

TOWN and AROUND

A young girl with light brown hair, wearing a pink knit beanie with a pom-pom, a pink scarf, and a black puffer jacket, is smiling at the camera. She is holding a bouquet of red roses wrapped in black paper. A white card with a red border is attached to the bouquet, with handwritten text. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with dry grass and gravel.

ISSUE 232 FEBRUARY 2025

PRICELESS!

To Princess Anne,
with Love From
Brancaster CoE
Primary Academy xx

Local News • Events • Great Outdoors • Features

First word



A Royal visit is always special and for Isabella, pictured on the front cover with the roses for the Princess Royal from Brancaster School, it was probably a day she will remember for ever. There's more on the visit on page 29.

As well as it being Valentine's Day on 14th (don't say I didn't remind you), The Kings Lynn Mart returns. Traditionally the opening to the travelling season, it has a special place in the hearts of the travelling show people.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century Frederick Savage of King's Lynn displayed his latest roundabouts and fairground attractions to the showmen. Russell Lyon's article about Frederick Savage can be found on page 12.

Elsewhere in the magazine there's a huge variety of articles that will, I hope, keep you informed and entertained throughout the month.

My thanks as always to everyone who has contributed to this issue and to all our advertisers, the revenue from whom pays for the print and distribution of every issue that is available free of charge to you.

Do check our website for news stories between print editions, all of which can be read in full at no charge at www.townandaround.net

Copy date for the March issue is 12th February.

With all best wishes,

Elaine

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RDR, Hunstanton.

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West Norfolk students impress in the US

Aspiring lawyers from a West Norfolk secondary enjoyed the experience of a lifetime when they travelled to the United States to showcase their talents in the world final of an international competition – making them the only contestants from the UK.

The team from St Clement's High School in Terrington St Clement had already made it through a series of qualifying stages of the Mock Trial contest, winning the Regional Final in Norwich last year, before placing second in the National Final, which took place in London in March. This made them eligible to compete in the Empire Mock Trial World Championship, which was held in Chicago.

The nine Year 11 students campaigned to raise funds for the trip, successfully generating £7,500 to cover their costs.

"They had to compete in four mock trial rounds, as both Prosecution and Defence," explained Eliza Bennell, who is Assistant Headteacher and Head of Science at St Clement's and led the trip.

"In each round, we put forward three attorneys and two witnesses. As well as this, we sent one witness to another trial to compete with another team as per the Guest Witness role.

"During the trial, they gave an opening speech, cross-examined witnesses, and gave a closing speech. Each round lasted three hours."

Launched by the Young Citizens charity in 1991 to improve young people's understanding of the law, the annual Mock Trial competition sees over 2,000 students from state schools and colleges across the country participate.

It was the first time that St Clement's, which is a member of the West Norfolk Academies Trust, had taken part.

"It was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," said Team Captain and 'attorney' Olivia Simms. "I will always remember the feeling of being in court after all of our hard work and preparation.

"I am extremely proud of our team for how far we have all come, from the local courthouse in Great Yarmouth to the Federal Courthouse in Chicago."

"Going to Chicago was an experience that I will never forget – I'm so grateful to be part of the team and its journey," agreed 'timekeeper' Finn Southerland, while 'witness' Lola Ward added: "The competition was a great event to enable me to talk to new people from different countries. It was definitely scary being questioned and cross-examined by other teams, but highly rewarding."

Forty-four different schools, from 15 different American states and five different countries, made it to the International Final in Chicago, including students from the USA, Canada, Ireland, and South Korea – as well as St Clement's representing the UK.



St Clement's team at the Federal Courthouse in Chicago.

The coveted trophy eventually went to Apple Valley High School from California, who were crowned Empire Mock Trial World Champions 2024.

"These competitions are a fantastic opportunity for students," continued Mrs Bennell.

"They give students confidence and the opportunity to visit another country and look at their legal system.

"As the only UK team taking part, they performed exceptionally, having to navigate differences in the USA legal system."

