

TOWN and AROUND



ISSUE 218 DECEMBER 2023

PRICELESS!

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is here!

Local News • Events • Great Outdoors • Features

First word



Welcome to the last issue of Town and Around for 2023; we have a wide variety of articles that I hope will inform and entertain you in this edition.

The Christmas season is upon us and the events listing can be found in the centre pages - it certainly has a festive theme!

Turn to page 43 to challenge the little grey cells with David Elsey's Christmas cryptic crossword (the solution is on page 49 if you get stuck), and on pages 21 and 57 you'll find competitions.

This year we increased our circulation to 14,000 copies and expanded our geographical area too. A heartfelt thanks to all our advertisers, the income from whom pays for the print. Please support them if you can.

I'd also like to thank all of our contributors and distribution helpers, plus you the readers.

Our plans for 2024 are really more of the same, and our January issue will be delivered between Christmas and the New Year. Just a polite reminder that the copy date is, as always, the 12th for all articles, photos and adverts.

Richard and I would like to wish you all a joyous Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year.

Until next month - next year,

Elaine

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Lively Wash tidal barrage meeting

A long queue formed outside the Princess Theatre ahead of the Wash Barrier Presentation evening on 3rd November which was organised by Hunstanton Town Council.

Originally planned to be held at the Town Hall, the requests for seats was such that the Princess Theatre was asked to host the event. Even so, every seat was taken and about sixty people had to be turned away.



Opening the event the Mayor, Cllr Michael Ruston explained that this was an information evening and emphasised need to be respectful, polite and listen to all views.



Centre Port's proposed £3bn development is for a container port on the Lincolnshire side of the Wash coupled with a hydroelectric scheme with up to forty turbines, and a road linking Norfolk and Lincolnshire.

Centre Port CEO James Sutcliffe, who had previously run Boston Docks, had agreed to attend the event on the understanding that he was the last speaker on the agenda. It became clear early on that the audience wanted to hear from him sooner as speakers from environmental groups expressed their concerns.

Cllr Terry Parish, Leader of the Borough Council reported that the Borough has no official stance so far, detailed plans would need to be examined, the challenges and opportunities outlined, and the risks to fishing, tidal locking, flood risks considered. He also had questions about the roads, infrastructure and sewerage.

Judith Stouff, from the Eastern Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authority explained that the whole of the Wash which extends to 62k hectares is a highly designated marine protection area which is home to vast populations of wintering birds and a large fishing fleet. The Authority works to sustain fisheries and the marine environment and has an advisory rather than a statutory role.

Andy Bullen, Independent Member of King's Lynn Conservancy Board, and Director of a specialist port and maritime media company

explained that the Wash is dynamic, the channels move all the time and the fifty marker buoy are constantly monitored and moved. He expressed surprise that they had no communication from Centre Port.

Oceanographer and Professor at the University of East Anglia, Tim Jickells said that tidal power is a good idea in the right area. The Wash is second biggest area of inter-tidal mud flats. The intertidal area is a mosaic of sand and water and sea levels had been rising for centuries and the sediments keep pace with rises in sea level mainly from off shore. He said that if you put in an obstruction and take tidal energy you slow the flow and have less sand and mud coming into the estuary. This threatens the integrity of the mud flats themselves, especially during the building phase; sediments clean, eleven thousand tonnes of carbon are captured every year. Any barrier would trap water posing a threat to the ecology of the area. The concentration of Nitrogen and Phosphorus is high in all four rivers that feed the Wash and this may cause eutrophic problems as in Chichester and Poole harbour.



From left: The Mayor, James Sutcliffe, Terry Parish and Andy Bullen

At this point the audience was calling for Mike Sutcliffe to present his project and after an intervention by Cllr Robert Corby, he agreed to speak.

Mr Sutcliffe, who said the project would take at least ten to fourteen years to come to fruition started by saying that: "tidal energy is all around us; and more energy needs to be generated, but just tidal doesn't work, there is a need for more income streams."

He argued that there is a need for a deep container port and this Smart Port project will be a zero carbon operation with renewable energy and include a flood defence.

Showing a map of the Wash he said that individual flood schemes don't work, the area produced 33% of the country's vegetable production and it is very important to protect this land. He described the turbines as a colander so the water flow isn't disrupted.

Studies about the environmental impact will take around four to five years.

A member of the audience said that the vegetable production was in fact 60% of the nation's consumption and was concerned about food security asking how many hundreds of acres would be taken out of production to build the infrastructure. Mr Sutcliffe responded with; "Its just a road and rail connection and some supporting warehousing and structures."



Speakers and organisers

Mr Sutcliffe said the east could become an economic powerhouse with the creation of the port. It would, he said, "offer lots of employment."

As a bonus, Mr Sutcliffe promised a new four mile long beach where residents and visitors could sit and "watch the sunset."

Interest has been shown by three different investors, One from the USA and two from the Middle East.

Mike Jones from the Norfolk Wildlife Trust echoed Tim Jickells' concerns and said that the Wash could be permanently degraded. He also pointed out that the seals in the Wash would have to navigate the barrage and may be damaged by the turbines.

It is the most important area for nesting birds and "I believe it would be catastrophic for the Wash - it is irreplaceable, and Holme dunes would be at risk."

The final speaker during the evening was Sutton Bridge farmer Stafford Proctor. His land borders the The Wash and Nene River. He said he was there to argue for people, their homes, their food security and their livelihoods. Thus he inferred that birds and ecosystems were not the only thing that needed protecting.

He said he supports the proposal because of the benefits of flood defence; "this land is vital for food supply, and it supports 80,000 jobs."

"600,000 people live in the Fens and infrastructure is at risk including two reservoirs."

"I'm Chairman of the Wash Frontage Group, and we came together to improve flood defences around the Wash to protect towns, businesses and farm production."

Mr Proctor spoke about the devastating effects of the 1953 and 1978 floods and the 2019 flood in Wainfleet. He described how close we were to flooding during the tidal surge in 2013 - inches from overtopping.

He reported that the Committee for Climate Change has said that sea levels will rise by 1m by 2100, and it would take generations to create adequate flood defences in a piecemeal way.

A project he was involved in at Wrangle Bank raised the bank by 1m but this is only 5.4km long and the Wash periphery is 80km and there is 140km of tidal river.

He continued: "the causeway sluice gates can be shut prior to surge to protect wild life and habitats."

"This project would answer the problem of flooding and protect future generation, I urge people to see the opportunity."

Editor's note: I wrote this article using my own notes, and with kind permission, those of Andrew Murray, Jean Bleasdale and Richard Bird. Thank you.

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Hunstanton set for new Travel and Community Hub

Work on a new £2m community and transport hub on the existing bus station and library site in Hunstanton could start in September 2024. This is a scaled down project from the original plan that included flats and shops that would have carried a £10m price tag.

The County Council said that the final designs are expected to be completed by Spring 2024. The work on site is planned to start from September 2024 to avoid disruption during the busy seasonal period with all elements of the project planned to be completed by Spring 2025.

Cllr Graham Plant, Norfolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport, said: "We know that one of the biggest challenges for people who want to take public transport more often is onwards journeys: this new-look Hunstanton Bus Station answers those problems by bringing cycling and walking infrastructure right to the doors of the bus. With a library and other services right in the same place, it makes greener, more sustainable travel a real, viable choice for service users and visitors to this beautiful part of our coastline."

An improved library offer will include access to adult education and tourist information – all alongside space for community groups and outreach.

The project includes the refurbishment of community toilet facilities as well as more green space and a pedestrian crossing for ease of access.

Cllr Andrew Jamieson, Norfolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Finance, said: "This new hub won't only bring together public transport, cycling and walking, it will also put the community's library and the services it offers right at the heart of Hunstanton, easily accessible and on hand for anyone arriving in the town. I'm delighted that after much hard work we're now able to make this vision a reality for Hunstanton, and I hope we will be able to bring truly, conveniently

integrated transport and services to other towns in Norfolk in future."

Work has been taking place on some early concept designs for the Travel and Community Hub, including the creation of several visuals showing what the site could look like. These visuals (below) are early concepts and are not a final design.



Approach to management of west Norfolk's coastal defences to be scrutinised

The current west Norfolk coastal management policies are to be scrutinised by the borough council's Environment and Community panel. In addition, the Leader of the borough council is to write to the Environment Agency and to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to seek support and reassurance for the borough's coastal residents.

The current management approach in south Hunstanton to Snettisham area involves annual beach recycling (moving material from the Snettisham Scalp northwards to 'top-up' the shingle ridge) and intermittent beach recharge (bringing new material onto the beach). The Environment Agency has reluctantly concluded that the beach recharge will not be able to go ahead due to multiple constraints. However, their regular monitoring data shows that beach levels are stable and therefore a beach recharge is not currently needed. The annual beach recycling will continue to be undertaken for as long as technically, financially and environmentally feasible.

Due to changes to the shingle ridge, the Environment Agency have shared a leaflet, Living with the Shingle Ridge, to all properties and caravans directly behind the shingle ridge in Heacham and Snettisham to ensure all property owners are aware of the importance of the ridge and that permission must be sought from the Environment Agency to commence any work within 16m of the ridge. The Borough Council will also be sending an additional winter sea defences newsletter before the end of the year (2023) to these properties. They have also been increasing engagement and their enforcement presence with properties and caravans directly behind the ridge in Heacham and Snettisham.

The combination of the ridge increasing in height and rolling back and the small beach recharge proving undeliverable, in line with the Shoreline Management Plan and Wash East Coastal Management Strategy (which provide the strategic intent for managing this area of coastline), has resulted in the Environment Agency reviewing how this frontage may be managed in the future.

The first step is a technical review by highly-regarded coastal engineers at Jacobs to assess whether the trigger levels identified in the Wash East Coastal Management Strategy (WECMS) have been reached and whether a full review of the strategy is required.

Cllr Terry Parish, Leader of the Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk, said: "As a coastal resident I'm well aware of our sea defences and have, for many years, written and spoken about them.

"The Environment Agency are the lead organisation when it comes to shoreline management, but we have worked closely with them and other partners to develop a Shoreline Management Plan (SMP 4) which covers the Wash coastline and the borough council and a Wash East Coast Management Strategy (WECMS). The EA regularly monitor the data for these plans, and this is showing that now is the right time to carry out a technical review of the natural sea defence, the shingle ridge, that runs between Heacham and Snettisham. Over time this has been pushed back by the natural action of the sea. As a result, some residents have been digging into it as it has been encroaching on their properties.

"I'm aware that the EA, the lead agency in this area, are engaging with residents who have weakened this natural defence, to explain why they need to stop this activity. The EA has also brought forward a technical report on the defence to help identify what happens next in the area.

"There is no doubt that this is a complex situation which needs to be examined by council officers and members of the council's Environment and Community panel. It will take some time to undertake a thorough review which considers all the data and the views of the experts and enables us to evaluate the costs and implications of any options or proposals. In the meantime, I have committed to writing letters to the Environment Agency and the Secretary of State to see what support and reassurance they can give to our coastal residents in the borough. Those letters will be signed by all group leaders at the council, as this is an issue that clearly concerns us all."

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There be dragons!

St George's Guildhall was taken over by dragons at its first ever Dragon Festival on Saturday 4 November.



Nearly 700 people dropped into the free event that took place on Saturday afternoon and was followed by a free screening, with free popcorn, of the feature film 'How to Train Your Dragon: The Hidden World (PG)' at the Guildhall Theatre.



Tim FitzHigham, Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk Creative Director, said: "It was wonderful that nearly 700 people came to see the dragons at the Guildhall. Dragons have always been a big part of life at St George's Guildhall. We have records of Dragon Collars being on site from the 1500s, which must have been a lot bigger and stronger than dog collars! We had so much going on during the day for families to enjoy, with a deadly dragons trail, face painting, archery, brass rubbing and even an opportunity to meet a real dragon and other live creatures. The whole day was ROARsome!"



Borough Mayor Margaret Wilkinson with Tim FitzHigham and a dragon



The event was organised in association with Norfolk Museums Service and funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the Borough Council.



Photos: Ian Burt

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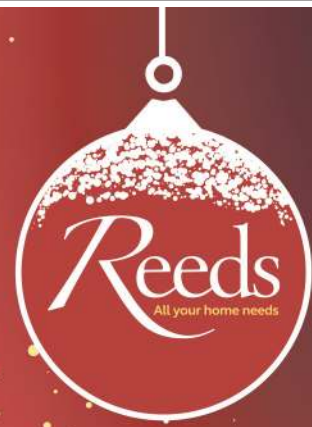
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Pets are for life: protect their future in your will

By Yasmin Knock, Solicitor, Hayes + Storr

When making a will, most people consider the distribution of their financial assets. But do you know what happens to your pets if you pass away? Pets are part of the family, and the thought of leaving them behind without sufficient care in place can be worrying.

You may have already asked someone to care for your pet and if this is the case, then an informal agreement may be sufficient. However, it can be reassuring to have such provision detailed in your will. This article briefly explains the main options of dealing with pets in your will, but you should always seek tailored legal advice.

Absolute gift to a beneficiary

Generally, pets are considered 'personal possessions' (unless classed as business assets, such as cattle). You can bequeath a pet to a specific beneficiary, which can also include any potential future pets.

You should always discuss this with the beneficiary prior to recording it in your will, to avoid any surprises when you pass away. You will need to consider the age and capability of the beneficiary, as well as the life expectancy of your pet.

You can include a cash gift in recognition of caring for your pet, which can also consider future care costs, such as vet bills. The cash

gift can be conditional on the beneficiary undertaking to care for your pet. However, there are risks associated with this option - a solicitor can provide advice and help calculate an appropriate value of the cash gift.

Gift to your Executors

Leaving your pet to your executors can provide more flexibility in providing suitable care. This is helpful if you are unsure who should care for your pet, or if you would prefer for your executors to make the decision, which can consider people's circumstances at the time.

Letter of wishes

A letter of wishes can accompany your will, providing further details in respect of the care needs of your pet, such as medical or dietary needs to be aware of. However, the letter is not legally binding, and therefore your executor or beneficiary does not have to abide by its contents.

Animal Welfare Charity

If you do not have anyone suitable in mind, you can opt for an animal welfare charity to care for your pet, such as the Cinnamon Trust, Cats Protection or Dog's Trust. You should always contact the charity prior to including this in your will to check their individual requirements.



Trust

In very limited circumstances, a trust can be set up to provide for your pet. A type of specific animal trust is limited to 21 years and may not be suitable for pets with a longer life expectancy. A discretionary trust of your residuary estate, along with a letter of wishes, is another option, which can provide great flexibility. As with all trusts, legal advice should be sought, as there are many practical issues and specific tax implications to consider. You should always seek legal advice tailored to your specific situation.

For further information, please contact Yasmin Knock in the private client team on 01328 863231 or email yasmin.knock@hayes-storr.com.

This article is for general information only and does not constitute legal or professional advice. Please note that the law may have changed since this article was published.

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Happy news from the Magpie Centre

Caroline Dudley, Voluntary Publicity Officer
West Norfolk Riding for the Disabled Association

Now that we are moving towards Christmas, and, dare I say it, 2024, it's time to look back at the recent achievements of the Magpie Centre, home of West Norfolk Riding for the Disabled Association.

Tea With a Pony sessions attracted 200 participants throughout the season, from April to September. These afternoons enabled participants with mobility issues, some from care homes, and others just wanting a relaxing outing, to enjoy tea and cakes in the convivial space of the wheelchair-friendly Sensory Garden.

On all occasions, our lovely little mare, Pebbles, was the star of the show, eager to meet and greet everyone.

Tea With a Pony, 2.00 – 3.00 pm every Wednesday, will resume in April 2024. Price is £5 per person, and booking is essential. To reserve your place, just call the Magpie Centre on 01553 810202.

Younger participants also enjoyed the Halloween Spooktacular, which attracted no fewer than 17 young riders to experience No Tricks – Only Treats. They loved it!

Christmas activities are also planned. Young riders are invited to ride to post their letters to Santa! Call the Centre on 01553 810202 for more details. £25 per participant.

Now that her foal Luna, is weaned and enjoying the companionship of another playful filly, our lovely mare, Ginger, has come back into lessons, showing enthusiasm for her work in showing smaller riders 'the ropes'.

However, we always need volunteers, offering a range of talents, from tea and cake-making at events, through DIY abilities, to hands-on work with the horses.

Right now, our need is for volunteers with experience of working with horses, to bring horses in from the paddocks, pick out feet, groom, tack up and lead horses into lessons.

This role might suit people who 'used to ride' or 'had a pony when they were younger', and now want to regain their connection with horses.

On Tuesdays, lessons run till 7.30 pm, and on Wednesdays till 6.30 pm, so these later slots might be possible for people who work during the day.

If you have, or know of, anyone with experience of horses, who might like to join the Magpie Centre's friendly group of volunteers, please call 01553 810202 or visit our website: www.rda-westnorfolk.org.uk and download a volunteer form.

If your time/availability is limited, you can still help! Join Friends of Magpie, and for a small monthly donation, you can become a member of our group, whose aim is to help people living with disabilities in West Norfolk, and beyond, to achieve their full potential, physically, socially and spiritually. More details are on our website:

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A Tea With a Pony participant, and helper, meet Pebbles

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Air Cadets Visit World War 1 Flanders Battlefields

Gary Walker



The 42F (King's Lynn) Squadron Air Cadets spent a busy half term touring the WW1 Flanders battlefields while paying homage to those from the local area who lost their lives in the fighting.

With a busy programme the Cadets saw for themselves the sites where so many soldiers from both sides in the fighting were killed and injured while also experiencing the memorable service of Remembrance at the Menin Gate, where a wreath was laid on behalf of the Sqn by Sgt Brydon.

The visit to the Tyne Cott Commonwealth War Graves cemetery which holds over 11,000 graves, of which over 70% are unknown, while its back wall holds the names of over 35,000, who have no known grave, most of who lost their lives in the notorious battle of Passchendaele or 3rd Ypres as it is officially known, was particularly poignant.

The visit to the large German cemetery at Langemark, where the Germans also used gas against allied troops for the first time, allowed

the Cadets to pay their respects to those who lost their lives fighting those who were our enemies at the time. It also amply illustrated the difference between the German cemeteries with their large mass burial sites and our own very well maintained cemeteries of the CWGC, where each individual grave is an act of remembrance.

A visit also took place to the Yser Tower memorial to peace and the Flemish soldiers who fought there. At 276 feet tall it gives an excellent view of the surrounding country side where the Belgium Army, in its determination to hold on to the very small area of unoccupied Belgium, held back superior German forces in lengthy battles. Each of its 22 floors is devoted to showing separate elements of WW1 including reconstructed trenches and dugouts.



The trip ended with a stop over in France at the British Air Services memorial at St Omer where a wreath was laid in memory of all those who lost their lives in flying operations. The first 4 Squadrons of the Royal Flying Corp landed at the airfield in October 1914, which went on to become the largest of the RFC and eventually RAF maintenance depots on the Western Front. Ironically, just 22 years after the RAF had left the airfield it became the home of the Luftwaffe flying against the RAF in the Battle of Britain.

Do you know an elderly person who has had a fall?

Gerry Mellough

When someone you know and love has had a fall, the consequences can be wide ranging and traumatic.

For the person who has had the fall, pain and injury are often the outcome and for those situations the obvious recourse is to dial 999 and get the person dealt with by health professionals. This will usually involve a considerable wait for the overstretched ambulance service to respond and deal with the injuries or remove the person to hospital.

But what if there are no injuries? If the person has simply stumbled and is unable to get up on their own or with help?

Currently there are two options in this situation. The first is to call the ambulance service for them to come and use their specialist lifting seats to get the individual off the floor. Alternatively, you can contact the SWIFT response service. This is a free service operated by Norfolk County Council. However, Swift cannot respond if the response time is going to be over 2 hours. In that situation an ambulance has to be called. Again, this will generally involve a lengthy wait, causing more anxiety and discomfort to the fallen person.

