

PRE- LOCAL ELECTIONS SPECIAL

The

March 2006

Hildersham

Issue XIII

Express



Is this Really the Start of
Christmas 2006
& What does it have to do with
The New Year or Income Tax ?

LADY DAY - & THE OLD STYLE JULIAN CALENDAR

The image of the Virgin Mary on the front cover, is part of the beautiful Hildersham wall-paintings that represent the **Annunciation**, the other half of the story portrayed around the organ arch is Archangel Gabriel, see below holding his symbolic Lily's.



This is an image we are nowadays more used to seeing in December, mainly on Christmas Cards and hearing about the story in the fifth lesson at our village Christmas Service of Nine Lessons & Carols. Yet if you think about it, if Jesus was to be brought into the world as a Man, he would still need nine months to naturally grow inside his mothers womb and hence quite logically our forefathers chose **March 25th** as the day we celebrate **The Annunciation** or as it is also known as – **Lady Day**.

THE ANNUNCIATION - the story of the -Archangel Gabriel coming as a messenger sent by God to tell Mary the good news of the virgin birth, is told in the

first chapter of the Gospel according to St. Luke: -

“ - In the sixth month, the Archangel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgins name was Mary - ” And the Archangel Gabriel having taken the figure and the form of man, came into her house:

“ - And he came to her and said: *“Greetings, Favoured One! The Lord is with you”* But she was perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel aid to her: *“Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end”* Mary said to the angel: **“How can this be, since I am a Virgin?”** The angel said to her: *“The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be Holy, he will be called the Son of God. And now your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.”* Then Mary said: **“Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to the word.”** Then the angel departed from her. - ”

Luke then goes on to describe the meeting between **Mary & Elizabeth** - this is called **THE VISITATION** and can be seen in the stained glass window at Hildersham nearest the organ steps. Elizabeth, is shown with a blue halo and is described as being in her old age, she is also as we read above, six months pregnant, this baby is also conceived by Divine Conception and she is



Mary & Elizabeth



John the Baptist – Baptising Jesus

carrying in her womb a son that will become **John the Baptist**. John's story can also be seen in this Hildersham stained glass window; John is shown in his customary portrayal of bearskin clothing and always holding a staff. To your left is the bottom window image – John is seen baptising Jesus in the river Jordan – the **Holy Spirit** is always symbolically represented as a **Dove** (see the cover).

Well, the above explains the link between **MARCH – CHRISTMAS, THE ANNUNCIATION** and **LADY DAY** – but why did we mention **“OR IS IT NEW YEAR”** on the front cover.

Well from the beginning of the 12th Century right up until 1752, LADY DAY was considered to be the first day of the New Year or New Year's day.

This is where things can get quite confusing, so let me tell you the story of the various Calendars & the **MISSING 11 DAYS OF HISTORY**.

In medieval times, the Exchequer that collected the King's Taxes divided the year into two periods, one ending at **Easter** and one at **Michaelmas**, or **Sept 29th**.

This allowed sheriffs of far-flung counties to travel to wherever the King was holding court with the coins collected as the Monarch's dues or taxes from his subjects without having to carry too much at one time or to make their hazardous duties during the shorter daylight hours of winter.

Later, as the amount of taxes collected grew greater and roads safer, it was decided to have Four financial periods and in order that they should be the same day each year they were fixed to the main Feast days closest to the **Quarter Days**, the **Vernal** and **Autumnal Equinoxes**, and the **Summer** and **Winter Solstices**.

Thus the four accounting periods ended on:

- **1: MARCH 25TH – LADY DAY**
FEAST DAY: - THE ANNUNCIATION
- **QUARTER DAY -VERNAL EQUINOX** – Daylight equals Night – **MARCH 20TH**
- **2: JUNE 24TH – MIDSUMMER**
FEAST DAY: - THE FEAST OF JOHN THE BAPTIST
- **QUARTER DAY - SUMMER SOLSTICE** – Longest Day – **JUNE 21ST**
- **3: SEPTEMBER 29TH - MICHAELMAS**
FEAST DAY: - THE FEAST OF ST MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS
- **QUARTER DAY -AUTUMNAL EQUINOX** – Daylight equals Night – **SEPTEMBER 23RD**
- **4: DECEMBER 25TH – CHRISTMAS**
FEAST DAY: - THE FESTIVAL OF THE NATIVITY
- **QUARTER DAY -WINTER SOLSTICE** – Shortest Day – **DECEMBER 20TH**

Traditionally, however, it remained the custom to balance the Exchequer books at **MICHAELMAS**, the Easter date having disappeared.

