

St John's Church

serving Stanborough, Lemsford, Cromer Hyde



December 2024 / January 2025 **£1**

Photos from St John's School



Photos:

Top left: Remembrance.

Right: Our Class wreaths

Bottom Left: Pictures from our Silent Disco

The Light is Coming!

Goodness me, it's dark! I'm 50(ish) and it still surprises me every year how quickly the darkness creeps in. Many of us are waking up in the dark, heading out in the dark, and coming home in the dark. This year, I've even asked Santa for one of those high-lumen lights just to help me get out of bed!

For some, this season brings cosiness – a time to settle in with hot chocolate, mulled wine, and open fires. But for others, the lack of sunlight brings real challenges, from low mood to deezzer struggles.

Thankfully, Christmas is just around the corner with its twinkling lights and joyful gatherings, brightening even the darkest streets. And at St John's, we'll be sharing in that Christmas joy at our services (see pages 4 & 8 for details). We'd love you to join us!

But I know that, even with all the festive lights, for some, it still feels dark. Perhaps this is your first Christmas without someone you love. Perhaps illness, loss, or personal challenges are weighing on you. Or maybe you're simply feeling weary and alone.

If that resonates, know that Christmas is especially for you. Not



the sentimental version we often see in adverts, but the deeper message – that Jesus entered a world filled with uncertainty, pain, and struggle. He came to share in our challenges so that we would never face them alone. Above all, he came to bring light into our darkest times, breaking through the shadows to show us ways to find hope and joy again.

The light is indeed coming. From December 21st, the days will slowly lengthen, and the sun will start to return. This Christmas and New Year, may God's light shine brightly in each of your lives, bringing you peace, warmth, and hope.

Wishing you a blessed and joyful Christmas!

Rev'd Kathryn

Cover Photo: *The Large Cowper Madonna*, painted by Raphael in 1509. It was bought by the third Earl Cowper in 1775 and hung in Panshanger House before being sold in 1928; it is now in the National Gallery of Art, Washington DC



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Celebrate Christmas at St John's!

December 15th

4:00pm All-Together Carols by Candlelight

A wonder-filled service of well known carols and readings
for all ages

December 22nd

11:00am Lessons and Carols

Traditional readings and carols

Christmas Eve

3:00pm Children's Crib Service

A lively retelling of the Christmas story

11:00pm Midnight Mass

The special first service of Christmas

Christmas Day

8:00am Traditional Said Holy Communion

A quieter start to Christmas morning

11:00am All-Together Communion

A joyful all-age service

January 19th

4:00pm Christingle Service

The classic orange and sweet celebration of Jesus' birth -
with pizza!

Christmas Services and Events

As usual there are lots of things going on over Christmas. Opposite (page 4) you'll see a poster of what we might term 'special events', but this is mixed in with our 'regular services' including our 'All Together', Sunday Club and Connect@4 services - see page 8. But that's not all as on **Saturday 14th Dec, 4pm we're doing: Carols in the Pub at the Crooked Chimney**. Please come along, and join in if you like!

Quiet Christmas Service – 21st December, 11am (St Michael's Church, Birchwood)

For those who would like a break from the jollity of the Christmas season, Rev Kathryn is offering a Quiet Christmas service at St Michael's Church on 21st December at 11am. This gentle service will offer a peaceful time to reflect, remember, and find comfort in the hope of Christmas.

Service of Thanksgiving & Remembering - 13th Oct at 4pm

We had reflective time that afternoon 'honouring our grief', at our Autumn service of Thanksgiving and Remembering.



All followed by the most amazing cake.

Our next service is on 8th June at 4pm, when hopefully it will be a bit warmer!

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At a recent event attended by Rev Kathryn there was a talk by Furniture Friends, who drew their important work to our attention. This is an article they've written about their project:



Furniture Friends

Furniture Friends is an All Saints Datchworth Church and Community project. We collect donations of good quality furniture and household items that are no longer wanted or needed. We do not charge for collections. We then resupply these essential items free of charge to families and individuals facing challenging circumstances. We only supply via requests from Social Services. This scheme is a practical way of showing God's love to our local communities. Furniture Friends deliver to people of any faith or none.

The places we deliver to are small, and sometimes difficult to access. We can only take small furniture – e.g. single beds or a two seater settee.

