

# *Delamere and Oakmere*

## *News*

Number 5

February 2006

## **Monkey Business in the Forest**

On 25<sup>th</sup> January Linnere Visitors' Centre played host to some fifty local people who had come to hear details of the Forestry Commission's latest venture into the world of entertainment.

Interest had been sparked by news that a team of French contractors working for *Go Ape* had begun constructing an overhead walkway through part of the forest near to Linnere. *Go Ape*, according to its website, "is a British venture inspired by a French concept". Based near to Bury St. Edmunds, it already has sites in Bracknell Forest, Grizedale Forest (in the Lake District), Moors Valley, Sherwood Forest and Thetford Forest. The Delamere site, where preparations are already well under way, should be ready very soon. Once it is opened, large numbers of adventurers can be expected to make their way to Delamere – certainly, judging by the popularity of other sites, the capacity of the Linnere car parks, already full even on a winter weekday, will be sorely tested.

Unfortunately relations between local residents and representatives of the Forestry Commission have been a little strained over the last year or two, mainly owing to the latter's handling of recent concerts in the forest, and matters have not been helped by this latest episode. It seems that, unlike private individuals, the Commission does not have to seek planning permission for any of its projects, but simple common sense should have dictated that, in the interest of public relations, at least those people living nearby should have been informed of what was planned. They were not. To say that the three families most affected, who live at Linnere Cottages, were unhappy would be an understatement. The rope walkway passes about twenty feet high only yards from the nearest house and the owners can look forward to a constant stream of excited tree walkers seven days a week when the system is open.

It appears that the Forestry representatives, none of whom so far as I can ascertain actually live in Delamere and evidently out of touch with local feeling, were taken aback by the strength of opposition to the project. Their attempts to play down the impact of the influx of visitors and their claims that the walkway could easily be moved to a more remote part of the forest were met with equal scepticism. Why, then, had they built it near to Linnere in the first place?

Their claim that their enterprises are good for local business was refuted the owner of the Station Café where trade suffers heavily on pop concert weekends: customers have been put off by the behaviour of drunks arriving at 3.00pm for evening concerts, urinating and leaving litter and broken bottles and writing graffiti, causing him to close his café early.

Not so many years ago the Forestry Commission's role was very different. A significant local employer, its job was to grow conifers and sell the timber. Much of it went as pit props for the now defunct mining industry. Today there is no market for home-produced timber. Like just about everything else that we used to produce, most (about 90 % apparently) is imported. The Commission has therefore had to turn its attention to other matters – conservation and the environment, and, of course, providing recreation areas for visitors.

To be fair the organisation can claim credit for some excellent achievements in this area: the work at Blakemere Moss and the discovery of several rare species (more about this in a later issue) is a good example. But can we as a country afford to carry on like this? Mining has just about gone; manufacturing is in steep, perhaps irreversible, decline; the countryside seems to be turning into a museum-cum-theme park. And as for farming...Well, that's another story.

**BUS NEWS – See Page 6.**

**What's On**  
**February & March**  
*All events in Delamere  
Community Centre,  
unless indicated  
otherwise.*

Sat., 4<sup>th</sup> Feb.

**Bingo**

8.00pm

All Welcome

Wed., 8<sup>th</sup> Feb.

**Golden Age**

Hot Pot Lunch

(Non-Members Welcome  
but phone Jean Riches ~ 01606  
882094, or Mr.J.Emerton ~  
01270 668934 by 4<sup>th</sup> Feb)

Followed by  
Slide Show ~  
Memorabilia

Sat., 11<sup>th</sup> Feb.

**Bingo**

8.00pm

All Welcome

Sun., 12<sup>th</sup> Feb.

**Oakmere Methodist  
Church**

Anniversary Service  
10.45 am

Preacher:

Rev. Pat Christopher

Mon., 13<sup>th</sup> Feb.

**Community Centre**  
Committee Meeting  
7.15pm

Wed., 15<sup>th</sup> Feb.

**Oakmere Methodist  
Church**

Anniversary Service  
2.30pm

Preacher:

Rev. Bernard Dodd

Fri., 17<sup>th</sup> Feb.

