

BEKESBOURNE

Correspondent: Jill Thomas,
Cobham Court, Bekesbourne CT4
5ET, phone 01227 832573.

Carols: Thank you to Clive and Cheryl of the Unicorn for hosting the annual carols evening, to Stuart Field and Dave Cutting for the musical accompaniment, and to Hoverspeed for raffle prizes. The raffle added more than £120 to the funds raised this year by the Friends of Bekesbourne Church.

100 Club: The new local lottery now has nearly 70 members. It is expected that the target of 100 members will be reached by the date of the first draw on January 31.

Jan. 4th 2001

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Anyone wishing to join should obtain an application form from Joan Atkins, Jane Millyard, Gill Moon or Cheryl Barker as soon as possible. Numbers will be limited to 100.

Council: The next parish council meeting will be held on Monday, January 15, at 7.30pm, in Bekesbourne Village Hall.

Jumble sale: Jumble is needed for the Friends of Bekesbourne Church sale to be held in Bekesbourne Village Hall, at 10.30am, on January 27. If you have spent the Christmas break tidying your cupboards, phone Jennifer Skinner (768925) or Jane Shorrocks (832133) to arrange for collection.

Church: Pat Kusel will lead the family service on Sunday at 10am. Note the new timing of this service which now takes place on the first Sunday of the month.

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BISHOPSBOURNE

Correspondent: Malcolm Mitchell,
The Old Cottage, Bishopsbourne
CT4 5HT, phone 01227 830645.

New rector: The Rev David Roper, the new rector for Bishopsbourne and the three other parishes in the Barham Downs benefice, is anxious to get to know as many parishioners as quickly as he can.

Writing the parish magazine for January, Mr Roper says: "A new year, a new ministry, a new start. There is much for me to do in getting to know the people and churches of the parishes the Bishop has given me charge of.

"I first need to get to know the people of our villages. I intend to visit as much as possible during the next few months and will be pleased to receive requests from parishioners and especially from

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any who are housebound.”

Mr Roper said he and his wife, Chris, wanted to thank everyone who had helped to make them feel so welcome since their arrival in early December.

They also thanked all the churchwardens who had continued the management of the four churches during the time since the departure of Canon Alan Duke to become chaplain to the Bishop in Canterbury.

Anyone wishing to receive a visit from the Rector can contact him at The Rectory, Barham, phone 01227 831340.

Parish church: The rector will celebrate Communion at St Mary the Virgin Church, on Sunday, at 9.30am. Otherwise, parishioners are invited to the following services in other churches within the united Barham Downs benefice: 8am, Communion at St John's, Barham; 11am, family service at St Giles's, Kingston; 6pm, Epiphany service, St John's, Barham.

In addition, parishioners are reminded that Communion is celebrated at 10.30am every Wednesday at Barham church, where the rector also says morning prayer from Tuesday to Saturday at 8am. All are welcome.

Village magazine: Villagers have been invited by the magazine editor, Carol Arter, to submit articles (or poems) about the ongoing flooding situation in the village. All contributions should be sent to Carol at 5 Greenacre, Kingston (phone 01227 830068) by Monday, January 15.

Birdwatch: Several sightings of a white stork have been reported at various parts of Bishopsbourne and Kingston. It is believed to have blown off course while migrating from Europe to Africa.

As it is said to like marshes and wet meadows it should feel at home in the flooded fields of the

Flooding: The cold, dry spell of weather over Christmas and the New Year brought both good and bad news. On the good side was a decrease in the amount of floodwater in the Nailbourne and in The Street, Rose Lane and Frog Lane.

However, the subsequent freezing resulted in treacherous road surfaces, particularly on Station Hill where residents used salt and grit provided by the parish council for use on the highway to rid their own drives of snow and ice, but entirely ignored the public road.

Residents are reminded by the parish council that the grit and salt are intended for the highway and urge them to be public-spirited enough to scatter it where it should be scattered.

The stormy weather of New Year's Eve resulted in river levels rising again, with consequent further flooding of gardens and fields.

Although some villagers are complaining about the noise from the three pumps which are kept going 24 hours a day, the pumps are carrying out a valuable service in keeping water levels down on the road surface, making it easier for motorists and pedestrians to get in and out of the village, and easing pressure on the sewerage system, enabling people living in houses along The Street to use their lavatories and kitchen equipment.

