



# THE MERRY MAWKIN

£1

Number 27  
Winter 2007/8

THE NEWSLETTER OF FRIENDS OF NORFOLK DIALECT



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COVER PICTURE 'Robbie',  
takes the strain, on Sunday,  
7 October 2007. EDITOR

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# A Mardle with the Editor

ASHLEY GRAY

IS IT JUST ME, or do we Norfolk folk – bred and born – *seem* to be in decline these days? I do hope not, although I mention it because, a few months back, my wife and I went to our local community centre (village hall to us old stick-in-the-muds) for a talk entitled ‘Norfolk as She is Spoke’ – and very entertaining it was too!

The speaker, Tony Ireland, from that ‘Gem of the Norfolk Coast’, Cromer, kept us captivated for almost an hour, with his anecdotes from bygone days in his own inimitable brand of local dialect. In short, ‘he *hooly* hed us in fits, bor’!

Suddenly, stopping in his tracks, Tony asked for a show of hands from those who claimed the distinction of being true-Norfolk ‘bred-and-born’. As if by instinct, my in-built discipline took over and, almost as if I was saluting the Commanding Officer, my right hand ascended, palm outermost. But I was almost alone. A mere half dozen of us obliged with upstretched hands, in declaration that we *are* Norfolk and *proud* to be so!

Taking stock of the situation, Tony explained it was much the same in other parts where he’d given his talk. Perhaps, the *furriners* are keener to learn more about our language than we are!

Ever since Clement Scott visited Norfolk in the 1880s, immortalising the area around Cromer with his writings, a great many visitors to our wide open skies and endless verdant pastures have flocked to savour the delights of his ‘Poppyland’ and elsewhere in our fair county.

Taking advantage of the purest and most invigorating air that blows from the north, newcomers to our county, like the Romans and Norsemen before them, discovering Norfolk’s unrivalled beauty settled here and so it goes on.

Here in south Norfolk, the dialect is not *quite* so noticeable these days, as it’s sometimes intermingled with more *southerly* strains, there again, probably due to the popularity of our region to others from far-flung parts!

Only recently, my wife and I took a trip to North Walsham on market day, when villagers from outlying parts tend to venture into the town

for some excellent fare off its colourful market – no online-ordering for them, you understand!

Suddenly, we heard that welcome sound of Norfolk ‘as she is spoke’, it was music to our ears. It was all around us it seemed, so – dare I admit it – we took the liberty of evesdropping.

“Hello bor, how’ya gorn on?”

“Be alot betta ’s’arternoon, when Oi git hooome, t’ tell ya th’ trooth Mawther ent well. She sear har chist’s hooly queer, tha’s hooly cloaked up, an’ hev’ya got enny o’ them there corfdrop coshies what’ll dew th’ trick?”

“Yis, ’cors Oi hev, bor,” replied the stallholder, “how menny d’ya wa’t, quorta dew ya?”

With a deft flick of the wrist, a ‘quarter’ of Victory Vees quickly found their way into a paper bag and the necessary money changed hands.

Do you know, that took me back I can tell you. At that precise moment I recalled an occasion – a Thursday lunch time of fifty years ago – nipping out the back gate of the Paston School to buy a small, round tin of ‘Zubes’ to ease a little ‘kissick’ I had in the throat at the time! And, you never know, it *may* well have been the same stall!

Safe in the knowledge that the Norfolk dialect *is* alive and kicking, my wife and I went home again – well, to our present home that is, the first being in *that* north Norfolk market town a mere forty years before. So, wherever you may be in our county, make sure good old ‘Broad Norfolk’ is heard by all, and let’s ensure it remains so as a lasting legacy for our future generations!

Finally, I would like to wish all of you ‘Friends of Norfolk Dialect’ a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and, ‘til we meet again:

“Dew yew mind how yew go, moi bewties!”

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# The Chairman's Report

COLIN BURLEIGH

WELL, HERE WE ARE, fast approaching the end of yet another FOND year, my first in the role of your Chairman. It has been a very busy and interesting year for me and one which I hope has brought some stimulation to the members. Our 'Dews' have been well attended, giving me a lot of optimism as to the future of FOND.

I must make comment on the excellent turn-out at the September 'Dew' at the Wash Discovery Centre in King's Lynn when we were entertained with two excellent films, courtesy of Stewart Orr, and my thanks go to him for his efforts on our behalf.

There seemed to be a preponderance of new faces there – possibly from King's Lynn – who were particularly interested in the 'North-Enders' film. Let us hope that some of those folk see fit to join us in FOND.

We achieved a bit more national coverage on 5 October when I was asked to talk on the BBC Radio 4 lunchtime programme *You and Yours* with presenter John Waite. Taking part were the Appledorians (a Devon dialect association with similar aims to FOND), Professor Clive Upton of Leeds University, Professor Peter Patrick of Essex University and myself. None of the speakers really had much time to put their points of view on dialect across but I did get the chance to tell of our Schools Project and to slip in a few choice Norfolk words and phrases. In the short time allowed I was able to make people aware of our aims and I gather it was well received.

All that remains for me is to say, have a happy and peaceful Christmas – I look forward to seeing you all at the AGM on 25 November and at our pantomime on Sunday 13 January 2008!

## From Our Young Mawkins

A further selection of dialect poetry

### A SMUR ON THE FIELDS

BY ABBIE CURRINGTON

There is a smur on the fields,  
All covered wif clag,  
There's a rimmer in mid-air,  
But on an' on ol' cockie works.

Bit o' a duzzy fule I think,  
Workin' in a rimmer,  
It mit start hullin' it down wif snow,  
But on an' on ol' cockie works.

Hard work out there on that ol' farm,  
With those rannies runnin' 'round,  
Still, I must keep troshin',  
But, hey, it's boot'ful wukin' in Norfolk!

### BISHY BARNABY

BY FLORA ARCHER

If bishy barnaby do foi away,  
The sun he guna shine all day.  
If bishy barnaby do remain,  
It's very likely we'll have rain.

### OUR OLD LOKE

BY MAX HACON

I went for a walk down our ol' loke,  
I slipped in the mud,  
And thought my leg wus bruk.

I saw som flowers a 'jiffin' in the wind,  
But they had been nibbled,  
By som ol' meece.

I thought they were lavender,  
But I didn't get none,  
'Coz the cockie saw me,  
And he had a gun!

Year Four, Scarning (VC) Primary School.



