

## SNOWBLAST: Isolated village;

# Gosberton cut off: No bread, no milk, no papers, no post

WE Gosbertonians are hardy folk. A foot or so of snow doesn't stop us getting to work in the morning.

No, what really did it was the Siberian wind that whistled round our ears on Tuesday night. It blew the snow from the flat fields surrounding the village on to the roads and the huge drifts left us cut off, unable even to reach Surfleet.

But — there is something about a situation like this that makes everyone very friendly. People I had never seen before said "hello" as I tramped through the village on Wednesday morning in the hope of hitching a lift.

I helped dig someone's car out of the snow, but realised it was no good when a van drove up and its driver said that the drifting snow had made the roads impossible — or was it impassable?

Already the snow had made difficult the deliveries which we rely on so much, without realising just how much. We got no post after Tuesday and Tuesday's papers had to be collected by one noble Bowgate inhabitant who forged his way through the knee-deep snow to get each house its daily read.

That I must admit is only in our lane; the shop even had papers on Wednesday — don't ask me how, maybe they were airlifted in!

But no milk reached the village on Wednesday or Thursday, and I doubt if any post was collected.

On Thursday morning a neighbour and I made an abortive attempt to get in to Spalding. Earlier in the day the road had been blocked by a jack-knifed lorry. At midday the police advised us not to go any farther because of the still drifting snow — unless we were in a four-wheel drive Land-Rover or similar!

by  
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I've always thought that would be the ideal transport for this area, and now I know.

My neighbour, who moved here from Yorkshire a few months ago, said when he moved here everyone told him it never showed here! Well, it doesn't usually . . . I replied.

In the village, I've never seen so many people. This was the first time I could remember so many cars actually keeping to the 30 miles per hour limit . . .

As Thursday is half-day closing, the Co-op was full of people buying what seemed to be siege rations.

There was no bread or milk left by now, of course, so everyone was buying evaporated milk, tinned meat and pet food!

But at least we all had our own beds to sleep in at night. Much worse off were all the lorry drivers and motorists stranded in Gosberton on Wednesday.

Jack and Pat Woodhouse, landlord and landlady of the village's only pub, the Five Bells, reckoned there had been 30 to 40 unable to get home during the "siege period". Their cars and lorries were parked all along the main street, from the school as far as Salem Street.

They were being fed at the pub, and most of them slept in the British Legion Hall. Drivers were from such disparate places as Sheffield, Billingham and Louth.

Because of the fields behind our house, we have a clear view of the "main"

road. During Thursday afternoon, we saw several gritting lorries go up and down it. Also the dangerous icicles hanging from the roof were melting. The conclusion? Definitely a thaw.

I strolled to the top of the village to find out more. Where ~~just~~ hours ago the road had been thick with snow it was now totally clear. And at the top of the village the policeman informed me that we could actually get to Spalding, yes, the road was unblocked!

In fact it was cleared at about 2.30 pm, which means that had I been standing by with a car I could have made it into work for the last two and a half hours of the day.

Well, I'm sure I'll be forgiven. I had tried manfully (or even womanfully) earlier on.

Walking on the road was becoming dangerous — there was far too much traffic, and I was even having to venture on to the snowbound wastes of the pavement now and then.

This more than anything proved the village was returning to the outside world.

Earlier in the day and on Wednesday, the road had been full of well wrapped up villagers trudging through the still deep snow.

Now it was once more seen by drivers as an inconvenient and largely to be ignored speed limit of 30 in the middle of large expanses where they could do 60 quite legally. Well, it was nice while it lasted.

On Friday morning the post arrived for the first time in three days, there were even newspapers at the shop again. And though there were still lorries lined up along the High Street, nothing impeded our progress through the village and into Spalding once more.

Rumour had it that we were still cut off Donington way, but there was no doubt the snow was thawing.

I have never been cut off and snowbound in a small village before. If it had gone on any longer than it did it would have got beyond a joke — no post, no papers, no milk, no bread . . . thank goodness for the snow ploughs!

And maybe we were all quite glad to get back to work on Friday!