Without the pumps there would be a rapid rise in sewage leaking from manhole covers, bringing renewed fears of health risks.

Crimewatch: As if flooding was not bad enough, one elderly woman's home in the village, which had been surrounded by water, forcing her to move to her daughter's home for the holiday period, was broken into by burglars on New Year's Eve. Antique furniture worth £15,000 was stolen.

Recreation ground: The parish council has been informed that the transfer has been completed of the ownership of the children's recreation ground from Richard Neame to the council.

Mr Neame made a gift of the land to the parish council for use as a recreation ground, subject to the council paying the costs of the transfer. The city council legal department acted on behalf of the parish council and has reported that the transfer has now been

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BRIDGE

Correspondent: John Anderson, 7 Dering Road, Bridge, Canterbury CT4 5NA.

Retirement: At a reception after the December parish council meeting, the chairman John Anderson on behalf of all the Bridge councillors presented a store token and bouquet in appreciation of the hard work, and devotion to duty as parish clerk, given by Janet Potter over the last

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two years.

Janet and her husband Robert now hope to spend more time with their family living in France.

Carols: In addition to the choir singing around the hostelrys reported last week, the same group sang on Christmas Eve outside the Bridgeway Stores, which provided tea, and Laurie Wakeham butchers which provided sweets.

During the morning the group raised a further £79.04 making the total of £212.88 for the Demelza House Children's Hospice. The choir thanks all who contributed.

New: A new host is taking over from Andrew Hills at the Red Lion, High Street on Monday.

He is John Leeming, who hopes to start catering on Saturday, January 13. It is hoped his stay will be a long and happy one.

FISH scheme: A coffee pop-in will be held in the village hall, on Wednesday, January 10, from 10 to 11.15am.

Council: The parish council will meet in the Hunter Room of the village hall, at 7.30pm on Thursday, January 11. All parishioners are welcome.

Church services: 8am, BCP Communion St Mary's Church, Patricbourne; 10am Communion, St Peter's Church, Bridge; 11am Bridge Methodist Church (covenant service) with the Rev George Baugh.

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BEKESBOURNE

Correspondent: Jill Thomas,
Cobham Courts, Bekesbourne CT4
5ET, phone 01227 832573.

Lunch: Bekesbourne's senior citizens lunched at the Unicorn on Saturday. Thanks are due to Jack Gater and the rest of the village hall management committee for organising and funding this annual event.

Anyone who was unable to attend received a voucher towards a home-based celebration.

100 Club: The first draw will take place on January 31. Anyone wishing to take up one of the few remaining numbers is urged to speak to Joan Atkins, Jane Millyard, Gill Moon or Cheryl Barker as soon as possible.

Council: There will be a parish council meeting on Monday, at 7.30pm, in the village hall. The agenda can be viewed on the parish notice boards from today (Thursday). All parishioners are welcome to attend meetings, which are held bi-monthly.

Walk: The January walk was a two-hour ramble in sunshine from Sandwich Quay across the flats to Sandwich Bay and back again across the water-logged links of the golf course. The route took in part of the Saxon Shore way and it has been suggested that some of the other walks this year should explore other sections of this coastline footpath.

The next walk will be on Wednesday, February 7 and will start as usual from the car park at the village hall; destination to be advised.

Bellringers: The six bells of St Peter's tower are regularly rung by the team of ringers captained by David Farbrace. Practice takes place on Monday evenings at 7.30pm.

New ringers are always welcome and anyone wishing to join is asked to contact the secretary, Gill Moon, on 832134.

Church: The Rev Paul Filmer will take BCP Communion, at 8am, on Sunday.

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BISHOPSBOURNE

**Correspondent: Malcolm Mitchell,
The Old Cottage, Bishopsbourne,
CT4 5HT, phone 01227 830645.**

Church services: Parishioners are urged to take note of changes in the traditional timings of services throughout the four parishes that make up the Barham Downs Benefice – Bishopsbourne, Barham, Kingston and Womenswold.