BUT WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE 1752 ?

The Roman calendar before **JULIUS CAESAR** was based on a year of 365 days. In Julius Caesar's time, it was realised that the calendar had got out of step with the seasons because the actual length of time taken for the earth to orbit the sun (Solar Year) was nearer to 365.25 days. So, an extra day (*two times March the 6th - Anus Bissextilis*) was introduced every four years. Thus was the **JULIAN CALENDAR** established. However, they had made a fundamental error and some how managed to add an extra day every 3rd year and obviously a huge error rapidly built up. **EMPEROR AUGUSTINE** realised this and put a 12-year hold on adding an extra day, to try to correct things – the next Leap Year was **A.D.4**. However, again by the sixteenth century the calendar was again out of step, because 365.25 days per year was a slight over-estimate of the true length of a Solar year. The cumulative error then amounted to **10 DAYS**. Therefore, **POPE GREGORY XIII** decreed that the day following **4th October 1582** would be **15th October 1582**. So that the same problem would not recur, the rule for leap years was changed slightly. End of century years would no longer be leap years unless divisible by 400. Therefore, while 1600 and 2000 would still be leap years as in the Julian calendar, the years 1700, 1800, and 1900 would not. Thus was established the **GREGORIAN CALENDAR** which we use today.

Unfortunately, the sixteenth century was a time of severe religious division right across Europe. States still obedient to the Papacy adopted the Gregorian calendar at once, that is in October 1582. These were Spain, Portugal, and Italy, with France following in December of that year, and Prussia, the Catholic States of Germany, Holland and Flanders on 1st January 1583. Catholic parts of Switzerland followed in the next two years, Poland went Gregorian in 1586 and Hungary in 1587. In the year 1700, the German and the Netherlands Protestant States and Denmark adopted the Gregorian calendar. Sweden wavered, keeping the Gregorian non-leap year of 1700 but reverting back in 1712 by having two leap days that year. The Swedes finally settled for the Gregorian calendar in 1753 omitting the eleven days from 18th to the end of February of that year. You will of course have noticed that I have not mentioned the good old British, always one at this time to lag behind Europe:

In Britain, the Gregorian calendar was not adopted until 1752, also part of the same Act of Parliament, changed the date of **NEW YEAR'S DAY** to **1ST JANUARY**. This meant that **31st December 1751** was decreed as New Year's Eve, to be followed by New Year's day on the **1st January 1752**, this is still the current Act of Parliament we abide by today. As England had taken the year 1700 to be a leap year, the difference that had now built up between the **Julian** and **Gregorian calendars** now amounted to **11 DAYS**.

Therefore, the Act of Parliament also specified that **Wednesday 2nd September 1752** was to be followed by **Thursday 14th September 1752**. – and hence:

THE MISSING 11 DAYS OF BRITISH HISTORY.

This '**correction**' of 11 days caused great dismay amongst the peasants and farm workers, who thought that the authorities had literally **STOLEN 11 DAYS!**

The balancing of books was also transferred from **Michaelmas** to **Christmas**. The changes were to apply to all the Dominions of the British Crown, including of course the North American colonies, you can see the effect of these changes quite clearly in the way the records are written in the Hildersham Parish Registers.

Well, that explains **"OR IS IT NEW YEAR"** part on the front cover, but what about the **"INCOME TAX"** part. The obvious question is why does the **Tax year** end on **April 5th**? Well quite simply all we have learn so far applies – Look at the evidence: -

In the 17th century, **HEARTH TAX** and other taxes were collected on **LADY DAY - 25TH MARCH**. When Britain forsook the Julian calendar for the Gregorian calendar, we also know that at the same time **1ST JANUARY** was adopted as the formal date for the start of each year.