Furniture Friends is run entirely by volunteers. Our running expenses are about £3,500 a year. This pays for the van and our designated mobile phone and some essential items that we have to buy.



Our team of volunteers.

A few testimonials (more on our website):

“Hello Furniture Friends. What life savers you are. You have offered so much for a Ukrainian refugee. I am thrilled and I know she will be as well.” Herts Welcomes Refugees

“In so many ways ‘Furniture Friends’ have been a life saver for a young mum – they have delivered bedroom and lounge furniture and changed the lives of this family. This may sound easy but they have all gone out of their way to help either through the organising process or pure muscle power! An awesome charity with awesome volunteers. I cannot thank you enough.” HCC Social Worker

The need is overwhelming. How can you help?

We are desperately short of drivers/deliverers. (Currently we are

(Continued on page 9)

Services

December 2024

1st Advent 1

8 am MP (BCP) 11 am 'All Together' Advent*

8th Advent 2

8 am HC (BCP) 11 am HC with Sunday Club

15th Advent 3

8 am HC (BCP) 11 am HC
4 pm 'All Together' - Carols by Candlelight*

22nd Advent 4

8 am HC (BCP) 11 am Lessons & Carols

24th Christmas Eve

3 pm Crib Service* 11 pm Midnight Mass

25th Christmas Day

8 am HC (BCP) 11 am 'All Together' Holy
Communion*

29th Christmas 1

8 am MP (BCP) 11 am HC

January 2025

5th The Epiphany

8 am MP (BCP) 11 am 'All Together' Epiphany*

12th Epiphany 1 - The Baptism of Christ

8 am HC (BCP) 11 am HC with Sunday Club

19th Epiphany 2

8 am HC (BCP) 11 am Reflective Worship
4 pm Christingle - Christingle-making, a short service
of light and praise, with a pizza party to follow*

26th Epiphany 3

8 am HC (BCP) 11 am HC

*** Services especially suitable for children, and all other ages!**

*HC Holy Communion; MP Morning Prayer (Matins); BCP Book of
Common Prayer; NB Kathryn's day off is Friday each week*

Furniture Friends - *continued*

(Continued from page 7)

collecting /delivering over 100 items a month and we cannot keep up with demand) A few hours a month would be lovely!

Could you donate? We desperately need small tables/small chairs/ wardrobes/ single beds/ bedding. mattresses etc.

FF mobile number – 07599 396111

Please look at our web site – there is a lot more information there:

www.datchworth.com/organisations/furniturefriends

Or talk to us:

Stephen & Catherine Jupp (organisers) 07812 567302, 07811 255311

Connect@4 informal all age worship gathering

◆ Next Connect@4 - 19th January, 4pm - Christingle

We'd love to see you at this **relaxed, interactive worship gathering designed for all ages**. Come join us for a time of faith, fun, and friendship. What to Expect:

- **Engaging Worship** - Enjoy lively music and singing that everyone can join in.
- **Interactive Activities** - Participate in creative activities that bring faith to life.
- **Message for the Day** - Explore a message that speaks to all generations.
- **Community Connection** - Spend time with friends, family, and make new connections in a welcoming environment.
- **Refreshments** - Enjoy light refreshments, often involving delicious cake! [or Pizza - see Christingle]

Whether this is your first time at St John's or you're a regular attendee at other services, we look forward to welcoming you!



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[Did you know The Church has an electoral roll?! - Ed.]

The Church Electoral Roll is a record of those people who are part of St John's church community. It gives those on the Electoral Roll the right to vote on Church matters, attend the Annual Parochial Church Meeting and stand for election to the PCC. But, more importantly, it is a measure of the health and strength of St John's.



Being on the Electoral Roll does not entail signing up to any additional commitments and you can be a full and active member of the church without being on the roll. However, it is important that we have an accurate record of those who are part of our community and contribute to it in any way. If that is you, I would urge you to consider registering for the roll.

Every 6 years, the roll must be completely renewed which means we discard the existing roll and create a new one. 2025 is renewal year. The renewal must be completed by the 2025 AGM which will be on 2nd March 2025.

To qualify to go on the roll, you must be over 16 years of age, baptised and resident either in our Parish or have regularly attended St Johns for at least 6 months. If you have been a regular attendee of St John's in the past but have not been able to attend for personal reasons, such as illness, you are very welcome to rejoin the roll.