For example, matins is usually at 11am at St Mary the Virgin Church, Bishopsbourne, on the second Sunday in the month. However, this Sunday – the second of the month – the Matins at St Mary's will start at 9.30am.

The rector, the Rev David Roper, said the re-timing of the main services across the benefice was planned to achieve a degree of regularity and uniformity.

Arrangements and timings of services would be among topics to be discussed at a joint study day for parochial church councillors in March and at a benefice day conference for all churchgoers planned for July.

Other church services on Sunday are: 8am, Communion at St Margaret's, Womenswold; 9.30am, Sung Eucharist, St John's, Barham, 6pm, Evensong, St Giles's, Kingston.

Writing in his Pewsheet this week, the rector said: "The new year brought with it the introduction to all churches of the new Common Worship services. This, I believe, is nothing to fear but gives us an opportunity to look afresh at our worship.

"This we will begin to do over the next few months and I hope you will all feel part of the discussions and decision-making."

The new forms of service will be a theme for Lent and will also be discussed at the church council's study day and the benefice day conference.

The rector has indicated that he does not intend to read out parish events announcements during services as a matter of course.

Instead, they will be published in his weekly Pewsheets which will be available at Sunday services. Items for inclusion, whether church or community-based, should be brought to the rector's attention by Friday each week.

He can be contacted at the Rectory, Barham (01227 831340).

Good cheer: An evening of conviviality is promised (honestly!) by landlord of the Mermaid pub, Colin Relf, on Tuesday, with a visit from the Whitstable Hoodeners.

The fun will start between 8 and 9pm when traditional hoodening will be followed by "much singing."

Flooding: Villagers were relieved when the downpours forecast by weather experts at the weekend did not materialise. In fact, the dry, sunny weather produced a dramatic drop in water table levels throughout the village, although the flow of the Nailbourne continues unabated.

Pumps have been kept running 24 hours a day in The Street and in Frog Lane to ease pressure on sewers and keep floodwater to a minimum level so that it can easily be managed by small cars and pedestrians.

Villagers have welcomed news that a bridge will be provided over the ford in Rose Lane to provide constant access to and exit from the village, whatever the level of the river, which is expected to flow until May or June. Work is expected to start today (Thursday).

Also welcome to villagers living at the Frog Lane end of The Street is the announcement that the city council is investigating the possibility of installing a permanent electric-powered pump in place of the noisy diesel one by the bridge in Frog Lane.

This would require a more powerful supply of current than the ordinary domestic supply and Seeboard is being asked to look into it as a matter of urgency.

Council: The next parish council meeting will be held on Wednesday, at 7.30pm, in the Conrad Hall.

Items to be discussed includes the flooding situation and updates on the acquisition of the Neame Meadow recreation ground and the siting of seasonal workers' caravans at Middle Pett Farm, Pett Bottom.

There will be an opportunity for villagers to raise topics before the start of the formal business agenda.

BRIDGE

Correspondent: John Anderson, 7 Dering Road, Bridge, Canterbury, CT4 5NA, phone 830260.

Saxon Lodge: The Christmas bring and buy, raffle and refreshments raised £250 for the Demelza House Children's Hospice appeal.

Betty Richards, the proprietor, thanks all who helped or supported. The giant teddy bear was won by Cllr Bill Oakey who generously returned it so that it may be re-raffled at a future event.

Christingle: The Christingle service for the benefice was held in St Peter's Church, Bridge, on Christmas Eve. The Rev Paul

Filmer compiled and led the service, aided by Margaret Clarke, the lay reader. The children also helped with readings and prayers.

The collection raised £226 for The Children's Society. The local secretary Kathy Eynon thanks all those who attended and made this result possible.

During the year a total of £720.52 was raised in Bridge for the society's work with homeless and disadvantaged children, and families in need.

Festival: A meeting of the Bridge Festival Committee, formed last year to celebrate the Millennium, is to hold a public meeting in the Hunter Room of the village hall on Tuesday, at 7.30pm. This is to explore the possibilities of promoting a similar event annually after the successful summer celebration.

The committee would like as many village organisations and individuals to attend as possible, for the input of fresh ideas.

WI: Bridge with Patricxbourne monthly meeting will be held in Bridge Village Hall at 7.30pm, on Tuesday. The speaker will be John Anderson retired chief hotel inspector for The Royal Automobile Club, on The Ramblings of a Hotel Inspector.