As a concession, the Government decided that the tax year 1752-53 should keep the length that it would have been without the change. This avoided accusations of collecting a whole year's tax for a year of only 354 days. It was thought that it was far to complicated a tax issue to change then end of the Financial year. However, to ensure that the tax year 1752-53 was the correct length it was extended by **12 DAYS** from **24 March 1753** to **5 April 1753**.

In 1854 the Government decided that the end of the financial year should be changed to **31ST MARCH**, but most confusingly & typical of the governments of the day, it was bizarrely decided that the end of each tax year would remain at 5th April. Since then the tax year has continued to run from **6th April** to **5th April** each year. 🐞

HILDERSHAM PARISH COUNCIL ELECTIONS MAY 4TH 2006

Back in November last year, I told you that in 2006, it will be time for the residents of Hildersham to Elect who it would like to serve them for the next three years as Parish Councillors. Hildersham is entitled to have 5 Parish Councillors, one of whom is selected by the other 4 as Parish Council Chairman. This Election will take place on the same day as the other Local Elections on Thursday, May the 4th.

If there are more than 5 nominations for Parish Councillor, an election will take place; if **NOT** all the nominated people will be appointed as Parish Councillors and the missing places will have to be filled by requesting people to stand.

Perspective Hildersham Parish Councillors, can be nominated or put their own name forward.

The **QUALIFICATIONS FOR CANDIDATURE** for Hildersham Parish Councillor are as follows:

To qualify as a candidate a person must be 21 years of age and a Commonwealth citizen, citizen of the Republic of Ireland or a citizen of another Member State of the European Union and either:

- a) Be registered as a Local Government Elector within the Parish; or
- b) Have occupied as owner or tenant any land or other premises within the Parish during the whole of the previous twelve months; or
- c) His/Her principal or only place of work during the previous twelve months has been in the area of the Parish; or
- d) Have resided within the Parish or within 4.8 kilometres (three miles) thereof during the whole of the previous twelve months

There are several factors that cause disqualification for election for local authority members, these are detailed in the yellow nomination papers.

Back in November, I asked you to have a long think over the Winter Months, as to whether you would like to put your name forward as a Parish Councillor. As there have not been enough Nominees - There has not been an actual Election for places on the Hildersham Parish Council for many years. As you know from what you have read and the inevitable free flow of

information around any small community, there are many very important issues facing the future of Hildersham. Here are some of those issues that will need to be addressed over the coming months; they are:

- ❖ *the Future of our Village Hall*
- ❖ *the Charitable status of the Village Hall & Parish Land*
- ❖ *the Best use of Parish Land for the benefit of all the village*
- ❖ *how do we Best prepare the village against the Risk of Flooding*
- ❖ *how do we square the urgent need to effectively get excess rainwater into the drains, without changing the rural feel and appearance of the village*
- ❖ *how do we best communicate these needs and discuss the possible solutions*
- ❖ *how do we deal with the thorny issue of Parking and Verges*
- ❖ *how do we adjust to the new financial reality of Local Government*

All the above are just some of the many difficult questions that any future Hildersham Parish Councillors will have to deal with; they are issues that simply will not go away. Yet, despite this, I think that they hold a great challenge and if we work together as a united community, we can find the solutions that will be right for Hildersham.

Next month I will give you a full and detailed report on the Parish Council meeting held on March 8th. However, here I will give a brief outline of subjects discussed, to give you a broad feel for the typical range of issues that are discussed:

❖ *During the Public participation session that always starts off the meetings:*

- There was an in-depth discussion on the new kerbing north of the river – the poor workmanship, its impact on the look of the village, were just some of the issues discussed.
- There was more discussion of the general problem of the green area in front of the village hall.
- There was discussion about the state of the Bus Shelter at the A1307 – it is full of broken glass, even old trainers
- The increasing problem of youths parking outside the Village Hall or in the Ford Access way at night, leaving empty beer bottles and in the trees some signs of the apparatus used in drug taking.