# From Our President

PETER TRUDGILL

## HOW NOT TO MAKE NORFOLK PEOPLE CROSS: PART II

READERS OF THE PREVIOUS *Merry Mawkin* may remember that Part I of this article was published as a reaction to the TV drama series *Kingdom*. The fact that the series was set in Norfolk seemed to have passed many of the actors by; and in spite of our TV screens showing incontrovertible evidence that we were in modern Wells or Swaffham, many of the actors could be heard trying to persuade us that, actually, we were somewhere in Dorset about 100 years ago. Some of the thespians, though, did appear to be *trying* to achieve a Norfolk accent, and these lessons are offered to them, entirely free of charge – except of course for the cost of the *Merry Mawkin* – out of gratitude for the respect they have shown to our county.

The number of grateful responses we have received so far from actors and others working on the series is – 0!

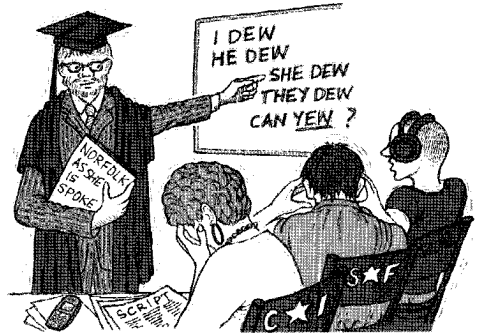
Lesson One, it will be remembered consisted of '1: Basic Level – how *not* to sound as if you come from somewhere else'; and '2: Introductory Level – how to start sounding just little bit like you *do* come from Norfolk'.

We now move on to Lesson Two.

### LESSON TWO

**1 Intermediate Level** – how to sound even more like you come from Norfolk.

A: It is better if you do not drop your *h*'s. Rural East Anglia and Geordieland in the Northeast are the only two areas of England to which *h*-dropping has not yet penetrated – like many things that start life in London we have been rather resistant to this – and you will therefore sound more authentic if you do not indulge in it. It is not too serious, however, if you forget and drop a few *h*'s – then people will think you come from Norwich or Yarmouth, urban areas which are of course always in the vanguard in the acceptance of exciting new changes from the



"We shall now recite the verb 'tew dew'!"

metropolis, provided of course that these innovations are at least 100 years old.

**B:** Get the co-operation of the script writers in ensuring that the real local characters in the series omit third-person singular present-tense *-s*. This is not so scary as it sounds. All it means is that, according to the grammar of the Norfolk dialect, forms with verbs like she 'works' there, he 'likes' it do not happen. We say 'she *work* there', 'he *like* it'. If you think about it, this is actually very sensible, as that little *-s* doesn't do anybody much good at all really, and leaving it out makes the verb system nice and regular: I, you, he, she, it, we, they all like it. And of course we also say 'he *do*' rather than 'he does', and 'she *have*' rather than 'she has'. So you will hear 'he *like* it, *do* he'? However, if your character is a local solicitor or banker, you might let him keep at least some of his *-s*'s, as that will make him sound just that little bit more-appropriately posh. This is all really rather simple and should perhaps have been in Lesson One. Good luck with Lesson Two!

**Reminder from Lesson 1:** NEVER pronounce the *r* in words like cart, bird, fort, beard, dared, muttered!

**Next time: Lesson Three – Advanced Level,** with the exciting and much anticipated section on the Norfolk long 'o'.



# Woss Thare Ter Dew?

ASKS THE BOY COLIN

WELL BOR, since them ow noights hev drawn in thass back tew th' ow routine: pull them certains shut, tarn th'ow fire on, mearke a cuppa tea an' tarn on tha 'idiot's lantern' wot stand in tha corner. Moind yew, tha ony decent thing on our telly is tha daughter's photo. Them programme planners hev bin a-hoardin' a load o' ow rubbish up ter show us during tha winter but Oi reckon we'll still git the searme ow thing, dorn't yew?

Nourthin' chearnge dew it? Thass ayther buy a plearce in Spain or how ter cook sum grub in ten minutes. Oi loike moi grub, but sum o' that wot they dish up look a bit too 'arty-farty' fer moi loiken. They hardly git it inter thare mouths afore they say how good that tearste, but dew it? Oi doubt not. Bet that dornt hev tha searme tearste as th' grub moi mother yewsta cook.

Har father wus a farmer so we hed pretty o' rabbit inter us, with a lotta grearvy and force mearte balls. Mawther yewsta say, "That'll mearke yew hop about!"

She orfen med a suet pudden an' we hed half onnit wi' th'ow rabbit and th'other bit wi' trickle onnit fer arters.

Her dumplins were big as footballs – din't know whether tew eat 'em or kick 'em. Arter

yew'd et 'em yew wished yew'd kicked 'em!

Oi allus wondered how she kep' the crust up on har rabbit pies till Oi found out she used humpty-back rabbits.

They reckon in th'ow days yew et a peck o' muck in yar lifetime an' that never harmed yer. That Nigella, she look a bitta orlright but summa har grub look a bit iffy – reckon yew could say the searme 'bout Ainsley Haricot's shirts.

Them property shows are orl werry well but yew can't nip down ter Cromer fer Mary Jane's fish 'n' chips evra week dew yew're living in Spearn, kin yew?

Oi loike a-gorn on haarldys, as yew know, but when they're dun thares ony one plearce Oi wanta be an' thass roight hare in good ow Norfolk.

We moight not hev the Leanin' Tower o' Pisa, but Dereham Chach Tower sometime look like thass leaning arter Oi've hed a stiffish ow session at The George – an' yew carn't git a good pint ter beat 'On the Huh' when yar a' settin' by a pule in Spearn.

Blarst, look at the toime – gotta go now. Oi kin smell the missus' homemed salary soop on the go!

Merry Christmas tergether!



## The Boy Colin's Norfolk Quiz

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF BYGONE DAYS

- 1 Where is Norfolk's Woodland Burial Site?
- 2 What is a Barley-bird?
- 3 Norwich City's FA Cup tie v Blackpool was postponed in the 1962–3 season due to bad weather, but how many times?
- 4 Which park is situated at the junction of St Martin's Road and Drayton Road in Norwich?
- 5 What is a skip?
- 6 What service did Mr Dumble of Sheringham provide?
- 7 Norwich City's all time record goal scorer died recently. Who was he?
- 8 Where is Nowhere?
- 9 Where is The Mermaid Inn to be found?
- 10 Who erected Swaffham's butter cross?