**Toddler & Baby  
Group**

Kelsall Community  
Centre  
10.00 – 11.30 am

Refreshments / crafts & toys  
for toddlers / baby area.

Entry £2.

Contact Julia Timpson\*  
(08700 668932)  
for further details

Sat., 18<sup>th</sup> Feb.

**Bingo**

8.00pm

All Welcome

Mon., 20<sup>th</sup> Feb.

Meeting of  
**Delamere Parish  
Council**  
in the Church Room  
7.30pm

Wed., 22<sup>nd</sup> Feb.

**Golden Age**

Talk & Display of  
Famous Hats  
2.00pm

Sat., 25<sup>th</sup> Feb.

**Bingo**

All Welcome

Tues., 28<sup>th</sup> Feb.

**Prize Bingo**

8.00pm

All Welcome

Fri., 3<sup>rd</sup> March

**Quiz Evening**

7.00 for 7.30pm

See advert. on p.7 for  
details

Mon., 6<sup>th</sup> March

Meeting of  
**Oakmere Parish  
Council**  
at Oakmere Cricket  
Club,  
7.00pm

Tues., 7<sup>th</sup> March

**Bingo**

8.00pm

All Welcome

Wed., 8<sup>th</sup> March

**Golden Age**

Soup & Sandwich  
Lunch

(See above for details.  
Phone by 4<sup>th</sup> March)

Followed by

Talk by Mr. Woods of  
The Primary Care Trust.

Tues., 14<sup>th</sup> March

**Bingo**

8.00pm

All Welcome

Fri., 17<sup>th</sup> March

**Toddler & Baby  
Group**

See above\* for details

Mon., 20<sup>th</sup> March

Meeting of  
**Delamere Parish  
Council**

In the Church Room  
7.30pm

Tues., 21<sup>st</sup> March

**Bingo**

8.00pm

All Welcome

Wed., 22<sup>nd</sup> March

**Golden Age**

Outing to Boundary  
Mill near Colne (Phone  
Mrs. Riches or Mr. Emerton by  
20<sup>th</sup> March for details)

Tues., 28<sup>th</sup> March

**Bingo**

8.00pm

All Welcome

**All club/society secretaries:**

*Please let me know  
well in advance the dates of  
your meetings for the following  
two months; ie, by 16<sup>th</sup> March  
for April/May, by 16<sup>th</sup> May for  
June/July, by 16<sup>th</sup> July for  
August/September, etc. (if you  
want them to be included in  
this diary).*

*Contact me on either  
01829 752723, or by e-mail:  
robin.ackerley@btinternet.com*

## Christmas Delivery

Sincere apologies to everyone whose November /December newsletter didn't arrive. In November I injured my leg and, though I managed to deliver some newsletters, getting in and out of the car was a slow and painful business. Thanks to the team of helpers, most copies were delivered, but many were not. I'm attempting to set things right by including the Christmas copy with this one.

All this highlights one remaining problem. I can't go on editing the newsletter *and* delivering all over Delamere and Oakmere. We badly need more helpers, mainly for the following:

All homes along A556 from Abbey Arms to Oakmere lights. Any part of this;

Crabtree Green Park;

Stoneyford Lane;

Hogshead Lane;

A49 from Oakmere lights to Fox Bank (west side of road only). Any part of this;

Racecourse Lane & Saddlers Lane;

A54 from Sandy Brow to Waterworks House;

Fishpool Road, incl. Ottersbank & Pigwood;

Please contact me on 01829 752723 if you can help with any of the above. There's a likelihood of deliveries to these addresses having to end if no volunteers are forthcoming.

*Robin.*

**Congratulations** to Eric Wright who was awarded the MBE in the New Year Honours List. Eric's award was for fifty years of service to the Forestry Commission and the environment.

Eric is the second forestry employee to have been honoured in recent years. Alan Garner, who sadly died in the autumn, also received the MBE.

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## Grant for Community Centre

The Community Centre committee recently learned that they had been awarded a grant of £3,500 from Vale Royal Borough Council. This will be used a) to buy fifty new chairs and b) for the refurbishment of the old pumping station.

