

Here's one on sport: what connects Tottenham Hotspur FC with the French rugby union national team and the Sydney rugby league team based near Bondi Beach? Answer: these teams all have the same emblem - the cockerel!

Perhaps it will be added to the village sign at Burnham Market, too. Although let's make this absolutely clear: I am completely sitting on the fence about this one. However, it does remind me of a sad cockerel-related story.

Jesus tells Peter (who has been crowing a bit himself) that Peter will deny Jesus three times before the cock crows twice (Mark 14.30). Peter says he would rather die. However, when it come to the crunch, Peter, - the man-amongst-men of the disciples, the prime "neighbour" of Jesus - denies Jesus, "dis"-es Jesus, dumps Jesus. The cock crows a second time (Mark 14.72). Peter wakes up to the truth: that he, just like everyone else, can be completely fallible.

As it happens, "cock-crow" in the New Testament (eg Mark 13.35) refers to sometime around 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning. The hours of darkness. So it would seem that a cockerel crowing has the power to call us out of darkness to greet the dawning light. We all fail to love our neighbour at some point, but we all are given a new dawn to have another go at putting that right (which is what Peter did for the rest of his life).

Yes, I'm sitting right up there on the fence; not crowing, because that's the cockerel's job. Just watching; just waiting: will the cockerel become our reminder of falling to be good neighbours? Or will it become the emblem of understanding and a good community? Now, that would be something to crow about...

Graham