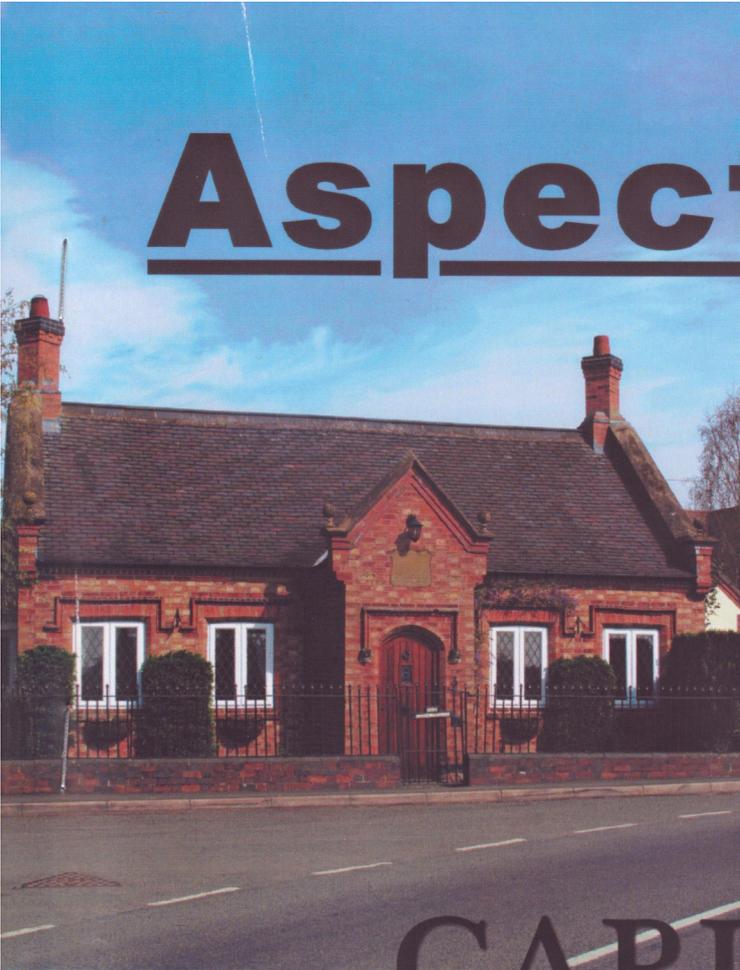


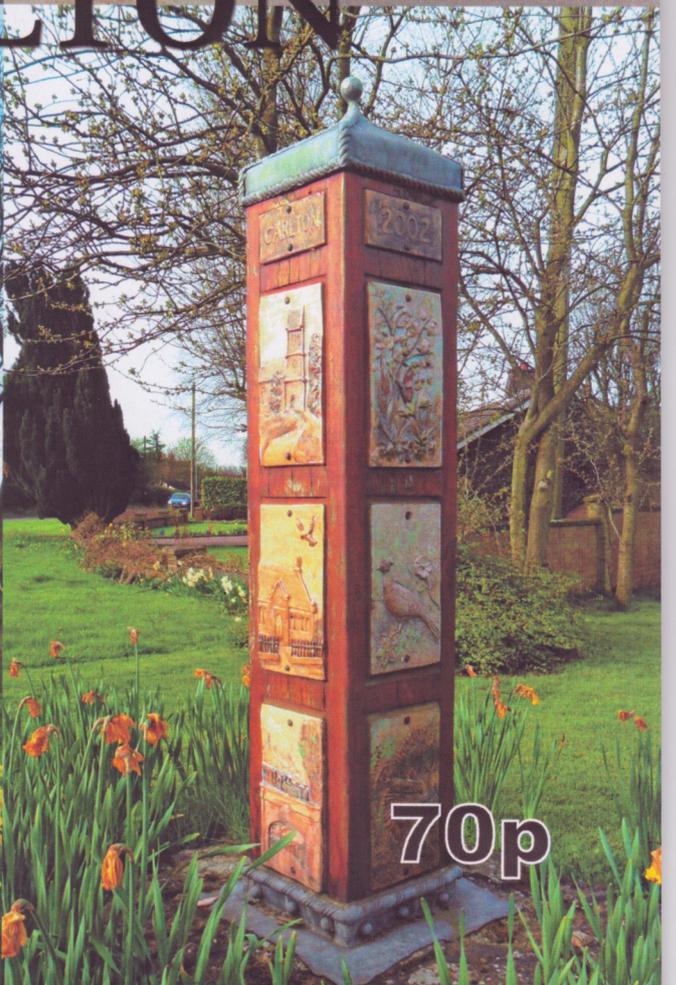
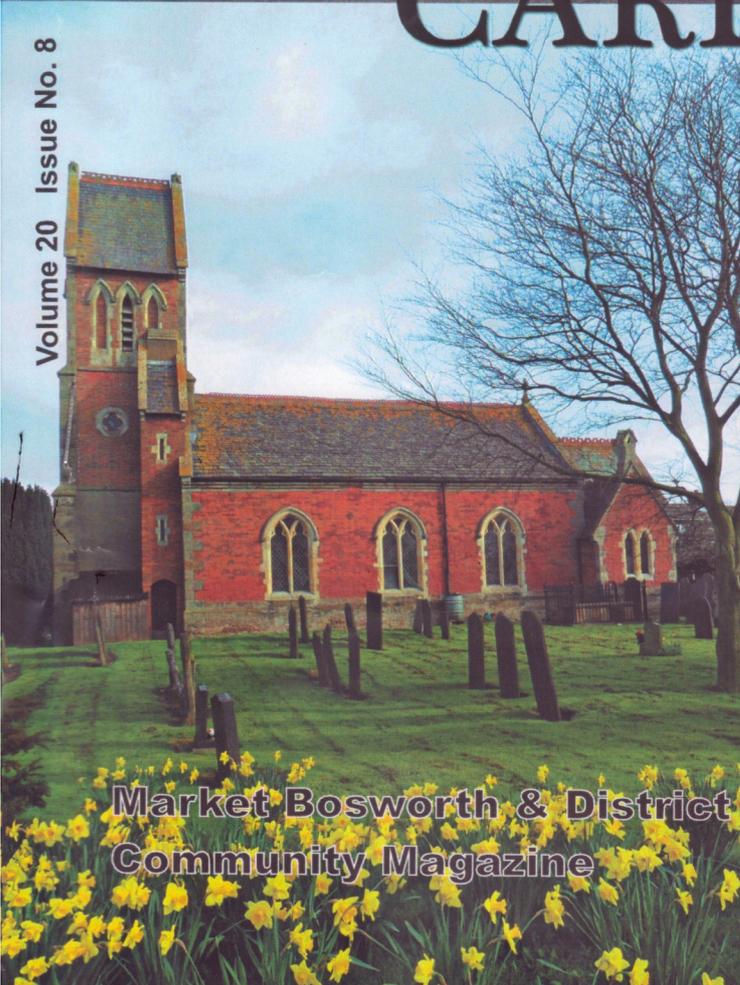
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Carlton in 2011

Work has just begun on a Parish Plan for Carlton, so this is an appropriate time to look back over the last ten years and try to look forward to the next ten. Parish appraisals were carried out in 1991 and 2001, so the 2011 plan should provide a good indication of changes in public opinion and aspiration.

A general account of the history of the village can be found on the information board in Little Lane off Shackerstone Walk. The erection of this board was one part of a Parish Council project to mark the millennium by celebrating times past, present and future. The board itself celebrated time past, the re-gilding of the church clock helped mark time present, and the promotion of trees in roadside hedges was an investment in times to come. This Millennium Project won second prize in the Anthony Stuart Memorial Competition in 2001. The new trees were hardly noticeable at first, but are now making a growing contribution to local amenity.

At this time of year, the roadside verges, village green and churchyard are brightened by clumps of daffodils, many of which are the cultivar 'Carlton'. According to Mr Bert Bouwmeester, a Dutch bulb grower who married a Carlton girl, this daffodil was named after the village in the 1920's. It remains one of the best varieties for naturalising in our cold, wet midland soils.

In structure, Carlton is a linear village created by infill between clusters of cottages and farm buildings. At the beginning of the 20th century there were groups of dwellings at Buffon, Westfields, at Carlton Gate, around the church, and around Shackerstone Walk. Since the Second World War, the gaps in development between Barton Road and Shackerstone Walk have been filled, but the process was piecemeal and created a very varied street scene with a wide range of buildings and designs. The definition of the settlement boundary in 1991 prevented built development from expanding further into the countryside, but is leading to a higher density of dwellings inside the boundary. Many bungalows and small houses have now been either extended into large dwellings, or demolished and replaced with larger ones, and business premises are being converted to residential use.