I will be in touch directly with all those who are currently on the roll in mid January – if you wish to remain on the roll, you will need to complete a registration form. And, of course, anyone who is involved in church life and wishes to join the roll for the first time can complete a registration form. We would be delighted to add you. Anyone who is currently on the roll but wishes to be removed, need not do anything.

Please look out for further contact from me in the New Year.

Lucy Earl - Electoral Roll Secretary

Lemsford Fete - 2025 by Paul Butler

A quick note to everyone in Lemsford and Stanborough to say that planning for the 2025 village fete is well underway and we had our first brainstorming meeting in October. Fingers crossed the poor weather we had this year won't be repeated in 2025.

As usual, the event will be held on the first Bank Holiday in May, which in 2025 will be Monday 5th May, from 12 noon until 4pm. We're aiming to have a number of our usual popular stalls, with a few new ones, including having the ride-on car arena again for the little ones.

This initial call out is to say if you're having a clear out we'd always be happy to take good condition bric-a-brac, books, dvd's, etc. Equally if

you 'd like to offer your time as a volunteer, pay for a business stall or sponsor an attraction please contact us on:

www.lemsfordfete.co.uk/contact-us/

The fete is an important event in the local community each year in terms of its fundraising capability to both the church and school, but equally as an excellent advert for the local area, school and church communities. It is also a significant part of the local Welwyn Hatfield calendar of events each year, confirmed every year by the number of visitors who come to enjoy it.

Many thanks

Paul Butler, Fete Chair

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In our Sunday Club this term we've been discovering the amazing stories of some familiar Bible names – Joseph, Moses and Joshua. We've dressed up, played games and crafted and even done some science experiments! We've re-enacted the escape from Egypt, and we've spent quieter time remembering God's goodness, just like God's people have always done. These are stories of ordinary people who have become extraordinary as they've trusted God through often very challenging times. God's never-ending love and faithfulness and his promises of rescue and redemption run through every story. Every story points to the fulfilment of those promises in Jesus, His beloved Son, who comes to earth to rescue and redeem us.

The next two months are all about welcoming Jesus again – our light and our hope in the world. There'll be quiet and preparation as we travel through the waiting season of Advent, then all excitement and joy when we reach Christmas. And in our usual St John's tradition, the joy rolls on into January!

What's on?

All together worship is on **Advent Sunday 1st December at 11am**; suitable for all the family, it starts us on the journey to Christmas.

On **Sunday 8th December** it's **Sunday Club** during the morning service at **11am**, with friends, fun,



games and craft. The story this time is Christmas of course, but we'll be starting in an unexpected place!

On **Sunday 15th December at 4pm** we have all-together carols, a lovely reflective service with candlelight and story telling.

Then all are welcome at the **Crib Service on Christmas Eve at 3pm** – a lively retelling of the Christmas story as we all get ready for the big day. And on **Christmas morning** we'll celebrate all together at **11am**.

Sunday Club meets again on January 8th, and last, but by no means least, is our annual **Christingle party on Sunday 19th January at 4pm** and pizza afterwards. All welcome!

Contact Jo Brooks at joholifield@gmail.com or revdkathrynalford@gmail.com for more information about these events or our children's activities at St John's.

Safeguarding!

Stop - don't skip this!

A personal perspective on Safeguarding - *by Frank Puranik - Editor*

These days safeguarding is a top priority for many of us, whether it's in Church or other areas of our lives. For me, it's a constant focus in both work and the Church. We take safeguarding courses and in the Church PCC it's a standing agenda item. And, we're not just ticking boxes - we really do care.

This makes the revelations of abuse, such as in the appalling case of John Smyth QC (see below) particularly painful and troubling.

One thing we should recognise though, is that institutions like churches, schools and youth organisations are not inherently places of abuse. It's rather that they can be targeted by abusers because they provide access to (many) young people and vulnerable adults. Which means the rest of us must be very vigilant and proactive indeed!

The hopeful news is that the Church and many other organisations are making significant strides to ensure safer environments for all. Policies, training, and dedicated safeguarding teams are in place to protect everyone, especially the most vulnerable. As Rev Kathryn's note below reminds us, by working together and staying alert, we can continue to create spaces that are welcoming, caring, and safe for everyone.