What if we could do something about it?

If someone suffers a heart attack, most people know where the nearest defibrillator is, to allow a timely start to the treatment.

What is proposed is that the same service be available for falls victims.

A manufacturer of lifting equipment has offered to supply a number of lifting chairs to be distributed around West Norfolk, allowing local access to the lifting equipment to facilitate speedy resolution of the problem.

These plans are only at the preliminary stage, but we need to find people in the local community interested in giving help and suggestions to implement this.

If you are interested in this, or want to know more, please contact me by email at gmellough@hotmail.com.

Thank you.



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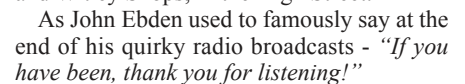
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Stuart B J Bellis a.k.a. 'Wayfarer'

I know at my age I can't change the world, but what can I do? Some of our readers will probably know of the 'Hunstanton, History on a Postcard' film that I was privileged to produce in 1996 when the town celebrated its' 150th Anniversary - amazingly still being sold through the town's Hunstanton Heritage Centre. It struck me, that this was one thing I might be able to do something about - by providing subtitles for the whole of the 90-minute film. I am pleased to say that the job is now complete and a revised DVD with subtitles is now available in 3 locations in the town: Hunstanton Heritage Centre, in




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'Let's Give a Giant Quilt Hug' launch

Rosemary Jewers

Rain, rain and more rain heralded the launch of our 'Let's Give a Giant Quilt Hug' project on November 4th at Little Massingham. But what a fabulous and colourful St Andrew's awaited the visitors who were determined to make it. The weather was appalling, but those who did make it were treated to some spectacular and colourful quilts.

Enthusiastic quilt makers are still offering help to make quilts which will encircle the circumference of the church next May highlighting the need to raise money for the repairs.

It is going to be an incredibly colourful event when it happens. The funds to restore the roof of this mediaeval building - on the at Risk Register of Heritage England - are beginning to come in but we still have a shortfall of just over £82,000 to restore the roof and more does need doing to the building. The church really does need a hug and some cash along with it!

The aim is to make the quilts from recycled cotton fabric and at the end of the project the quilts will be given to young adults leaving the care system and taking their first steps towards independent living.

More at fosalm.org



Radio station keeps on growing!



Heacham based KL1 Radio the local radio station for King's Lynn and West Norfolk announced two brand extensions to its media portfolio on 6th November.

KL XTRA will offer a pop-up radio service to local organisations and event companies who can use their online and DAB service to 'own a temporary radio station' for a week or a month dependant on how much time they need.

They are using this platform to promote seasonal cheer offering back-to-back festive tunes and will be music led without presenters. This will enable shops, offices, and factories a readymade festive music outlet from their local radio station.

The music on KL XTRA for the festive period will feature classic songs, new recordings of traditional Christmas music alongside party mixes to light up any Christmas party. This service will be available online and on DAB. On the technical side, KL XTRA might just be the first AI powered 24-hour radio offering in the UK.

Running alongside this there has been a call from listeners for a country music offering in the area. They asked and KL1 listened with the launch of KL Country. This will air country music 24 hours a day, initially music led, but they are looking to expand their team of presenters to man this station on a permanent basis.

Programme controller Richard Dix commented "We have had a huge response to KL1 Radio, and we feel that launching KL XTRA and KL Country will add to our commitment to the local community and economy."

Hunstanton Christmas Day Swim 2023

Tim Keogh



The annual Hunstanton Christmas Day swim will take place from the promenade at 11am on Monday, 25th December raising money for various local charities.

This is one of Norfolk's biggest events over the festive season, with hundreds of people taking part, cheered on by a large buoyant crowd. This year's event, which has been taking place for over 60 years, is expected to be busier than ever so an early arrival is recommended. Various local hostelrys will be open providing teas, coffees, soft drinks, mulled wine and alcoholic refreshments.

Most of the swimmers, usually adorned in fancy dress, will be hoping for milder sea conditions compared to the freezing icy waters of last year. Registration starts at 10am in the Alive Oasis reception, with the fancy dress judging at 10.50am. Soup will be available to all swimmers outside the Marine bar. The grinchies will once again be on hand to "referee" the swimmers and helpfully shove them under the finishing line banner in the sea. Warm showers are available at Alive Oasis. Any under 18's must be accompanied by an adult on the day.

Most swimmers also raise money for charity and receive a prized Certificate for succeeding in the challenge. The event is ably organised and managed by Hunstanton Round Table each year. Vice Chairman of the local Round Table, Glenn Perkins (and a suspected Grinch!) said, "we are really looking forward to this year's event and hope it is one of the biggest yet".

For more information or to register for this year's swim please visit the Hunstanton Round Table Facebook page, where you can also download sponsorship forms.

Hunstanton Eyecare blog

Cheerio Emma, Hello Carol!

As the title suggests, we are saying a fond cheerio to Emma, who is retiring at the end of November. We don't have a great turnover of staff here as it is such a lovely place to work, so folks need a really good reason to leave us. Emma joined us in 2010 as a receptionist, and over the years has become our "go to girl" especially when there are computer issues, usually with the NHS system. Just leave Emma alone for a while and the problem magically goes away, oh if everything was that simple! Emma is also a bit of a wiz with the hardware, as much as I shout at the printer it doesn't make any difference, so call for Emma to get it sorted. She has always been reliable, hard working and efficient, and she will be missed. Fortunately she doesn't live far away but I think she may always be out when we call! We have all enjoyed working with Emma, but we understand why she has decided now is the time to make the break. Emma's husband Tim retired earlier this year, and they both enjoy walking and exploring new places, and she will be glad to have more time to spend with other family members. We sincerely wish her a very happy retirement.



So it's hello to Carol, who joins us as a receptionist / optical assistant. Carol has never worked in the optical world so there is a lot to learn, but she is looking forward to the challenge. We welcome Carol and are sure she will enjoy working with us.

I will sign off the last article of the year by wishing our readers a very Happy Christmas and wish you all success and good health in 2024.

Annette



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Business solutions to help small businesses

Cllr Alistair Beales, Portfolio holder for Business at the Borough Council

West Norfolk supports more than 5,000 small businesses, most of which are micro and small enterprises, making them crucial to a healthy economy and job growth.

In this article we'll be telling you some of the support you can apply for that could help your small business to thrive. The Shared Prosperity Fund, administered by the borough council, aims to support small businesses who:

- provide leadership for west Norfolk as a centre of excellence for the visitor economy
- promote innovation and entrepreneurship
- support people to access training opportunities

Our website gives more information on opportunities at:

www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/wnsfpf-grants, some of which are detailed below. Central to this is our financial support to the New Anglia Growth Hub to provide businesses with a 'one stop shop' for free, impartial and bespoke advice; they will tailor the business solutions that are available from a range of organisations that match your business needs including:

Getting started solutions

Any small business or start-up needing help with market research or developing business skills, finding funding sources or accessing company reports can check out their local Business and Intellectual Property Centre (BIPC). In King's Lynn, BIPC Norfolk provides free access to a range of business databases and publications, guidance on protecting intellectual property (IP) and hosts networking events. Find out more at: www.norfolk.gov.uk/libraries-local-history-

[and-archives/libraries/business-and-careers-support/bipc](#).

Funding solutions

- Love Your Town offers business grants of up to £1,000 to support initiatives, events and activities that will increase footfall in King's Lynn, Hunstanton and Downham Market. Visit:

www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/loveyourtown; expressions of interest are open until 8th December.

- Go Digital has supported more than 1,000 Norfolk businesses to move online, with excellent feedback. An expert conducts a digital audit and provides a report to identify digital opportunities. Businesses can then apply for a grant of up to £500 to implement their action plan.

Apply online at www.norfolk.gov.uk/godigital

- Rural Business Capital Grants support new and established rural businesses, including farm businesses looking to diversify, to develop new products and facilities that will benefit the local economy. Businesses can apply for capital grants of £10,000 to £100,000. The maximum grant is 50% of eligible costs, up to £100,000. Projects must be match funded, ready to proceed and completed by 31 December 2024.

Training solutions

- West Norfolk Training Grants can help businesses to upskill employees, improve resilience and productivity, and support staff. Grants of £500 to £3,000 are available, with funding covering up to 75% of total training costs. There is no limit to the number of employees being trained (subject to a maximum grant award per business).



- Apprenticeships Norfolk offers impartial advice in a range of areas, from choosing the right scheme and training provider to navigating the process. The team also matches larger businesses with unspent apprenticeship levy to smaller businesses who need help with training costs. Just under £1million was raised in our initial trial period. www.apprenticeshipsnorfolk.org.

Innovation solutions

- Innovate UK funding helps businesses to develop new products, processes and services. The application process is complicated but the county council offers mentoring to guide business owners through. You can find out more at: www.norfolk.gov.uk/business/grants-and-funding/innovation-grant-mentoring

If you are running a business of any size, I urge you to contact the New Anglia Growth Hub to find the right support for you. Visit www.newangliagrowthhub.co.uk.

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CHRISTMAS GIFTS & PARTIES FOR YOUR STAFF – ARE THEY TAXABLE?

By Kathryn Gigg Chartered Accountants, Hunstanton

Whilst not every employer will wish to follow the lead of a certain Dickensian character in buying a turkey as big as a boy for his/her clerk, as we move into the Season of Goodwill many businesses will wish to recognise the contribution and loyalty of their staff after what may have been a difficult and challenging year.

Sadly, when it comes to staff entertainment or reward, whether Christmas parties or Christmas gifts, for staff, there are employment tax, business tax and VAT consequences.

A Party?

A staff party (or other staff entertainment event such as a meal) will qualify as a tax-free benefit only if it meets all of the following conditions for exemption:

- The event must be open to all employees generally, or to all those at a particular location (and not just the directors!) and cost no more than £150 (inc VAT) per head.
- If there are separate locations, the relief will still apply, so long as all employees have the option to attend at least one event.
- The event must be an annual event, on a recurring basis, but doesn't necessarily have to be held at the same time each year (so the 2023 event might be a Christmas party, and the 2024 event could be a summer ball)
- There is a limit of £150 (inc VAT) or less per attendee. This is a threshold not an allowance, so if the cost of an event exceeds £150 per head, there is no exemption on the first £150 and the whole cost (and not just the excess over £150) will be subject to Income Tax & NIC.
- The £150 limit applies to the number of guests, rather than the employees, so spouses and partners can be included.
- The limit can cover more than one event provided the total does not exceed £150 (inc VAT) per attendee in any tax year, and all other conditions are met.
- The event must not be provided under an optional remuneration plan.

What about Christmas Gifts?

Making gifts, such as non-cash retail vouchers or hampers, to employees still appears to be a popular alternative (or addition to Christmas parties) for many employers.

Such gifts could either be covered by the trivial Benefit-in-Kind exemption, or the annual events exemption if given at the event (as long as the total of all costs at the event do not exceed the £150 per head).

The trivial benefit exemption will apply when all the following conditions are met:

- The cost of providing the benefit does not exceed £50 (inc VAT and delivery) per employee.
- The benefit is not cash, or a cash voucher. N.B. A cash gift, such as a Christmas Bonus does not qualify.
- The employee is not entitled to the benefit as part of any contractual obligation.
- The gift is not provided in recognition of particular services performed by the employee as part of their duties.

Where all of the conditions above are met for a seasonal gift, there are no tax or NIC liabilities for either employer or employee. Where one or all of the conditions are not met, the gift will be taxable and subject to NIC. Additionally, where an employee buys their own gift, and is reimbursed, this relief will not apply.

So, on the basis that a Christmas Turkey can easily cost in excess of £50 nowadays, careful planning of an office party might ensure that a little bit of Christmas goodwill could be passed on, in a tax-efficient manner for all.

For advice regarding the tax implications of employee parties & gifts please contact either of the partners Kate Gigg FCA or Nicola Tarry FCA at Kathryn Gigg Chartered Accountants, Hunstanton on 01485 534800 or kate@kathryngigg.co.uk.

N.B. Article written in November 2023





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News From The Woottons

Richard Coates

New Gas Main

On the face of it, there's not much happens in The Woottons and that's probably one of the attractions about The Woottons for many people - you know what you're getting. But underneath the surface, there's plenty going on. Recently we've had contractors digging up the road for Cadent and installing a new gas main. They started on Castle Rising Road in South Wootton near Oak Avenue and they've been working their way along Priory Lane, North Wootton to Manor Road. Motorists have been very well aware of the work because of the temporary traffic lights and the annoying delays. So why have they been doing this work? Well the old gas main was made of iron and was laid down over 50 years ago but it has become porous over time and has been leaking gas under pressure so the replacement is a 180mm (7 inches) plastic pipe that won't leak in the future. Being iron, the old pipe had to be laid in a straight line but the road wasn't exactly straight which explains why the holes have been dug in different positions along the road. The work should be finished by early December when the work crew will be moving to somewhere in the Snettisham area, I believe, to do the same kind of work.

Wootton Planning Applications and Property for Sale

The large building estates are well documented and little needs adding here: one housing estate is now selling the houses, another is rapidly constructing the new roundabout and the third has been stuck with detailed planning delays of its own making. One interesting thing I've noticed about The Woottons in the last year is that individual planning applications have almost dried up whereas a couple of years or so ago there were several every month. No longer do we have Wootton people wanting to extend their homes and yet that's not the case throughout the rest of the Borough where the number of planning applications continue at their normal level and that means the pressure on the Council's planning staff continues unabated. But another thing that is common with other areas is the asking price of properties throughout much of the area. A couple of years ago when someone put their house up for sale, it was followed shortly afterwards with a "sold" sign. Now rightmove.com is much more likely to relist it with a "Reduced" label and it seems to me that little is selling these days, even at a reduced price.

Knights Hill Planning Application

Many planning applications are approved (or otherwise) by the planning staff but the more controversial ones are dealt with by councillors on the Planning Committee. This meets more than once a month sometimes and one meeting in November considered the details of the large Knights Hill housing estate for which a government inspector had recommended outline planning approval three years ago. The developer had tried to get some of the details approved by the Borough Council in July this year but it deferred that application so that the concerns of the local parish councils could be considered. The developer subsequently met with representatives of three local parish councils who explained their concerns, many of which were taken on board by the developer. The Borough Council Planning Committee considered the whole matter in November in a report nearly 200 pages long with lots of plans and

photographs for the planning committee to consider. After 3 hours of careful consideration it was decided to approve the applications so that the construction work can now go ahead. As with the new housing estate off Edward Benefer Way, the developer will first have to construct a new roundabout just off Grimston Road. To do that, it will open up an old farm gateway to form a temporary access road for the roundabout construction traffic. Once the roundabout has been completed next year, it will become the new permanent access for the main construction work for the housing estate. The developer then hopes to have the first houses built in 2025.

Free Money

I've mentioned before that there's free money available to anyone that wants it. Oh, yes. There are strings attached to it! It's only for voluntary groups of some kind, not for individuals, and it's got to fund some good local purpose. Nothing too big but if your club or society needs a few hundred pounds for a specific project, do get in touch with me (email address below). Whilst I only deal with The Woottons, other councillors will offer the same throughout the Borough of West Norfolk. Just get in touch with your local councillor - or me if you're not sure who it is. I can give you the details of your local councillor if you give me your address.

Gas canisters

Last month I mentioned about the problem of abandoned gas canisters in the North Wootton woods. At the time I wrote, I said it was far from certain if anything would be done about making this form of drug taking illegal but, shortly after my comments were published, the law was changed. Of course, that doesn't mean the problem will be cleared up overnight but it should be in the next couple of months.

Councillor Surgery

No, not a doctors' surgery although the new one on the edge of South Wootton is rapidly taking shape. This is a Borough Councillor Surgery - a new venture for The Woottons. Some of the Borough Council's wards are comparatively small and it's not too difficult for the people to know the ward's councillor but there are two wards that are much bigger and so have three councillors. Of those, The Woottons is the biggest and so one of The Woottons councillors is holding a "surgery" where Wootton residents can call in with any Borough Council problems they might have. If they're not sure if their problem is with a service provided by the Borough Council or a different council, they should call in anyway. It's being held in the South Wootton Parish Council Meeting Room (next to the Village Hall and attached to the Parish Council Office). That's at 24 Church Lane, South Wootton, PE30 3LJ, on Monday 11 December between 10.00 and 11.00 a.m. Which councillor is it? None other than your columnist! If you can't make that date and time, you can always contact me by email: cllr.richard.coates@west-norfolk.gov.uk at any time.

This is my last column for 2023 and I hope that everyone in The Woottons has had a good year. With the seasonal festivities to look forward to at the end of the year, I hope that 2024 is even better for The Woottons and everyone living here!



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Round the bend with Dean Baker

It's a Letter about a Leak or Check your Post

It's here again, the glitter of Christmas, the turn of the year, Mrs B's familiar 'I need a list, otherwise you'll get something you don't want!' There's so much that's familiar, the food, the enticing shop windows and the cards.

In the Baker household there are 2 December birthdays and ... what's all this to do with plumbing I hear you ask? Well, actually nothing, but there were so many cards and letters on the doormat I nearly missed an important letter from Anglian Water. I know it's tempting to recycle without reading, but thankfully I didn't, because this letter told me that we had a leak and we were losing up to 2 litres of water a day over our usual usage!!! If this happens to you – don't panic. With the letter came a very useful leaflet, titled 'How to find leaks at home'. Its available online too - Anglianwater.co.uk/leak-check.



The first place I checked was the toilet, as a plumber I knew this was where a leak might be and the leaflet lists this as the most likely place for a leak too. As I listened, I could hear water trickling into the pan. I should point out, this happened in what was the guest bathroom and is now the 'strictly for teenagers' bathroom, which is why I hadn't noticed the leak before the letter.

Round the Bend



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In this case I needed to change the 'ball valve'. Other likely leaks can come from dripping taps - always make sure they're fully off. Check that the shower head isn't leaking. If you still can't find the leak, check out your household appliances – pull them out and look for pools of water or any trickling. And if the culprit still evades you, try checking

your garden tap! Anglian Water offer a leakage allowance if a leak has made a serious impact on your bill. Wishing you all a peaceful, warm and happy Christmas. See you in '24.

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Standing from left: Anna Pugh, Adrian Eden and Ros Mayle. Seated: Ross Greenwood

On the day *Death at Paradise Park* was launched Ross Greenwood was in Hunstanton at 'by the book' signing copies for fans of his work. One of whom, Ros Mayle, was there to collect her pre-order prize from Ross - 'Canaries in the Coal Mine' plus a set of bookmarks.

Peterborough born, Ross attended the King's School there before working in the United States and around the world. His writing career includes the very successful DI Barton series.

Lovers of crime fiction won't be able to resist his latest novel that opens with a murder in Hunstanton and features well known landmarks and characters.

Death at Paradise Park begins when Alfie Hook settles down to eat his fish and chips by the Hunstanton seaside and is murdered. DS Ashley Knight and her Major Investigation Team are called to investigate and when they discover who Alfie is married to, they realise this case is not going to be straightforward.

Death at Paradise Park is the second book

in the series featuring DS Ashley Knight and her fast-track Constable Hector Fade.

Their first outing as the Norfolk detectives took place some two months earlier in 'Death at Cromer Beach', and I enjoyed reading how their working relationship develops in this new book as Ashley begins to confide in Hector during a challenging investigation for the team who struggle to connect the victims.

The Hunstanton Vegas Fish Bar owner Joe Rodrigues has a cameo on page 3 (although the real Joe isn't a bald man with big glasses) and much of the action takes place at Paradise Park, that may or may not be based on a nearby caravan park!

This unputdownable seaside thriller kept me up way past bedtime as I followed the gritty, plausible, and shocking twists.