One important consequence of the shift to bigger houses is that there are now very few affordable starter homes or bungalows. This means that local young people who work in the area cannot afford to set up home here, and that older people who would like to downsize but stay in the village cannot find suitable places to live. These problems are being partly addressed by a scheme to build eleven two-bedroomed affordable homes – seven houses and four bungalows - on a site at the edge of the village. The current funding crisis has affected this project, and it is not yet clear whether it will go ahead as envisaged. There is a need for similar small properties for sale on the open market to allow more movement up and down the property ladder within the village.

In common with most small villages, Carlton is gradually losing its services and public transport links, but at least it is close to Market Bosworth, and within the range of the larger electric mobility buggies. A safer link for buggies, pedestrians and cycles is needed, but a recent attempt to create a footway failed because of the high cost and legal issues. There are also conflicts between improving road safety and access and conserving the appearance of the rural landscape.

The countryside around Carlton retains the mixture of fields and woods of the former Bosworth and Gopsall estates. Changing agricultural needs have led to a net loss of hedgerows, but this has been partly offset by the planting of new woods, an increase in streamside trees and the creation of new ponds and lakes.

The only public open spaces in Carlton are the churchyard and cemetery, Carlton Green, and Little Lane. These areas are maintained by a grounds maintenance contractor and local volunteers. The churchyard and cemetery offer a peaceful green haven in the centre of the village, and are a place for quiet contemplation. Carlton Green is a place for parish events, sports and games, and probably originated as an area of manorial waste. It was originally much larger, but is now jealously protected from damage and encroachment. Indeed, a small area of adjoining land has been bought by the Parish Council, levelled up and seeded by volunteers, and dedicated as a new green.

Carlton School was erected in the middle of Carlton Green by Sir Wolstan Dixie in 1847. There was a small school yard, but the children played on Carlton Green and in the field across the road. Just after the First World War a school inspector commented on the lack of dedicated space for physical education, and was told firmly by the Governors that the children had their PE lessons on the adjacent village green, and if the grass was wet these lessons took place on the road outside the school. This explanation was accepted, and nothing more was heard of the matter.

The school closed in 1969, and in a referendum the villagers at that time made the short-sighted decision not to buy it for a village hall. The school is now a private dwelling, but the current volume and speed of traffic past it do not encourage pedestrians to linger. A mobile youth club attends the village once a fortnight and has proved to be well supported and very successful. The West Green is still regularly used for ball games, but the East Green is now little used because of the risk of children running into the road. The provision of a safe public open space - for everyone, not just children - has been a high priority for many years.

The oldest buildings in the village are Saint Andrews Church, Church Cottage (originally a bakery), Manor House Farm and the Stone House - the latter two providing good examples of Carlton Stone construction. Westfields Farm, at the western edge of the parish, is built almost entirely of Carlton Stone. In 1951 the last of a group of disused stone pits to the northwest of village was filled in, but it is unlikely that this quarry was large enough to have supplied all of the Carlton Stone which can still be seen in many plinths, walls and buildings round about. The field - now half wooded - is still known as The Stone Pits.

There has probably been a church in the centre of Carlton since well before Domesday, but at that time it would have been a chapelry of Market Bosworth: Carlton did not become a separate ecclesiastical parish until 1846. Copies of the registers go back to 1574; the C18th register books in the Record Office are charred from the fire which burned down the building. The church was rebuilt in 1764, but surprisingly the stone used was not Carlton Stone. This building had a short square tower with a pinnacle on each corner, and was dedicated to Saint Michael (Nichols, 1811, Pl.LXXXII, p.517).

The church building was extensively re-modelled in 1867 at a cost of £1,112, and dedicated to Saint Andrew. The design, including the distinctive saddleback top to the tower, was probably by Joseph Goddard of Goddard & Son of Leicester, and is typical of his restrained take on the Victorian Gothic style. He also designed the

parsonage, now known as Carlton Grange and built in 1869. Joseph Goddard was a versatile architect, and is best known for the Clock Tower in Leicester, though this is by no means typical of his work (Brandwood & Cherry, 1990). The family practice, which is still in business, was responsible for the restoration of many local churches and good vernacular buildings. On a local note, Joseph's father, Henry, designed the stable block at Bosworth Hall for Sir W W Dixie in 1839-40.