Rotary Young Musician Competition

Michael Walker

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 third year another Rotary competition – Young Musician – has been held in King's Lynn. Five competitors took part in the local round. Pupils from Alderman Peel School in Wells, King Edward VII Academy, Springwood High School and Wisbech Grammar School took part.

For the second year running the winner was violinist, Zoe Burton, whose two pieces by Kreisler and Weinowski greatly impressed the judges and the audience. She goes on to the District round to be held in Norwich in February. In second place was Ukrainian, Iryna Oliinyk, who played pieces by Beethoven and Debussy.

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

Photograph: Zoe Burton, Amelie Hayward, Iryna Oliinyk, Charlie Pitkin and Ethan Soong.



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Your support saves lives 24/7

East Anglian Air Ambulance King's Lynn Fundraising Group, by Trevor Dane, EAAA Volunteer

East Anglian Air Ambulance (EAAA) is one of 21 Air Ambulance charities in the UK. They collectively complete more than 45,000 taskings per year (an average of 126 taskings per day) to treat people with life-threatening injuries and medical emergencies. These taskings are undertaken by the charities' pilots, doctors, critical care paramedics, and are possible thanks to kind donations and support from the public.

EAAA provides 24/7, 365 days a year life-saving treatment and care, by air and road, in Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire and sometimes beyond. The charity now treats an average of six people every day.



EAAA Helimed House Norwich Airport

The charity has two operational bases: Helimed House, our Norwich headquarters, at Norwich Airport is home to the Anglia One (Norwich) helicopter and critical care cars. The Anglia Two (Cambridge) helicopter and critical care cars are based at Cambridge (Marshalls) Airport. The critical care crews from both bases cover an area of 5,326 square miles. The charity is tasked an average of eight times a day to medical emergencies in our region.

EAAA is independent of the NHS and receives no regular Government funding. Each tasking, on average, costs £4,250 and is funded almost entirely by generous donations from the public, community support and fundraising.

It is important to raise awareness in the community as it is very much at the heart of what we do. In late 2023, The EAAA King's Lynn Fundraising Group (KLFG) was formed. A small



Anglia One, Helicopter at Helimed House Norwich Airport

number of local volunteers, including myself, came together to raise awareness of EAAA in the area by way of finding and attending local events to represent and fundraise in aid of EAAA. In May 2024, KLFG attended their first fundraising event, and we are now looking forward to completing our first full year of fundraising in May 2025. Regular fundraising is very important to enable the specialist doctors, paramedics and pilots to bring the emergency department with advanced skills, equipment and medicine directly to the patient's side in the fastest time possible to give everyone the best possible chance of surviving and recovering from a life-threatening medical or trauma emergency.

KLFG continues to welcome new opportunities for support for EAAA. We can also support community groups in their fundraising for EAAA by providing them with a local connection, as well as to the wider charity.

Contributing to Town and Around magazine offers the chance to raise the profile and awareness of EAAA in King's Lynn and West Norfolk. In future issues of Town and Around magazine, I will explain more about EAAA charity, how it started, how to support us, the distinctive yellow helicopters, equipment, and CPR and AED

training courses available for the community, as well as EAAA and King's Lynn Fundraising Group news and updates.

Contact us:
EAAA general enquiries.

03450 669 999
Website: www.eaaa.org.uk
Email: info@eaaa.org.uk
Charity number: 1083876
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Award for Anne who swapped Post Office for care



After working 80 hours a week in a Post Office and store, carer Anne Jenner decided there was more to life and changed her career.

She and her partner Peter ran the Grimston store for 15 years, but the hours became an issue and she chose to step away from a shop position and take up a new role as a carer. And that seems to have paid off as she has won an award thanks to her dedication.

Anne, 53, joined the Heacham office of Extra Hands in 2022 and is now the proud recipient of a Going the Extra Mile (GEM) Award after

being nominated by a colleague.

"I worked in a care home before coming to Extra Hands, working with people who had dementia. I somehow seem to have a connection with older people and I really love what I do," she said.

Moving to care at home meant Anne had the chance to meet different people in their own environment, and she has never looked back.

"I was really thrilled to get the award," said the mother of two.