Owners of by the book, Adrian Eden and Anna Pugh are thrilled with the interest in *Death at Paradise Park*. Adrian said: "Don't forget, this is the book that features all your Hunstanton local landmarks plus multiple murders; a must read!"

Competition

Adrian and Anna have offered a prize of the next book in the DS Ashley Knight series 'Death at Bacton Wood' that will be published in the spring. Simply answer the following question (and you'll need to read *Death at Paradise Park* first):

QUESTION: Where does DS Ashley Knight have a drink watching the sunset?

ANSWERS TO:

editor@townandaround.net or by post to: The Editor, Town and Around, 18 Tapping Close, Snettisham PE31 7FF

Please note we do not accept entries via any social media channels or text message

CLOSING DATE: 31st January 2024

A recipe from the Prudent Pensioner

My (nearly 9 year old) great niece is coming to stay again soon and I know I won't fail to please if I have some Chocolate Brownies to offer. A friend gave me a copy of this recipe some years ago and it has been in my file of favourite recipes ever since. Sometimes I add walnuts. I bake it in a tin 30cm X 19cm X 2.5cm (12in. X 7 1/2in. X 1in) I cut it into slices and wrap and freeze each slice separately, it is easy then to unwrap as many as needed and pop them in the microwave.

Chocolate Beetroot Cake
100g Drinking Chocolate
230g SR flour
200g Golden caster sugar (I sometimes use soft brown to make it even richer)
100g Dark chocolate (min. 60% cocoa solids) broken in pieces
125g Butter
250g Cooked Beetroot
3 large eggs

Preheat oven to 180c
Butter and flour cake tin.
Sift together drinking chocolate and flour then add sugar.
Melt chocolate and butter in a bowl over hot water.
Puree or grate beetroot.
Whisk eggs and stir into beetroot.
Add all ingredients together and mix thoroughly
Pour into prepared tin and bake for 30 minutes
Allow to cool 10 mins before turning out.

My updated book "Less Waste more Soup" 45 easy, budget friendly recipes for nourishing soup is available from Ridouts Bakery in Heacham, Docking Farmers Market, By The Book in Hunstanton and Hunstanton indoor market and Robert & Christine home shopping. Copies are available to borrow from Heacham Library & Hinckley Library

Remembrance Sunday

Tim Keogh

Hunstanton Town Council in association with The Royal British Legion, Hunstanton Branch, held a Remembrance Service on Sunday, 12th November, allowing people to come together to recognise and pay their respects to serving personnel and, most importantly, those that paid the ultimate price.

A service and prayers were held in the Town Hall followed by a Remembrance at the War Memorial where the names of all local lives lost in World Wars One and Two, and other conflicts were read out. The well attended service was conducted by Fr. James Monro.

The Last Post was sounded before a two-minute silence at 11am followed by wreaths being laid at the War Memorial.



Photos by Chris Bishop

Snettisham Remembers

Richard Bird

A large crowd gathered in Snettisham Market Place for the annual service of Remembrance. Many youngsters joined the procession along with representatives from the RAF, US Air Force, Police, Councillors, Members of the RBL and residents.. Old soldiers wore their medals and the Salvation Army Band provided the musical accompaniment before and during the service which was led by Rev Dan Tansey.



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Wild in Westminster and West Norfolk

It was historic to sit in the House of Lords for the first King's Speech in 70 years which set out the government's legislative agenda to grow the economy, strengthen society, and keep people safe. It was a reminder of the legacy of service to this country by Queen Elizabeth II who gave 67 Queen's Speeches.

As the year draws to a close, we can assess progress on the five priorities the Prime Minister set at the start of 2023. Inflation is set to halve. The economy is growing. Debt is set to fall. While the longest waits for NHS treatment are down industrial action means there is more to do. Illegal boat crossings are down by over a fifth compared to last year.

The King's Speech set out a broader agenda. On the economy, new legislation will strengthen our energy independence by backing North Sea oil and gas. This is consistent with our climate commitments - the independent Committee on Climate Change has said the UK will continue to need oil and gas even when the UK reaches net zero by 2050. In addition, these industries support hundreds of thousands of jobs.

Alongside this, the government is working to secure record investment in renewable energy such as offshore wind to build on the

UK's record in decarbonising faster than other major economies.

A Trade Bill will confirm our membership of the Trans Pacific Partnership – giving us access to a trading zone that will account for the majority of global growth in the coming decades. Another measure only possible post-Brexit which many constituents welcome is legislation to ban live animal exports.

To keep people safe, the Sentencing Bill will ensure the most dangerous criminals are in prison for longer. Life will mean life for the worst murderers and rapists and serious sexual offenders will serve the entirety of their sentence. I welcome changes I campaigned for to give judges powers to require defendants to attend sentencing hearings rather hide in their cells.

There were also measures to create a smoke free generation and to strengthen communities with reforms to the housing market to help ensure a fairer deal for tenants while protecting landlords' interests.

The Speech came after I spent a morning at Heacham Water Recycling Centre. This was my latest meeting with Anglian Water and the Environment Agency to review the action being taken to address improve our coastal waters. Encouragingly monitoring data shows

improved water quality this year, however, bathing classifications are based on 4 years' data meaning the overall rating will not change.

I then met the Environment Agency on South Beach to talk about the annual beach recycling and shingle ridge natural flood defence. They pointed out areas highlighted in Town and Around where material has been removed from the ridge as it gets closer to property boundaries. This increases the risk of flooding properties where it has been excavated from and their neighbours.

A concern locally is the beach recharge project bringing new material onto the beach is not happening this year. Although data indicates it is not necessary the Environment Agency highlighted constraints they consider mean it is undeliverable. That assessment means further work is underway on how to protect this coastline.

Standing on the beach looking at homes, businesses, and land, the Environment Agency assured me they were committed to long term coastal defence measures. They must be.

House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA
Email: james.wild.mp@parliament.uk
Tel: 020 7219 6968

James Wild MP celebrates Parliament Week with pupils at Smithdon School

Parliament Week UK highlights what Parliament does and how students are able to get involved. Last year, over 1 million people took part in Parliament Week.

This year, James Wild, MP for North West Norfolk, met Smithdon High School's School Council for a discussion about Parliament and life as an MP. Other schools and organisations in the local area also participated in UK Parliament Week including Hunstanton Primary School, Walpole Cross Keys Primary School and the College of West Anglia.

Discussing his role, James spoke to the 15 strong student council about his work as MP for North West Norfolk helping constituents with housing, tax, welfare or other issues; campaigning on local issues in Westminster; scrutinising legislation; and holding the government to account.

He spoke about his successful campaigning over three and a half years with strong local support to get QEH added to the New Hospitals Programme, as well as securing investment in road, rail, and bus services and infrastructure, new health facilities, and the £25 million Lynn Town Deal.

James also spoke about the many career options available in Parliament from research, assisting MPs and administration to engineering, IT and digital services as well as the roles available in the civil service.

The School Council asked James a number of questions about his role as MP, Parliament Week and life in Westminster. Questions included James' involvement with the School Rebuilding Programme, the £25 million Lynn Town Deal and increasing transport links from Hunstanton to other parts of the constituency. James also spoke to the School Council about what they would like to improve for their local area, such as more accessible transport, new communal areas and better sports facilities.

Whilst at Smithdon School, James reviewed progress with Headteacher, Ms Gibbins on the School Rebuilding Programme. James supported Smithdon's successful bid to be selected as one of the schools and colleges to be part of the 10-year school rebuilding programme.

Commenting on the visit James said: "It was a pleasure to return to



Smithdon to mark UK Parliament Week which is an opportunity for young people to find out more about democracy, the role of Parliament, and how they can get involved.

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Borough Council news

Cllr Terry Parish ward member for Heacham, Sedgeford and Fring and Leader of the Borough Council

The Ward

It is sometimes difficult to separate Ward issues from Borough as, obviously, the Ward sits in it. Consequently, there is an overlap in the following, Borough, report.

Heacham: there was a meeting between the developer of the Cheney hill site and the Parish Council. I could not attend but several councillors did and asked pertinent questions. I will pursue those when the reserved matters application comes to planning committee.

Sedgeford: I have arranged a meeting between Sedgeford councillors, planning officers and housing officers to discuss the old school site which is being developed by NCC. I hope some resolution is found which suits the village

Fring: I kept an eye on potential local flooding as Fring suffered several winters ago. Local maintenance of ditches etc seems, I hope, to have mitigated that, although water extraction rates by Anglian water could have something to do with it. There are concerns that a very neglected pond poses a potential risk to future flooding and I have asked officers to determine how to proceed.

The Borough

An unusual month or so as we had the Local Government Association (LGA) peer review immediately before last council and some LGA training / consultation for Cabinet and group leaders between then and now. Perhaps the most significant benefits of both is a chance to compare and contrast approaches to council functions and the people which provide them, including councillors, as the review providers were or are councillors from elsewhere. More will emerge about outcomes of the review when the report is published and the action plan written.

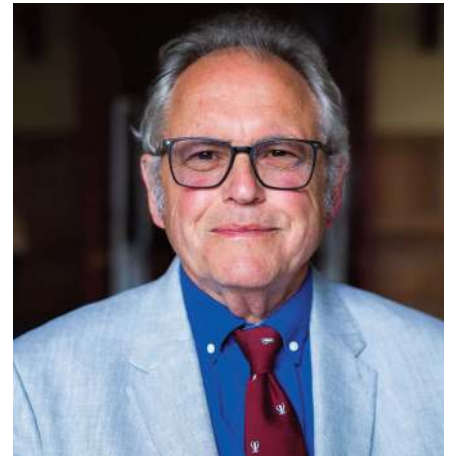
Continuing the theme of talking to people I have continued regular meetings with Independent Leaders which enables discussions with people across the country. Increasing difficulties with homelessness was a fairly common thread though it was linked to rehousing asylum seekers rather than the emerging issues of mortgage defaulting. The former is causing major problems along the

south coast. River flooding, after heavy rain, challenged areas to the north and west of us though part of Somerset, susceptible to such flooding, apparently escaped due to investment after previous floods

That brings me to several environmental matters I am involved in both as Ward member and as Leader. The Heacham River is one of the chalk streams which has suffered in recent years and I hope to be working with local landowners, councils, and the Norfolk Rivers Trust (possibly with Anglian water joining in) to improve matters. The river reaches The Wash at Heacham South Beach and sea water quality there remains poor (over the rolling average) which is of Borough as well as local concern and I have continued meetings with the Environment Agency and Anglian Water about that. The river enters the sea under the shingle ridge which was debated at last Council and I did write to The Secretary of State and the Environment Agency reiterating this Council's concerns about flood defence funding and await an answer.

Sea water quality, lack of, particularly off Heacham Beaches was the subject of an Environment Agency /Anglian Water/RSPB and Creh Analytical Ltd, meeting. It boiled down to, 'there is no smoking gun', 'further investigative work will continue', and how to move forward. I will await further developments before commenting further. A meeting with AW at Heacham Waste water Treatment Works, also attended by the EA, Heacham Parish Cllrs, and James Wild MP, convinced attendees that sewage did not escape from that infrastructure. However, concerns were still raised about operations at pumping stations which serve HWWTW and I have received complaints about leakage from local pipes, one anecdotal, one acknowledged by AW as due to overloading of a local pump in heavy rainfall.

I can't avoid the sea and was on the stage for the Port Evo (wash barrier) meeting at the Princess Theatre, Hunstanton. Every seat was taken and I was told over 60 people were turned away at the door. The promoter of the scheme was scheduled to speak last (his demand) and it proved to be an error of sorts.



He did say a sentence to open the talks, 'We are not building a barrier'. His full presentation at the end effectively contradicted this. I spoke for the Borough and stated that we had no position as we did not have sufficient information. I did give a list of questions we needed the answers to. Other speakers, on fishing, ports, biodiversity, oceanography, did have sufficient knowledge to criticise it. There is likely to be 5+ years of investigations to see if it can be done without causing problems, then 3 to 5 years building the port connected to Lincolnshire. Phase 2 follows, consideration of joining to Norfolk – the full barrier.

Changing tack, though it could be related to matters above, I attended and made a (very small) contribution to a Business Continuity Exercise which placed key officers in modelling conditions which could curtail council activities. They revolved around escalating weather conditions both in the winter and summer. It was pleasing to find that, as things got worse, officer responses got better.

A meeting of the West Norfolk Transport and Infrastructure Steering Group proved informative. It discussed progress, or rather lack of it, on the A17/A47 Pullover junction at King's Lynn. A fall out from HS2 cancellation is awaited and a further technical study will be done.



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New hospital funding

Jo Rust

The concerns about the state of play over the planned new build of our local hospital have resurfaced recently. This is a total contrast to the relief which many felt after the announcement that we were supposedly going to get a brand new building by 2030. At the engagement event which took place on 21st August 2023 we were told quite clearly that by January 2025 we must have BOTH stages of the Multi Storey Car Park complete in order to be ready to start the construction of the new hospital by January 2026. But that's looking less and less likely as the funding for the MSCP hasn't even been released yet. Apparently the delay to the MSCP funding is due to a desire to ensure that the design is "fit for the future" which relates to electric cars and EV charging. I totally understand that. But it puts us in an ever increasingly difficult position as we've been told time

and time again that we MUST have a new build up and running by 2030 as our hospital won't be able to be used after that time.

There was a recent investigation into the way in which the QEH had used vital funds to pay for a PR firm – Hood and Woolf, to apparently boost staff morale and get the bid over the line. The fact that the hospital felt it appropriate to spend nearly one million pounds on this piece of work which lasted less than two years is, while disappointing, not surprising. After all, it was under Rishi Sunak's tenure as Chancellor that the full programme of replacing RAAC schools was hugely reduced. So you can absolutely understand why a desperate hospital trust who had been excluded from the first list of 40 new hospitals would feel it necessary to spend such a sum to make sure they were part of the new additions.

As far as I can see, it also

demonstrates a lack of faith that the local MPs and County Councillors could bring about the positive announcement that we all so desperately needed. I was proud to be a part of, and to lead, our local weekly campaigns and demonstrations that lasted over 2 years. We know that the publicity that we raised made a real difference to the awareness of the need to replace the RAAC buildings. But as proud as I am of the work that the Community Action Group did do, it really shouldn't have been necessary. As spending nearly a million quid to a firm of spin doctors shouldn't have been necessary. The replacement of RAAC hospitals and schools should have been a part of a planned estates strategy which every government takes up.

I'm making the case for the NHS to be taken out of politics as the political cycle is, too often, based on short term targets. The NHS is a long term issue and



should not have to struggle or worry about which government is coming in and what their views are going to be about a free, at the point of delivery, healthcare system. I do not think it should be considered a privilege to have a health service like the NHS. Our health, and the wider determinants of it, are fundamental to the health of our country and our economy. We need to give reassurance to our hospital trusts that the £10.75 billion backlog of estates work will be completed without them needing to waste their local budget on PR firms. Another shameful example of how this government operates.

The Council should make and keep a New Year Resolution!

John Maiden

This story is dedicated to Ivy Scales who sadly passed away in October. Ivy used to provide snippets of useful information to help in my crusade to restore The Green at Hunstanton to its original appearance. Her life story was told to Margi Blunden in three parts, for publication in recent editions of Town & Around, and it is also available on the Hunstanton Society website. I think Ivy would appreciate this update to the story I broke in October's Town & Around.

Two months have passed since I celebrated what appeared to be the borough council's belated acknowledgement that the presence of a 'hangar' on The Green breaches a legally binding Covenant, imposed in 1955 by Bernard le Strange for the benefit of the inhabitants and visitors of Hunstanton. The council's own bylaw also makes it an offence to obstruct the promenade, as is clearly the case with the 15 columns supporting the hangar where it overflies the promenade; along with an assortment of machines located at promenade level and on The Green, beyond the footprint of the hangar.

When I received copies of recent emails from the council to the current occupants of the hangar drawing attention to these facts, I was entitled to believe that steps would soon be taken by the council to comply with all the legal constraints, intended to protect The Green and the public promenade.

Weakness shown by previous labour and conservative administrations when dealing with defaulting 'Pier' lessees, should not stop the new 'independent' council from acting on the legal advice given to the council in September 2002.

This was when Graham Sinclair made it clear that if CHS Amusements Ltd was claiming occupancy of a site on The Green as Lessee of Hunstanton Pier, the council, in its capacity as Pier Landlord, should insist on the provision of a Pier and nothing else whatsoever!

CHS directors seemed to be more aware of their responsibility to make and maintain a Pier than the council was, because they actually included a short Pier/balcony in amended plans, which were submitted on September 5th and controversially passed on September 9th 2002, without being made available for public scrutiny!

The only point in mentioning this now, is because CHS owners have been consistent in recognising their legally binding obligation to provide the Pier described in the 999-year pier lease. Why else would Henry Moreton have asked to be released from this onerous duty as soon as he acquired CHS from Clive Sillis in 2007? It is worth remembering that in 2007 it was borough council regeneration policy to reinstate Hunstanton Pier!

When he asked to be relieved of his duties as described in the Pier lease, Mr Moreton referred to his ongoing discussions about restoring the Pier with Sheila Jeffreys, who was Chair of Hunstanton Civic Society at the time. He should also have been familiar with correspondence dated March 27th 2003, in which Sam Staveley, a local solicitor acting for CHS, turned down a Deed of Variation offered by solicitor Simon Alely on behalf of the council.

Mr Staveley pointed out that "If a document purports to vary the terms of the existing Lease, then effectively it takes effect as a surrender and

Ivy Scales



regrant of the original Lease. Given the particular nature of the original Lease, in this case we think that is extremely dangerous and really not possible."

It follows from this that an attempt by Nicola Leader, the council's legal services manager in 2009, to release CHS from an obligation to build the pier specified in the Pier lease, was "really not possible"...

However, in exchange for attempting the impossible, CHS was persuaded by Mrs Leader to release the council from an obligation, imposed by a 1954 Deed, not to trade on the promenade within 100 yards of the Pier.

By accepting this arrangement CHS appeared to forget that the 1954 Deed, also prevented the Pier lessee from trading on the protected section of promenade. Add to this the fact that CHS has been in breach of a bylaw making it an offence to obstruct the promenade, ever since the hangar was erected in 2003, and it is immediately obvious that in spite of past shortcomings, the new independent council is still well placed to re-zone the whole of The Green, in line with its prime position within the Conservation Area, which was extended in 2009 to include the entire length and width of the North Promenade.



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Hunstanton Town Mayor, Cllr Michael Ruston, sends his warmest wishes to residents this Christmas

I am delighted to wish our community of Hunstanton a very Merry Christmas.

We continue to live in extraordinary times, and after another tough year for many it is more important than ever to look after one another, keep ourselves safe and look forward to the New Year.

Let's continue to shop locally, use and support our many incredible and hardworking independent businesses while sliding into a new year full of smashing goals, chasing dreams, and finding success on whatever is most important to you.

As Mayor I have the privilege

of meeting many local people who are working hard to keep our community moving. Whether in the emergency services, business community, public services or the voluntary sector there are so many unsung local heroes. I couldn't begin to recognise them all, but I would encourage you to think about the people you see day to day who make your life that bit easier; please take the time to wish them a very merry Christmas.

While many will spend the holidays with friends and family, there are others who are needed 'in work' on Christmas Day and throughout the festive period. I

would like to say 'thank you' to all of them for this sacrifice; our police and fire service, doctors and nurses, hospital and social care staff, volunteers and those working in the hospitality and retail sector – we are hugely indebted to you all.

Hunstanton Town Council gives thanks to our wonderful team of volunteers, those who assist in the Helping Hands Café, those who run the Friday Friendship Group and to the residents who assist us with council run events. Without you all, we would not have been able to achieve so much for the local community.