Rev Kathryn writes regarding the recent resignation of the Archbishop of Canterbury:

Dear Friends,

Many of you will have heard of the Archbishop of Canterbury's (The Most Reverend Justin Welby) decision to resign his office in light of the Makin Review into the Church of England's handling of serious abuse by John Smyth QC, for which he has taken personal and institutional responsibility.

Archbishop Justin's resignation statement can be found here: <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/press-releases/statement-archbishop-canterbury>

The Bishop of St Albans has also provided a response, which is availa-

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Safeguarding - *continued*

(Continued from page 14)

ble here: <https://www.stalbansdiocese.org/news/makin-smyth-resignation-archbishop-canterbury/>

These are difficult and sad days, and I would ask that we hold in prayer all those who have been affected by the abusive actions of others, both directly and indirectly.

Here at St Michael's, St John's, and throughout the Hatfield team, we are blessed to have dedicated and compassionate Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSO) and PCC members who work tirelessly to ensure our congregations are as safe and welcoming as possible. I am especially grateful to Nikki Spencer (PSO) at St Michael's, Lucy Earl (PSO) and Jo Brooks (Deputy PSO) at St John's, along with our churchwardens, PCC, and each of you for the role you play in this important work.

Together, we strive to keep everyone informed on policies, procedures, and training, fostering a vigilant culture around safeguarding. Safeguarding is a standing item at every PCC meeting, and Nikki, Lucy, and I regularly meet to monitor and support our progress. We are always looking for ways to build on our best practices to make our churches places of welcome, care, safety, and inclusion.

I am deeply grateful for all that our volunteers do to keep our churches running. If you are asked to complete safeguarding training, please make it a priority. If you have any difficulty accessing the training, do reach out to myself, Lucy, or Nikki, and we will gladly assist you.

Please know that if you ever have concerns about safeguarding, or if you have been affected by recent events, you can speak with me, Lucy, Nikki, or any of our safeguarding officers. We are here to listen, support, and, if needed, take action to ensure our churches remain safe and caring communities for everyone.

This past week's events remind us all that safeguarding must be at the heart of our Christian call to love and care for others.

Thank you for everything you all do to keep our community safe and welcoming.

With love,

Rev'd Kathryn

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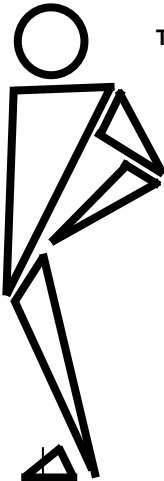
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Hello everyone,

As always, the weeks are flying by with Advent soon to begin and Christmas just around the corner. We have had a busy time since the last Parish Magazine was produced with many special things happening relating to the change of seasons and to the church's calendar.

Our **Remembrance** service was particularly moving this year. Each class had been given the challenge of creating a new Remembrance wreath. The result was 4 different but very lovely wreaths to which all our children contributed. The wreaths are presently displayed in school but during our Remembrance service, led by Rev Kathryn, they were presented in the church and then laid by one of the trees which we all gathered around to reflect on those who have given their lives, so that ours can be peaceful.

This year we are including the **Heart of the Earth project** in our Collective Worship and are using it as the basis of our three RE enrichment days that we are planning. The diocese led project focuses on Climate Change and consists of resources for schools to use to raise awareness of this important issue and to promote a carbon neutral way of life. We had a fantastic day in October where the whole school focussed on the Creation story and our obligation to look after our world: locally,



nationally and worldwide. A beautiful display on our school hall stage display board is being created to share the children's thoughts and reflections on this important subject. Many thanks to Jo who led our school collective worship at the start of the day.

Our Lemsford School Association (LSA) continues to incredibly supportive of the school. So far this term they have already organised a cake sale and a Silent Disco! The latter consisted of children wearing headphones with different music tracks - it worked so well! The children were able to choose the music they wanted to listen to as well as the volume level. Lots of fun was had by all – children and adults alike! We have also had our annual fireworks display which once again was well attended and a great community event. The LSA are now busy organising all kinds of

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News from St John's School - Nov 2024 - Continued

(Continued from page 17)

Christmas fun for the children including a Christmas shopping afternoon, Christmas Jumper Day, parties and, of course, a visit from Father Christmas himself.