*Answers on page 17.*



# Granddad's Christmas Magic

LIL LANDIMORE

## GRANDDAD'S CHRISTMAS MAGIC

When owd Grandad woke up on Christmas morn,  
He stretched his owd self an' giv a yawn,  
Suffin' crackled on his bed,  
"Wha' on arth is tha'?" he said.

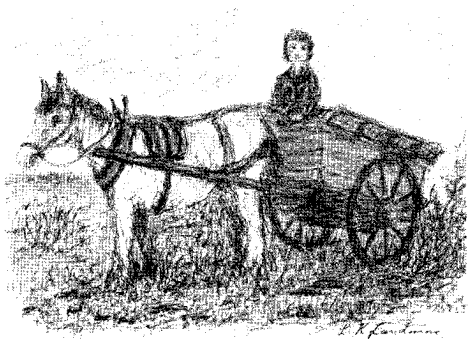
He switched on the loight an' then he saw,  
"Well, blass me," he said, "tha's a rummin, bor,  
Oi dint here northin' in the noight,  
But tha' int no dream, tha's real awroight."

With his gnarled owd hands to it he clings,  
A stockin' filled with his fearvrit things.  
Chucklin' away to hisself,  
Inner tha stockin' he did delve.

An ounce er backy fer his poipe,  
A pair er socks, the sort he loike,  
Biscits annall, twixt yew an' me,  
The ones he loike ter dunk in his tea.

An apple and an oringe too,  
Nuts tucked away down in the toe.  
Over the covers of his bed,  
All his presents he had spread.

"Are well," he say, with a glint in his eye,  
Remembrin all them years wha's gone by.  
"Don't matter be yew young or owd,  
The magic of Christmas will allust hold."



## A WINTER'S DAY ON THE FARM

Yokin' up the hoss  
And harnessin' him t' the cart.  
Tightnin' up the belly gat,  
Now we're ready t' start.  
Then orf we'd go, ole Smiler and me,  
To cart mangol and kearle for the cattle yer see.

All day we'd be cartin', from fild t' meder,  
Not carin' northin' 'bout the cold wintry weather.  
On a sharp frorsty morn you'd find me cuttin' the  
kearle,  
Blundrin' over the stalks, I int tellin' yew no tearle,  
Loadin' the cart t' tearke down t' the meder,  
Me and ole Smiler, along all day t'gether.



## THE OLD ARCH by Ashley Gray

*Streart ahid's th' way to Norridge,  
Through that greart ole regal aarch.  
We trudged our way from Walsam,  
An' bor, it was a hard ole march.  
Tha' signpost points t' Woosted,  
Well known fur thar foine clorth,  
An' all th' way t' Stallam,  
Where Oi cycled back an' forth.  
T'other way's t' Swantun Abbut,  
An' onta Ellsham Town,  
But yew carn't see Westwick Arch no more,  
'Cos the b\*\*\*\*\*s hev knocked it down!*



# Little Walsingham: Then and Now

ASHLEY GRAY



**THEN:** (Left) *Children of all ages, eager to get in the picture, patiently pose for the camera on the corner of High Street and Market Square. Whilst, in the Market Place, a pub sign advertises 'Bullard & Sons, Norwich Ales'.*

**NOW:** (Below) *Today the picture remains almost the same, although no-one poses for cameras anymore! Where horses and carts traversed the narrow streets, now parked cars clutter the roads.*

ALL PICTURES FROM  
EDITOR'S COLLECTION

THERE ARE NOT many villages in England that can equal the quiet beauty of Little Walsingham, set in the midst of glorious Norfolk countryside.

The quaint streets are bordered by fine medieval houses and through an ancient arch are the ruins of an Augustinian priory, founded in the twelfth century, whilst, on the edge of the village, there are also remains of a Franciscan Friary.

It all began in 1061, with the apparition of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the many miracles worked at her shrine. Walsingham was considered so sacred that many English Monarchs visited the village, walking the last few miles barefoot, as well as an unceasing procession of pilgrims.

Little Walsingham is still one of this country's major religious sites and a centre of pilgrimage, with many thousands regularly visiting the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham in the Holy House.

**THEN:** (Right) *In 1931, the Holy House was re-erected by builders from Messrs Bullens of Cromer. In this old photograph they sit amidst wooden scaffolding, posing for the camera. My grandfather, Elijah Abel Gray, Master Builder, is third from the right on the back row.*





FOR THOSE who like statistics we have had 57,114 visits to our website pages since we started in 2002, with 56% of those being unique hits and 44% repeat hits, which is nice because it means people enjoy coming back. It is also interesting to discover that our busiest day for visitors seems to be on a Thursday!

**Joshua Gulick** from Ohio writes:

*"I never had even heard of the Norfolk dialect! Interesting... I enjoy learning about dialects. I'm from North-Central Ohio. No worries about our dialect slipping into disuse. Cheers and a nice site! Peace."*

**Tim Melton** is in a bit of a quandry:

*"It's bothered me for years. As a native of Swaffham I called Cockley Cley as 'Cly' but Cley on the coast as 'Clay'.*

*Which is preferred? (I'm not going to change whatever the answer!)."*

I pointed Tim to our page containing Robert Hope's 1883 Glossary of Dialectal Place-names: [www.norfolkdialect.com/hopeslist.html](http://www.norfolkdialect.com/hopeslist.html) and on it Robert Charles Hope says they should *both* be pronounced as 'Cly' as in 'fly' – but perhaps things have changed since 1883?

[Editor's note: Sheringham bred-and-born, and living for many years just seven miles away from Cley-Next-The-Sea, I've *always* pronounced it as 'Cly' as did the *true* locals in *those* days.]

**E Wood**, a Londoner now living in Norfolk, was stuck on a quiz question:

*"Hello there, I am doing a quiz but am stuck on some, being a Londoner, now moved to Norfolk, can you help? What is a 'Stukie Blue', what is a 'Floater', is this a Norfolk dumpling, and what is a 'Cushy'?"*

*I have looked through all of my reference books also Google, which is where I found the Norfolk dumpling, but nothing else. Thanks a lot."*

I have to admit I didn't know what 'Cushies' or 'Cooshies' were but *Larn Yarself Norfolk* to the rescue – **sweets!**

'Stewkey Blues' – **Cockles** from Stiffkey, and yes, 'Floaters' were **dumplings**.

Hopefully E Wood managed to complete the quiz and also learned more about the Norfolk Dialect.

