

	Memories:	
	Memories of:	Hargrave News Correspondents
	Author:	Nicholas Newman
	Date of Record:	March 2026
	Notes:	Examples of Hargrave news printed in 1989 and 1994 by the Bury Free Press but compiled by local village reporters.

Hargrave News Correspondents

Bury Free Press – News From The Countryside.

The Bury Free Press (BFP) has been serving Suffolk communities since 1855, providing local news, information on upcoming events and increasingly opinions on lifestyle issues. This is in part supported by revenue from commercial and individual advertising.

In addition to stories from its own roving reporters it has also welcomed comments from readers on its 'Letters to the Editor' page and submissions on specific local village news. In the 19th century this was generally clumped together with reports from other villagers, but by 1900 these were assembled under the banner of 'District News'. Through the next century it was rebranded as 'News from the Countryside', 'Countryside News', 'Village Focus', 'Village News' and by 2000 it was called 'Town and Village News'.

The entries for Hargrave when viewed over this period certainly seem to have evolved. Early entries are infrequent, but do cover community gatherings, events and appointments. During the war years further submissions contained the results of fundraising activities to support the troops. The construction of the village hall in the 1920's saw the movement and expansion of entertainment from the schoolroom to the new facility, and this was reflected in press reports. By the 1950's there was frequent reporting of whist drives, complete with winners listed and their prizes. Summer fetes, gymkhanas and other outside activities, although less frequent often covered even longer reports. The BFP editor didn't seem to mind how many column inches were used to explain the results of three-legged races, fancy dress and pet show competitions.

By the 1970's there was a definite shift to including more serious matters, with regular summaries of the minutes of the parish council and village hall committee meetings taking greater prominence to the more frivolous activities. Recurring themes were speeding and heavy traffic, flooding at The Wash, potential loss of public footpaths, the quality of local policing and the postal service, the loss of the bus service, and the condition and viability of the now aging village hall. Representatives of public bodies were often called to attend and account for any perceived failings.

The understandably small Hargrave section of the newspaper also managed to include the activities of the church, methodist chapel, the Boys Brigade, the Women's Institute and the Red Cross Group.

Through this evolution the paper increasingly relied on the skills of the local resident correspondents, who week after week, took the trouble to summarise local news and send in their new copy in time for print deadlines. Also, they had to ensure it was an accurate reflection of events (the need for retractions not welcome), and hopefully it would be written in an easily readable style so that it will be appreciated

by the villagers it was aimed at and any other reader who may browse through this section of the newspaper.

Hargrave News 1989.

The following excerpt from 35+ years in the past is representative of many others submitted by the Hargrave correspondent. Perhaps unusually long it covers many of the matters of concern listed above, along with mentions of those trusted residents who frequently volunteered their time for roles in the community. It is interesting to speculate how many of these issues are still concerning Hargrave residents today?

The following item was printed in the Bury Free Press on the 22nd September 1989.

VILLAGE FETE The village fete was well supported in spite of the inclement weather, and this meant Jacky Gidney, Ann Parnell, Jenny Hassell and Sheila Fain were kept busy serving very welcome teas.

The vintage car belonging to John Rushden found an admiring audience and the contest to guess the value of it was won by John Feacey, the prize being a bottle of whisky. The pet show included a solitary cat amongst the dogs entered. The gymkhana entries were disappointing, but the few children with their ponies enjoyed the various activities organised for them by the numerous helpers, and most went away happily clutching rosettes. At the end of the day about £450 was made for the village hall Improvement Fund and the management committee would like to thank everyone who helped prepare the field, and worked so hard on the day, and also to thank those who so generously donated gifts for the stalls. The next event being planned is a Halloween dance on October 28, to be held at 'Flints' the home of Mr and Mrs Mapperley.

PARISH COUNCIL

Hargrave parish council met in the village hall with Cllr Harry Wiseman in the chair. Also present were Borough Cllr Peter English and two members of the public. There have been seven inquiries in response to the advertisement in the Bury Free Press for a council clerk but only one application has been received, and this was from someone living outside the village. There had been no response from the other advertisements placed on the village notice board and in the parish newsletter. The chairman is in contact with the applicant and Mrs Slade indicated she would continue as clerk until a replacement had appointed.

COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Further inquiries about community councils revealed there are no information leaflets available on the subject as Suffolk is the only county in the country to have such associations. The community councils in Scotland are different, being the equivalent to parish councils in England. Letters received from the community council for Suffolk confirmed the information given by the clerk to the previous meeting that a community council could not legally take over an existing village hall. Community councils were usually formed in villages without facilities and principally undertook fundraising to build a new community centre or to buy land for a playing field. It seemed that when this has been achieved, so many associations find it difficult to know where to direct their energies. It was difficult to see how a community council could benefit a small village the size of Hargrave which already had a village hall and playing field, both of which came under the trusteeship of the parish council with an elected committee to manage the hall. It seemed that community councils in some villages were in the process

of being wound down where they had not taken advice and mistakenly taken over the existing village hall.

VILLAGE SIGN

The artist who painted the village sign has agreed to make good the paintwork, which is badly peeling, as it should have lasted longer than three years. He will remove it to his workshop for repainting.

TREES

75 trees and some hedging have been put on order with St Edmundsbury under their village tree planting scheme. David Upton has agreed to be named as the village tree warden.

WATER

An interesting visit was made to the sewage works at Fornham where representatives of several parish councils were given a conducted tour. A query was raised about the quality of the drinking water supplied to Hargrave and a chemical analysis produced by Anglian Water revealed the supply from bore holes of Barrow Heath and the Risby sources, which supplied the village, were well within the European Community guidelines.

SCHOOL MANAGER

The vice chairman of the parish council, Mrs Janine Taylor, has been nominated as the combined minor authority's representative to the governing body of the Ickworth Park County Primary School.

PLAYING FIELD

The debris left on the playing field, caused when improvised goal posts became entangled in grass cutting machinery, has been cleared away. Mrs Taylor will see if she can obtain some old goal posts from schools which are closing in the area.

POSTAL SERVICES

Complaints had been received that collection times had been removed from the post-box on the green. This has been reported and was being dealt with from Ipswich. Recent problems with late deliveries is only temporary and occurs when the regular staff are on holiday or away sick. The clerk pointed out the difficulties facing a postman/woman new to the area. It took some time to learn the route in this rural area where it is difficult locating addresses when so many houses do not display the house name, and numbers were often not in consecutive order. Also many properties do not have letterboxes, but use a variety of containers placed in varying and sometimes unusual positions to receive the mail.

A new person has to find their way around these like an obstacle course, taking up valuable time. It might not be realised that the postal delivery staff begin work at 5am and sort the mail first and then deliver to Great Saxham, Barrow and Denham before coming to Hargrave.

FOOTPATHS

No objections were raised to the proposed rationalisation of the public footpaths on Southwood Park. These had previously been agreed at a special parish meeting held in 1979, although not implemented. Two new footbridges are in place at the top of Barrow Hill.

PLANNING

The borough council as local planning authority has refused permission for residential development on land along Wickhambrook Road belonging to Mr H. Wiseman, although the parish council had supported the application. A site inspection was held at Chapel Cottages to view the application by Mr

and Mrs Taylor for a first floor rear extension to their listed cottage. The parish council will not object to this as it is in keeping with the existing building.

VILLAGE HALL

The document relating to the removal of the restrictive covenant by Greene King, posed barring the sale of alcohol on the premises, has been signed by the chairman and vice chairman of the parish council as trustees and has been returned to the solicitors for completion. The village hall committee will be responsible for paying the costs.

ROAD SAFETY

Following a recent accident and several near misses at the Ousden road junction, the owner of the garden hedge blocking the view will be asked to co-operate by keeping it well cut back at all times and to consider reducing the height to improve visibility for traffic coming out of the Ousden road when turning right towards Wickhambrook. The area surveyor will be asked for his advice on how best to deal with the problem of lack of visibility for vehicles turning out on to the road from the access to Mill House.

BOTTLE BANK

An offer has been received to supply a bottle bank from a firm in Thetford who are willing to pay £2 per tonne of glass. All councillors agreed with the recycling of glass but needed more time to consider the pros and cons involved, so a decision was held over to the next meeting. Councillors would welcome views from the public on this subject with suggestions for suitable sites. Planning permission is required and this will cost £19 at the special half-price rate for councils. One wine bottle weighs approx 1lb so it will take 2,000 bottles to earn £2 and 20,000 bottles to cover the cost of planning application before any is made. Care has to be taken over siting as the sound at breaking glass can be noisy unless the container was emptied immediately it was full, overflow glass could become a hazard.

S.A.L.C.

It is hoped to organise seminars on village hall management, children's play equipment and keeping accounts if there is sufficient interest. The NALC conference will be held at Great Yarmouth on May 18-20, 1990.