Her nomination said: "Anne was so supportive when I was shadowing her, she encouraged me to be confident. She made all the service users smile whilst visiting them. Anne even checked in on me once I was working on my own to see how I was doing which means a lot."

"I love my job and working for Extra Hands, they have all been really nice and are a good bunch to work with."

Anne said her working hours are ideal for her, and she is very happy to have made the move to Extra Hands, a family-run home care company which also has offices in Horsham St Faith.

BagLadies exceed fundraising target

Sue Warham



Back row L to R: Rae Allsop, Angela Morris, Wendy Brooks, Janet Needham, Carolyn Barrett

Front row L to R: Val Goddard, Sue Warham, Ann Whiting

We've done it! We are delighted to share the exciting news that the BagLadies of Thornham have exceeded their Fundraising target of £100,000. A generous donation has taken our all-time total to £100,500.

Our successful Winter Gift Fair raised over £2,500 on a wet and windy day in early December.

At our next meeting in January, we will be discussing our future plans and we would like to hear villagers' views on a suitable project to bring our fundraising efforts to a close.

Since 2006, many Thornham projects have benefited from our fundraising efforts, including the Cricket Club, Village Hall, Children's Play Area, All Saints' Church, the Bowls Club and, in 2025, we will be supporting the proposed new Sports Pavilion and the restoration of the Thornham Village Sign at the end of Hall Lane.

We will continue with our fundraising, but on a much reduced level, until all our stock is sold. A Coffee Morning and Sale is planned for early Spring.

Jubilee Meadow continues to develop, and BagLadies have sponsored two trees, a Jubilee Oak and a Weeping Willow in memory of Melanie Venes, as well as a picnic bench. We will support Jubilee Meadow in the future in line with Melanie's wishes.

BagLadies would like to thank everybody for their continued support over many years.



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EQUITY RELEASE MADE SIMPLE



James Batchelor, Principal of Evergreen Equity Release Solutions, based on the historic Tuesday Market Place in King's Lynn, on making Equity Release simple.

When my business partner, Nigel Barrett and I first formed Barrett Batchelor Mortgage Services LLP, the aim was to not only be professional and efficient, but also to ensure that the service offered was personal and friendly. We firmly believed that this was required to make our company successful and is also what the people of Norfolk required. We were, and remain, determined to treat our clients with the respect they deserve and to ensure that they don't feel as if they are just a number, as can be the case when dealing directly with the big banks.

When we made the decision to extend our range of services a number of years ago by forming Evergreen Equity Release Services, it soon became apparent to us that this personal approach was probably even more important when dealing with people who were considering Equity Release.

Important decisions have to be made when people are approaching retirement, and using your property to raise funds could well be the most important one of all. It's fair to say that Equity Release is not for everyone, and part of the process I guide people through is explaining other options that may be available to them. In addition to this, future plans and state benefits could be affected. It's not a decision that should be rushed into and it all depends on your individual needs and personal circumstances.

Having said that, more and more people are recognising the benefits of raising money this way, and that it can be a very efficient way of doing so.

Many of you will still be very active in retirement, and still have plenty of plans ahead of you. If you no longer have a wage coming in, and maybe your private pension has not performed as you had hoped for, the question that could be asked is how you can fund your future plans?

For many, it could be a case of having the majority of your wealth locked up in your home. Where some will look to downsize their property to release some money (not a cheap option in itself when you take into account the fees from estate agents, solicitors, potential stamp duty on the new purchase etc), more and more people are looking at the option of staying in their current property, and raising funds via Equity Release to enable them to do so.

One thing I am very keen to do is to explain to people how the Equity Release market has evolved over the last 25 years. You no longer have to sell your property to the bank, so you still retain ownership of the property. Another important point is the "No negative equity guarantee", which ensures that the amount you borrow will never exceed the debt on your property.

Examples of how I have assisted people with their Equity Release requirements are:

- raising funds to boost their income in retirement
- clearing an outstanding mortgage on their property
- property improvements
- assisting family members financially
- funding a new or existing hobby, such as caravanning

There are of course numerous other reasons you may be looking to raise money, and the importance of fully discussing such matters with a fully Qualified Equity Release Adviser cannot be stressed enough.