Nice compliments from **Ray Harrowing**:

*"Hi! Surfing (as one does) I came across this very interesting site. I come from the Harrowings of Weasenham (surname spelt in 14 different ways that I've found so far!). Son of Jack and May, of Narford and Sporle. Couldn't wait to get away from Norfolk when young, but now know the value and uniqueness of the place!"*

*My Norfolk accent has almost completely gone, I'm sorry to say, but my exercises in the dialect have kept many an audience fascinated! Good luck with your work – it's well worth doing."*

My favourite entry comes from **Seth Reeder**, Burgundy, France – bred and born in Fritton 'Three Nags', near Long Stratton:

*"When going back to Long Stratton recently, and driving around the country roads in the Forncett direction, my wife (French) assumed the verges on the side of the road were solid and easy to drive on just like ours in France. I suggested that she stopped to let traffic pass less she dropped into a 'groop'. (Groop (spelling?) being those nasty little culverts, cut tangentially to the road to allow water to drain into a ditch, great for getting your front wheel stuck in!).*

*'Groop,' she said, 'what kind of word is that?'*

*I asked other Norfolk natives in the village and they all knew what I was referring to.*

*Is groop, grup, group, just a Norfolk word?"*

As luck would have it I was sitting at my computer as Seth's message arrived and I immediately emailed him back confirming that *grup* – a shallow drain or rut, was in Keith



Skipper's book and if it's in there then it is *definitely* a Norfolk word!

Seth's reply:

*"Thanks Pauline, Thanks very much indeed. Quick response, I did not expect that FOND is alive and well. Norfolk boy in Franceland."*

[Editor's note: I once had the misfortune of dipping a front wheel into a *grup* (also near Fornect!!) when giving way to another driver – he had to stop and help me lift the car out again!

Pippa had found the pages nostalgic:

*"Have thoroughly enjoyed your pages which bring back fondest memories of my Grandfather Fiddy. Many's the time I've felt that wind blow right through me on Cromer pier too! x"*

Pippa was referring to John Kett's *Lazy Wind* which you can find here as a sound file:

<http://www.norfolkdialect.com/lazywind.htmlm>

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## Norfolk Word Search Puzzle

BRENDA BIZZELL

S	O	U	T	Y	B	B	A	W	B	U	R	G	H	B
D	W	S	A	G	N	I	T	E	E	W	C	U	O	H
E	T	A	C	O	L	N	E	S	T	O	N	D	V	E
R	O	H	N	S	G	H	C	O	T	S	H	R	E	V
S	M	A	O	T	N	A	N	U	Y	A	R	D	T	I
I	M	M	R	D	O	M	K	T	M	L	E	I	O	N
N	A	T	T	E	R	N	I	H	E	N	W	S	N	G
G	H	O	H	N	T	Y	M	L	T	H	P	S	I	H
H	G	N	E	V	H	A	C	O	T	D	U	M	M	A
A	N	E	L	E	W	X	N	P	R	H	A	M	A	M
M	I	Y	M	R	O	H	U	H	D	L	F	S	H	Y
G	H	S	H	M	L	A	T	A	R	M	E	T	T	I
I	B	Y	A	H	D	M	O	M	S	O	N	Y	R	M
Y	M	E	M	I	D	D	L	E	T	O	N	H	A	M
O	T	N	D	I	T	C	H	I	N	G	H	A	M	S

**PLACES WHERE WE HAVE  
HELD 'DEWS' – BUT CAN  
YOU FIND THEM ALL?**

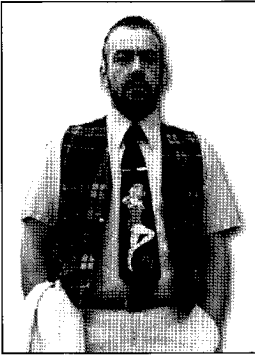
Bawburgh	Hoveton
Binham	Martham
Bodham	Middleton
Denton	North Elmham
Denver	Northwold
Dersingham	Saham Toney
Ditchingham	South Lopham
Diss	Swanton Morlo
Hemsby	Tacolneston
Hevingham	Weeting
Hingham	Yaxham

*Answers on page 17.*



# Who Took the 'P' out of Haisbro?

RURAL RHYMES BY SID KIPPER



FOR NIGH on a decade BBC Radio Norfolk's panel game 'Should The Team Think' has included a limerick challenge. For every programme Sid and the others have had to come up with a rhyme, often about a Norfolk village.

Here, then, starting with 'the secret of the show's success', is a selection of Sid's best:

*To make this here programme a hit,  
Take some people of wisdom and wit.  
Stir in some direction,  
Half-bake to perfection,  
And you'll end with this load of old squit.*

*A visiting lady from Asia,  
Said "How they spell here would amaze ya:  
Typhoo, it is written  
Put the 'T' into Britain,  
So who took the 'P' out of Happisburgh?"*

*There was a young lady from Kelling,  
Her young man's illusions dispelling;  
She said "Heavens above,  
The true price of love,  
Depends if you're buying or selling."*

*There was a young girl from Thorpe Marriott,  
Liked to drink, but she just couldn't carry it.  
She'd quaff with a zest,  
Then whip off her vest,  
And kiss every Tom, Dick and Harriet.*

*There was a young lady from Scarning,  
About her fiancé was yarning;  
"He's as keen as a whip;  
He can't wait while I strip,  
So my gussets forever need darning."*

*There was a young couple from Pickenham  
Got married, but sex only sickened 'em.  
She said: "It's the pits  
That he's got all them bits;  
Let alone where he's thinkin' of stickin' 'em."*

*Old Archibald looked at his hollyhocks,  
His bright red hot pokers, and jolly phlox.  
He cried: "Mama mia!  
Cez bonne! and Zapia!"  
Well, he was a multi-tongued polyglot.*

*While sat in a bar in Caracas,  
Two beautiful girls played maracas.  
When I pulled them they snapped,  
Then quickly unwrapped –  
Blast, they were a couple of crackers.*

*When they asked me to write on manure,  
My ideas could not have been fewer;  
Nevertheless,  
I think this should impress  
The EDP's poetry reviewer.*

*One day old Rudolph Valentino  
Went to Brooke for a bit of a beano.  
He said "In my view  
It's so charming and new,"  
But the locals said "Well, what do he know?"*

*An Ingleshorpe widow, though squireless,  
In sleeping with men was quite tireless.  
She treated each session  
With utmost discretion:  
Now it's all been exposed on the wireless!*

The next 'Should The Team Think', recorded at Sedgeford, will be broadcast on BBC Radio Norfolk at 1pm on Boxing Day.