I finish by wishing you all a wonderful Christmas and a happy New Year and hope 2024 brings joy and prosperity to you all.

Giving

Councillor Joshua Osborne – Downham Old Town

Christmas nears with all its cheer, and within the celebration is built the idea of giving. From the presents we gift friends and family to charitable giving to those in our communities, Christmas is an excellent time to think about what we do for others.

We do a lot when it comes to charity in West Norfolk, with charity shops, food banks and so many other organisations helping improve

lives. This is built on a rich history, with the centuries-old almshouses that still stand on our streets, charities first set up in the Victorian era, and many schools such as KES that began in the wills of wealthy merchants. The urge and the social necessity for relieving hardship in society was long carried mostly by voluntary giving, but of course times do change.

There was a reason that Asquith, Lloyd George, and Churchill brought forth the New Liberal reforms more than a century ago. The new Britain was wealthier but had greater needs to meet its potential, the state taking further steps to guard its citizens with national insurance and old age pensions, as well as asking for more from the wealthiest. This was the pattern followed by the governments that came after, even if there has been considerable debate since about the proper limits of government.

I would argue something has to change, because it feels as though much of our social infrastructure (as well physical infrastructure) is crumbling. Years of increasing demand met by handwaving calls of the 'Big Society' and real-terms cuts to local and central government funding has done this and we cannot expect our charities to adequately fill all of those gaps in provision. From getting doctor's or dentist's appointments, to those struggling affording food, or those made homeless, we need change.

The scale of the problems we face is large, and not easily solved. It sometimes feels as though some in government have given up however, hardship seen as a 'lifestyle choice' that it is not the business of those who govern the country to solve. Charities will certainly explain complex cases but remember what can be done when charities are backed with political will. The early years of my life at the millennium's beginning saw rough sleeping dramatically decline, and it can again. So, if you can, give to charity before, during, and after Christmas, but think also about what you want your government to do.

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Julie 07927 467984

Sue: 07891 506912

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- Hunstanton District Festival of Arts
- Good Hope Communities Youth Club
- Little Lights
- Friday Friendship Group
- Smithdon High School
- Redgate Rangers Football Club
- East Anglian Air Ambulance (Mayor Charity 2023)
- Hunstanton Primary School PTA

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Hunstanton Town Council

Councillors are elected by the residents of the town to work in the community and receive no payment of any kind for their services.

This current financial year, the council has financially supported and managed 2 major events held in the town - the Carnival in June & the Dickensian Christmas Festival 2023 Festival.

Both events brought crowds into the town, our thanks go to KL1 for their continued support with these events and to staff at Resort Services for their advice and assistance.

Our thanks also go to the Princess Theatre for stepping in at the last minute to hold the Centre Port Presentation.

By applying to KLWNBC for 50/50 CIL funding, in 2023 HTC has been able to;

- Renovate the Town Hall Lift
- Install a Theatre style Screen & Projector in the Town Hall

In addition, HTC received a grant from Norfolk County Council to install a bus shelter at Tesco's



Helping Hands Project

When opening the Helping Hands Café in the Town Hall Hub in October 2022 Hunstanton Town Council could never have predicted how valuable the service would become to the community.

Open Mondays & Wednesdays 10am-12noon Offering a warm space, hot drinks, and light refreshments on a 'pay what you can afford' basis, advice and friendship.

The council are pleased to be working closely with:

Citizens Advice, Tech Skills, Red Cross Support, Multiply, Norfolk & Waveney Mind, BCKLWN Adult Services, Grow Live Support Services, Community Action Norfolk, NCC Start for Life, Hunstanton Food Bank & Coastal Community Super Market.

*** HTC could not offer this service without the dedication of our wonderful volunteers.



Hunstanton Carnival & Music Festival

3 Days of Music & Events
21st, 22nd & 23rd June 2024

Would you like to join our parade? Have a stall on the green?
Provide Entertainment?

Please get in contact on 01485 532402 or email: clerk@hunstantontowncouncil.gov.uk

HTC Organised Events 2024

26th March - Indoor Market Re-Opens

TBC - Jobs Fair

24th April - Town Meeting

20th May - Community Day, Town Hall
10am-2pm

7th-9th June - D Day Celebrations

14th-16th June - Bee Weekend

21st-23rd June Carnival Weekend

10th November - Remembrance Service

Hunstanton Town Council is here for its residents and are very interested to hear your ideas for the local community, maybe you would like to volunteer some of your spare time and join us as a Hunstanton Town Councillor?

For more information or to share your ideas please contact the Town Clerk:

Tel No: 01485 532402 - Email: Clerk@hunstantontowncouncil.gov.uk

December events - see also: <https://townandaround.net>

Friday 1st

Docking Heritage Group presents Chanter's Jig with 'Our Jolly Wassail' at St Mary the Virgin Church, Docking 7pm.

Admission £5 at the door. Mulled wine and mince pies available during the interval.

Fincham Memorial Hall PE33 9EJ. Roy's Christmas Quiz 7.30pm. £2pp. 50/50 raffle. BYO refreshments. Up to 6 in a team, either bring your own or make up a team on the night.

United Services Club
Hunstanton: Christmas Quiz. £50 first prize Teams up to 4 persons. £4 pp incl supper 8pm

Saturday 2nd

Snettisham Flea Market 9am-3pm, Memorial Hall PE31 7LX

Bag Ladies of Thornham Winter Gift Fair at Thornham Village Hall. 10am-4pm

North Wootton Christmas Fair at the Village Hall 10am-5pm

Snettisham Christmas Fair, the Market Place 5-8pm

United Services Club
Hunstanton: Splash Duo
Excellent tunes from 60s onwards 8.30pm

Sunday 3rd

Dersingham Day Club
Christmas Craft Fair at Dersingham Village Centre 11am-2.30pm Stalls and refreshments.

Tuesday 5th

United Services Club
Hunstanton: Christmas Singalong with Hunstanton concert Band. Come and join in singing your favourite carols and Christmas songs. Light refreshments in the interval 7.30pm

Wednesday 6th

Community cinema at the Burnham Market village hall at 2.30pm Annie (musical) 1982. Set during the Great Depression in 1933, the film tells the story of Annie, an orphan from New York City who is taken in by America's richest billionaire starring Albert Finney. £5 on the door or contact Diana Walker 01328 738604.

Music in the Burnhams Winter Music Supper Club presents two young artists Alison Langer and Lawrence Thackeray who made a huge impression when they gave their recital two years ago. Coupled with a delicious supper, wine and good company, what a great way to spend a cold winter's night. 6.30pm. musicintheburnhams.com or 07879 177079. Booking is essential £25 for supper and a great recital.

Christmas Carol Service at Mintlyn Crematorium 7pm. Chapel open from 6.30pm. Donations for The Norfolk Hospice. Free event but ticket required: email mintlyn@west-norfolk.gov.uk or telephone 01553 630533 for tickets or webcast log-on details.

Fincham Memorial Hall PE33 9EJ Fincham History Group 7.30pm. 'Trades and occupations in a Norfolk village'. All welcome.

Thursday 7th

Stanhoe & Barwick WI The Reading Room Stanhoe. 2pm Christmas entertainment from Stuff and Folly. Visitors welcome £5 incl refreshments.

King's Lynn Community Cinema Club present a special charity screening of the new Ken Loach film "The Old Oak" at St George's Guildhall, King Street, starting at 7.30pm in aid of the King's Lynn Night Shelter. Entry to the KLCCC screening of "The Old Oak" will be by cash collection on the door and a minimum donation of £5 per person is suggested.

Friday 8th

Kings Lynn U3A Monthly Talk at Gaywood Community Centre, Kings Lynn. Doors open 9.30, Talk 10am "A Christmas Alphabet". Join Three's Company on a whistle stop festive journey. Leah and Irma will entertain you with their seasonal anthology of poetry and prose, and not a bah humbug in sight. Visitors and members £3. A warm welcome to all.

United Services Club
Hunstanton: Diamond Paul's Mixed Bag Disco 8pm

Saturday 9th

Fincham Memorial Hall PE33 9EJ Christmas Craft Fair 11am-4pm. Crafts, hampers, art, cakes & bakes. Teas & coffees available.

Hunstanton & District Community Voices present a Christmas Carol Concert at The Way Christian Fellowship, Downs Road Hunstanton PE36 5HU at 2.30pm. Free entry with refreshments served. Donations to the church.

United Services Club
Hunstanton: Carolann, dancing to music 60s onwards 8.30pm

Monday 11th

The Arts Society NW Norfolk talk at Sedgeford Village Hall 2pm. Peter Medhurst lecture: Robed in Dreadful Majesty: Music, poetry and traditions of the Advent season. Guests £5

Tuesday 12th

United Services Club
Hunstanton: Christmas Bingo Eyes down 8pm

Thursday 14th

New Hunstanton W.I. Meeting, Methodist Church Hall, Austin Street at 2.15pm Entertainment by The Heacham Songsters. Visitors very welcome £5.00 to include refreshments. Contact details 01485 572027

Friday 15th

Music in the Burnhams collaboration with Burnham Market Primary School for a "Look towards Christmas" event on December 15th at Sutton church. The school's choir will join Sutton's Chamber Choir for a late afternoon of seasonal songs and poetry to welcome in Christmas. Mince pies, brownies and drinks available from 3.30 for a musical start at 4pm. No charge and proceeds towards Sutton church.

Fincham Memorial Hall PE33 9EJ Christmas Bingo night. Cash Bingo with other games and raffle. Doors 7.30pm, eyes down 8pm. BYO nibbles & drink.

United Services Club
Hunstanton: Christmas Prize Draw and dancing to Charlotte Sayer 8pm

Saturday 16th

Hunstanton Lions Club will be selling Mistletoe and Holly in Hunstanton High Street from 10am. Please come along and give us your support.

John Harris Birthday Piano Party at the Methodist Chapel Hall Heacham 10am-4pm. Musical games and competitions, singalongs and carols with guest artistes. Cold lunch and desserts at 1pm. No charge but donations for Diabetes UK and the Alzheimer's Society Call 01485 579136 before 12th December to book lunch.

Carol Concert at Union Church Hunstanton 2pm. Music by the Hunstanton Concert Band. Tea, coffee and mince pies. Free. Parking available at the Community Centre.

Christmas Bingo at Thornham Village Hall Doors 6pm, eyes down 6.30. Reserve your table: cllr.achesterman.thornhampc@gmail.com. All proceeds to Thornham Village Hall.

Dersingham Choir Free Christmas Concert 2-4pm at St Cecilia's Church Hall, Mountbatten Road, Dersingham PE31 6YE. Full of festive music, sing-a-long to well loved carols. Refreshments and raffle.

King's Lynn Festival Chorus at King's Lynn Minster 6pm. A family carol concert including readings and popular carols. £15 (under 16s free) 01553 764864 kingslynncornexchange.co.uk

United Services Club
Hunstanton: DNA Rock, pop and soul 8.30pm

Sunday 17th

Thornham Village Hall Live Broadcast of The Nutcracker. Doors 1.30pm, performance 2pm. Tickets £15 and £10 for under 16s. Booking at balletandoperatvh@gmail.com

Tuesday 19th

Snettisham Pensioners' Christmas Lunch at 12 noon. Booking essential: hello@snettevets.co.uk or collect a form from Stockley's Chemist.

l.net/whats-on/december

Wednesday 20th

Christmas Carols at Dersingham Village Centre 5pm.
Refreshments will be provided.

Friday 22nd

United Services Club
Hunstanton: Diamond Paul's Mixed Bag Disco 8pm

Saturday 23rd

United Services Club
Hunstanton: Graham James 60s onwards 8.30pm

Sunday 24th

United Services Club
Hunstanton: Steve Moyes on Christmas Eve 8pm

Monday 25th

Wishing all our readers a joyous Christmas

Hunstanton Christmas Swim, the Promenade. Registration 10am.
Fancy Dress judging 10.50. In the water 11am.

Saturday 30th

Snettisham Flea Market,
Memorial Hall PE31 7LX 9-3pm

United Services Club
Hunstanton: Travis sings hits from all eras 8.30pm

Sunday 31st

United Services Club
Hunstanton: New Year's Eve fun and dancing to Just Us Duo in the Lounge and Disco in the front bar. Tickets members £10. Non-members £22, 13-17 £5, under 12s free. Bring your own party food. 8.30p

Editor's note

Thank you to everyone who has supplied information for this listing. This is not a comprehensive diary for everything that's happening in December. The events diary on our website is updated regularly. Sometimes events are cancelled or the times are changed, especially when the weather is inclement. Please don't make a long journey without checking it is still going ahead first. Lastly, don't forget it is Panto season - oh yes it is!



THE ARTS SOCIETY
North West Norfolk

We meet at Sedgeford Village Hall at 2pm.

Come as our guest for £5 to one talk to see if you enjoy our meetings.



Next talk:

Monday 11th December 2023

Robed in Dreadful Majesty: Music, Poetry and Traditions of the Advent Season

Lecturer:
Peter Medhurst

Would you like to join our Arts Society?

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- * Special Interest Days
- * New Year members' lunch
- * Support for Young Arts
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Campaigns update

Landline: 01553 630329
Mobile: 07920 286636

Cllr Alexandra Kemp (Norfolk County Council and BCKLWN)

NHS DENTAL CAMPAIGN

In a bid to help improve dental health for young people in the Borough in the cost of living crisis, Purfleet Pantry Affordable Food Supermarket launched its offer of free children's toothbrushes and toothpaste for families who cannot afford them, on 7 November. I have donated from my personal Councillor Allowance for the purchase of children's toothbrushes and toothpaste. Thanks must go to "Beauty Banks" and to the Co-op Pharmacy Hunstanton for their supply of free children's toothbrushes and toothpaste. Please get in touch if you can help. West Norfolk was found to have the highest prevalence of tooth decay amongst 5-year-olds in the East of England and growing numbers of 15-19 year-olds being referred for tooth extractions. Parents can't get children registered with an NHS Dentist and can't afford private treatment. The local NHS is also offering funding to dentists, on a short-term basis, to do outreach prevention work in schools.



Alexandra Kemp with South Lynn resident Emma Marriott

KING'S LYNN NIGHT SHELTER

Lynn Night Shelter re-opened its doors on 1 November and is currently full, amply demonstrating the continuing need. It re-opened with a month's delay from its scheduled re-opening on 1 September. The Night Shelter's September ask, for Borough Council funding, has not yet been granted, but the public have dug deep in their pockets, providing money and donations of food. Since the Night Shelter started to take in single homeless people in 2017, Rough Sleeping in the Borough has reduced and for this, we must credit Night Shelter's tireless work, the efforts of the Purfleet Trust who have reached 100% success with setting residents into new tenancies, and the Borough's enhanced homelessness and prevention service and advice services. Before then, I remember the rows of people in shop doorways in Lynn, including young Care Leavers; homeless residents in South Lynn were spending cold nights in the Hardwick Road Cemetery. The safety net the Night Shelter provides, is critical to the Borough's Housing Prevention Strategy. We must not forget Government cuts to Supporting People funding over the last decade led to more homelessness, when they mistakenly thought the need had disappeared. The perceived divide between the Night Shelter's charitable objectives, and the Borough Council's statutory criteria for funding, must be resolved as soon as possible and I have raised this with the Council.

PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS IN THE BOROUGH

The Council is reviewing its Rough Sleeper and Homelessness Strategy with its partner organisations, including Housing Providers, King's Lynn Night Shelter and homeless-experienced residents. The number of people

presenting to the Council as homeless, has doubled since 2018, from 100 per quarter, to 200 per quarter. An average of 80 homeless people are being housed by the Borough at any one time - in single-person pods in King's Lynn, in bed and breakfast, in the Council's 8 Housing First units and its 10 places in Housing-led accommodation. Homelessness is a national crisis, caused by the shortage of private rented accommodation and social housing. People on benefits cannot now afford to rent privately at all. Because in 2016, Government froze the Local Housing Allowance link to the 30th percentile of private rents. So there is typically a £300-400 gap a month between the lowest 30% of rents, and what Housing Benefit will pay. So more cost falls on District Councils, who have a Discretionary Housing Fund, which they can top-up out of their own funds to a limited amount.

People fleeing domestic violence, relationship breakdown, and people whose families can no longer accommodate them, issues with health and addictions, are also contributory factors to homelessness. Landlords are giving up renting properties, because of soaring buy-to-let mortgages and the cost of making homes more energy-efficient. So building more social housing, not just "affordable housing", is a must. The Borough Council is so stretched, it has been housing homeless families on the outskirts of Lynn, where it is difficult to get to the children's schools or access public transport. The Borough could consider purchasing more accommodation through its housing companies, rather than placing families in bed and breakfast. The Government needs to urgently restore the Local Housing Allowance link to rents.

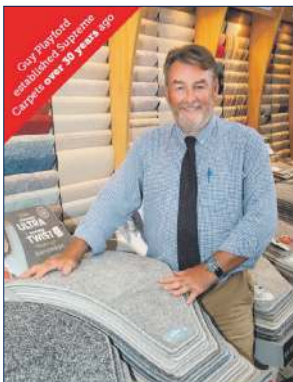
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Remember, a woman can never have too many accessories!

Christmas shopping for the most important lady in your life may just have got a whole lot simpler, says Allez Chic's Cheryl Daubney.

You know how it goes, the weeks fly by and then suddenly there's the last-minute dash to get everything done. Of course, you've already wrapped and hidden the children's gifts and posted great-aunt Joan's, but then there's the difficult shopping to do – and it's the one you just have to do on your own...

But don't despair, stylish dressing always calls for beautiful accessories in different shades and colours – and a lady really can't have too many. They complete every outfit, take up very little wardrobe space and without them she risks getting bored with her outfits. Accessories can extend the life of her wardrobe staples, making them look fresh and different.

This season Allez Chic has beautiful warm and soft pashminas (every girl's favourite) in a wide range of colours. They look equally good with jeans or dresses and whilst they are usually worn by draping around the shoulders, if tied with a simple knot, or looped through itself around the neck it takes on a whole new look.

Gloves don't just keep a lady's hands warm; they can be a whole fashion statement on their own and these new boxed gloves not only come in an exciting range of colours but

also have this beautiful colour button detail.

If it's a cosy sweater you are after for that Boxing Day walk there are some super styles in store from Micha and Pomodoro. And to complete the cosy theme, what better than a new bobble hat?

Cheryl and her team will be pleased to help you with your shopping and you won't leave disappointed. Even more important though – the lady in your life won't be disappointed either!

The shop is open Tuesday- Saturday 10am-4.30pm. The last day for Christmas shopping is 23rd December. Allez Chic will re-open after the New Year.

**Allez Chic, The Old School House,
Lynn Road, King's Lynn PE31 6AG
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Store re-opens in the
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**Princess
TEA PARTY**

**Saturday 27th January,
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THE BARKING BUGLE NEWS

Yappy Christmas

Phew! It has been yet another extremely busy year for the BB repawters with so much going on. We have been on the telly three times woofing about all things canine, we were featured in two prestigious doggy magazines, and we also won a major award which highlights the impawtance of giving a warm home to neglected doggies who desperately need love and attention. I know all about that as I used to be one of them myself! I am glowing with pride as I put paw to paper because my two sisters, Ziggy Bear and Clara, (despite numerous tantrums) have both worked tirelessly this year to inform all you lovely humans out there about the latest doggy stories both local and national.



We will be collecting for PACT Animal Sanctuary just before Christmas outside Tesco in Hunstanton on Saturday, 23rd December. This is a cause very close to our hearts so please, please could you put this date in your diaries! All the wonderful humans who work there help rescue, rehabilitate and where possible re home neglected, injured and abandoned animals, not just woof woofs. There are over 1,600 animals there who all need a lot of love and care. It would be lovely to see you outside Tesco on this day. If you're thinking of dropping by please stop and give us a stroke and a cuddle. As you probably know we Cavalier King Charles Spaniels love all that fuss and attention!