The redundant building, situated in the corner of the car park, was bought from United Utilities for the princely sum of £1. Once refurbished it will provide invaluable storage space for staging and trestle tables at present taking up useful space in the main building.

## Billiards Successes

Delamere billiards players are enjoying another successful season.

The 1<sup>st</sup> team have already secured runners up spot in the Chester League and Darren Robinson has reached the semi-finals of the individual knock-out.

Meanwhile the 2<sup>nd</sup> team are lying second in the Frodsham League. Best wishes for a successful outcome to the season.

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## From My Window

Hurrah! The catkins are out! Spring must be on its way?

On 25<sup>th</sup> November a barn owl spent one hour twenty minutes on a fence post, late in the evening, his head turning this way and that, looking perhaps for a mouse coming to feed on the left-over bird food.

On 26<sup>th</sup> a yellowhammer, a pied wagtail, four jays and four magpies came to the bird table. But where have the sparrows gone? During the summer a flock of about eight came regularly to feed, but not a sign of them now. Perhaps the sighting of a kestrel sitting on a low branch in the sun at the edge of the wood, preening, frightened them away. Turning its back to the sun, it spread its barred tail feathers like a fan and sat there for about ten minutes.

Now the leaves have fallen, the woodland floor can be seen clearly, the squirrels scampering to and fro. They still haven't found the peanuts, preferring to take the seed and bury it. No doubt all kinds of strange plants will be appearing in the summer.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> January the kestrel was sitting on the bird table and had to be shooed away.

Two male and six female pheasants come to feed regularly in the mornings. On 17<sup>th</sup> January a tawny owl was spotted sitting on a post a few feet away from the house. He only stayed a short time, but what a thrill to see him.

On a sad note, a grass snake was found dead on the lawn; he was a big fellow, about three feet long. He showed no sign of injury.

Blue tits and great tits are already inspecting the nest boxes, so I think it is time to put up a few more.

*D.D.*

## BUS SHOCK

**News that Arriva are to cancel the 82 service from Chester to Northwich came as an unwelcome surprise to Delamere and Oakmere people recently.**

Arriva's commercial manager said of the route that "passenger numbers have been dropping significantly over recent years and it has now reached the level where it can no longer operate commercially".

In a press statement released on 30<sup>th</sup> January and headed

**"ARRIVA TO BOOST BUS SERVICES IN CHESHIRE"**

Arriva proudly announced that an improvement to buses between Northwich and Winsford and Crewe will now result in a 15-minute frequency. So take heart, everyone in Delamere and Oakmere; think of all those lucky people who are getting *more* buses instead of none at all. Cheer yourselves up with the following:

*Folks with cars may well ask what the fuss is,  
You may well ask what all of the fuss is.*

*From the Weaver to Deva  
Our friends from Arriva  
Have gone and stopped all of our buses.*

## AND NOW THE GOOD NEWS...

On 31<sup>st</sup> January I rang Cheshire County Council, who proved very helpful. I was told the council are arranging for an emergency service to operate from 27rh

February until 18<sup>th</sup> August. They were unable as yet to tell me who the new operator will be. This service will run to the same timetable as the 82 route, **but with the following amendments:**

The new buses will leave both Chester and Northwich at **twenty minutes to the hour** (the old ones left at 25 past). The one exception is the first bus from Northwich in the morning; this leaves at **7.20.**

*Revised timetables appear on the back page of this issue, together with some additional rail fare information.*

## Water Mains Latest

Just as you thought it was all over...

Rumour has it that, having conquered Black Hill and Station Road, United Utilities are planning an assault on the main road (no doubt with sound and Furey), followed by an overland expedition up to Pale Heights with entrenchments on Rectory Farm, Eddisbury Hill Farm, Organsdale and what was the Old Pale.

Spies have not yet come up with a date for the invasion. Perhaps a few moles could help.....