Sid will be presenting *A Kipper Country Christmas* on 30 November at **King's Lynn Arts Centre** (01553 764864) and on 1 December at **Norwich Maddermarket Theatre** (01603 620917).



# Margaret Bakes a Nice Cake

ALBIE OF WINDUM

I HAVE TO ADMIT to being rather perplexed, one morning a few days before Christmas. I was looking at the glittering display of greetings cards we'd had through the post that day, but one I'd been looking forward to was conspicuous by its absence. Was it still languishing in the post, or had it been delivered to someone else's house?

Such was my quandary, that I decided to enter the 'holy of holies' – the inner sanctum of the kitchen – to consult with Margaret.

Accompanied by the sounds of egg-beating in basins and the stirring sound of spoons in Tupperware bowls, my nearest and dearest was merrily humming away to herself – *carols*, seasonal music, what a *load* of old humbug, I thought, as I opened the kitchen door!

There, as my eyes took in all the colourful concoctions and my nostrils became pleasingly teased by the spicy aromas of the festive delights, the familiar strains of Good King Wenceslas invaded the innermost privacy of my ears.

"When tha sno lear round about, deep an' crisp an' ee-EE-ven," Margaret warbled, a bit off key, most likely due to the half-empty bottle of sherry, I espied secreted behind the microwave.

"Git some sno on that there roundabout up the rud," I laughed, "an' no-one'll be gorn anywhere, let alone ole King Wassissnearme!"

"Wha's a-matter wi' yew, Albie?" Margaret asked, dabbing her floury hands on her pinny.

"Well," I replied, scratching my head, "I'm puzzled an' can't quite mearke it out."

"Wha's that then?" she asked.

"I jist had an email from boy Harbert, an' he reckins he's gorn an' lorst our address agin, so we un't git a card from him this year!"

Margaret 'tutted' to herself and, wielding her palette knife like an

expert artex-plasterer, began applying a good inch of snow to her latest culinary creation – her Christmas cake.

Pausing for a moment, to stand back and admire her handiwork, she set to with increased vigour and began planting a little copse of snow-capped pine trees, in true Monty Don fashion!

From behind one tree, a rather furtive-looking Father Christmas peered out, adjusting his bright red coat – or that's how it looked to me!

"How come Harb lorst our address?" asked Margaret, adding a reindeer to the seasonal scene before pouring herself another glass of sherry.

"Suffin' to do wi' bein' all fumble-fisted an' pushin' the wrong button on his compooter," I replied, shaking my head in dismay.

"Din't he dew tha' afore?" Margaret asked, pausing for a while to decide just where to erect a 'Merry Christmas' sign on her cake.

"Come t' think of it, yis," I told her, "an' that mearke me *hooly* raw, that dew an' orl!"

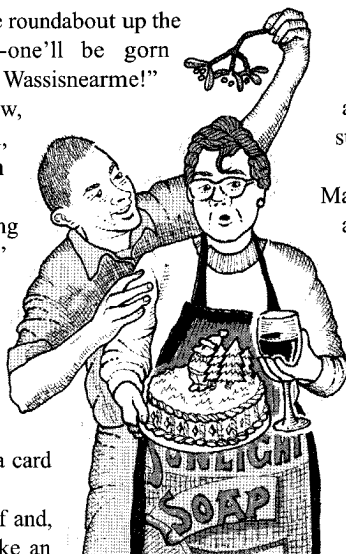
Then, casting my mind back to last year, when a similar thing had happened, the more I thought about it the less 'hooly raw' I became.

"Tha's my fault, Margaret," I confessed, as I'd forgotten to send our 'friend from foreign parts' the address he had requested. "He arsked fur it larst month, but it went streart outta my hid!"

"Yew greatt daft lummo," mobbed Margaret, "dun't yew think yar havin' any o' this cearke until yew send Harb our address, 'cos yew en't!"

Standing there, all glum and dejected, I thought just a little affection might 'put things right' and held a sprig of mistletoe over Margaret's head.

"An' yew kin put *them* there idears streart outta yar hid this minute, an' orl!" she laughed – and poured herself another glass of sherry!





# A Bumper Christmas Bundle

A REVIEW BY PETER BROOKS

## I READ IT IN THE LOCAL RAG – Selections from Suffolk and Norfolk newspapers 1701–1900

*Pip Wright, published by Poppyland Publishing.  
208 pp, 173 b/w illustrations.  
ISBN 0 946148 78 3  
Price: £12.95*



*I Read it in the  
Local Rag – an  
intriguing book  
by Pip Wright*

THE RESEARCH for this intriguing book must have been a labour of love – reading through two hundred years of local newspapers, such as the *Norfolk Weekly Standard*, the *Woodbridge Reporter* and the *Hunstanton Telephone and West Norfolk Chronicle*, to uncover strange tales of human behaviour, newsworthy individuals and public reactions to local events. Such as the man from Bury St Edmunds who, when charged with bigamy, pleaded he had received a letter from his wife saying she was dead so he had assumed he could marry again. Or what about this dictionary definition listed in the *Suffolk Chronicle* in 1824: ‘RING – a circular link put through the noses of swine and upon the finger of a woman to hold them both in subjection’.

Anything with a sexual connection is sure of some column space as in this report in the *Norwich Mercury* on 16 February 1721: ‘On

Friday last the complaint by Mrs S was opened against her husband in a great ecclesiastical court. The principal charge brought against him was that he was incapable of performing matrimonial rites according to the law of nature. Mr S denies her charge and will submit to a scrutiny of the faculty’.

With over 90 towns and villages mentioned, and some 285 individuals named, this is a book that may hold facts not realised by many families in the two counties covered, which adds immense interest to every reader.

## SKIPPER’S PATHWAY and NORFOLK ECHOES – Two new CDs from Keith Skipper

*Price: £10 each, plus £1.10 post and packing.  
Available from: Keith Skipper, 25 St Mary’s  
Road, Cromer, NR27 9DJ.*

*Also available from: Stewart Orr, Prior’s Croft  
Barn, Withersdale, Harleston, Norfolk, IP20 0J.  
Please make cheque payable to whom you order  
from.*

CONTAINING 16 tracks, **Skipper’s Pathway** CD has a running time of approximately 46 minutes. Among the gems is the story of the Litcham honey-cart and Wally the village legend, also the flatulent lady bus passenger and the bible story (in *pure* Norfolk dialect) of how the hated tax collector met Jesus!