We are now busy preparing for **Christmas**. The choir are practising for performances at Stanborough Lodge and Brockett Hall. They will also be singing in the Candle lit service at St John's [Sunday 15th Dec at 4pm - Ed.]

which we are especially looking forward to. Robins and Starlings classes are busy singing, learning lines and organising costumes for their nativity as well.

There is so much to be grateful for and much to look forward to!

We wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

*Love from Michelle Boylan
(Head)*

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This edition's THEN & NOW (on the inside back cover) shows 33 & 35 the Village. The THEN is an image from the early 1900s, the NOW a recent image from the archives. The image between them shows Mr Carter outside number 33 (owner in the 1940s) which was a general store. The strange man in a vintage car is an actor/comedian Freddie Frinton. More about Freddie later.



33 Lemsford Village built before 1833

George Spurling ran number 33 from 1966 as a grocery shop, later adding a bicycle shop which became very successful.

David Sutcliffe, architect, and his partner Ron Starkey, quantity surveyor and their wives owned 33 & 35. Number 33 had been a smithy. During work to strip out the shop and take up the floor, evidence of fire and fuel were found in the centre of the large room at the front, 17x20 feet. No evidence of a chimney. Behind this room is a 16x12ft room linked by a 3ft 6in opening to the end of the passageway with a number of iron brackets and similar still in place.

(Continued on page 20)

LLHG - Know the past to understand the future

(Continued from page 19)



Date	Owner of No. 33	Tenant or owner of No. 33 Lemsford Village
1841		George Westwood, blacksmith, wife Elizabeth, 6 children
1851		George Westwood senior, master blacksmith, wife Elizabeth, 3 sons, George & William are blacksmiths + a daughter.
1861		Elizabeth Westwood, aged 71, son George blacksmith + 2 more children and a grandchild.
1871		George Westwood, aged 49, master blacksmith, wife Hetty
1881		George Westwood and wife Hetty
1891		George Westwood and wife Hetty
1926		Blacksmiths shop empty but a lot of old implements
		Mr & Mrs Painter living in no 35
	Mr Carter	Turned premises into a general village store.
1957	Douglas Graham	Conveyance describes it as 'Millstream Stores, Lemsford formerly the Post Office Stores
1966	George & Katherine Spurling	General store, later included bicycle shop
1973	Margaret Sutcliffe and Dorothy Starkey	1972 consent for shop to become a house and later offices.
1995		Properties sold.

(Continued from page 20)

It is obvious that horses were brought in via the passageway and into the rear room for shoeing.

The whole of number 33 is solid brick built using externally the excellent Luton grey facings which are no longer available. Thus, the whole ground floor of the later built number 33 comprises just 2 rooms and the passageway, probably late Victorian. The first floor was contained within a roof that linked through with number 35. The village shop was created from the smithy at some time and in the late 20s or early 30s the roof was raised about 12 inches as is clearly seen in the gable brickwork and was created into a first-floor cafe with a new staircase up from the shop at the gable end. Formerly, the only access to the yard area behind the 2 properties was an 8ft passageway from the front main road created when number 33 was built, where horses entered the blacksmiths.



35 Lemsford Village According to David Sutcliffe

(Continued on page 22)

(Continued from page 21)



35 Lemsford Village appears always to have been a cottage. Most of the ground floor rooms are in brick but may originally have been timber. First floor rooms are timber. The common wall between 35 and 37 Lemsford Village is timber. Small brick fireplaces in sitting room and dining room. Pitched roof slopes down to its west end but continues its ridge to abut with the slightly higher gable of 33. But concealed are the timbers of an original sloping end which would suit 35 when it was alone. May be C18 or C19. Partially attached to No. 37 Lemsford Village.

The image on the inside back cover of a man in a white coat with staff looking at a man in a veteran car is Mr Carter (name over shop door). The man with top hat in the car is Freddie Frinton (born Frederick Bittiner 17 January 1909-16 October 1968). He was an English comedian, music hall and television actor. He is primarily remembered today as a household name in several central European countries [notably Germany - Ed.] for his 1963 television comedic sketch entitled 'Dinner for One', a perennial national television broadcast New Year's Eve favourite there, whilst being largely forgotten in his home country.

In 1964, at the age of 55, Frinton became a belated success as the plumber husband in the popular television sitcom 'Meet the Wife' which ran for 40 episodes (the wife was played by Thora Hird). The series is mentioned in the Beatles song 'Good Morning Good Morning' with the line 'It's time for tea and 'Meet the Wife'. As a boy, I remember seeing Freddie Frinton and Thora Hird in the 1960s at the end of the pier in Bournemouth playing husband and wife.