❖ *District & County Councillor Report by John Batchelor:*

- The proposed new turning arrangements at the A1307: Councillor Batchelor explained that the section 106 agreement for Granta Park phase 2 has been agreed that the £350,000 be used to fund a right turn into Hildersham from the A1307. However, the County Council Highways department have objected and asked for the money to be put by for the long term project of a cycleway from the Four-Went-Ways to Cambridge – Mr Batchelor stated that he would continue to our case strongly.
- Councillor Batchelor explained that the School Bus department was looking at the best way to resolve the Hildersham children's safe route to School problem.
- Correspondence had been received from Councillor Smith regarding Asbestos & the continuing problem with parking on the grass at Meadowlands – it was hoped that the site visit & new suggestions would improve the situation, but as the land belongs to SCDC we are awaiting permission & a decision from them.

❖ *Village Hall Refurbishment:*

- *Later on there is a paragraph on the Hildersham Village Hall Sub-Committee.*

- The Hire charges for the Village Hall were discussed & it was decided to raise the prices. [see next month for details]
- There was also discussion of the need for a deposit of £100 to be left for hirers from outside the village.

❖ **Village Maintenance:**

- The quotes from the various Grass Cutting Contractors was discussed & a selection was made for the 2006 Season
- Street lighting was again discussed & we were informed that the SCDC has decided to retain ownership & still be responsible for replacement & renewal of the lamp posts – with the Parish Council being responsible for the repair & maintenance of the actual electric of the lights.

❖ **Correspondence: [NONE OF THESE LETTERS WERE READ OUT IN PUBLIC]**

- A letter had been received expressing concern at the number of animals frequenting the allotments – especially Rabbits & Rats.

The Parish Councillors will look into ways to curb this activity

- A letter had been received from Margaret Bate explaining that Mr Gerald Franklin, the Parish Council Chairman was completely mistaken in his belief that she was victimising Mr Martin Taylor with the aim of getting him removed from his council bungalow at Meadowlands. She stated that nothing was further from the truth. She went on to explain that she had enjoyed a long friendship with Mr Taylor; although they had disagreed over the issue of parking on the grass. She stated that she had told Mr Taylor personally that she had communicated with SCDC over the state of the grass at Meadowlands. She also stated that she wanted the letter to be read out at the Parish Council meeting, so that it be publicly known that she would never do anything behind Mr Taylor's back.

The Parish Councillors acknowledged the contents of this letter.

- A letter had been received from Mr Gerald Franklin, the Parish Council Chairman explaining that it was his intention to hold further Motocross Events at Rectory Farm. He explained that he had always had a great passion for this sort of activity & that under the law as it stands he was entitled to hold up to 14 such events a year, although he did not envisage that there would be this number. He went on to explain that he would try & hold them in a more distant field & use straw bales to dampen the noise. He went on to say that they would be timed so that they would not interfere with church services & that he would donate some of the proceeds towards the village hall refurbishment.

The other Parish Councillors expressed their disappointment that Mr Franklin had decided to hold further Motocross events at Rectory Farm, in light of the many letters of complaint, deeply held views expressed at the November Parish Council Meeting and all the other strong feelings of opposition in the village after the last event in October 2005. Mr Franklin countered this argument by stating that he in turn had received a great deal of support in the village and had requests of the dates of the next motocross meeting so that residents could attend.

❖ **Planning:**

- 7 Beeches & Elm Cottages was discussed – [see Parish Council notice board for details]

❖ **Any Other Business**

(i) The forthcoming elections were discussed & the urgent need for an actual election was warmly agreed upon, as well as the need that this needed to be pointed out strongly in the Hildersham Express.

(ii) Recycling credits – the credits from the Green Box scheme has been abandoned. Therefore, Hildersham residents are encouraged to use the paper bank outside the village hall as we still receive the income from this.