The competition is for the most useless article in your kitchen. New members and visitors will be welcomed.

Thank You: Dr Stewart Coltart on behalf of the oncology unit at Kent and Canterbury Hospital thanks Nailbourne Group of the League of Friends of the Canterbury Hospitals, and its supporters, for raising just over £900 from a string of events, to purchase computer and digital camera equipment for their department.

The department is delighted with the equipment which will aid monitoring patients' progress and be a useful teaching aid as well.

Church news: A caring and sharing group is being formed for women throughout the benefice at the Vicarage fortnightly on Mondays from January 15, at 7.30pm. This is not only for a coffee and a chat, but to learn new skills, have cookery demonstrations or listen to guest speakers.

It will also be arranging social trips. For the meeting on January 29 members are asked to take a favourite record or poem. For more information contact Judy Filmer, 830250.

Services: On Sunday, 10am Matins is at St Mary's Church, Patricxbourne; 11am family service and 6pm Evensong at St Peter's Church, Bridge, and 11am Bridge Methodist Church Service led by the Rev David Marshall.

4 January 11, 2001

Village hails victory in bridge battle



AMPHIBIAN ATTEMPT: The road at the Black Robin, Kingston, under water
9A/6524E/01

by Gerry Warren

LONG-SUFFERING villagers at Bishopsbourne have won their battle for a bridge to cross the flood waters which have brought misery to the community.

The city council first claimed the relief bridge, estimated to cost £10,000, was too expensive for the village, despite it being cut off at times.

But continued pressure from the parish council has persuaded the authority to relent and the bridge is expected to be put up across the ford at the bottom of Rose Lane today (Thursday).

The cost is being shared between the city and county councils.

Parish council chairman Malcolm Mitchell said: "This is a victory for common sense. Originally, highway engineers



RIVER VALLEY: For the first time in memory the Petham Nailbourne flows through the fields near Kenfield
5/6560E/01

approached the matter purely on cost grounds.

"They did not seem to want to take on board the humanitarian issues.

"Although flood levels are down, any appreciable down-pour could result in the levels rising to those of December, when it was impossible to get in and out of the village with a small car. Continued pumping

at the Frog Lane end of the village has helped keep the water down, but when the pump has broken down the road soon became impassable.

"The only permanent solution is a bridge, which will guarantee we can get in and out whenever the flood levels return."

City councillor Bill Oakey, who has been lobbying the

authorities for action, said the bridge would prove a long-term investment for the rural communities affected by flooding.

"The flooding has caused a lot of heartache for people and the bridge will bring relief in a similar crisis," he said.

"But we are disappointed with the Environment Agency and the slow response of Southern Water."



WARNING SIGN: The river flowing through Patrixbourne

Engineers are also considering the permanent provision of an electric pump in Frog Lane, but it will require a stronger electricity supply than is presently available. Seaboard is said to be investigating.

The road through Barham and Kingston still floods after fresh rainfall, as it did on Friday. But it is not as deep as it has been and is passable with care.

Friday's rain also caused flooding in Hackington Road, Tyler Hill, and Beaconsfield Road, Canterbury.

The flooding has provided a picturesque view from the Chatham Downs road, as the Petham Nailbourne is flowing for the first time in memory. But it is said to be bad news for farmers who are struggling with the water-logged ground.

Weather watcher and retired farmer Tom Castle, from Petham, said: "The last time the Chartham valley looked like this was in 1937 when we had similar levels of rainfall.

"The first week in January has been average, with around one-and-a-quarter inches.

"But the water table is brimming at the moment and farmers are having a tough time. It will only take a decent downpour to bring back the floods."

14A/6524E/01
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New bridge proves its worth in hours

by Gerry Warren

COUNCIL officials faced with a bill of £10,000 thought it was a bridge too far.

But villagers at Bishopsbourne, who endured flood misery for months, finally persuaded them otherwise.

So engineers set to work on Thursday to build the relief crossing over the ford in Rose Lane.

It means residents who have been cut off at times by the overflowing Nailbourne have a vital, safe route in and out of the village.