A big concern I have is that many people decide that Equity Release is not an option for them, without being in possession of the full facts. They could be missing out on a great opportunity due to this, and this is why I offer a completely free consultation, without any obligation. I'd even suggest that you bring a family member or a trusted friend with you to the meeting.

If you are fast approaching retirement (Equity Release is available to over 55's only), or indeed you have already reached this milestone in your life and would like to explore the options available to you, I'm here to offer a helping and guiding hand. To understand the features and risks, please ask for a personalised illustration.

If our service is of any interest to you, I'll be only too pleased to visit you in the comfort of your own home if you would prefer me to do so.



Evergreen Equity Release Solutions
27-28 Tuesday Market Place, King's Lynn, PE30 1JJ
01553 692800
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Ensuring your will is validly signed and witnessed

By Jennifer Taylor, Associate Solicitor, Hayes + Storr

Creating a will is crucial to ensuring your assets are distributed according to your wishes. However, even small errors in signing and witnessing can render a will invalid, as illustrated by the following example:

David used a DIY will kit to prepare his will and had two neighbours act as witnesses. He outlined how he wanted his assets to be distributed among his children and a charity he supported. Unfortunately, he signed the will alone and later collected the witnesses' signatures separately, which invalidated the document. As a result, his estate was distributed according to the rules of intestacy. This meant that the charity received nothing, and David's assets were divided among his closest relatives, which was not his intention.

Key Legal Requirements for Signing a Will

The Wills Act 1837 governs the formalities of creating a valid will. To ensure compliance, the following procedure should be adhered to:

Writing and Signature: The will must be written and must be signed by the testator (i.e. the person making the will). The testator must also intend by their signature to give effect to the will.

Witnessing: Two independent witnesses must observe the testator signing the will and acknowledge their signature. Both witnesses



must then sign in the testator's presence.

Witnesses must be physically present with the testator at the time of signing. Remote witnessing, introduced temporarily during the COVID-19 pandemic, ended in January 2022. Wills executed via video conferencing during this period remain valid but may benefit from being re-signed in person for certainty.

The importance of impartiality

Witnesses must be impartial, and should not be beneficiaries, or closely related to beneficiaries. If a beneficiary or someone closely related to a beneficiary serves as a witness, this could result in the beneficiary losing their entitlement under the will, although the will itself may remain valid.

Role and responsibilities of witnesses

Witnesses play a vital role in validating a will. Their role is to verify that the testator is the person signing, that their signature is not forged, and that no coercion is involved in signing the will.

If a dispute arises during the administration of the testator's estate, the witnesses may later need to provide evidence if disputes arise about the will's execution or the testator's capacity.

Consequences of Improper Execution

An improperly executed will can result in your estate being distributed according to the rules of intestacy or under the terms of a previous will, which is unlikely to reflect your wishes. This can lead to disputes among potential beneficiaries, resulting in costly and prolonged legal battles.

How Professional Advice Helps

Seeking expert guidance ensures your will adheres to legal standards and reflects your intentions. Professional advice reduces the risk of errors and disputes, safeguarding your estate for your intended beneficiaries. For more information on making a will, contact Jennifer Taylor on 01328 863231 or email Jennifer.taylor@hayes-storr.com.

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42F The Place To Be

M Lister

Having been in existence for 85 years, in 2024 the staff of 42F (King's Lynn) Squadron called out to past members to find out how being a Cadet on the Squadron had influenced their now adult life.

Numerous past cadets responded, and these testimonials show how anyone thinking of becoming a cadet today, or even joining as an adult volunteer, could enhance their life skills and set them up for employment in numerous careers.