The group is happy to share its archive and research with the community and provides walks and talks to groups. For more information, contact us on info@lemsfordhistory.co.uk. Please use the same email address if you want to share memories.

Merry Christmas

Andy



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Grey Herons are magnificent birds. I see them from time to time on lakes within Brookman's Park golf course; even when my golf is awful it is a thrill to catch sight of one, either gliding through the air with its characteristic slow wing-beat, or sitting silently and motionless at the edge of a lake, ever attentive and poised to strike. I recollect a time when there was a flourishing heronry in Lemsford and asked Barry Trevis what had happened to it.

He told me that Herons originally nested in oak trees on the riverbank just downstream of Paine Bridge in Brocket Park, with 6 nests up to 1986. In the middle of the breeding season that year very sadly the entire colony were illegally shot. No culprits were found despite an investigation by the RSPB.

The British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) has organised a nationwide Heronries Census annually since 1928 and it is now the longest running breeding bird census in the world. Following the Brocket Park shooting Barry undertook this survey, submitting details to the BTO via the Herts Bird Club, which has birdwatchers checking Heronries throughout the County. He handed over these duties in 2019 to another member of the Bird Club.

In 1987 there was a nesting attempt in another area of Brocket Park estate, this time within the larch plantation directly behind the cottages numbered 24-28 Lemsford Village. This was successful and numbers increased steadily, peaking at 38 nests in the spring of 2007. That would



have been around the time that I had noticed them.

Subsequently the numbers breeding there have dropped year on year. The most likely reason is that the Herons were moving to islands on the north lake of nearby Stanborough Park (all the other heronries in Herts are on islands). The trees that were planted on those islands had matured giving the birds the security of nesting high in their canopy. Grey Herons have bred at Stanborough since 2011 with 12 nests this year.

One suggestion was that the introduction of Red Kites had led to them preying on young Herons but Barry doubts this. Red Kites are a bird of prey but mainly forage on carrion such as road kill and discarded food items. Also, adult Herons are very capable of protecting their unfledged young from birds of prey and other predators.

Heronry did not breed in Lemsford between 2020 and 2023 but Barry was pleased to note that there were two occupied Heron nests in mid-April this year. Let us hope that Herons continue to flourish here; they are an important bird that we should cherish.

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Prayer for Advent

**Come Lord Jesus, come
and let your light shine through us
so that through our actions
we may be salt for the earth,
a light in people's sight
and that we might reach out to you
in one another,
especially those in need.**

Amen.

CAFOD (Catholic Agency for Overseas Development)

And finally

*Whatever
happened
to the
Three Wise
Men after
they had
presented
their gifts
to Jesus?*

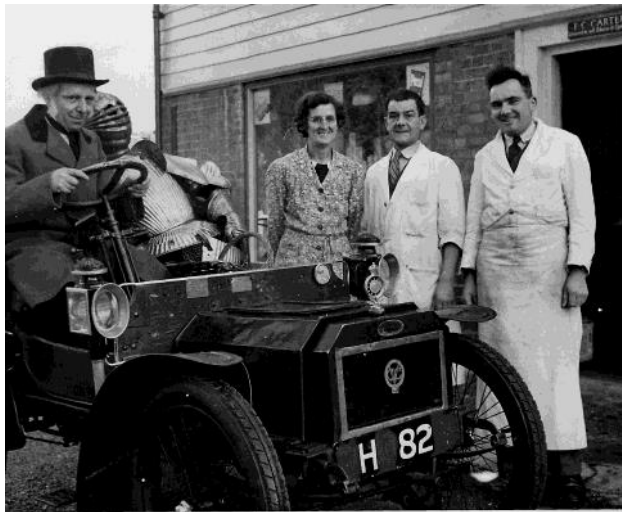




Then:

33 & 35 the Village.
from the early 1900s

[For (much) more on the history of number 33 see the Lemsford Local History Group Article on page 19 - Ed.]



Then:

Mr Carter outside number 33 (owner in the 1940s) which was then a general store.

The strange man in a vintage car is an actor/comedian Freddie Frinton.

[More about Freddie in the LLHG Article - page 19 - Ed.]



Now:

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today

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