The BB team would like to bark a huge THANK YOU to all you wonderful humans who donated items for the Pet Food Bank this year. All the recipients of these goodies were greatly appreciative of your incredible generosity. We would also like to bark our gratitude to Lily's Pet Store in Hunstanton for continuing to be our collection point.

I hope to be visiting Santa Paws myself this Christmas with my two sisters. Please visit the BB website to discover all the places in Norfolk that he will be visiting and also to get pressie ideas. I still don't understand how he can get around so quickly and be at all these places at the same time. He must have supaw charged reindeer for transport!

There once lived a very famous human being who said, 'I have a dream.' Well, I have one too. I have a dream that all homeless doggies around the world get a warm and loving home this Christmas and plenty of healthy treats to nosh. Now wouldn't that be just pawsome?'

Woofs Miss Zsa Zsa,
Editor of the Barking Bugle -
www.thebarkingbugle.co.uk

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NEWS FROM BRANCASTER VILLAGE HALL (BVH)

Geoff Wingrove

It continues to be a very busy time at BVH, with successful events and groups, a thriving shop and Post Office, and a well-supported Bar 71. Much of this success is due to the hard work of all the volunteers who give freely of their time and expertise. A reminder: the shop/Post Office is open 9.00am to 5.00pm Monday to Saturday and the shop at the same time on Sunday, where you will be sure of a warm welcome. The official opening of the shop/Post Office on 19th October by pupils of Brancaster School was a great success.



The regular groups continue to meet, including Yoga, Mothers and Toddlers, Coffee Mornings, Fitness, Pilates, Scottish Dancing and the Mobile Library. The Hot Spot lunches will continue over the winter on a monthly basis on Fridays.

Forthcoming events include the Christmas Bingo (2nd December) and the Christmas Party (22nd December). Bar 71 continues Quiz Nights, Darts, Pool and Skittles; food vans will be serving delicious homemade pizzas and burritos.

For full details of all events and activities, please visit our website: www.brancastervillagehall.co.uk and for enquiries: brancastervillagehallcommunitybookings.co.uk

FROM THE BRANCASTER VILLAGE HALL ARCHIVE: THE VILLAGE SHOP

The 19th and 20th centuries were the halcyon days of village shops and service centres in North Norfolk: in Brancaster there were a number of shops and establishments offering services such as bakery. After the Second World War significant changes began to occur in village life as people became more mobile, large retail stores were established and extended in towns, and there were large scale variations in work opportunities and home ownership. In Brancaster the retail offering was reduced to a village shop and separate sub-Post Office. The shop eventually closed and retirement put the sub-Post Office under threat during the second decade of the 21st century.

The extension and refurbishment of Brancaster Village Hall in 2019 allowed the establishment of a joint shop and Post Office on the BVH premises. BVH was fortunate to have Gurneys, a well-established business, take over the management of the enterprise

and get it off to a good start. However, this local business eventually wished to progress in a different direction and so, at the beginning of September this year, Mark and Kerry Eldridge took over the management of Brancaster Village Stores.

Mark and Kerry have been running the Great Massingham shop/Post Office very successfully for a number of years, along with a tearoom called The Cartshed Tearoom and a mobile Post Office serving 18 different venues in North and West Norfolk. Mark, who is the day-to-day business manager, has a number of years' experience in retail, having worked for the Coop and Somerfield supermarkets, rising to Regional Director; Kerry heads up a People and Workforce function in a large organisation. Having moved to Great Massingham, Kerry and Mark took the opportunity of buying the village shop and subsequently developed it into the success it is today. When the chance arose to take over at Brancaster, they were enthusiastic to extend their business, although realistic about the challenges to be faced.

Mark is keen to bring the lessons that he has learnt at Great Massingham to Brancaster and emphasises the critical business factors such as being open when customers want, sourcing goods they want to buy, having staff who are friendly and enthused about the service they are providing and keeping prices as low as possible, given the need for the business to pay its way. To this end he has, in short order, begun to recruit and train staff, revamp the premises to make them more customer-orientated, extend the range of goods and open the shop 7 days a week from 9.00am until 5.00pm and the Post Office weekdays and Saturdays at the same times, with a plan to extend the hours further in the Spring.

There is general agreement that the village shop and Post Office fulfil a crucial need in the community. Besides the retail and postal services, it is a focal point where people meet and exchange information on a daily basis. It has a strong community cohesion function and as such needs to offer good service, a cheerful and welcoming ethos and be a place where villagers want to come and interact with each other. This will become increasingly important with the continuing closure of banks and the demands imposed on isolated rural places with the onward greening of the environment and transport. Mark also feels it important to offer cash services as well as online payment to meet the needs of all villagers.

One of the major challenges faced increasingly by all villages in North Norfolk – something already present in Brancaster – is the issue of seasonality. The customer base changes between the summer and winter periods in proportion to the number of second and holiday homes villages have, together with the general influx of holiday-makers to the area. The key for village shops is to pitch a retail offer that addresses both needs, which is a difficult balancing act in terms of staffing and the volume of stock that needs to be

carried. A further challenge is the recruitment and retention of staff, something in which Mark has been very successful, having increased staff numbers at Great Massingham from about 5 to 23 currently, with negligible turnover. This has been crucial to the success of a thriving village store, as it has provided employment for local people, which further improves the service in the business. Mark's enthusiasm, leadership by example and commitment about what he is doing, along with a comprehensive training and support programme, creates an atmosphere in which staff want to come to work and go the extra mile to achieve customer satisfaction. The fact that the shop at Great Massingham has been awarded "Independent Store of the Year" after a multi-stage assessment in the Retail Industry Awards 2021 speaks volumes for the type of organisation that he and Kerry run and for the experience and commitment they are bringing to Brancaster.

Mark clearly enjoys what he is doing and is determined to create a relaxed, friendly and customer-centred ethos in the Brancaster Village Stores. He seeks to meet local demands and to resolve the considerable challenges he faces, at the same time ensuring the viability of the business. Other factors he faces include the problems of inflation, high energy costs, competition and the legacy of the Covid period. It will be important to construct around the resident community the sort of service they will support, whilst also reacting positively to the requirements of summer visitors. As with all village shops, success will come if the community throws its full support into the service on offer and in turn, that service is attractive, responsive and affordable: these are the challenges ahead for Kerry and Mark, but also for the villagers of Brancaster.



The pictures show, firstly, the official opening of the village shop and Post Office by pupils of Brancaster School on Thursday 19th October and, secondly, Mark Eldridge and Mary Andrews with the new display.

A gourmet experience on wheels

An enterprising restaurateur and farmer has launched a Bus Bistro combining fine dining with theatre trips and excursions.

Josh Green has been running the Barn restaurant since 2016 and he opened The Street in King's Lynn earlier this year. Ingredients are sourced from local suppliers and his own herd of Dexter cattle (that he also shows around the country) from his farm that is within 5 miles of the restaurants.

The team of chefs has vast experience working within the UK, France and Spain and they prepare the food for the trips.

The Bus Bistro is a new project in partnership with Hosier Executive Limited and the same varied and traditional menus will be served on board the luxury Neoplan Starliner II as guests are transported to their destination. "The idea is to provide affordable trips to fabulous venues on what is surely one of the very best coaches around," said Josh.

The high specification vehicle seats 34 people and has everything you need for a long trip including an on-board kitchen, granite topped tables, super-comfy seats, air conditioning and toilets. Three members of staff are on board each excursion to serve food



and drinks. Starters and main courses are served on the outbound journey and desserts on the return journey.

Upcoming trips include: Cirque du Soleil – Alegria at the Royal Albert Hall on January

13th at £185 per person, OVO Cirque du Soleil at £134 per person in Birmingham on 27th April and Andre Rieu in Birmingham on 17th May at £179 person.

However, if cars are more your thing then the coach is headed to The Silverstone Museum, Towcester on April 2st where you can discover the stars, stories & science behind the history of British Motor Racing. Tickets are £95.00 each which includes your ticket into the museum itself, travel and breakfast on the outbound journey to Towcester and then a 3 course meal on the way back to Wisbech & King's Lynn.

All prices are inclusive of travel, ticket to the event and food. A full list of the excursions available can be found at: <https://www.busbistro.co.uk/shop/>

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New Hunstanton Women's Institute Val Walden

Peg Hunter had us dancing round our chairs with a stick to great laughter, which made us appreciate how unfit most of us are! She will be taking our craft meeting (her other hat) when we will be preparing for the Christmas Tree Festival which we have entered again this year.

Our October speaker was Leonard Priestly who recounted some very humorous stories of his time as a Furniture Removal Man and Lorry Driver. We welcomed several visitors to this meeting who along with our members enjoyed his enjoyable talk. We now look forward to our Christmas Lunch at The Lavender Lounge.

New members and visitors always very welcome. Please contact Carol on 01485 572027.

Stanhoe and Barwick WI

Our 2024 Programme is still under wraps, but will be full of our usual entertaining and informative talks. We return on January 11th and thereafter on the first Thursday of each month, from 1st February.

Please contact Valerie (01485 576261) for further details.

Winter Warmer Lunch Veronica Moores

The Stroke Association Coastal Stroke support and Carers Group had our Winter Warmer Lunch with a Halloween theme; everybody had a fun time dressing up! The food was excellent! Jacket potatoes with various fillings and salad, spooky desserts were all provided by Alison from Moss Bakery.

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Hunstanton Society

HUNSTANTON & HEACHAM FLYERS 1930s - PART 2 by Committee Member Bill Cunliffe

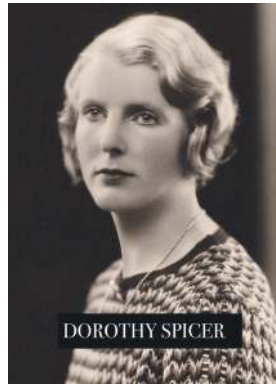
Last month we provided the story of some of the Flyers who visited Hunstanton in the early years of aviation. The story continues

Life after Hunstanton

Dorothy Spicer

In 1938, Dorothy accepted a position with the Air Registration Board, becoming the first woman in the British Empire to receive a technical appointment in Civil Aviation. When the 2nd World War broke out she took on flying work and was a great asset in the war effort. Her mechanical knowledge also enabled her to assist on the development of new aircraft types and aircraft equipment.

Dorothy married a pilot who soon after the war took a job in aviation in Brazil, and so they left England.



Pauline Gower

Pauline Gower also continued working in aviation. She eventually convinced the War Office that women pilots had a worth in the war effort, (WW2) and after much discussion, Pauline was asked to find a total of 8 women pilots to be employed flying RAF and other planes from airfields after either being repaired or built locally. They were not operational in the sense that they shot down enemies, but they did do the work of male pilots who could be used in 'front-line' duties.

They were so successful that the 8 female pilots became 150 pilots and together they delivered more than 300,000 aircraft.

Pauline also identified that female pilots were not paid at the same rate as their male colleagues. Years ahead of her time, she made it her mission to remove this anomaly. Eventually she succeeded and women pilot's pay were made equal with male colleagues.

In 1942 she was awarded the MBE, which she richly deserved.

Pauline as well as being a talented aviator, was an excellent musician and also wrote funny poems. She had a book of her poems published with the title, "Piffing Poems for Pilots".

On 2nd June 1945 Pauline married Bill Fahie. Not surprisingly, Bill was also a pilot and wore RAF uniform at the ceremony. They were a perfect pair always happy and totally dedicated to aviation.

Pauline and Dorothy deserved to live a life of luxury after all they did for the war effort in general and for aviation in particular.

However, both their lives ended abruptly and far too early.

Dorothy Spicer was killed in 1946 when she and her husband were passengers in an aircraft that crashed into a mountain in Brazil in bad weather. There were no survivors.

Pauline Gower died on 4th March 1947 after giving birth to her twin sons who survived her. One of the twin boys Michael Fahie is the author of "A Harvest Of Memories".

That both Pauline and Dorothy died within months of each other was ironic. A tragic ending. However, we should never forget two wonderful women who graced Hunstanton in the 1930s. Two women who were an important part of Hunstanton's history.

— oOo —

AMY JOHNSON (1903 - 1941)

Amy Johnson was a very good friend of Pauline Gower and Dorothy Spicer. It was inevitable that the three women would meet, as they were all trailblazers in aviation. However, they were much more than colleagues, they were close friends.

Amy trained at the London Flying School in Stag Lane and in 1929 became a fully qualified pilot.

Amy Johnson always endeavoured to push the boundaries of air travel and established many flying records.

Amongst many other records, she was the first woman pilot to single handedly fly from England to Australia. Her pre-flight planning amounted to obtaining a world atlas, finding a page which showed both England and Australia, then ruling a straight line with a ruler between them.

It worked and she landed in Darwin Australia. She was the first woman to do so. However this planning method was not adopted by other pilots!!!!

In the mid 1930s she became a glamorous celebrity and was a pin up star with a well-known fashion house. The Daily Mail newspaper employed her as their air correspondent. In what the newspaper described as a trip round the UK to promote interest in female participation in aviation, Amy circled the UK and landed in many major towns. Her arrival ensured large groups of people would flock to see her.

Unfortunately, like Pauline and Dorothy, Amy died young. During World War Two, she performed valuable service for the war effort joining Pauline and Dorothy in the Air Transport Auxiliary, shipping planes to airfields where they were required to be.

On January 5th 1941, on one of these ATA flights, Amy was way off course and crash landed into the Thames Estuary.

A convoy of wartime vessels in the Thames Estuary spotted Amy's parachute coming down, and saw her alive in the water, calling for help. Conditions were poor with a heavy sea, a strong tide and snow. It was bitterly cold. Lt Cdr Walter Fletcher was captain of HMS Haslemere and he navigated his ship to attempt a rescue.

The crew of his vessel threw ropes towards Amy but she could not get to them and she ended up under the ship. A number of witnesses said they saw a second body in the sea. Walter Fletcher dived in and swam to the 'body' he rested on it then let go. When the lifeboat reached him Fletcher was unconscious and as a result of the intense cold he died in hospital days later.

Amy's watertight flying bag, her log book and cheque book were later washed up and were recovered near the crash site.

There has always been speculation regarding the circumstances of Amy's death. Some say she was shot down by 'friendly fire'. Some say she became entangled with the propeller of the rescue ship. Some say she was on a secret mission with another passenger, and even in the late 1990s a man said he believed the plane was shot down because the pilot (Amy) did not respond when asked for a code word. Her body was never found.

Whatever the circumstances it was a tragic death of a wonderful woman.

In case you were wondering what Amy's connection is with Hunstanton. The photograph at the top of page 41 is one I found which I am assured depicts Amy Johnson and her Daily Mail plane in Hunstanton on her tour of the UK. I would love to hear from anyone



Amy Johnson's plane in Hunstanton on her Daily Mail UK Tour



who was at that occasion in the 1930s. You never know!!!!

I was very moved after reading "A Harvest of Memories" and I urge everyone to read it if they are lucky enough to find a copy.

In researching the above I have become very interested in local aviation and aviators. If possible I will add to my records for future publication at the Hunstanton Heritage Centre. I am very grateful to all the people who helped my research and to those who provided some of the above information.

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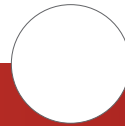
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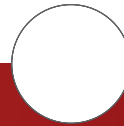
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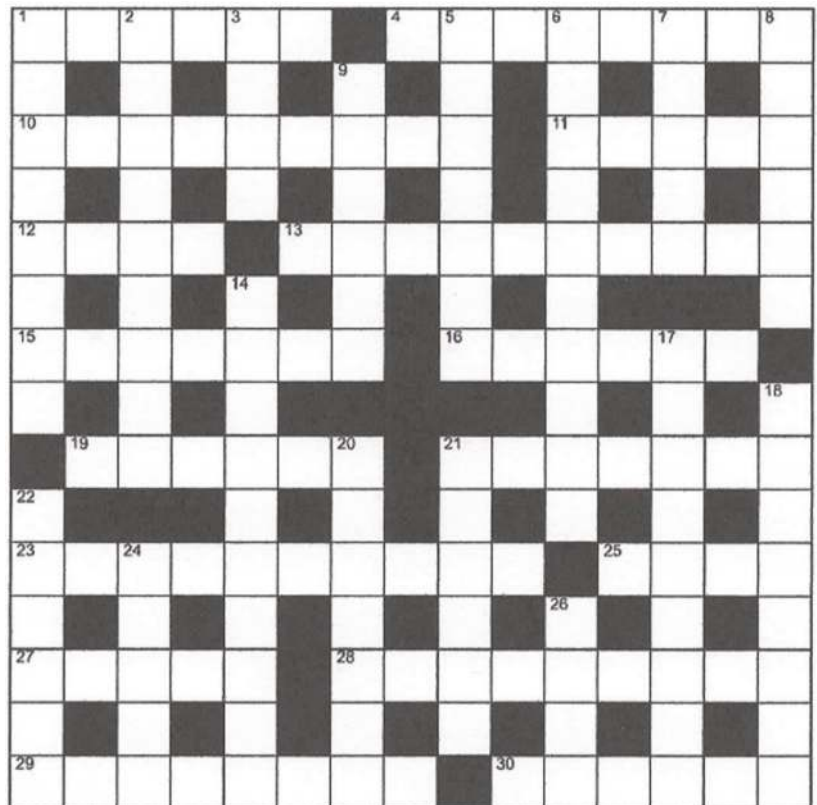
David Elsey's Christmas crossword

Across

1. Dressing festive bird, stuffing to finish (6)
4. Keeping in a seasonal hang-up (8)
10. Unfinished, in the end part of turkey is offered to community worker (9)
11. Approaching time when Santa will make his deliveries ... (5)
12. ... a little one of his helpers will drop off the last two (4)
13. Petitions to a boss for something to create a seasonal display (10)
15. After Eights – seen and demolished! (7)
16. Sacks holding a couple of presents that are the tops (6)
19. A small number opt out of festive jobs in bars (6)
21. About to put tree in a large bowl (7)
23. Delivers last present and flies into atrocious weather (10)
25. Opening time leading up to Christmas goes without notice (4)
27. Before the beginning of evensong a Christmas tree is lit up (5)
28. Margarita's choice of liqueur? (6,3)
29. Getting down lanterns and candles (8)
30. Push as sled runs into trouble (6)

Down

1. Hold back at first, then rush around with Christmas flyers (8)
2. Broadcast, live every Sunday, starts with carols and prayers (9)
3. Christmas carol isn't finished (4)
5. Fantastic fairy ain't it? A treat! (7)
6. Charming bride, but what a pantomime! (10)
7. Became popular overseeing bar (5)
8. Entrance with a posh dessert (6)
9. Get star to twinkle on cards (6)
14. One can help with door-to-door seasonal deliveries (5,5)
17. Busy elves seen taking an early break (9)
18. Hymn has the power to thrill on hearing (8)



Crossword solution on page 49

20. Cut down small tree at the end of November (7)
21. Welcoming words for one of Rudolph's friends with no time to get home (4,2)
22. Go for festive song when first released (6)
24. Unsettled when angel is damaged? (5)
26. Request opening of presents before ale drunk (4)

Mudpies & Butterflies

"I've learned that you can tell a lot about a person by the way he handles these three things: a rainy day, lost luggage, and tangled Christmas tree lights." – Maya Angelou

Gardening in December: A Festive Guide to Green Joy

As winter blankets the UK in its chilly embrace, many gardeners may assume that December is a quiet month for gardening. However, there are still delightful activities to engage in, bringing both joy and productivity to your winter garden. Here's a guide to gardening in December and some fun things to do to embrace the seasonal spirit.

Gardening Tasks for December

Winter Pruning: December is an ideal time for pruning deciduous trees and shrubs while they are dormant. Remove dead or diseased wood to encourage healthy growth come spring.