Past cadet Sam Oakes says: "I spent almost six years as a cadet with 42F, between 2008 and 2013, and it was one of the most transformative experiences of my life. The squadron not only gave me the confidence and skills I needed to excel both academically and professionally, but it also taught me how to realise my own potential. The foundation built at 42F set me on a course that led into the British Army and beyond. Under the guidance of the adult staff, I gained invaluable skills, knowledge, and confidence that laid the groundwork for a bright future. If you are looking for a youth organisation that truly makes a positive impact, not just on you individually, but also on the wider community, you have found it. Even if you have no interest in a military career, this experience will change your life in ways you can't imagine."

Sam is currently the Founder and CEO of ATOVA International a UK-registered charity dedicated to creating meaningful and sustainable change through education, conservation, and community empowerment. Operating in the breath-taking landscapes of North Sumatra, Indonesia, its mission is to unite humanity as one global tribe, working together to build a brighter more harmonious future. Look up his web site, it will inspire you. <https://www.atova.org/>
Photo shows Sam in 2012 - a Cadet Sergeant with his WARMA Road Marching medal and team award.



HUNSTANTON & DISTRICT ROTARY CHRISTMAS TESCO COLLECTION

Jean-Marie Vernon, President, Hunstanton and District Rotary



We would like to give a massive BIG THANK YOU to Hunstanton Tesco who allowed us to collect at their store over the Christmas period. The public were most generous to give cash and card donations that will be used to benefit the local community in West Norfolk. A MASSIVE THANK YOU to everyone, who through their fantastic support enabled Rotary to collect a total of £2,225.00. Local charities and groups are reminded that Rotary is there to help them if they are in need.

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Frederick Savage - Kings Lynn Innovator and Engineer

Russell Lyon

There are not many statues in Kings Lynn – three when I last counted including the recent one of King John in New Conduit. I don't know the average percentage of statues per head of population in Lynn compared to other similar size large towns but I suspect it might be low.

There is one that has always intrigued me. Frederick Savage in his magnificent mayoral robes stands at the junction of London Road and Guanock Place looking towards the South Gate. Who was he and why did he merit such an honour?

Next time you or your children climb aboard a fairground carousel in Kings Lynn give silent thanks to the man who was the chief engineer and innovator of fairground rides as we know them.

He was born in Hevingham during the reign of George 4th into a poor farm labouring family. His father to make ends meet went poaching. He was arrested and found guilty at the Assize and sentenced to be transported to Tasmania for 14 years. This had a severe effect on the family's finances and as a result Frederick's education was very poor and he was semi-literate all his life. He started his working life on a farm at 10 years old earning 2/6d (12.5p) a week.

He was ambitious and got a job in Dereham at Thomas Cooper, Whitesmith, machine makers where he gained experience enough to move to Kings Lynn with his wife. There he was employed by Charles Willet a millwright and machine maker who retired fairly soon after.

This enabled Savage to set up his own business in Tower Street and then London Road making and repairing agricultural implements.

By the mid-century steam engines had been developed to allow better drainage in the Fens and Frederick realised the potential to adapt these engines for agricultural use – notably threshing machines. He then diversified into other avenues. He did not invent steam driven roundabouts - that was Sidney Soames of Marsham in Norfolk but

he used his wonderful imagination and inventive flair to transform his agricultural mechanical devices into "Magic Roundabouts" for showgrounds.

The Gallopers which featured up to 56 horses four abreast was very popular and then the "Switchback" which was the forerunner of our now "Waltzers" and the still well known "Cakewalk." The noise, smoke and smell of steam along with glittering lights and music all added to the fantasy and thrill and showmen clamoured for more and more of these mechanical wonders.

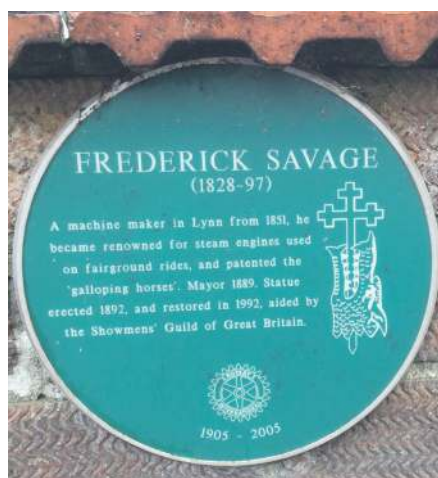
Savage employed at the height of his genius, carvers, painters and illustrators which added so much to the popularity of each ride. Giant cockerels – red and yellow creations and horses off course were made in the yard with pine and beach and elm wood. Savage proudly said that only the eyes and horsehair were not made in the iron works.

