August numbers will be drawn once monies have been received for the current year).

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07787 522 313

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**Mace**

## Confirmation

Mei was a little Chinese girl, three-years-old, dark eyed with straight black hair. Her mother was put in prison for refusing to surrender her Christian faith (this was in the 1950s), Mei had to go with her as there was no-one to look after her. They were not allowed visitors and communion was not allowed by the guards. However there were still priests outside the prison and they used to send loaves of bread to the prisoners, hidden inside were consecrated wafers, and in this way the prisoners received communion.

One of the women was put into solitary confinement. Nobody was allowed to visit her, but the guards did not count Mei. So the little girl took the Blessed Sacrament to her, hidden in her closed fist held demurely in her sleeves.

Later Mei's mother was released and returned with Mei to her village. There was still a foreign missionary priest there and Mei kept asking him to give her communion. She was still only four years old but she knew all about it, so the priest allowed her to make her first communion and a month later she was confirmed.



When the priest was finally expelled from China, he said goodbye sadly to Mei and her mother, and hoped they would be left alone. He never heard how they got on but he remembers how Mei said, "I'm not afraid - I've been confirmed."

Next year we are going to have a confirmation service in the benefice and will be starting confirmation classes in January. There will be ten sessions over the following five months with the hope of having the service on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2021. If you are over eleven (adult and child) next year and would like to be confirmed please let me know 01986 798136 or by email at [theparsnips@googlemail.com](mailto:theparsnips@googlemail.com) and I will let you know when the first meeting is.

David

## St. Mary's is back!

There will be some changes due to government guidelines. The most important being we will have to wear masks. So please bring one along.

Secondly please note the service times have changed.

### St. Mary's Church Services – September 2020

Sunday 13th	Sunday 20th	Sunday 27th
<b>6.00pm</b> Evensong DB	<b>9.00am</b> Village Worship CM	<b>9.00am</b> Holy Communion By ext. CM
Sidesperson Andy Edmonds	Sidesperson Andy Edmonds	Sidesperson Andy Edmonds
Reader Andy Edmonds	Reader Peter Baker	Reader D. Peacock
Genesis 50:15-21 Romans 14:1-12 Matthew 18: 21-35	Jonah 3:10-end Phillipians 1:21-end Matthew 20:1-16	Ezekial 10:1-4, 25-end Phillippians 2:1-13 Matthew 21:23-32

### Church Bookshop

Thank you to all those who have made contributions of books recently, we are very grateful, but, just a reminder, paperbacks in good condition are the ones which people are looking for.

If you take a book a donation in the wall-box by the door would be much appreciated.

Thank you

# DIRECTORY:

Doctor's Surgery	Fressingfield	01379 586 227
	Stradbroke	01379 384 220

## Local officers:

Church Rev. David Burrell		01986 798 136
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'The Vicarage, Noyes Avenue, Laxfield

[theparsnips@googlemail.com](mailto:theparsnips@googlemail.com)

## Church Wardens:

Andy Edmunds		01986 798523
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Lay Elder for Cratfield - Margaret Thompson		07906 509302
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Parish Council - Lotty Barbour		01986 798099
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PC Clerk Sally Chapman		01379 855486
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PC Website	<a href="http://www.cratfield.onesuffolk.net">www.cratfield.onesuffolk.net</a>	
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Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator - Nick Eade		01986 798725
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## Village Hall:

Chair Person - Natalie Lloyd-Evans		01986 798790
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Vice Chair - Richard Turberville		01986 798346
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Bookings - Jo Nunn		01986 799181
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Laxfield School Head of School- Mrs Minns		01986 798344
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Nova Group - Heather Hargood		01986 798180
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[peter-sparrow@outlook.com](mailto:peter-sparrow@outlook.com)

All information must arrive by 20<sup>th</sup> of the month.

Advertising rates p/a: Full page £60; half page £30; quarter £20; eighth £10; directory £8; flyer £10.

Please contact Sue, Graham or Peter for more information