## And More Cheshire Talk

A number of readers have responded to the *Cheshire Born and Cheshire Bred* feature in the newsletter of "last backend". Nigel Nield (Frith Avenue) and Clive Robinson (Station Road) both wrote with answers to some of the words (Clive knew most of them) and also some new ones; some of them I'd heard before, some I hadn't.

I'd not heard *marefart* (posh word *ragwort*) called a *fleadod* before.; nor had I heard a hedgecop called *hedgebatter*. Clive called this the grass verge of a hedge; I 'd always known it as the small mound of earth and sometimes stone (sandstone round here) that a hedge was built on. I've a theory about this word.

Many of our words go back many centuries, often to other related languages. A famous battle in the Boer War took place at Spion Kop, (from Dutch ie from Afrikaans *kopje*, a small hill). In 1906 this gave its name to the famous stand at Anfield, later just called "the Kop". Our word possibly came over with the Saxons, but today it is shared by Liverpool fans (or was until 1994).

Noticing one day that I was left-handed, my gran said, "Ee lad, tha't key-pawed!" Quite by chance several years later I came across this definition in a book: *Kei ~ Old Danish for left*. The Danes, of course, invaded and settled here eleven hundred years ago (place-names such as Helsby are of Danish origin). Many of their words survived, some, like *key*, presumably unwritten for all these centuries.

After writing the last article I kept thinking of other words I could have put in: one word I hated being called when I was little was *mard* (or should it be *marred*?). Next time, space allowing, I'll put in the answers to last time's list of words, together with some new words from Nigel. And one I heard only last week. Where does a *jowyed* come from?

*It's getting a cock stride lighter every night now that spring's on its way.*



## Delamere's Tragic Loss

55 years ago this month, on 7<sup>th</sup> February, 1951, the Parish of Delamere suffered perhaps the most grievous blow in its history.

It was the evening of Ash Wednesday and the Rector, George Payne, had been travelling round the parish picking up children to take them to the Church Service. He had collected four of his young parishioners from Forest Road, Oakmere – Joan Lovatt, Ernest Cooke and David and Brian Hughes; he then went on to Commonsides to pick up Ann Prince before proceeding in his familiar blue Morris Ten to Crown Cottages to collect Marjorie Rutter. Parking on the opposite side of the main road, he had sent Ernest to call for Miss Rutter. Unfortunately Ernest had approached the wrong gate. Leaving his headlights on, Mr. Payne got out of his car and started to cross the road. He was struck by a car travelling towards Northwich and died instantly. No blame was attached to the driver who had been blinded by the parked car's headlights and had no chance of seeing, let alone avoiding, the dark-clad figure crossing in front of him.

It seemed cruelly ironic that Mr. Payne should have died while carrying out his parochial duties; not only that but that he should have been killed outside the home of someone who could have come second only to him in her devotion

to the church and the parish.

George Septimus Payne (he was the seventh child in a large family) had come to Delamere in 1889 at the age of seven when his father, the redoubtable Doctor Samuel Payne, had taken up the post of Rector. In 1913, succeeding his father, he returned to Delamere from Witton Parish Church, where he had been curate, and remained as Rector of Delamere until his untimely death nearly 38 years later.

The crowds that gathered at his funeral, filling not only the church but the churchyard and drive as well, were tribute to the love and esteem in which the Rector (and he was always known as just that) was held. All who lived in the parish, be they Church of England or Methodist or of no denomination at all, he held in equal regard – and all in turn regarded him as their rector.

The latter years of his life could not have been entirely comfortable. In her final years Mrs. Payne suffered from what today we would presumably identify as Alzheimer's disease. She was eventually confined to hospital, leaving the Rector alone in the large old rectory save for his housekeeper, Miss Annie Edge.

Increasingly handicapped herself and suffering from Parkinson's disease, Annie was perhaps not best qualified to provide domestic comforts. The Rector's home life must have been lonely and cheerless at this time, but never did he trouble his parishioners with his personal problems.

For Mrs. Payne the end came on Christmas Eve, 1949. The Rector told no

one the news of his bereavement, taking the Christmas services as usual, and waiting till Christmas was over. He said afterwards that he didn't wish to spoil other people's Christmas.