Such huge and elaborate rides needed specialised machinery to drive and tow them to and from each venue and again Savage was up to the job and invented the "Little Samson" to haul the vehicles.

By 1892, he was at the height of his fame and popularity and the people of Kings Lynn recognised the town's debt to him. His products now sold all over the world – to America, Europe, Africa and Australia. He was a JP, Councillor and Mayor of the town. He had accumulated a lot of money but was well known for supporting many local worthy causes and helping the poor and religious establishments. Banquets were held in his honour which was pretty good going for a poor, semi-literate son of a farm labourer.

The rather austere statue we see today was raised by public subscription when he died. It gives no indication of the man himself – kindly and with good sense of humour.

His business was carried on by his sons but failed to prosper without his acumen and eventually went into decline and insolvency. A display of the history of Savages can be seen at Lynn Museum.



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WWII 80th Commemoration Celebration

Tim Keogh

Whilst the formal surrender of Imperial Japan occurred nearly 80 years ago on the 2nd September 1945 when the surrender document was signed aboard the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay, the 15th August is recognised by the Allies as VJ Day, the Memorial Day for the end of the war.

Jim Race from Heacham is looking to commemorate this 80th anniversary with a show in August. The idea is to base it around the experiences of local men who served in the war, but predominantly in the Royal Norfolk Regiment between 1939 and 1945. Six members of the regiment have been awarded the Victoria Cross.

Jim said, "I know from my relationship with my father, that people may not always have been fully privy to what their parents experienced during the conflict, so I am asking anyone with personal experiences, memorabilia or memories of the time to get in touch so I can pull together what I hope will be a nostalgic show in August".

Jim aims to base the evening on a 'Norfolk at War' theme with interesting facts and stories interlaced with songs from the era.

If you or anyone you know feel they can contribute, please get in touch with Jim by email at jimrace@jayars.co.uk or on 07950 032292.



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“One pair of specs do everything”, or perhaps not?

In today's world we have many things that make our busy lives easier, and that includes varifocal spectacles. One pair of specs, on your nose, see distance, middle and up close, perhaps make them in Transitions material so they react to the sunlight too? My Mum used to say she had four pairs in one if you counted the light reactive tint, and I would agree, I have specs like that myself. When dispensing, I do like to mention that although varifocal lenses are great, they do most things very well, most of the time, but not everything perfectly all the time. It's a case of managing expectations. There are rare occasions when a client returns who is not entirely happy with their new varifocals. After discussions it

generally turns out that they are fine for most day-to-day tasks, but in certain situations they are not as good as the client hoped for. More often than not, it is work related. One of the most challenging situations can be working in the office, it's busy, things have to be done with accuracy and often to a deadline, demand on our visual system is high. Annoyance with your new varifocals is quite understandable when you consider the manufacturer of these complex lenses. Due to the changing focal power of the lens, the middle zone has the smallest field of view, and this is the part we would generally need for a computer screen. Nowadays I hear folks say that they work with more than one screen at a time, thus making



this field of view more impractical. So, our lens manufacturer, Essilor, have developed “Varilux Digitime”, a new generation of occupational lenses for patients who use digital devices daily or have other near or intermediate vision activities. There are three versions, Room, Mid and Near, so we can tailor your specs to the demands of your lifestyle and workplace. It does mean that you almost have to do a task analysis before choosing the lens type but it is these discussions that are so important when dispensing spectacles. Yes, it does mean another pair of specs, but it's a case of having the correct tool for the job and we do spend a lot of time at work. Essilor has introduced the multi-pairs promotion again this year, so the second pair of lenses can be half-price. Travel to work in your regular varifocals, change to Digitime at work and then swap back in time to go home, that's our routine in the practice and it works a treat!