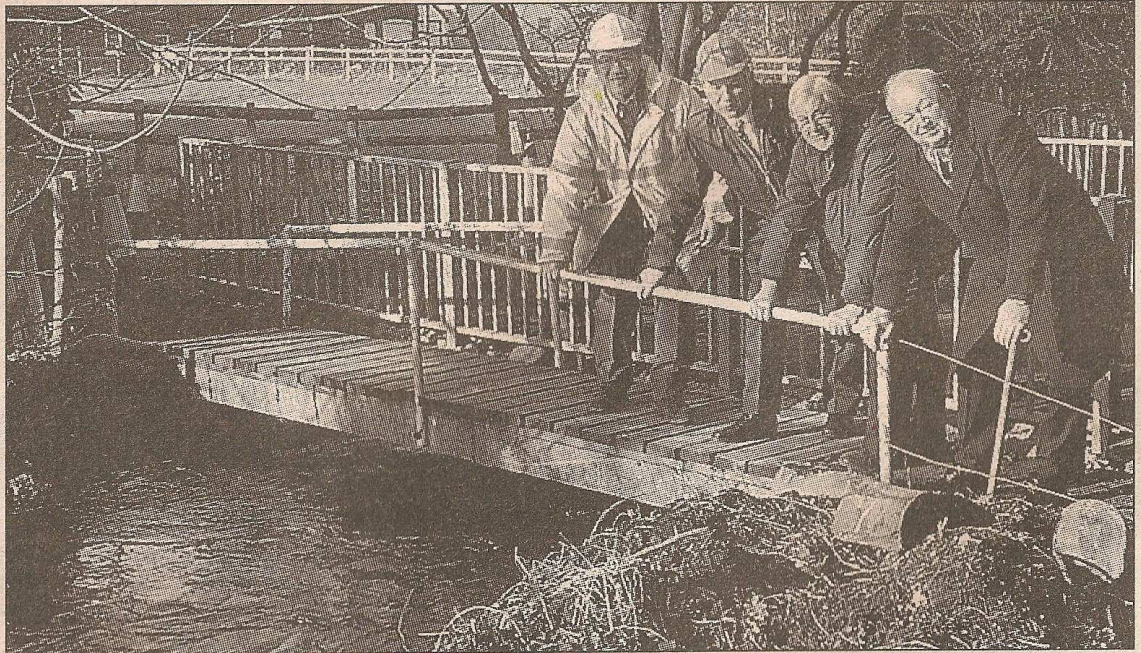
The city and county councils are sharing the cost of the bridge, which is only temporarily in place while flood-water continues to threaten access to the village.

The concrete and steel structure took two days to erect and has a weight limit of three tons.

It was welcomed by parish council chairman Malcolm Mitchell who has been in constant negotiations with the authorities.

He said it was regrettable the authority had not acted when he first appealed for the crossing in November as the worst flooding in memory cut off the village.

At the time officials said the solution was too expensive



ON THE BRIDGE: Engineer Paul Lo, head of engineering Viv Pritchard, parish council chairman Malcolm Mitchell and city councillor Bill Oakey *kg1609gw15-1-01.jpg*

but villagers criticised the city council for putting the cost before the humanitarian need of the community.

The value of the bridge became evident on Friday when a Southern Water pump used to reduce pressure on sewers in the Park Lane area caught fire and was put out of action.

The flood water at Frog Lane deepened until the road became almost impassable to all but bigger vehicles, leav-

ing the Rose Lane bridge as the only guaranteed way out.