For some time his parishioners had worried about the Rector. Always preoccupied with thoughts of his ministry, he paid little attention to road safety and his driving – fortunately at a time when traffic was far lighter than today – had become something of a legend. He was always to be seen driving round his large and scattered parish, invariably accompanied by his Pekingese dog, visiting the sick and the elderly, no matter whether or not they were churchgoers, a true parish priest of a kind rarely encountered in these days.

Mary Rutter of Rectory Farm recently sent me a photograph of the church choir taken, we think, in 1942 (see page 11). She recalls how every Christmas Day and Easter Sunday the choir would attend eight o'clock communion and then go to the rectory for breakfast followed by a football match on the rectory lawn before returning to church for matins at ten thirty. There are twenty choir members in the photograph – and this doesn't include another four away on war duty.

Even when I joined the choir (on Remembrance Sunday, 1947), though the numbers had diminished, there were still enough choirboys to fill the front rows of the old choir stalls.

George Payne's presence, not only in church, but in and around his parish, was in itself an inspiration to his flock.

*Robin Ackerley.*

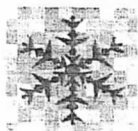


**Delamere Church Choir 1942**

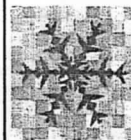
**Back Row:** 1 Betty Wilson (Bolland) 2 Margaret Hood (Jeffs) 6 Colin Woods 8 Cyril Walker 10 Marjorie Rutter 12 Pearl Stubbs (Nixon)

3 Gladys Walker 4 Derek Ashworth 5 Jim Yardley 7 Joe Gregory 9 Herbert Pixton (organist) 11 Mary Ford (Rutter)  
**Front Row:** 1 John Leathwood 3 Maurice Bettley 5 Rev. Paterson Morgan 6 Rev. George Payne 8 Neville Bettley 9 Jim Gore  
2 Donald Wilcox 4 Vic Bettley 7 Alan Gore 10 Derek Bettley

Absent on War Duty: Noel Billington Bob Jeffs Colin Jones Tom Stretch. Absent from photo: Norman Ackerley (lay reader)



## **TREAT YOURSELF TO AN ART WORKSHOP VOUCHER**



### **Art Workshop The Edge of Delemere Forest**

Come and enjoy an art session creating a picture capturing the local landscape and wildlife in pastels.