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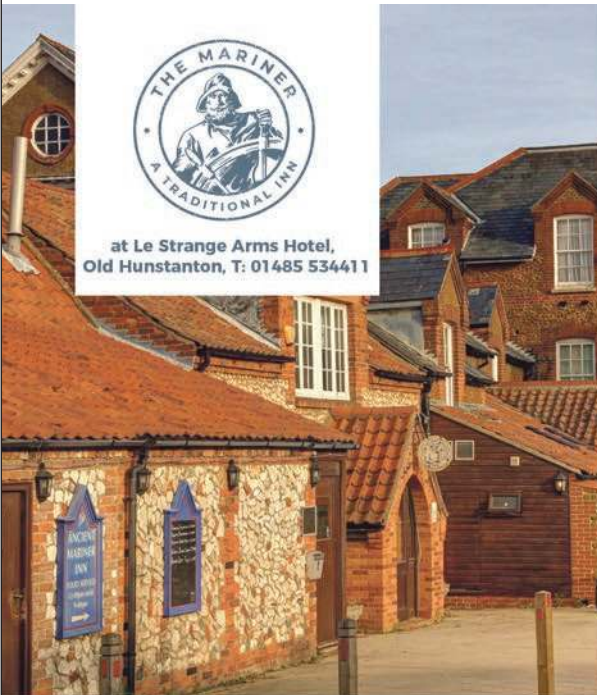
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T&A JAN

Wild in Westminster and West Norfolk

It has been a busy start to the year in Westminster and I continue to be optimistic about my campaigns for West Norfolk despite the worrying economic picture.

Recent surveys show business confidence has plummeted following the huge tax rises announced in the Budget. Talking to local businesses, the focus for many is on trying to survive in the face of the higher costs of employing people. For pubs, shops, and hospitality firms, higher business rates kick in in April.

With over a fifth of all jobs locally in these sectors, it is worrying the government is loading on extra costs but even now there is still time for them to change course.

On a different but important issue, 2025 must be the year that we see spades in the ground and the start of the rebuilding journey to a new by QE. That starts with the new multi-storey car park and QE's plans are ready to go. It has been frustrating that while

Labour say QE and other RAAC hospitals are a priority they've failed to back that up with action. I'll keep pressing them to get on with it.

Anyone who's been to the new Community Diagnostic Centre, Endoscopy Unit, or West Norfolk Eye Centre will know how new facilities that harness technology can deliver better care for patients.

Better access to the fastest gigabit speeds is essential to support growth and access to services particularly in rural areas. Since the initial Project Gigabit contract was awarded I've been campaigning to extend it to more of North West Norfolk – it only included premises in Castle Acre, Little Massingham, Great Massingham, and Harpley.

CityFibre who won the contract which ministers have agreed to extend are shortly due to set out their plans to cover more homes and premises locally. And I look forward to the detailed plans and maps becoming available for my constituents.

Mobile phone coverage also needs to improve and I'm meeting mobile network operators to highlight gaps in coverage in Hunstanton and elsewhere and push them to invest.

This year will also see further progress in the £25 million Town Deal projects which while centred in Lynn are about boosting wider West Norfolk.

For me this is the perfect time to enjoy walking on our amazing coastline with the promise of a pint and warming fire at a local pub afterwards. And hardy souls continue to take a dip although the official bathing season doesn't start for a couple of months. Continuing to improve our coastal waters and rivers remains a priority for me.

It is encouraging the latest water quality results show the improvements recorded at Heacham last year have been maintained. I will continue working with the Environment Agency, Anglian Water and others on this.



Whether better infrastructure, supporting local schools, investing in our police force, reducing waiting lists and more NHS dental appointments, or other issues, I'll be championing our area in the months ahead.

Please get in touch if you have an issue or cause that you think I can help with.