**Norfolk Echoes** CD, with its 11 tracks, also runs for about 46 minutes and starts off with a song by Horry Taylor and the Sugarbeets, a real toe-tapper with totally unintelligible words, but you’ll love it! There are also several interviews, with horse-lovers Arthur and Olive Clouting, John Hill recalling his school days and service as a baker in the Army, and former teacher, Geoffrey Gorham, deploring the way Norwich has developed with ‘functional drabness’ resulting from how planners ‘lost their way’ during the 1960s and ’70s.

These two CDs are ideal stocking fillers for everyone who is interested in our unique dialect and enjoys listening to people with a story to tell, and who are proud of their Norfolk roots and willing to share their many experiences of life with us.

**UM STILLA THINKUN – More poems from my past**

*Tina Chamberlain, self-published.*

*48pp, 9 b/w illustrations.*

*Price: £4.00*

THIS IS TINA'S SECOND BOOK of dialect poems, with all 33 of them recalling incidents and aspects of family life with her eight brothers and sisters. Subject headings range from 'Pilchards for Tea' and 'Feedun the Pigs' to 'Mother's Day' and, significantly, 'My Norfolk Upbringun', the latter bringing back memories of tin baths in front of a fire, learning to drive a tractor and clothes being bought from the local Army and Navy store.

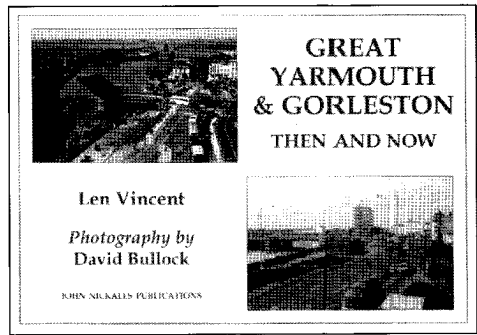
In addition to this delightful serving of dialect there is also an accompanying CD, at just £7.00

Book and CD are available at bookshops, or direct from Tina Chamberlain at 53 Orchard Way, Wymondham, NR18 0NY (*inclusive of post and packing*).

Her e-mail address is [tinatailpipe@tesco.net](mailto:tinatailpipe@tesco.net).



*Um Stilla Thinkun – more poems of the past by Tina Chamberlain*



**GREAT YARMOUTH & GORLESTON – Then and Now**

*Ken Vincent and David Bullock, published by John Nickalls Publications.*

*108pp, 102 b/w postcards and photographs.*

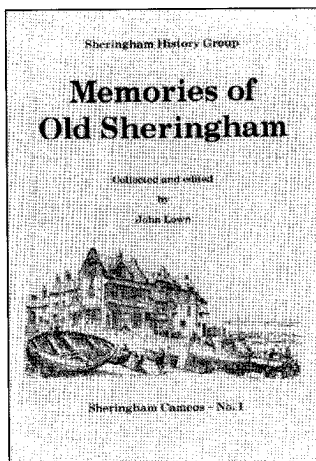
*ISBN: 1 904136 20 5*

*Price: £7.99*

FOR THIS REVIEWER this is one of the best books he has seen in the 'nostalgic photographs' category. The landscape format is ideal for showing the 'Then' pictures on the left-hand page and the 'Now' images on the right. Credit must go to the author for the clarity and detail in the picture captions. It was, for example, intriguing to learn that someone was prosecuted in 1899 for speeding along the Marine Parade at 8 miles an hour, and of the Town Council, in 1952, deciding to name a street 'Nottingham Way' in recognition of the number of visitors from that city.

Looking at the changing scenes there is a personal recognition of the charm of the 'old' days when life appeared to be far less stressful than today, with our main seaside resort having a charm and appeal that is not present nowadays with its plethora of noisy, unattractive arcades and tacky souvenir shops.

The illustrations in this valuable book clearly show today the 'car is king' and that not all planning decisions over the past years have been in the public interest. Despite these criticisms, this is a book for everyone who knows and loves Great Yarmouth and Gorleston and how they have changed over the years.



*Memories  
of Old  
Sheringham*  
*a little gem of a  
book by John  
Lown*

## MEMORIES OF OLD SHERINGHAM

*John Lown, published by Sheringham History Group.  
68pp, 14 b/w illustrations.  
Price: £4.95*

THIS LITTLE GEM of a book is divided into 13 sections, each dealing with a specific town location or activity dating from the turn of the last century.

Subjects such as 'A Sheringham childhood with horses' or 'Bait Day' are recounted in the contributor's own words recalling what the town was like before it became a nationally-recognised holiday destination.

This book recalls the days when residents in Gun Street had to cross the road to go to the toilet, when girls sat in a tin bath in front of a meagre coal fire and had their hair washed before Mum used 'Dod-e-mons' (strips of rag) to curl their hair.

These were also the days when gentlemen raised their hats to ladies they met in the street, and when many locals were both astonished and somewhat fearful when they met the first black servicemen from the USAAF air base at Sculthorpe.

This is, unashamedly, a nostalgic book and should have an appeal far outside the boundaries of the 'Premier' seaside resort in North Norfolk.

## ALBIE'S THOUGHTS – A Poetic Journey through Bygone Seasons

*Ashley Gray, published by Geo R Reeve Ltd.  
36pp, 28 pen and ink sketches by the author.  
ISBN: 9780900 616 79 2  
Price: £3.99*

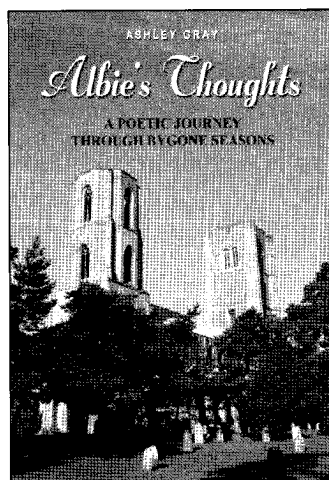
ASHLEY HAS CHOSEN the changing seasons of bygone years as the underlying theme for his second book of poems.

The twenty poems in this attractive book are written with warmth and feeling, as in his dialect tribute to 'My Mawther', a record of his courtship and proposal to his wife Aileen on Sheringham promenade.