Potted Garden Delights: If you have potted plants, consider clustering them near the house to provide some protection from harsh weather. Mulch the soil surface to insulate plant roots against freezing temperatures.

Evergreen Brilliance: Appreciate the beauty of evergreen plants like hollies, conifers, and winter-flowering heathers. These resilient plants provide structure and color during the winter months.

Bird Feeding Extravaganza: Set up bird feeders and bird baths to attract winter visitors. Enjoy the lively presence of birds in your garden while supporting local wildlife.

Indoor Bulb Forcing: Pot up bulbs like hyacinths and paperwhites indoors for early winter blooms. The fragrant blossoms will add a touch of spring to your home.

Festive Container Displays: Create festive outdoor container displays using evergreen branches, winter-flowering pansies, and ornamental berries. Add some twinkling fairy lights for a magical

touch.

Winter Vegetables: Continue harvesting winter vegetables like Brussels sprouts, leeks, and kale. Plan for next year by perusing seed catalogs and selecting varieties for your spring and summer garden.

Composting Wisdom: Keep turning your compost pile to maintain decomposition, although it may slow down in colder temperatures. Add kitchen scraps, but avoid adding too much during the winter months.

Fun Garden Activities for December

Decorate Your Garden: Embrace the festive season by decorating your garden with outdoor lights, wreaths, and other seasonal ornaments. Illuminate your outdoor space with a warm and welcoming glow.

Winter Garden Strolls: Bundle up in warm layers and take leisurely strolls through your winter garden. Appreciate the subtle beauty of frost-kissed plants and the tranquility of the season.

Garden-themed Crafts: Engage in garden-themed crafts indoors, such as making seed packet ornaments or creating pressed flower art from summer blooms.

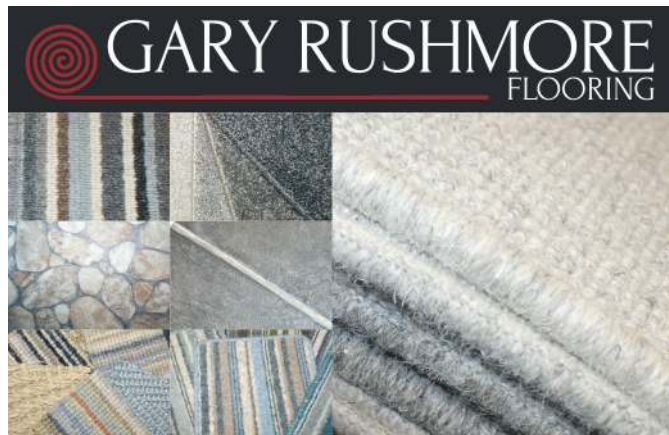
Warm Beverages by the Fire: Set up a cosy seating area in your garden with blankets and cushions. Enjoy a cup of hot cocoa or mulled wine by a fire pit or outdoor heater.

Winter Photography: Capture the charm of your winter garden with a photography session. Focus on the intricate details of frost on leaves or the contrast of evergreens against the winter sky.

Nature Journaling: Keep a nature journal to document the changes in your garden throughout the winter. Sketch winter plants, note bird sightings, and jot down your gardening thoughts.

Conclusion: December need not be a dormant period for gardeners. Embrace the seasonal shifts, revel in the beauty of winter flora, and engage in activities that celebrate the unique joys of gardening during this festive month. Whether it's pruning, crafting, or simply savoring a hot drink in your outdoor haven, there are endless ways to make your December garden a source of inspiration and delight.

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We do not hold a meeting in December but will be having a Tombola at the Christmas Fair on Saturday 2nd December to support East Anglia Children's Hospice.

Our AGM will be on Wednesday 31st January when our 2024 programmes will be available for members joining. We start at 7.30pm and once the business is complete there will be a quiz and refreshments available. You will be most welcome to come and see what we have planned for 2024.

In the meantime, enjoy the Festive Season and our best wishes for a Happy and hopefully more peaceful New Year.

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Nature notes with Carrie Carey

Winter visitors

As autumn slowly ebbs away and temperatures dwindle into single figures, the slightest hint of chilly air can make me retreat further into my downy bed. Getting up early on a bracing morning goes against common sense and staying in the warm seems a solid plan. Although days may begin with a frosty start at this time of year, an array of seasonal visitors brings a touch of magic to our gardens, parks and green spaces. In the months when gardens are virtually silent, the morning anthem of the Robin is a joyful contrast to the hush of night. With their large eyes, Robins see well in low light and even when the day is fading and the bitter chill of night takes hold, you can still hear their lively melody rising above the tumult of human noise. In fact, the Robin's merry vocals are usually the first to greet the dawn and the last to salute the sunset. Most Robins sing all year round and their sprightly refrains of ripples, trills and burbled notes resound crisply against the

stillness of a winter day. The Robin's song is so ubiquitous that many birders use this as the metre by which to identify other bird calls.

While I enjoy watching these delightful birds hopping across the garden, I'm also spellbound by flocks of Thrushes moving across the grey and violet undertones of a winter's sky. The term 'Thrush' describes a wide variety of songbirds that share some common characteristics. They may lack the flamboyant plumage of other vocalists, but their sweet, resounding strains make up for it. Fewer melodies better reconcile us to winter's onset than the simple call of the Redwing. Often heard as early as September their characteristic chattering calls echo through the night sky. A common winter visitor, Redwings show a bright rusty red crescent along their flank when perched but the name stems from the chestnut red underwing seen in flight.

Redwings feed in flocks on farmland or open woodlands,

they dine on berries or windfall apples switching to small invertebrates as fruit supplies decline. They are often seen in the company of Fieldfares and if you're lucky enough to spot them together, well that's a real treat.



Slightly larger than the Redwing, the Fieldfare has the most variegated plumage of all the Thrush family striking a handsome pose with its steely grey head, reddish-ochre breast and throat. The sight of a flock of Fieldfares displaying a flourish of silvery-white underwings in flight is quite stunning. Sadly, they lack the sweet melodic song of other winter birds, the call is a progression of harsh sounding clacks; still, you can't have it all.

In contrast, the joyous fluty notes of a Mistle Thrush drifting across a cheerless sky was perhaps the inspiration behind Thomas Hardy's poem "The Darkling Thrush"

At once a voice arose among
The bleak twigs overhead
In full-hearted evensong
Of joy illimited;
An aged thrush, frail, gaunt, and small,
In blast-beruffled plume,
Had chosen thus to fling his soul
Upon the growing gloom.

Traditionally associated with a turn in the weather, the Mistle Thrush often sings before the onset of a storm and unlike many other birds continues to carol through the rain. Perhaps this is the 'take away' from Hardy's aging Thrush as opposed to the favoured Nightingale of Keats and Shelley. Thought to take its name from its love of mistletoe, you might find one of these birds

jealously guarding a bush of sticky white berries from would be marauders. Look closely at the plumage and you'll see the Mistle Thrush has black spots on its white breast and belly, this distinguishes it from the smaller Song Thrush whose belly markings resemble upward pointing arrows. The face is a greyish brown with a visible white ring around bright, inquisitive eyes. When berries are not abundant, they will forage for earthworms and other invertebrates on the ground but sing their lilting, slightly hesitant refrain perched high in a tree.



While not a member of the Thrush family, I want to include the Waxwing in this article. Looking very dapper in cinnamon-grey plumage, black face mask and striking head crest, this bird is conspicuous for its good looks. Unlike other winter visitors, Waxwings are socially unconventional; they are nomadic wanderers with a non-territorial social structure and are colloquially known as Bohemian Waxwings. Migration to the UK is driven by a lack of food in native Scandinavia and the word on the street is that we can expect a large 'irruption' this winter, so keep your eyes peeled for groups of these birds settling on berry laden trees such as Rowan and Hawthorn. Their designation as a songbird is disputed in some circles as they lack a true song. The absence of territorial angst might allow them to get by without a significantly noticeable melody, but you might hear their high pitched, rapid trill (sounding much like the quick fire setting of a toy laser) of a flock of Waxwings before you see them. They are one of my winter favourites, if not for their song, then certainly for their resplendent punk-rocker quiff.

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Wendy Warner's plant of the month - Sarcococca



We regularly get asked at the garden centre for evergreen plants that "do something" - by this, the customer usually wants them to flower 12 months of the year! Many evergreens are not the most exciting when it comes to their flowers, but *Sarcococca* will definitely bring some interest to the winter garden. From the same family as box, and commonly known as Christmas Box or Sweet Box, *Sarcococca* is similar in many ways. It is a low maintenance, hardy, evergreen shrub with small, dark green glossy leaves and has an abundance of tiny, slightly insignificant, white flowers from December to February but the

real bonus is the sweet, heady, vanilla fragrance. You will usually be aware of the scent before the seeing plant. The flowers will be followed by shiny fruits changing from red to black when mature.

They are versatile in their use and can be grown in the border or in pots and used in formal or woodland or cottage garden settings. They are structured in their form and can be rounded or clipped to form a low formal hedge similar to *buxus*. In the border they combine well with other winter flowering plants such as *hellebores*, *pulmonarias* or early spring-flowering bulbs. Ideally position them where you know you will walk regularly in

the winter, by the front or back door or near a path on the way to the shed or greenhouse so you can appreciate the wonderful scent.

Sarcococca grow best in rich, moisture retentive, well-drained soil and prefer full or partial shade. They are tolerant of full shade in a north corner near the house or in a woodland where they will be shaded by trees and will actually withstand dry shade once established so can grow under larger trees. If grown in full sun or in a very dry position, the leaves can become pale or yellow in colour. If growing in pots, plant in John Innes No. 3 compost and remember you can move your pots nearer the door as they come into flower. They don't require much pruning, but if you need to tidy them or want to shape them more formally, this should be done after flowering in spring.

Sarcococca confusa is the most popular species and will grow to up to 1 metre to 1.5 metres in height and spread. *Sarcococca hookeriana* var. *humilis* has more creamy-white flowers and is

compact at just 60cm but can sucker to reach a greater spread. The leaves of *Sarcococca hookeriana* var. *digyna* 'Purple Stem' are green flushed bronze, and it has brownish-purple stems and the white flowers are tinged pink at the base. *Sarcococca hookeriana* 'Winter Gem' is smaller reaching 50cm to 1 metre in both height and spread.

Lastly, bring a few sprigs of *Sarcococca* indoors as a cut flower and enjoy its wonderful scent.

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Car Dealership in the Woottons

Richard Bird

Carl Spitz has nearly 30 years' experience in the motor trade having worked with some of the best dealerships in the area - both main dealers and independent traders.

He decided to take a different route when he started Mercury Motors based in the Woottons with a much more friendly personal approach. Keeping overheads and expenses as low as possible allows him to be reasonable in all his deals. There are no 'Hard Sells', or any sales pressures. His closing statement is often "O.K. I will leave it with you."

Historically car dealers have suffered from negative stereotypes, but Carl consigns these notions to the bin immediately you meet him. He's a friendly, family man and his approach is one of helping customers to the best of his ability, not only with finding the correct vehicle but being understanding about after-sales issues that occasionally crop up, attending to the smallest of detail himself and making sure his customers are completely satisfied. You only have to see the reviews on Facebook, (F)@mercurymotorskl to see the satisfaction that his customers have enjoyed.

Mercury Motors buy and sell locally pre-owned vehicles, where and whenever possible, with the background knowledge and history of the vehicle being an uppermost priority. Carl will consider to purchase any aged car with any mileage provided it's a genuine vehicle.

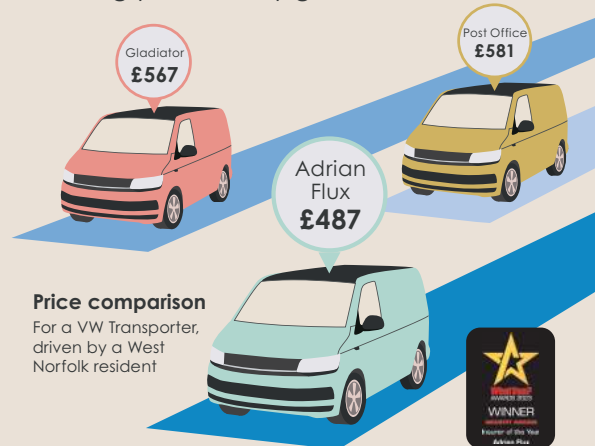
It was a pleasure to interview Carl, who gave the frankest of response to all our questions.

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SWAG: a valuable village asset

Eric Langford

The monthly SWAG (Snettisham Wednesday Activities Get-together) afternoon event is proving a successful formula for addressing the issue of loneliness and isolation known to exist within the village. SWAG is run by RBL volunteers, is free of charge and takes place in the Royal British Legion Hall in Church Road. So far 47 people have attended and, with an age range of 60 to 92 years, have registered their names with SWAG. Without exception, all have stated how much they like the informal and community friendly atmosphere of the SWAG set up and enjoyed, and benefitted from the wide range of the activity experiences on offer.

Favourable comments and expressions of support have been received from a local doctor and the Lily/ Befriending agency with both making recommendations for clients / patient to attend and experience SWAG. SWAG organisers have been actively fundraising for contributions towards the SWAG running costs and are pleased to receive a £250 donation from the Snettisham parish council and a borough grant of £250 via the office of Councillor Stuart Dark. SWAG organisers are currently researching ways to establish a transport option to enable housebound people to be able to attend the SWAG events.

Readers are asked to let SWAG know of housebound people they feel will benefit from attending SWAG.

A special December SWAG is planned for Wednesday 20th December during which there will be a Christmas themed break to include mince pies and community singing. Thereafter SWAG events will revert to the 4th Wednesday of each month namely: Jan 26, Feb 28, Mar 27, April 24, May 22 and though 2024.

Please contact Eric Langford 01485 541515 or June Barrett 01485 533011 for further information.

Hunstanton u3a

We will be holding our Members' Christmas Party at the Community Hall, Avenue Road, Hunstanton on Monday 11th December at 1.00 pm. We wish all members a Happy Festive season and let us hope for a peaceful New Year 2024.

Our first meeting in 2024 will be on Monday 15th January at the usual time of 2.00 pm when Georgette Vale will be reminding us of the great contributions made by Norfolk people Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe. You will be most welcome to join us.

For further information: hunstantonu3a.org Telephone 07443763679

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Across: 1. Robing, 4. Stocking, 10. Inelegat, 11. Night, 12. Dash, 13. Poinsettia, 15. Enneads, 16. Apexes, 19. Estops, 21. Caldera, 23. Snowstorms, 25. Vent, 27. Affire, 28. Triple sec, 29. Lighting, 30. Hasle
Down: 1. Reindeer, 2. Blessings, 3. Noel, 5. Titania, 6. Cinderella, 7. Ingot, 8. Gateau, 9. Tarots, 14. Carol sheet, 17. Elevenses, 18. Canticle, 20. Shorten, 21. Come in, 22. Assail, 24. Owing, 26. Plea

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DING DING, LAST ORDERS!!

It's not too late to get those last minute orders in for Christmas.



Our Butchery and Deli team will be taking orders up until Tuesday 5th December and you will have until 1pm on Sunday 24th December to collect. (£30 deposit required)

But there's plenty more on offer than just meats and cheeses.

Did you know that we now stock frozen pizzas made locally by Askers, or that we offer a range of frozen ready meals from Fieldgoods?

(Who now supply Fortnum & Mason; the first frozen meals they have ever stocked!)

We also have a large selection of frozen fish and seafood.

(It would be shellfish of us not to mention that!)

And of course, we still have plenty of vegetables, fruits, cakes and sweets and lots of other tasty treats.

Oh! And how could we forget to mention our large selection of locally produced beers, wines and spirits.

Why not pop in and see for yourself?



Please ask our staff if you need help ordering or call them on 01485 570002.

And finally, we wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Hunstanton Events

Roger Partridge



The end of October saw Strange Fascination Theatre take centre stage in the Borough Council's events programme. In the October half term they performed their Hansel & Gretel puppet show to over 60 adoring children in Hunstanton Town Hall. Many thanks to the Town Council for its help with these shows. And for Halloween they performed the Murder Mystery 'The Hauntings of Hunstanton' at the Golden Lion. The evening was a sell out and the audience were entertained to a very enjoyable and amusing evening of intrigue and silliness. Congratulations go to the winning team- Dead Fred (comprised of Sebrina Richmond, Mike Gould, Jenny and Johnathan Butler, Dave Cleland and Caroline Demidh) who successfully detected that groundsman Willy Willie was the murderer because he didn't want Fran DeMille (heiress to a family legacy) to find out about the fabled Golden Skull (of course!). Well done to all the team members, who thoroughly engaged in the evening. Great fun was had by all.

Stargazing

Early November saw King's Lynn & District Astronomy Society stage, 'A Journey Beyond Our Solar System to the Edge of the Universe.' The venue was once again the Golden Lion. The evening consisted of a presentation which covered the existence and development of the universe, an engrossing and mindboggling subject area if ever there was one. This was followed by telescopes on the Green. An unexpectedly large audience of



*Murder Mystery
'The Hauntings of Hunstanton'*

about 100 people attended and Alan Gosling from KL&DAS led an enormously interesting presentation and discussion lasting two hours. Then, blessed with some clear skies, everyone could take to the Green to use the telescopes and look out to the stars. KL&DAS were pleased to report that have recruited some new members from the night. Our apologies must go to those who missed out because we simply could not fit any more people in the room. We will be considering a booking system for future events.



New Year's Day Walk

2024 will kick off with a walk led by West Norfolk Walking for Health. What a great way to start the New Year. Why not come and blow the cobwebs away by joining in with this friendly and sociable walk. It will be a gentle one, taking everyone around the outskirts of Hunstanton (approximately 3 miles in distance). Everyone is welcome to take part, all levels, no one ever gets left behind; you can walk at your own pace. Meet at St Edmund's Chapel Ruins by the Old Lighthouse (PE36 6EL) at 10.00am for a 10.30 start. Under 18s should be accompanied by an adult please. Dogs are welcome on a short, fixed lead. The walk is free of charge (donations welcome to West Norfolk Walking for Health). The Cliff Top Café will be open for refreshments afterwards. We look forward to seeing you!

Next Year

Planning for next year's events will take place over the coming winter months. We have some dates set already: 22nd September for the Soap Box Derby; 15/16 June for the East of England Regional Flower Arranging Show; 27th April for a mass Tai Chi event; 7th July for a Classic Car Rally. Other events may include a football festival weekend (walking and junior football), a mass dog walk, a drive-in cinema evening, outdoor cinema again on the Green, tennis courses, the re-introduction of Beat the Tide, a music event with the Rock Choir, Beach Sports, Health Walks and a follow up Battle of the Bands event plus activities for children including Punch and Judy, art workshops and fun activities in the Heritage Gardens. As events develop, details will be placed on the Hunstanton Events webpage at: www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/hunstantonevents. If anyone has any enquiries, please contact me at roger.partridge@west-norfolk.gov.uk.

See you in 2024!



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Letters to the Editor

Wash Barrage

I decided to do a live detailed tweet update on X (Twitter) during the event for the community, as it was unfortunately not live streamed. Many, many people were turned away after the theatre reached capacity shortly after 5.30pm. I hope Hunstanton Town Council and Councillors are able to find a way of live streaming any future events.

I have tried to keep an open mind to the proposal. Having heard the latest information, and from a range of experts, I now believe that it's time for Centre Port UK to shelve these Wash barrage plans. The community heard of huge environmental concerns from Norfolk Wildlife Trust. Worries about sandbank movements and integrity of mudflats could not only cause confusion or danger for navigating ships, but devastating to the waders and seals that use this sensitive habitat as their home. The importance of sediment movements retaining nitrogen and phosphorus were key factors raised. A point as one resident noted, when you consider the amount of sewage being flushed into our rivers. The residents of West Norfolk have heard enough and were very vocal in their calls to stop the Wash barrage proposal now.