New skills learnt

All abilities welcome

Warm and friendly environment

A recognised way to relieve stress

All materials included

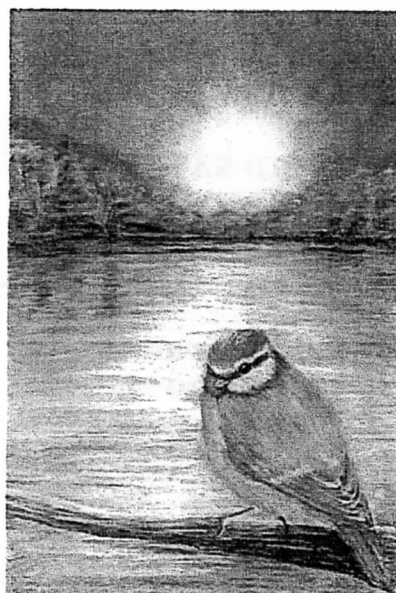
Lunch included

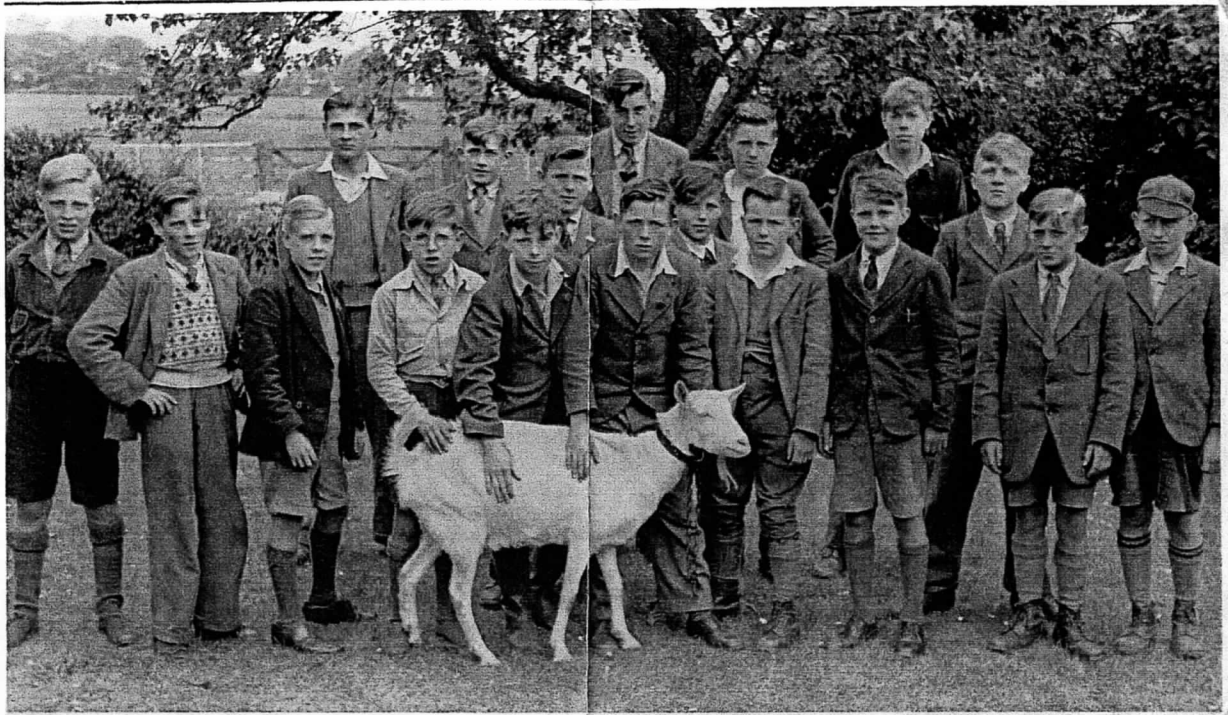
Saturdays 10:30am - 3:30pm

£20.00

Please call for details

07904 435232





**Delamere School Senior Boys. Summer 1949.**

How many can you name? And who can remember the goat's name? As usual, there are no prizes.

## School's Anniversary Plans

Founded in 1846 Delamere School is in the early stages of preparations for a full scale celebration of its 160th anniversary this summer.

Headteacher Stephen Docking would welcome contacts from former pupils with offers of involvement in the celebrations, memories of and/or photographs from the past or just with news of themselves and their contemporaries in the years since they left. Does anyone know who is the oldest former pupil? I know of one who left in 1930.

There are plans to create a celebration garden near the oak trees. Offers of help with this would be appreciated.

If you have anything to offer, contact Mr. Docking at the school, or e-mail him at: [head@delamere.cheshire.sch.uk](mailto:head@delamere.cheshire.sch.uk)

## New Building

Work starts in early February on an extension to the rear of the main building. Among other facilities the block will contain new toilets. Delamere School is, of course, a listed building and great care has been taken to design an extension in keeping with the original building. The block should be ready by late April.

## Football

In the first match of the term, against Huntington C.P., the girls lost 6-0, but the boys maintained their winning run of last term winning 3-1.

# Fame

It's not just in these pages that Delamere School makes the news. In March a rival publication – **Cheshire Life** no less - will feature the school as it approaches its 160th birthday.

## Forthcoming Events

Tues – Thurs, 7<sup>th</sup> -9<sup>th</sup> Feb. ~ **Book Fair**

Thurs., 9<sup>th</sup> Feb. ~ **Disco**

Mon., 13th Feb. ~ **Governors' Meeting**

Mon., 20<sup>th</sup> – Fri., 24<sup>th</sup> Feb. **Half Term**

Mon., 27<sup>th</sup> Feb. **Inset Day**

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Thanks to Violet Woodward of Racecourse Lane we've now identified all but two of the 1959 infants class.

My thanks to Beth Knowles for her help with scanning of photos & adverts.