Days past are remembered in 'The Silver Darlings' in which the work of the Scottish fishergirls on Yarmouth Quay is recalled, as is the weekly tin bath in front of the fire.

Monday washing day and the use of Sunlight soap 'to stamp out dirt' together with the mangle in the backyard bring a smile as does Ashley's fearful Christmas Eve when, as he was trying to get to sleep, stealthy footsteps and squeaking stairs make him disappear down the bed but not before he glimpsed Father Christmas's slippers – which were 'just the same as his dad's'!

An enjoyable book full of memories with local towns and villages revisited.



*Albie's  
Thoughts –  
the latest  
illustrated  
book of short  
poems by  
Ashley Gray*

# A Norfolk Man's Lament

MARIE RANDALL

*There's a holly tree a growin' in our garden,  
Leaves darkly green, all edged wi' white, you know,  
As full a berries that is in the winter,  
Look right pretty that ole tree do in the snow.  
And in springtime, cor, the bards, well you should see 'em.  
Used it donkey's years they have now, dorn't you see.  
Make a rare rum ole to-do with all their nestin'  
Do them thar bards in that there big ole holly tree.*

*Cast a fair nice bit a shaade too in the summer,  
Though our summers they ain't ever very hot.  
But it's allus there to hand if you might want it,  
Whether you see fit ter use it then or not.  
But now ya know, all this is gornta finish,  
They're a recknin' on a cuttin' on it down.  
They're takin' four or five feet orfa our garden,  
Ter widen out the rood right inter town.*

*Well, at fast we thought we'd try out a petition,  
A gitten tergether and all a signin' of our names.  
But that was just a lotta argy bargy  
'Corse the council they'd already maade their plans.  
My word, we dint arf give them hell for leather,  
But a corse they jist tan round and all they say,  
"Oh the traffic, must be kept a movin',  
And your ole holly tree, tha's right there in the way."*

*Well, I spoos you can't keep on a fightin' progress ,  
But bor, when they're rebuilt that garden wall,  
I've got a fair nice little holly tree all ready,  
Thas now grown well, le's see, just three feet tall.  
And when tha's really grown right big and splendid,  
That'll reach well out beyond that garden wall.  
And me and them bards bor, we'll jist sit there,  
Dammin' progress, dammin' traffic, damn 'em all.*



## MEMBERSHIP REMINDER



**PLEASE NOTE: All FOND memberships fall due for renewal on 30 November 2007.**  
**If you haven't already done so, please send your remittance of £6 single membership,**  
**or £10 family membership (cheques made out to FOND), to:**  
**Brenda Bizzell, Walnut Tree House, Fornceff St Peter, Norwich NR16 1HR,**  
**to ensure you receive The Merry Mawkin Number 28 in good time.**



# News and Chatter

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### AUNT AGATHA HAD ME GIGGLIN'

I was so glad to receive my copy of *The Merry Mawkin* this morning. I was thinking about it the other day as I really enjoy reading it, and it always makes me laugh. So I am really glad we have a new editor.

I have lived in Norfolk for ten years now. My father's family came from Sheringham and my great granddad, Alfred Skipper, ran the Fishing Boat pub at East Runton around 1894. Unfortunately, my granddad ended up in Bedford where my dad was born. But I'm glad to say I've made it back to Norfolk!

I find the articles interesting and enjoy the quizzes, and page six 'Aunt Agatha she say' had me gigglin', so I wish you all the best with the newsletter.

*Susan Crozier, Bunwell*

*Visiting [www.norfolkpubs.co.uk](http://www.norfolkpubs.co.uk), it seems Alfred George Skipper took over the tenancy of the Fishing Boat, East Runton, from William Todd on 3 September 1894 until May 1913, when Frederick Hardesty took over. – Editor.*

### PASS THE GRAVY!

Now I've turned eighty-one, I would like to give a bit of advice to some of our young 'Mawkins', to save them from domestic trouble.

Sune arter me an' my missus got hitched, we hed a nice yung cupple ov newlyweds for lunch.

The missus say: "I'll cook a nice bit of beef with Yorkshire an' that."

I sed: "Righto, I'll meark the gravy," which was daft, corz I hant never done that afore.

Anyway, I copped hold of the ole tin of gravy granules an' hulled some inter a basin an' poored the hot water on 'em, like wot that sed on the tin, oony I should hav hed ma glasses, corz I thought that say two ounces of granules to the hot water.

Howsomever, wen we set down to eat, one on 'em say: "Pass the gravy", which I dun, but wen she tried to pour it over her pleart, nothen come out! Do you know, that ole gravy was set like cement – I shoulda used half an ounce not two!



*The Fishing Boat Inn, East Runton, circa 1900*

COURTESY: A ROGERS, CROMER

My missus wunt half suffen riled: "Carnt yew do nothen right?" she say.

I thought, this here marridge int gorn ter last, but that hev.

So, my councel to newlywed fellas is 'dorn't you interfear, just you set down an' let the little woman git on with it. That way you 'oont git no come back!

*Bob Cross, Downham Market*

*Thanks for your timely advice Bob! – Editor.*

### GAL LIZA IS 'HOOLY' CRORSE!

Well, hare we are a-comin up ter the festive season with maybe a hint o' snow. What hev we gotta think about? Wrappin pearper!

Yew see thar tellin onus, on wun hand, dew yew keep a resoiklin an' then, on tother, sum o' this hare wrappin pearper ent no good fer resoiklin.

Yutu is suffen savidge corse she borte all har pearper in the Janry Sairls. She thort she'd save harself a bit o' money! She allus find harself a bit short cum Chrismuss. Har Billy hed an idea ter mearke a few bob an' sell sum o' them longshore herrin he'd cort.

She say, "I hope yew dint wrap them up in my EDP?"

"No," he say, "I found sum roite pretty pearper in yar cubbard." She're crossed *him* orf har Chrismuss list I kin tell yar!



I hed a latta from mi posh friend who yew know now lives in France. She tell me she went inter wun o' them grete ole supermarkets ter git a loite switch an' a lampshade, an' she cum out wi' a shanderlear. I reckon she's gittin above har stairshun. Wait till I roite ter har agin.

I'd loike ter wish yew an' all yar readers all the best an' good health over the festive season.

Gal Liza, Stalham

Courtesy: The Eastern Daily Press  
(Previously published circa 2004)

### NEWS FROM BLAKENEY

I received *The Merry Mawkin*, No. 26, from a mutual friend and, to my delight, found it very amusing! I have circulated it around our village hoping to find some new members for you.