By 1990, the church roof had been condemned and the fabric had so deteriorated that the church was at risk of closure, and ultimately of demolition. In 1994 the PCC set up a Fabric Fund, which then evolved into a registered charity – the Friends of Saint Andrews Church Carlton – with the express object of restoring and maintaining the building. Although few parishioners are regular churchgoers, most appreciate the church building, want to see it maintained, and give strong support to the social and fundraising events organised by the Friends. These events are an important part of the social life of the community, and bring diverse people together – the next event will be a Book Fair, to be held on Carlton Green on 14th May.

Around £100,000 has been spent on the church building – the roof and external walls have been repaired, the stained glass memorial window by Theodora Salusbury has been conserved, and work has begun on the stonework. There are plans to add a toilet, small kitchen and meeting room. In the long term any building must pay its way, and these improvements are making it possible to hire out the church for different purposes. The Parish Council now meets in the church (the new heating made this practical), it is used for the annual horticultural show, and this month it will be used as a polling station for the first time. The church also houses the Carlton Millennium Tapestry, which includes an image of every building in the parish in 2000, together with the names of the inhabitants.

The former BT K6-model telephone kiosk became redundant in 2010, and was bought by the Parish Council for £1 and restored by volunteers. It now houses a Community Defibrillator, part of a project – again by a group of dedicated volunteers - to improve local emergency care and knowledge of first aid.

In 2002, the Queen's Jubilee was celebrated by a memorable parish party, which began with the unveiling of the Carlton Jubilee Post on the verge of Barton Road opposite The Gate public house. This project was managed by a small voluntary group which raised the necessary funds, held a competition for a design, and made and put up the sign with the help of local craftsmen.

The Carlton Charity Lands, a small charity created in 1317, still owns and rents out land in the parish. The income has been used to support young apprentices, and more recently to provide a donation to eligible retired parishioners at Christmas. It is now being applied to general charitable purposes in the parish.

Walking is one of the most popular outdoor recreational activities, and the area around Carlton is well served by footpaths which connect to create a range of circular walks. The Carlton Footpath Group has reinstated local paths and monitors and helps to maintain local RoW. It recently became clear that many parishioners enjoyed walking, but were finding it increasingly hard to climb stiles, and this has led to a programme to replace stiles with metal kissing gates. One or two minor diversion orders have yet to be implemented, but in a year or two the paths from near Harcourt Spinney to Carlton Green and Keeper's Cottage, and to Carlton church and Barton in the Beans should both be stile-free. Late this year, a new footpath will be dedicated and will create a new circular route between Carlton and Barton in the Beans.

Problems with litter and fly-tipping led to the creation of the Keep Carlton Tidy Group in 1992. This voluntary group organises a Spring Clean litter pick each year, reports incidents of fly tipping, and carries out litter picks when needed. Experience has shown that less litter is dropped and rubbish dumped in areas that are kept clean, and that keeping on top of the problem makes it easier to deal with, and creates a more attractive environment for everyone.

Changes are taking place, whether we welcome them or not, but we need to encourage and develop the good and work to mitigate or reverse the bad. In writing this review I have been struck by the amount of work carried out by volunteers. Names have deliberately not been mentioned, but it is the cumulative effect of small individual actions which create living landscapes and caring communities. Previous Parish Appraisals have shown that most parishioners like Carlton pretty much the way it is, and are rightly wary of change. I am confident that the timeless qualities of peace and quiet, beautiful and cared-for countryside and good neighbours will remain as important in the future as they are now, and will ensure that Carlton remains an attractive place to live and bring up a family.

Chris Peat

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The above article appeared in Aspect, Volume 20, No 8, May 2011, p.2-4.

The photographs which follow were submitted but not used, and have been added here for information.

**Chris Peat
June 2011**



Victorian Gothic

False chimney on vestry, Saint Andrew's Church, Carlton



New kissing gates

Footpath S69 between Carlton and Barton in the Beans.



Carlton Stone in boundary wall (above) and at the base of a barn wall (below), both at Manor House Farm, Main Street.