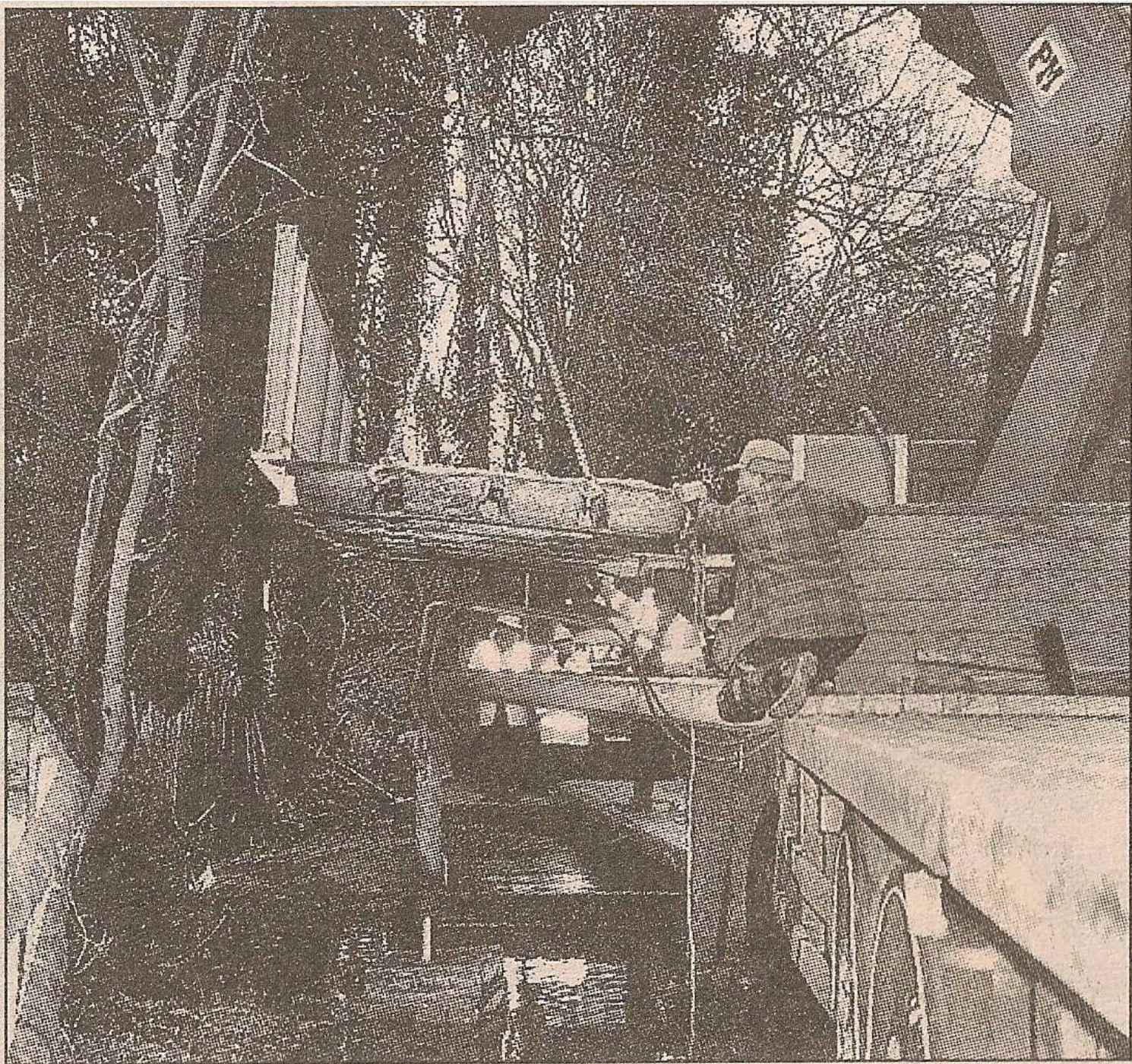
Mr Mitchell said: "When officials were saying the cost of the bridge could not be justified I argued that the council and Southern Water could not guarantee keeping their pumps going 24 hours a day for 100 days - and Friday proved me right."

City council head of engineering Viv Pritchard said the bridge would be in place until the flood threat subsided.

The structure will then be put in storage for use in similar circumstances in the village or elsewhere.

But Mr Mitchell and city councillor Bill Oakey say that longer-term remedies had to be sought to cure the Nailbourne flooding problems.

Cllr Oakey said he would continue to fight to prevent development in the flood plain which many believe increases the threat of flooding.



ON LOCATION: Workers place the temporary bridge over the ford in Rose Lane

BRIDGE

Correspondent: John Anderson, 7 Dering Road, Bridge, Canterbury CT4 5NA.

Gardeners: The annual meeting of the Nailbourne Horticultural Society will be held in the village hall on Tuesday, at 7.30pm. Before the business of the evening, Barbara Beevin, Sainsbury's home economist and regional speaker will be talking about the company and its products.