The front cover picture [*Blakeney Quay*] dates from 1935 and the stall in the background was usually run for a local charity, mostly for our church. If you look through the roundabout, behind the two men, you will see a lifeboat. I have been told this was the *Carolyn*, which was brought into Blakeney Harbour every summer to be painted and then moored in the pit.

One of the surviving lifeboatmen of that time,



Tony Wright, is a 92-year-old, and his son, John, is involved in the Blakeney History Society.

Judy Pegden, Blakeney

Thanks for dating the photograph, Judy, and also for pointing out the lifeboat to us. — Editor.

### Norfolk Word Search Puzzle Answers

### Answers to Boy Colin's Norfolk Quiz

- Colney.
- Nightingale.
- Eleven.
- Wensum Park.
- A wicker basket.
- Hiring out deck chairs and wind breaks.
- Johnny Gavin.
- In the parish of Acle.
- Elsing.
- The Earl of Orford.



# This Ole Weathers a Rummun

TINA CHAMBERLAIN

HOW ARE YA together? Summer git here arlier now don't ut? Thut fare ta start somewhere about Earprul an thut finish end a June time. I can remember when I was a young Mawther, a wearun a tee shut in March n I dint tearke ut orf till end a September. Mind you, thut wus the only one I hed at the time.

The old cold weathers caught up wi us now though, n I reckon thut ull stay here till end a Febrary, thut normally do. I hate a gorn out on these here dark nights, ya never know who you'll bump into, cos I hint got a torch.

The ole ground, thus still wet from orl the rain we're hed. I was a token to a blook the other day n he reckon there could be a shortage a tearters n onions if thut keep too damp. I hope not cos I love ma onions n tearters in a stew. I spus I could git a few onions n string um up in the shud like Father used to. They seem ta keep like thut, but I don't know what ta do ta keep tearters. I spus they keep better in the dark n the dry, but then I spus they'd git shoots on.

I can remember when I wus a young'un an mother used ta git Robin Pears orf the tree down the rood, n she used ta bring um home n put um

in a box unda the bed ta ripen, n we'd hev them Christmas time. They were lovely n juicy ba then, an thut felt like we'd grown um ourselves.

Well thut ont be long now till Christmas, n we can hev some nuts.

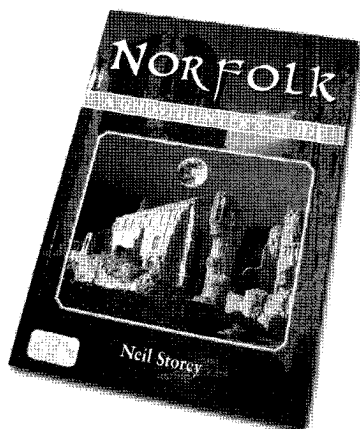
Why is ut us Mawthers allus go sorft wi food jus cos thus Christmas? Diya know I git orl this here stuff in n I hev a few family members round n I spend the rest a the holdy a eatun up orl the stuff wus left – then I moan n groan cos ire put half a stone a weight on, thus a rummun int ut.

Anyhow, um nower gorn, but afore I do, I must just tell ya this; when I delivered ma last letter for the *Mawkin*, to the new Editor, I walked up ta him as he was a leavun his drive in his car; well, he looked at me, n I looked at him, n thus orl we said fa a little while. Then thut orl clicked inta place – he was the chap I always used ta wave at in the mornuns when I went ta work on ma Motorbike. I used ta wave as I went past.

I allus went by his time, if I missed him I was either late or early. Thus a small wuld int ut.

Keep you a troshun Ashley!!

An may all on ya have a very Happy Christmas.



## BOOK REVIEWS APPEARING IN THE NEXT EDITION:

In Number 28, the Spring edition of *The Merry Mawkin*, Peter Brooks will be reviewing Neil Storey's latest book, *Norfolk, A Ghosthunters Guide*, which is in the shops now, priced at £9.99.

Also included will be a review of Keith Skipper's latest volume on *How to Survive in Norfolk*, which will be in the shops in time for Christmas, priced at £12.99.

*It is regretted, due to lack of space, that these books have had to be omitted until the next issue.*



# Follerin' the Plough

ASHLEY GRAY

ON SUNDAY 7 October, a Ploughing Day was held at Burrells' Farm, Wattlefield, just outside Wymondham. It was good to see working horses in action, such as the magnificent 'Robbie' making easy work of pulling a cultivator (*as seen on the front cover*), although there were a great many tractors hard at work as well.

A short poem in Broad Norfolk by John Kett of Cawston sets the scene perfectly.



ASHLEY GRAY

## FOLLERIN' THE PLOUGH

*Up the fild,  
Down the fild,  
The tractor keep a-goin',  
Leavin' lovely furrers all a-shinin' in the sun.  
Where on'y weeks ago  
The barley was a-growin'  
For another haargest the warks bein' done.*

*Up the fild,  
Down the fild,  
Follerin' the tractor,  
White gulls an' peewits fly an' dive around.  
Jus' like they useter dew,  
Follerin' the hosses,  
For the baards allus gather when man tills the ground.*

COURTESY: BY KIND PERMISSION OF JOHN KETT © 1981



ASHLEY GRAY

## SOMETHING TO SAY? WHY NOT PUT PEN TO PAPER?



OR, BETTER STILL, if you have access to a computer, please submit your letter or article as good hard copy printed in a clear font such as Arial or Times Roman. If it's on a disk, or CD, in MS Word, all the better!

Send all material to the Editor at 37 Ashleigh Gardens, Wymondham, Norfolk NR18 0EY. If preferred, **text only** may be sent as an email attachment to: [merrymawkin@ashleygray.waitrose.com](mailto:merrymawkin@ashleygray.waitrose.com) – any photos by post please, together with your contact details for return.

All material for the Spring Issue of *The Merry Mawkin* to the Editor by Monday 18 February 2008, please.



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## Friends of Norfolk Dialect

### MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

I/We wish to join Friends of Norfolk Dialect (FOND) and enclose the membership fee of (*delete as necessary*):

**£6 Single member   £10 Family membership   £20 Educational establishment  
£50 Commercial company**

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms ..... Surname and initials .....

Address .....

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Postcode ..... Telephone.....

Please send completed form (*photocopies accepted*) to :

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Cheques made out to FOND, please.