KNOWLES GREEN

A payment of £1 been agreed rent has agreed and paid as wayleave for access to Knowles Green Cottage across the green. The vice chairman took the chair when the chairman declared an interest and left the meeting before the council discussed the grazing licence for Great Knowles Green which came up for annual review. It was agreed the rent and terms should remain unaltered and be offered to Mr H. Wiseman for the 1989/90 season.

Date of the next meeting will be Monday November 13 at 8pm.

VILLAGE HISTORY

Mrs Slade, the village history recorder, is currently reading manorial court records for Hargrave and has found that the land now known as Knowles Green was referred to as 'common land known New Way Green' in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The present name was first recorded in about 1840.

A day conference for the Suffolk history recorders is to be held at Mendlesham community centre on Saturday November 4. The programme includes items on recording farm buildings, archaeology and field walking together with the unusual displays of recorders work. Mrs Slade will attend, but as she will

probably be leaving the area, would like to hear from anyone in the village interested in taking over from her as village history recorder and would welcome them to accompany her to the conference.

Footnote:

In writing this footnote, I must declare a personal interest and ask you the reader to indulge me a little. Doris Newman from School Cottages who submitted reports to the BFP on activities in Hargrave throughout the 1980/90's was my mother. I still recall her typing out her reports on an aqua blue Smith Corona home portable typewriter, and I assume sending off the fresh news copy to Bury by post each week early enough to hit printing deadlines. Obviously this was in the days before word processors and the internet. Her free time was also spent acting as secretary to the Parish Council, Village Hall Committee, Women's Institute, which she also had a stint as Chair, and working for the local Red Cross Group including the annual door to door collection. Plus part time work as Secretary at Chevington School for a period and of course running the home for husband Ron and two growing boys (although we both always knew our place!).

Also in my experience, she was scrupulously honest. Even when there had perhaps been friction between those carrying out various roles and responsibilities within the groups she had reported on. See if you can spot the interesting example below which was also published:

The following item was printed in the Bury Free Press on the 29th July 1994.

Hargrave

Contact Mrs D. Newman, 15 School Cottages, Hargrave.

COUNCIL - At the parish council meeting in the village hall on July 14 apologies were received Mr T. Smith, Mr H. Wiseman, WPC White and Mr D. Upton. Mr D. Pettitt was in the chair and welcomed Mr English and Mr Burgess. He also apologised to Mrs S. Chapman for not thanking her at the last meeting for her services over the past year.

ACCOUNTS - Mr Pettitt reported that all accounts were in the hands of the auditors until August 5. The balance stands at £1,079.26. A bill and cheque has been received from Lacy Scott.

COMMITTEE - Mr T. Smith and Mr D. Pettitt agreed to stand again for the planning sub-committee. Mrs S. Chapman was proposed by Mr D. Pettitt and seconded by Mrs H. Feasey.

RECORDER - A letter from Mrs M. Slade pointed out that she is the village history recorder and not Mrs D. Newman. Mrs D. Newman takes notes at parish council meetings and any other items of interest in the village to be printed in the Bury Free Press Village Focus column.

PRECEPT - An account was given as it was thought there had been some slight misunderstanding at the last discussion.

GRASS - The council is waiting to hear from Mrs Williamson about when the grass at Knowles Green will need cutting. It is understood to have been sprayed.

GOLDEN MILE - A letter has confirmed that Golden Mile is now a bridleway.

FOOTPATHS - The footpaths on Mr H. Wiseman's land have been altered and all parties are in agreement.

DRIVE - In spite of the clerk asking the council to let Mr D. Bennett have copies of all correspondence on his drive, he has not received them.

LETTERHEADS - A quote for letterheads from one printer has been received.

BURIAL GROUND - The grass on the burial ground is getting very overgrown.

AMBULANCE - A new scheme is proposed by the East Anglian Ambulance NHS Trust, in collaboration with Ordnance Survey, which will give everyone a code number for their house. In an emergency, this code number will be given and the ambulance driver will have a map with the numbers matted. It is hoped this will speed up attendance, especially in remote areas.

REPORTS - Mr English reported that the new bus station in St Andrew's Street. Bury St Edmunds should be well on the way by this time next year. He also said the Cattle Market will be left as it is.

The recent festival made £60,000- no cost to rate payers - and the 24 open gardens raised about £5,000 for St Nicholas' Hospice.

Mr Burgess reported that within the next two years all speed limits in villages will be down to 30mph.

A survey of lorry traffic through villages is to be carried out about their use as short cuts to reach the motorways.

SEAT BELTS - A member of the council asked the county council's views on seat belts in coaches and buses transporting children. Mr Burgess said they were in favour but that it was a very big problem to solve.

Nicholas Newman – March 2026