(iii) Andrew Westwood-Bate pointed out that it would soon be the 120th Anniversary of the Act of Parliament that led to the Enclosure of Hildersham on the 25th April 1886. Hildersham was the last Parish in Cambridgeshire & one of the last in the country to be enclosed – Opposition to this was led by the Goodwin Rectors & the Webb Farmers – who believed it was not in the best interest of the villagers {**the research I am presently doing shows that the Revd Robert Goodwin bought some of the Kings College owned land and converted it into private allotments for his parishioners & we now have a fairly good idea where these were located**}; however after Mr Thomas Webb Jnr. was buried on the 28th February 1881 having died in the small Smallpox outbreak in the village, the momentum of the opposition to enclosure was lost. The Hildersham Enclosure Act specified that the former parish Common Land of St Margaret's Green & Night Common be transferred to the Huddlestone of Sawston Hall, whereas some of their former land was transferred to form the two areas of Parish Field Gardens (Allotments) & the Recreation Ground. The act also specified the stop-up of several old roads as well as giving the permission to build the Hildersham Road Bridge & straighten the river.

I think this gives you a good idea of the sorts of things discussed at the Parish Council.

As I said before in November last year, we owe a great debt of gratitude to all the past Parish Councillors and Parish Council Chairman, but why leave it at that; all these people have a vast amount of knowledge and expertise, we should tap into this and use them as Mentors to our new parish council.

The new Hildersham Village Hall Sub-Committee is made up of Parish Councillors and none Parish council members and is working very hard on your behalf. We have had many of the required surveys carried out, this includes a detailed Structural Survey. That was a crucial first step before any other money was spent on repairing and refurbishing the Village Hall. We shall have to wait until we receive the final report, but it is clear that historically building regulations were not as rigorous in the 1920's. The Hall itself is supported above the flood plain on brick piers or columns. It would initially appear that the central white brick columns may have no foundations at all and just sit on the bare earth. While the outer harder engineering brick columns only have very shallow footings. You only have to look at the floor of the Hall to see how it has moved. There is a 7.5" drop from the centre line to the outside wall and the kitchen end has clearly sunk. I mention all this at this stage to emphasise the fact that we are carrying out a very thorough investigation and before any decisions are made, we will be holding an open day to explain all the options available to us. Definitely, "**Doing Nothing**" is no longer an option, as it is clear from several of the surveys, that before long if nothing is done, we will no longer be able to use the village hall. Therefore, all possible options and solutions need to be investigated and discussed and then some very difficult decisions made.

So if you feel like I do that Hildersham is a very special place, why not put your name forward for nomination to the Parish Council, both the outgoing Hildersham Parish Council and the members of the Hildersham Village Hall Sub-Committee believe that it is very important and in the best interests of the village that in this years Local Elections that there is an **Actual** Election at Hildersham, not just a hand over to the few that have put their name forward. With all these important future decisions needed, it would give the new Parish Council the mandate and backing of the whole village and more importantly the Councillors would have been chosen by the village.

The Closing date for Nominations to be physically with the Returning officer at SCDC is April 3rd, Nomination Papers are available from the Parish Clerk, but swift action is necessary.

After writing all this, I think it is clear how important I believe all these matters are for the future of Hildersham and this is why I am prepared to accept the challenges that lie ahead and to put my name forward for Election to the Hildersham Parish Council; I know that there are many other people that have exactly the right qualities and what it takes to join me and make a valuable contribution to the future of the village. It is no good sitting at home moaning about this and that in the village unless you are prepared to be part of the team and decision making process that will try and address all these issues facing the village on your behalf. 🌸

If you have any thoughts or comments on any of these issues,

You are more than welcome to raise them at the next Parish Council Meeting taking place at

7.30 PM ON WEDNESDAY 8th MARCH 2006

HILDERSHAM PARISH CLERK

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Do not always reflect the opinions and views held by the Hildersham Parish Council

HOWEVER, THE REPORTS OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS ARE ALWAYS BASED ON THE PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES

IF YOU WERE TO COUNT BACK IN DAYS FROM THE 1st FEBRUARY 2006 TO FEBRUARY 1st 1706, HOW MANY DAYS WOULD IT BE?



AWB-2006 © - Large Print Colour Version in the Pear Tree Inn & Parish Church