Cllr Rob Colwell

I have been told about the idea to have a meeting and discuss the idea of a barrage or a bridge across the Wash. This idea has been going for a long time but it is pie in the sky and it will never happen, many things have been suggested for the Wash but none of them have come about.

The main thing we have to worry about in Hunstanton is the condition of the promenade. This year so far we have had more high tides than usual one stretch of the promenade from Johnson's slip way to the Oasis has had a right old bashing. This length of promenade was found to be quite weak in the 1980's and a firm called Mott McDonald were brought in to strengthen it by drilling holes in the face of the promenade and filling it by pumping liquid cement to strengthen this area and in my opinion this could need doing again as this length of promenade gets the most bashing by the high tides and needs looking at.

Dick Melton, The Sage Sunny Hunny

Thank you to all those who organised and presented at the 'Wash Tidal Project' public forum. In addition to the well-articulated environmental risks, a perfunctory enterprise risk assessment indicates that this highly ambitious and ostensibly visionary concept is very unlikely to succeed; extremely high costs of both construction and long term maintenance, inability to generate power at meaningful scale, diminishing profit margins, reliance on Government subsidies and newly revised scientific forecasts of sea level rises (up to 5 metres) combine to severely compromise the business plan.

Tidal power is considerably more expensive to generate and much less efficient than nuclear, wind or solar. Its utility, currently, is limited to small scale, such as relatively isolated communities. Fundamentals of this infant technology have changed little in the last decade; a £25 billion proposal to build a barrage on the Severn Estuary, between Somerset and Wales, was rejected 10 years ago.

The UK Government is subsidising a number of tidal projects on lavish terms; it guarantees to buy electricity at £198 per megawatt hour (MWh) compared to nuclear (£90MWh), wind (£52MWh) and solar (£47MWh). This artificial business environment is further skewed by the fact that over a 10 year period the consumer cost of solar and wind power has fallen 89% and 70% respectively. The same could happen to tidal power, severely reducing the ability to operate and maintain the system.

Given the significant risks, the business plan should be independently and comprehensively risk assessed and span the short, medium and long terms. Given the potential implications the results should be made public and used to inform legal decisions. Key questions include; what is the contingency in the event of Government funding being withdrawn and in the event of failure, for whatever

reason, will those involved be legally obligated to return the environment to its original state, ie not leave a half finished or inoperable barrage/causeway? The recent debacle of HS2 truncation emphatically demonstrates why due process is essential to ensure transparency, comprehensive consideration of all potential implications and a definitive legal position before any plans are approved.

Mr W Martin, Hunstanton

Girlguiding Smithdon & Brothecross District

Thank you to everyone who came and supported our Hall of Stalls on November 4th. We had a successful morning, and the girls in our local units will benefit from your generosity.

We are still looking for adult volunteers for some of our units, and if you think you could help in any way, please register with the following website:

www.girlguiding.org.uk/interested

You will then be contacted by a local leader and you can discuss where and how you would like to help.

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The dark skies of West Norfolk

Terry Parish

Christmas beckons and the star of wonder this year will be the planet Jupiter which is closest to the Moon on the 24th. If you want a blue bauble then Uranus is close to the bottom right of the Gibbous Moon on the 23rd. And a bit of tinsel is to the right of the Moon on the 23rd, to the left of it on the Moon 22nd. The glitter (in binoculars) is our old friend The Pleiades, without binoculars they will look more like a whisk of Santa's beard.



The Pleiades. Internet

Below the Moon on these nights and generally low in the East other nights, is Rudolph's nose. Not Mars which is out of sight this month, but the star Aldebaran. More of an orange red than Rudolph would like but



he will be busy.

Internet

All the above can be seen from 5pm as the nights are now dark. In fact, the shortest day, longest night, the Winter Solstice, is on the 22nd. You should be dragging in the Yule log and sacrificing mince pies to make the Sun return. It will, though day length won't noticeably increase until the end of January.

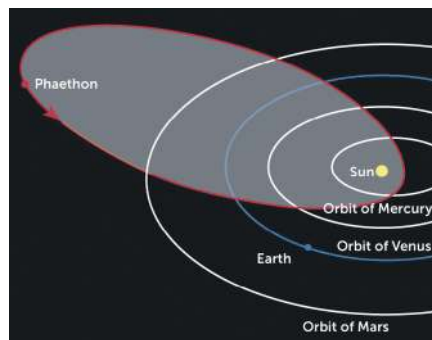
Heralding the season are a couple of meteor showers though the ones I have forecast in recent months have been blotted out by cloud. Let's hope we get some clear, sparkly, skies. On the night of the 2nd/3rd there is a return of the Andromedids, a name which conjures up images of Dr Who's adversaries. This meteor shower produced some good displays in the 18th and 19th centuries but was then thought to have been lost. The Earth passing through



Winter Solstice. Internet

debris from the tail of Comet Biela every 5 years caused the displays. Then, in around 1846, the comet broke up, likely from passing too close to Jupiter. The debris field changed and few meteors were seen in subsequent years. However, the Earth is once again on track to pass through the remains of the old comet and this year is forecast to be a bumper show.

On the 13th / 14th the Geminids are in the sky. This is a consistently good shower caused by Earth passing through the debris of an asteroid – Phaeton. The Moon is out of the way, so a clear sky is all that is needed for Christmas glitter.



The Geminids are coming. Internet

On the 9th, Halley's comet, perhaps the most famous one amongst astronomers, is at its furthest distance from the Sun, 5,257 million km. It will then fall back towards Earth and be in our skies in July 2061. I won't see it but some of you or your children or grandchildren, will. The comet takes about 76 years between visitations so is deemed a short period comet. I saw it in 1986 from a seat in my garden in Wolverhampton. It was pretty faint but it was possible to track it by eye. In fact, it was fainter than it had been in 2000 years, just my luck.

In 2061 it will be closer and brighter. Edmund Halley was an English astronomer who first realised, in 1705, that records, over more than 1000 years, of a regular apparition in the sky were referring to the same body. He predicted its next appearance but died well before he saw his calculations were correct. Fellow scientists named the comet after him.

Back to the planets. Early December is a good time to look for Mercury as it will have a magnitude of -0.4 (similar to fairly bright star) and is furthest from the Sun on the 4th (greatest eastern elongation). It will be low in the SW after sunset. Heacham North Beach is a good spot but anywhere without light pollution with a clear view of the sunset will do. Binoculars are really needed but do not use them until the Sun has vanished over Lincolnshire.

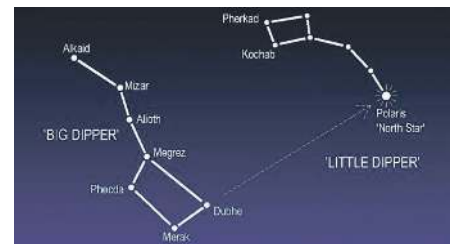
Saturn is in the SW setting about 10pm. It is a yellowish dot to the naked eye. A 'phone app will let you find it. Stellarium is still good, not sure if it is still free but it will be cheap. The rings are the best things to see in a telescope. See them at least once

Jupiter has been the brightest 'starry' object in the sky for several months. Use the dark nights to glimpse the Galilean Moons (see earlier copies of the newsletter).

Uranus is up until 5am. See above for a guide to locating it on the 23rd.

Get up at 4am to see a really brilliant Venus (at magnitude -4.1 it is far, far brighter than Jupiter). Look through a telescope and you will see the gibbous phase it displays. On the 8th/9th a Crescent Moon will make a nice companion to the Morning Star. A real star, Spica will be close above and to the right.

Already, in November, the odd clear sky for an hour or two, enables me to have my back to The Plough in the NW whilst facing Orion rising in the SSE. They will rise earlier as this month proceeds.



Internet

Both the asterism of The Plough and the constellation of Orion seem to be known to everyone. An asterism is a pattern of stars smaller than a constellation. The Plough is part of the constellation of Ursa Major, the Great Bear. A prominent W in the sky can also be seen which people identify as the constellation of Cassiopeia. In fact, the constellation is very much larger than the W which is an asterism within it. Such patterns are picked out by bright stars which are all that we see most nights. In the distant past skies were unimaginably darker and the patterns picked out far more complex. Even the pattern we recognise as Orion is not all of him. He has an extended arm from his right shoulder holding a bow whilst, from his left shoulder, his arm extends upwards and is sometimes depicted as holding a hunt trophy.

*The Orion Nebulae. Internet.*

Arms and bow are fainter stars which can be picked out on a clear night.

Top left star is Betelgeuse, an enormous red star which is variable in brightness. The story a couple of years ago was that it would go nova, explode, and be visible in daylight.

Never happened and the story has receded. Much photographed is the fuzzy patch below the left side of the belt stars. This is the Orion nebulae, stellar birthplace.

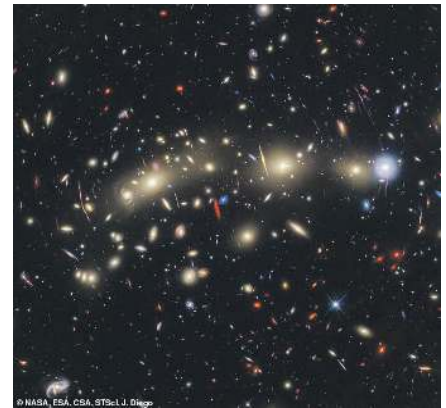
The Plough provides a test of eyesight. The second star along the handle is named Mizar but close to it is Alcor. Eyes like mine see just Mizar (magnitude 2.2). Good eyes see the companion (magnitude 3.9) and can separate the two easily. A child asked to count the stars in the tail will wonder what the problem is. The story is more complicated as Mizar is a 4-star system and Alcor a binary system, both in their own right. The systems are gravitationally linked so one star to many is a six-star complex. Knowledge of this has evolved over time, from three stars in the 17thC to five by 1908 and 6 in 2009. The latest addition was following a search for exoplanets which were not found.

Recent 'discoveries' closer to home are that the Moon is a bit older than previously thought, and the remains of the Earth impactor, Theia, which created the Moon may have been discovered within the Earth. Perhaps that's where the Silurians originated (for the baffled reader, another Dr Who reference – it is the 60th anniversary).

If I haven't written about January in the

double edition of the Heacham Newsletter it's because I've timed out. They should appear in the January Town and Around.

Meanwhile have a Christmas tree:



The James Webb Telescope Christmas Tree. A cluster of galaxies whose light set towards us around 4.7 billion years ago when our Solar System was forming. Christened the Christmas Tree as there are flashing lights within it.

Happy Christmas and may the New Year have clear nights.

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WE ARE IN THE TOP 10

THE SUNDAY TIMES

The 10 best fish and chip shops in the UK

Fishers, Hunstanton

6. Fishers, Hunstanton, Norfolk

There are newer, more fashionable chippies on the north Norfolk coast, but I've eaten at them all, and the best is the shop on the Green that has been serving since the 1950s. Most fryers make a big deal about their "signature batter", but Fishers is the lightest and crunchiest I've tasted this year. There's a charming restaurant, but unless it's raining you'd be mad to use it when you could sit on the Green overlooking the sea, or walk for five minutes up Cliff Parade to find a bench in Esplanade Gardens and watch the sun set over Lincolnshire. Cod and chips £9.70 (fishershunstanton.co.uk)

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Hunstanton Croquet Club

Caroline Harper

As I start to draft this text, Hallowe'en dec's are competing for space with Christmas tinsel; by the time I submit it to the lovely editors it will be bonfire night and by the time it is published many people will have their trees decorated and Christmas shopping done!

If you still have presents to get for those who are hard to buy for, how about membership of your local croquet club? Or perhaps as a gift to yourself!

We, at the club, have wrapped up our year with a presentation lunch at Heacham Manor, attended by 42 members. In addition to presenting the year's trophies, we gave flowers and thanks to Pat Dawson who has stepped down from the committee and from organising the lunch for many, many years. Her contribution to the club over decades has been enormous.

The AGM saw Janet Kendal handing over the reins to Caroline Harper and Debbie Hardacre taking on the role of Treasurer. Janet has been a wonderful Chairman, working tirelessly over the last 4 years, steering the club through the difficult COVID years and building us back to nearer full strength. We are so grateful that she is staying on the Committee, but also pleased for her that she will finally have more time to enjoy her other interests.

Thank you to the 22 members who turned out on the final day of the season to put the club to bed for the winter. Everyone worked so hard and so much was achieved. A happy band of Wednesday Warriors will be continuing with maintenance tasks throughout the winter, but apart from a coffee morning meet-up on December 6th, that's all folks! Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



Pat and Janet at the presentation lunch.

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Bridges 3 Wood Bowls League

Brian Stockdale

This year the Bridges 3 Wood Bowls League celebrated its 25th anniversary. Formed in 1998 by Alan Bridges when a meeting of clubs was held at Ingoldisthorpe Social Club, it was intended as a friendly league, to be played on a Saturday night over 16 ends with 3 blocks of 3 woods.

Initially 7 clubs took part and Alan Bridges went on to run the league for 20 years, ably assisted by his wife Mave.

The league is still going strong 25 years later, with Brian Stockdale having taken over as Secretary five years ago.

Today the league has 8 teams: Bircham, Flitcham, Heacham, Kings Lynn, Wallington, Wiggenshall and two teams from Shouldham.

It is the only Bowls League in the county to still have a presentation night and this was held in October at Wolferton Social Club which included a buffet, presentation of trophies for the league and shield winners, and a well-supported raffle.

Unfortunately, this year was tinged with sadness as our League President for the past 25 years, Pete Waddison had passed away earlier in the year.

Pete had supplied the entertainment at our presentation night for all those years and will be sorely missed. The league is now sponsored by Supreme Carpets, for which we are very thankful, as this enabled



Finals day of KO shield held at Heacham Social Club and played between Shouldham Greens, winners, and Shouldham Yellows, runners up.

us to continue to supply entertainment every year.

At this year's presentation evening a bucket collection was taken in Pete's memory which raised £100 which was donated to Tapping House in his memory.

Next year's AGM will be taking place in February and anybody wanting further information on the Bridges League can contact the secretary on 07903 138251.

Sporting corner with Tim Keogh

Emotion!

Ian Smith is an ex-Scottish international rugby player and much travelled Army Dentist, who has released one book about his rugby career and is due to release another soon. He lives in Snettisham and has been giving Town & Around's Tim Keogh monthly insights into his fascinating life.

For those readers who watched the Rugby World Cup you will have seen varying degrees of emotion. Some players in tears during their National Anthems, others at the moment of defeat, and, for a few, the realisation that their international rugby careers were finally over.

I have often been asked how it feels to run out onto the international pitch for the first time and hear your National Anthem played as a debutant. This must be the moment that your dreams come true, but, in truth, for me it was all about trying desperately to control my nerves by concentrating hard on what was to come that it kind of passed me by.

For me, there was to be a moment of high emotion that was still to come. My first two international matches had been against the legendary Springboks, when I had the good fortune to come out on the winning side, a rare event indeed, especially as I had scored all my country's points. The second was against France, where I had been lucky enough to score a try, and both games had taken place at Murrayfield in Edinburgh. However, I had only worn a white jersey as we were the home side on both occasions and there was a colour clash with France wearing blue and South Africa in green.

As a proud Scot I was desperate to wear the blue jersey with the white thistle, and also to

go to the legendary Cardiff Arms Park to play Wales, and hear the crowd sing 'Land of my Fathers'. This was the summit of my dreams. No apologies to the English and Twickenham where, in fact, I was never to appear!

Fortunately, I had played well enough in the first two matches to win selection against Wales, albeit there was a small problem in that my wife Maureen was heavily pregnant with our first child. There were no dramas in that direction until breakfast on the morning of the match when the telephone rang, and my name was called out. As I picked up the phone a voice said, your wife has had a son. I couldn't believe it, there I was miles away on Saturday 7th February 1970, and I was now the father of a little boy to be called Simon.

You may feel that I was incredibly selfish, and I should have been with my wife, and you are probably correct. To be fair she had insisted I played, and she was staying with a doctor who happened to be an Irish Rugby International.

When I got back to the breakfast table Frank Laidlaw, the legendary Scottish Hooker, asked me what that was all about, and when I told him I had just become a father for the first time, he proceeded to grab a large napkin and show me how to do a nappy.

That afternoon as we ran out to face Wales at the Arms Park, we didn't line up for the anthems as happens today, but as we were all running about the band struck up, and you had to stand to attention wherever you were on the pitch. Land of My Fathers began, and I just burst into tears.

I remember standing there with tears streaming down my face, praying no TV camera was pointing in my direction. To be wearing the Scottish blue jersey, being the father of a newly born little boy and standing

on the one pitch I had spent my life wanting to play on, was just too much to bear. I wasn't at all certain that any Scotland supporters watching the anthems on TV would have understood!

There is no happy ending, we lost to Wales as so many teams did in the 1970's, but at the dinner after the match I found myself sitting next to John Dawes who was to become the legendary Welsh captain of the British Lions in New Zealand in 1971. He turned to me and said 'We're going to wet the baby's head.'

That was the last thing I remember on that never to be forgotten day!



The Scotland team versus Wales in 1970 (Ian Smith is bottom left)

The copy date for the January 1924 edition is strictly 12th December. Please don't be late!

Sporting corner with Tim Keogh

Local golfer aiming to make the big time

Heacham Manor Golf professional, Warren Bates, turned professional in April, joining the Clutch Pro Tour - an official feeder to the Challenge Tour and, ultimately, the PGA Tour. He managed two 3rd place finishes throughout the course of 2023, with a win just a matter of time.

Despite the increased amount of travelling to events, the 23 year old says he is "loving it". Obviously playing at top venues helps, with his two third place finishes at Minchinhampton and South Staffordshire Golf Clubs. Of course, at this level there is prize money at stake too so these finishes all help his progress both financially and experience wise.

The youngster has realised now is the time to up his game if he is to make main tour events with the elite. He's certainly doing that, finishing 10th on the Order of Merit from over 200 players on the Clutch Pro Tour. The likeable and popular player certainly possesses the

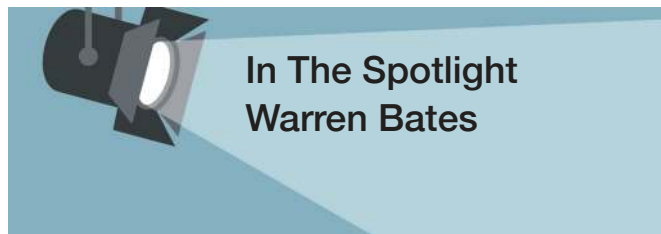


confidence and ability to make it.

A tie up with coach, Paul Ashwell - given Master Professional and Master Coach status by the PGA - has helped improved his game. The St. Ives based England coach, fine tuning the youngster's game which has given him a newly instilled confidence going into events. Paul said, "Warren has done well in his first season as a pro, he has worked hard and learnt a lot and we look forward to a successful 2024".

Warren is also thankful to his sponsors, The Daly Group and Strata Architecture, as well as the support of Ray Stocker and his team at Heacham Manor Golf Club. Warren can often be seen practicing in the Range at Searles GC too, where his drives frequently fly out of the end - anyone playing the first hole may need to be mindful if he's in the Range!

2024 is going to be a big year for Warren. Town & Around will be monitoring his progress closely, so watch this space.



Name: Warren Arthur Bates
Age: 23
Star Sign: Libra
Where born: QE Hospital, King's Lynn
Occupation: Heacham Manor Golf Club Professional and player
Family: Mum & dad
A Cats or dogs person: Dog
Sports Team Support: None

Biggest Break: Turning Pro and following my dream

Worst injury: Torn meniscus

Funniest memory: Too many !