Following the meeting, members will have the opportunity to renew subscriptions and be entered into the draw for tickets for the Chelsea Flower Show in May. They are looking forward to welcoming exciting and new members.

They are also looking for new committee members and anyone who is interested should get in touch with the secretary on 830057 or any member of the committee, or volunteer on the night.

Inn: On Sunday, January 8, a farewell party was given at the Red Lion to mark the retirement of Andrew Hills and his partner Penny after seven years providing an excellent service to the village.

As a token of their customers' regard, and on their behalf, they were presented by the chairman of the parish council John Anderson with an engraved salver and an indoor garden.

On the following Friday there was another party with a buffet and disco to welcome the new landlord John Leeming and his family to the village. John has announced that a full menu of snacks and meals is now available.

His first Sunday evening gig on January 21 will be Partners in Crime a talented duo.

Gig: Tomorrow (Friday) evening at the White Horse Inn, Three Blind Mice jazz is offered. On Friday, January 26, there is a Burns Night supper. For booking or details ring 01227 830249.

Library: The revised weekly timetable for the Kent mobile service for books and information in Bridge is Thursdays 4 to 5pm, at Greencourt.

Church services: On Sunday, 10am Communion is at St Peter's Church and 11am Methodist Church service is led by the Rev Donald Lugg.

PARISH COUNCIL

Tele-cottage: Councillors agreed that a survey should be carried out to establish interest in the village.

Streets and footways: The two road signs which had been turned round have now been returned to their correct position although one has since again been turned.

Kent Highways have been written to confirm that the obstruction by branches of the London sign at the top of Town Hill is to be cleared as soon as possible and the drains requiring attention at Pett Hill, Town Hill and Bridge Hill have been added to the contractors list for attention.

Following the removal of the footbridge in Mill Lane the county council's bridge engineer will be contacting the parish council with

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regard to proposals for its replacement. A request for the footpath at Renville to be extended has been received and the parish council will be contacting Kent Highways regarding this matter.

Recreation ground: Following problems with the recreation equipment, Playdale Playgrounds are arranging for their inspection and maintenance engineer to make a site visit within two or three weeks to inspect and make recommendations on the units in question.

Vandalism: The post office bench was substantially vandalised during the Christmas holiday and reported to the police. Councillors agreed unanimously to replace the bench with a robust wooden seat.

Planning applications: No new applications were received. The following application had been notified as granted: Replacement garage/store and erection of 1.8 metre high wall to rear at 45a High Street, Bridge.

Talk: Cllr W. Oakey attended the meeting from 8.25pm and was invited by the chairman to address the council on matters of flooding and possible information technology funding.

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BRIDGE

Correspondent: John Anderson, 7 Dering Road, Bridge, Canterbury, CT4 5NA, phone 830260.

WI: At this month's meeting, the talk Ramblings of a Hotel Inspector was given by John Anderson, retired chief hotel inspector for the RAC and a resident in the village.

The method of inspection for hotels was explained, coupled with a number of humorous anecdotes of Mr Anderson's experience as an inspector. He was thanked by Pat Hulyar.

The competition for the most useless kitchen article was won by Joyce Hopkins, with an unidentifiable piece of plastic. On Tuesday, February 20, in the village hall, at 7.30pm, the talk Boots, Backpacks and Blisters will be given by Mr R. Black.

The competition will be for My Favourite Brooch.

Councillors: Surgeries for both Bridge and Bishopsbourne by city councillor Bill Oakey, will take place in the Methodist Church, Patrixbourne Road, Bridge, between 10am and noon on February 17, April 21, June 16, August 18 and October 20.

Parish councillors are welcome to attend and residents have the opportunity to bring matters of importance to the attention of their city councillor.

Pudding evening: An evening of indulgence with a variety of both savoury and sweet delights, in aid of local churches, will be held at the village hall, on Saturday, February 3 at 7.30pm; tickets £5. For more details phone 830668 or 830947.

Church services: On Sunday, 8am BCP Communion with the Rev Paul Filmer, is at St Peter's Church, Bridge; 10am Communion with Mr Filmer, at St Mary's Church, Patrixbourne, and 11am Bridge Methodist Church service with the Rev Maurice Weatherup.