Hero: Tiger Woods

Hobbies/interests: Gym and cleaning my car

Best memory: Winning at the home of golf

Favourite international meal/cuisine: Mexican

Favourite drink: Dr. Pepper

Favourite holiday destination: Gran Canaria

Three items for a desert island: Phone, water, sweets

Favourite band/singer: Chris Brown

Worst habit: Buying clothes and trainers

Pet hate in others: None

Biggest achievement in life: Being a successful Amateur golfer and progressing into Pro golf

Best advice ever given: Never give up

Like to live forever: Yes

Local Bowls Round Up

Hunstanton Bowls Club 'A' were the big winners in the Norfolk Bowls Association League, winning Division 2 West. The Cromer Road outfit impressively secured the title by remaining unbeaten throughout the season. The 'B' team came 6th, whilst Cliff Parade BC were a creditable 4th in the same division.

In the North West Norfolk Bowls League, Burnham Coronation BC won Division One, whilst Amner BC won Division Two. Burnham Coronation also won the Ridley Cup, beating Ingoldisthorpe BC in the final whilst South Creak BC beat Flitcham BC in The Subsidiary Cup.

In the Countryside Bowls League, Ingoldisthorpe BC were crowned champions with Houghton "B" just beating Dersingham Institute for the runners up spot by a solitary point. Snettisham Excelsior won the Eddie Hipkin Trophy, defeating a valiant attempt by Searles BC on the very final end of play.

The Countryside Bowls League KO Shield Final was contested between Houghton "A" and Dersingham Institute, with a very competitive match culminating in Dersingham Institute running out victors by 61 shots to 43. The Countryside Bowls League are also looking for a new secretary, anyone interested in this position can contact Steve Booth at Steve.booth@talk21.com.

In the Bridges 3 Wood Bowls League, Bircham just lost out to Shouldham Greens by one point.

Indoor carpet bowls continues throughout the Winter season at the Alive Oasis. For more information you can contact Kevin Johnson by email at cagey45@aol.com.

The popular game of Bowls as a sport actually has a long history. Whilst a form of bowls was played by the Ancient Egyptians, bowls as we know it today is considered a variant of the French game boules (jeu Provençal). Bowls in England can be traced back to as early as the 13th century and conjecturally to the 12th century. The game actually came under the ban of king and parliament, both fearing it might jeopardise the practice of archery, then so important in battle. Statutes forbidding it and other sports were enacted in the reigns of Edward III, Richard II and other monarchs. When, on the invention of gunpowder and firearms, the bow had fallen into disuse as a weapon of war, the prohibition was continued. However, it was the patenting of the first lawnmower in 1830, in Britain, that is strongly believed to have been the catalyst for the worldwide preparation of modern-style greens, sporting ovals, playing fields, pitches, grass courts, etc. This, in turn, led to the codification of modern rules for many sports, including lawn bowls. Today, bowls is played in over 40 countries with more than 50 member national authorities. The home of the modern game is still Scotland with the World Bowls Centre in Edinburgh.

Armchair Sports Trivia

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QUESTION: The Suppression of Unlawful Games Act of 1541 banned all sports in England on Christmas Day, except for one. Which sport was it?

ANSWERS TO: editor@townandaround.net or by post to:

The Editor, Town & Around, 18 Tapping Close, Snettisham PE31 7FF

Please note we do not accept entries via any social media channels or text message. CLOSING DATE: 15th December 2023.

Last month's question was: Which English football team could be cryptically termed as a "very large dark puddle"?

The correct answer was Blackpool and the lucky winner was Peter Jermany of North Wootton.

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Hunstanton Primary School

After a busy first half term, we are now looking forward to an exciting build up to our Christmas celebrations including - The EYFS and KS1 Nativity Play, the KS2 Carol Service at St Edmund's Church, The PTA Christmas Fair, Christmas Lunch, Christmas Jumper day and a Rudolph Run, which is raising money for Tapping House.

On Sunday 26th November, the children were invited once again to join Your Choir led by Mike Tandy, Musical Director, for their set as part of the Hunstanton Christmas Light Switch on. We look forward to a magical event to start of the festive season.

Before our half term break, the whole school celebrated Harvest Festival with individual performances from Key Stage 1 and 2. Friends and family were invited to watch and the school hall came alive. Once again we were overwhelmed by the amount of food donations to the Hunstanton Food Bank and we thank everyone for their kind and thoughtful generosity. The Food Bank were very grateful for the items received, which were delivered by the Head boy and girl.

At Halloween, the PTA hosted our annual Pumpkin Carving competition and I think you will agree the entrants' designs were fantastic and we congratulate all of the class winners. There were some fang-tastic entries!!!

Throughout October and November, we had 18 pupils from Years 2 to 6 compete in the WNSSP Cluster Cross Country race in Snettisham from the HPS Running Club with 3 medal winners. Of those 18 we had 13

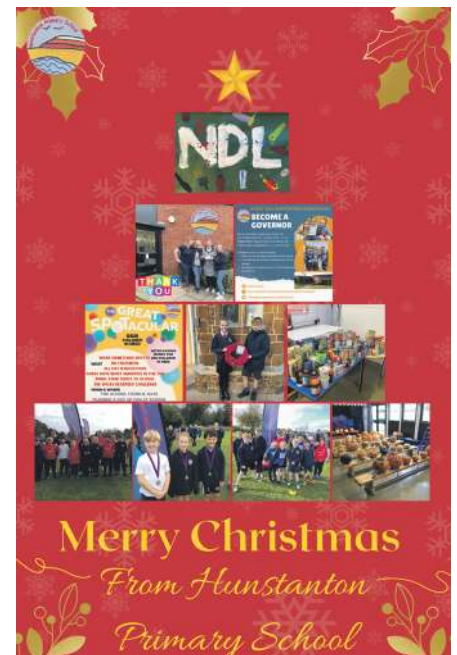
pupils in Year 3 – 6 qualify for the next round at Lynnsport, and following that Morgan and Nico both in Year 3, have qualified to represent West Norfolk at High Lodge in Thetford at the county finals in late November. Congratulations to everyone who participated and a particular well done to Morgan and Nico for reaching the finals; as a school we are incredibly proud of you all.

Our Head Boy and Girl, Brogan and Maisy, represented the school beautifully as they laid the wreath and participated in The Remembrance Service at the Cenotaph and Town Hall in Hunstanton on Remembrance Sunday.

Children In Need was also celebrated on Friday 17th November, with a spotty and colourful non-uniform day. The day was organised by the School Council and all whilst raising some money for a great cause had a fun filled day of events, including an all-day danceathon.

We are currently have a vacancy on our School Governing Board. Do you want to make a difference in your community, and develop your own professional skills? By volunteering as a school governor, you can do both. Please contact the school office if you are interested.

The PTA received a cheque donation from the Hunstanton and District Ladies Circle towards books & the refurbishment of the school library. Thank you ladies! Also thank you to Norfolk Decor Ltd (NDL) who promoted a fantastic competition for children between 4-11 to design their new logo to go on their homepage. We are proud to say that



the winner was Lucy in Year 4 and coming in third was Nico Year 3. We look forward to seeing Lucy's winning design as NDL's logo and on their website.

Did you know we now have a Facebook page where you can follow along with all of the schools activities and highlights? Follow us @HunstantonPrimary.

From all of us at Hunstanton Primary School we wish all the readers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. We look forward to a fun and exciting 2024 full of new adventures.



Glebe Harvest tables



Glebe Sandringham Walk



Glebe Cross Country



Glebe Geography field trip

Brancaster school news

We are always busy in school and having a good time. In Thrift Class we have planted our hyacinths and they are in our shed in the cold and dark, waiting to grow for Christmas.

Reception have started learning their first sounds and they have done 5 already and we are very proud of how they are doing.

We have been learning about Poppy Day and selling poppies. We hope it will be lots of money. Our service will be on Monday 13th.

We made a beautiful wreath for Lilith's Mum and lots of us went to the service or to Bar 71 afterwards. We send lots of love to Lilith's family.

School council opened the new village shop, which is very exciting and everyone who has been likes it and we all think it is selling lots of good things.

Our new Secretary Ms Kaye has started, and Mrs Woodrow has told us that she is staying permanently so we are happy.

In half term, the Children's Book Centre Team came and sorted out our library and got us new books. It looks really good and there are some exciting new books. We look forward to reading them all! We really need a librarian to help us choose books and to keep



records. If anyone could help once a week or once a fortnight, please contact the school (mornings 01485 210246)

Next week is antibullying week and we have lots of things planned for that and Class 2 are finally going on their trip to Norwich Castle Museum.

After that, Mrs Bocking says we are going to have our Advent Bag again. We each take it home for one day to play with and explore the books and the Nativity set and colouring etc. (We have just learnt that etc means "and other similar things" and we like using it!)



We also have Parents' Evenings and we hope our parents will be proud, Christmas Jumper Day for Save the Children, our trip to the pantomime (thank you to Miranda Labanc for raising the money to pay for this), a Christingle Service and our Christmas dinner and parties. We can't wait!

Our Nativity Play and Service is 2pm in the Church on December 12th, followed by our Christmas Fair (also in the church) – all are welcome.

Term finishes on 20th December and we start again on January 4th.

GLEBE HOUSE SCHOOL & NURSERY UPDATE

There was a real buzz around a new addition to our social calendar, the Friday Night Activity Evening spearheaded by our new Headmaster Mr. Stewart and backed by our committed staff. They kicked off with exciting bowling trips to Bowlers at The Pier in Hunstanton, and a scrumptious Waffle Party held at school. From Div III to VIII, pupils enjoyed competing for the new House Bowling Cup on three consecutive Fridays.



At the start of the month, we embraced the spirit of giving with a heartwarming Harvest Celebration. Mrs. Haslam led a whole-school assembly, focused on gratitude and raising awareness of providing for those in need, teaching about the history and importance of community Food Banks.

We were excited to host our first Open House of the year on the 6th October. To spend time with both current and prospective families, and to see our Division VII and VIII pupils proudly showing our guests around the school they so love and the community they

thrive within, meant an uplifting day for everyone involved.

As usual, there have been lots of sporting fixtures during October, but in addition to the inter school hockey and rugby matches, we were excited to have a team taking part in the IAPS National Football Championships. It was an early start for the U11's Boys Football Team and their coaches who travelled across to Loughborough to compete in the regional qualifier of the IAPS National Football Championships. The team battled very well against some much bigger schools and offered a great experience for the boys involved.

The sporting theme continued with our annual inter house cross country event. It took place on a very wet afternoon, yet the children showed great character and gave it their all.

Well done to everyone who took part. Great to see so many smiles at the end, despite the rain! Hats off too to the brave family members that came to support!

Always a highlight to end half term, our Informal Concert! This was the first of the year, and what a line up. There were piano solos, singing duets, trumpet and drum performances as well as a topical song from the Pre Prep choir! The concert was enjoyed by parents as well as fellow pupils.

Our school trips continued this month with Division V embarking on a Geography field trip in support of the work they have been doing about rivers. They visited various stretches of the River Glaven to undertake measurements and observations of the different stages of the river journey, and were lucky enough to receive an inpromptu hands

on session from the Norfolk Rivers Trust. They were conducting an investigation and very kindly took the time to introduce the fish they had collected. They talked about the habitat requirements and characteristics of each one, and even invited the children to take turns in handling the fish!

Division II had time out of the classroom when they followed the Wolf Trail in Hunstanton after learning about Saint Edmund in their History lesson. They stopped at each of the six pedestals and did rubbings of the images before ending up at the large wooden wolf sculpture by St Edmund's Chapel. They then recreated the trail through the Pre-Prep building when back at school.

October also saw the annual Pre-Prep Autumn Walk take place in Sandringham. This is always a very enjoyable occasion, with parents and grandparents welcome to join the children and staff as they take a walk through the Sandringham grounds, looking for different signs of Autumn. The afternoon stayed (relatively) dry, which is always a bonus at this time of year!

If you would like to find out more about life at Glebe House School & Nursery, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Did you know we offer wraparound care from 8am to 6pm? And that we provide school transport from many convenient locations?

Please contact Mrs Fraulo on 01485 532809 or email tjf@glebehouseschool.co.uk to register your interest!

More photos on page 57

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Rotary and Inner Wheel news

Young Musician Competition

For many years the Rotary Club of King's Lynn has organised a very successful debating competition for secondary-aged pupils in the area. For the second year another Rotary completion – Young Musician - has been held in King's Lynn. On 8 November four competitors took part in the local round. The winner was violinist, Zoe Burton from Wisbech Grammar School, whose three pieces greatly impressed the judges and the audience. She played Tchaikovsky's Canzonetta, Bach's Gigue Partita III in E Major and, in complete contrast, Gerswin's It ain't necessarily so. She goes on to the District round to be held in Norwich in February. In second place was Ukrainian, Iryna Oliinyk, a pupil at Alderman Peel School in Wells.

The Rotary Club is very grateful to Derek Oldfield, Avril Wright and Daniel Jenkins for acting as judges and to Springwood High School for hosting the event.



Iryna Oliinyk, Zoe Burton, Christopher Tooley and Chantelle Verdad.

Crocus and tree planting

In each of the past 10 years members of the Rotary Club of King's Lynn have planted some 4000 purple crocus bulbs in various parts of the town: along the main path in the Walks; at the South Gates roundabout; on the NORA roundabouts and along the main road; outside the nursery school at St James Park; along Boal Quay; on the verge outside the Hardwick Cemetery; and on Edward Benefer Way opposite the Fire Station. The year the Club decided to plant a tree as well as some crocuses. A Cotinus tree and 300 crocuses have been planted at the Bus Station and some 1700 crocuses on the grass between the Railway Station and St John's Church.

The bulbs are planted to draw attention to Rotary International's support for the worldwide eradication of polio which has been a major aim of the organisation since 1985. Over the years Rotary has contributed more than \$1.6 billion to ensure the immunisation of more than 2.5 billion children in 122 countries. Every child who is immunised has his or her finger dipped in purple dye. Hence the planting of purple crocuses which come out in the spring in many parts of King's Lynn. The new tree also has purple leaves.

As a result of the work of Rotary International and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which since 2013 has matched

Rotary funding 2-1 up to \$35 million per year, polio has been eradicated from all countries except Afghanistan and Pakistan.



Steve Roberts, Derek Harvey, Pip Rippengill, Helen Rippengill, Elaine Roberts, Paul Robson and Ian Mason.



Elaine and Steve Roberts, Mel and Paul Robson, Pip and Helen Rippengill, Ian Mason and Geoff Cheney.

ROTARY BRA DAY

On Saturday 28th October, Hunstanton & District Rotary, decorated the Hunstanton Ski Cafe & Bar on South Beach with bras. The collection was to raise funds for the West Norfolk Breast Care Unit at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in King's Lynn. We are delighted to announce that following this event and our collection in August, a total of £1,300 was raised.

The money will go towards the purchase of some new equipment for the Breast Care Unit. We have also sent over 400 bras, we collected, to Africa to help local charities who are involved in women's welfare. A big thank you goes to everyone for their kind donations, especially Peter Byrne and his staff at the Ski Cafe & Bar for their kind hospitality and support.



HUNSTANTON AND DISTRICT INNER WHEEL

I started writing this article on a very wet and windy day, feeling very lucky that we missed the worst of the recent storms.

At our November monthly meeting, Yolanda who is Malaysian and was born in Penang State but now lives locally gave us a very interesting talk on the 13 States of Malaysia and the people that make up the population. She described the food and recipes which made our mouths water making us all wish that Yolanda would cook a special meal for us.



As our President Coral Campbell explained in the October issue, Inner Wheel was founded in Manchester in 1924 so will be celebrating 100 years next year. We continued to meet the challenge of dancing for 100 hours over the year by ending our November meeting with 10 minutes dancing. Just what we needed after a wonderful dinner at the Le Strange Hotel of roast beef and Yorkshire pudding followed by fruit crumble and custard.

Gill, our international representative recently collected a large number of items to be sent to the Ukraine. Blankets, winter jackets, woollen hats and gloves, toiletries and a First Aid Kit were just some of the things included in the parcels.

Remembrance Sunday dawned bright and crisp and our President Coral Campbell attended the Remembrance Service in Hunstanton Town Hall. She then processed to the Cenotaph accompanied by a past President Susan Bradshaw and Rotarian Jean – Marie Vernon to lay the wreath on behalf of our club.



The aim of Inner Wheel is of friendship and service to the local community and overseas. If you think this may be for you, please email us on: hunstantoniw56@gmail.com

Val Garner, Secretary

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Behind the scenes

It's Christmas! (nearly), and what a year we have had at the theatre. Throughout this year we have thoroughly enjoyed bringing to the local community a variety of brilliant acts! With performances from artistes such as Francis Rossi, Marti Pellow, Steeleye Span, and more. The celebration of a plethora of music genres, plus amazing tribute artistes! Continuing, we have had live plays, comedy acts, film screenings, and family entertainment. An amazing variety, all to celebrate the arts, for audiences near and far! And what better way to end the year than with our fabulous Christmas pantomime – Jack and the Beanstalk, which we will talk about more within this December edition.

But first, coming this December is a performance from the very talented Rick Wakeman. Rick is no stranger to our theatre as he has performed at the Princess a number of times. This year Rick is not doing a full Christmas Tour, but a one-man show in selected theatres, and we are grateful for one of his destinations to be here – performing for one night only on Thursday, 7th December! Using Keyboards, Wakeman will be able to perform a selection of pieces, paired with his characterful stories, making a night of great entertainment. So, make sure you get your tickets to experience some of Rick's extensive catalogue of work - before we sell out!



'Rick Wakeman'

Also, throughout December, as mentioned, we – of course – have our magical Christmas pantomime, Jack and the Beanstalk! Running from Saturday 2nd December 2023 to Monday 1st January 2024, there's plenty of dates and times to choose from, to ensure your visit. The perfect activity for all the family during the festive season, expect fun songs, great dancing, fantastic costumes, brilliant sets, and lots of laughs. The producer of this year's pantomime is Tom Rolfe, from Tom Rolfe Productions. We have a fabulous cast and will also be joined by the very talented dancers of Rollason Stage School.

Within Tom Rolfe's biography, for this year's pantomime at the Princess, he states that pantomime is 'one of the most important' genres of theatre, and that it 'is steeped in the highest and strictest traditions and rife with superstition!' For example, Tom addresses where specific characters would enter and exit stage within a panto – 'a Villain should always enter from the audience's right and a Good Fairy should always enter from the audience's left'. On a personal note, Tom discusses how

panto 'is particularly important to (him) as it is often a child's first introduction to live entertainment'. This notion is very true, we see many children fixated in glee at the wonder of pantomime; the sparkling costumes, joyful music, and bright colourful scenery and lighting. It can be said during this time of year, Christmas magic shines throughout our auditorium!

Furthermore, for Tom, he reminisces on his own childhood introduction to the theatre, he writes, 'I can still remember the 'smell' of theatre as we arrived. Smoke billowing on to the stage, Christmas house music playing and the orchestra tuning up for the grandest of overtures.' Finally, Tom closes, 'if I can create an atmosphere to make a family half as excited as I was, then I'll be a happy man!'. It truly is the most wonderful time of the year, and we are all so excited for you to enjoy Jack and the Beanstalk with us this Christmas.



Jemma



'Jack and the Beanstalk – photography credit: Steve Norris'

Following on from the fantastic year the theatre has had in 2023, is 2024 – and we can't wait to bring you another year of brilliant entertainment. We have many acts lined up for 2024, visit our website to see all the listings so far, where you are sure to find a performance you will love! We are so grateful for the support we have had from our wonderful audiences throughout 2023, as our slogan states, we are a little theatre with BIG shows, and we endeavour to continue living up to this. Join us in giving thanks to the amazing team at the Princess, and we all wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. But until next time, break a leg!



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Jack and the Beanstalk

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Our brilliant 2023 Panto -
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