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Borough Council news

Cllr Terry Parish, Heacham Ward which includes Sedgeford and Fring

The government is committed to extended devolution of powers to local authorities and to local government reorganisation. This has become a time-consuming issue at the Council as what it means is the ending of District Councils, including the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk, within 2, possibly 3, years. The functions of both County and District Councils will be subsumed into Unitary Authority(s). There are several models currently in the air, a single unitary composing all of Norfolk; two unitaries splitting Norfolk from North to south with a combined West Norfolk, Breckland and North Norfolk suggested to encompass us; three unitaries as an outsider (population of a unitary has to be around half a million minimum and Norfolk hasn't got 1.5 million people though, with the insane housing development proposed, it could have I suppose).

Whatever option wins the day, the two-tier system in Norfolk, County and Districts, will end. Will the public have any say in the matter? A token approach only, even District Councils have little say. For example, Norfolk County Council could have chosen not to join the Devolution Priority Programme (though there are some possible good reasons to do so) and, therefore, not voted to delay County elections due this May 2025. They have so voted and such elections will not go ahead. Leaders of District Councils and certainly the current Leader of BCKLWN did want those elections delayed as it is not in the interest of democracy.

I consider stopping or interfering with elections is something expected of a

dictatorial state run by self-centred despots so has Norfolk sunk so low? It will be supported by a government anxious to push through reorganisation without pause for thought and minimal time for any consultation. Planned County elections should go ahead and candidates given the opportunity to say what they will do to ensure the changes dictated by government improve the lot of the electorate rather than pasting over the very wide cracks in local government provision.

I am in favour of single tier authorities of the right geographical scale, one council to serve all local functions rather than bucks passing between County and Districts and the public left bemused. I am not in favour of a Norfolk wide unitary which will just replace County with County with too little local representation.

A suitable unitary should make more efficient use of the public money available now though I will believe that when it happens and additional money will be needed from Government too. It will reduce the number of councillors and, consequently, their financial cost to the public should be less. However, each new councillor will have a large area to cover so will likely get a bigger allowance. A councillor could become a full-time job and so prevent those who work and have useful current skills and experience from becoming councillors.

There is another consideration. Reorganisation requires an elected mayor who will be given all sorts of powers including gainsaying decisions made by elected councillors. Elected mayors have been offered in Norfolk before and the public refused them. That's why public consultation will be thin;



don't ask the public if you don't want an answer you don't want.

Interestingly, the proposal to give Kings Lynn a Town Council is being revisited. It remains in the Council's corporate plan where I put it in autumn 2023 but was left 'until later' due in part to significant resistance from the Conservative Group at the time and surprising reluctance from the Labour Group. Now, with unitary raising its head, it has been realised that both West Norfolk's resources and heritage might be at risk and a Town Council for King's Lynn is likely advantageous. Watch this space.

As the story quickly unfolds, I will add detail though you will find plenty in the press. If you find such political changes akin to reorganising deck chairs whilst the ship sinks, please tell your MP. Also give them your opinion of cancelling scheduled elections. You should tell your County Cllrs that too. They voted 51 to 7 to stop elections this May. A senior councillor in Cabinet was removed from his position because he put constituents before party. Putin might like to retire here.

February is budget setting month for the BC. Finances remain tight and plans to manage them began a year ago prior to the new government's decisions about devolution and local government reorganisation. It will be interesting to see if this change in direction affects how the budget is realised.

The new Chief Executive Officer, Kate Blakemore, and Leader of the Borough Council, Alastair Beales, are visiting Heacham to introduce themselves and take questions, on Thursday 13th February. Venue is The Old Friends Hall, Sunnyside, PE31 7DU. Time is 10.45am until 12.15pm.

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Bossy-Boot Government Wipes Out Local Democracy

County Councillor Alexandra Kemp

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While everyone was looking forward to Christmas Turkey, the Labour Government rushed out a startling White Paper on 'Devolution', just before Christmas. A more accurate title would be "Bossy-Boot Government Wipes Out Local Democracy", because it heralds the abolition, yes, abolition, of all Borough Councils, and County Councils, replacing them with just one or two Super Councils – 'Unitaries'. (Except if you can successfully make out the case that your Council should stay.)

Watch out for the Consultation and please have your say. Govt also wants a new layer of government, a Strategic Mayoral Authority and Elected Mayor for Norfolk and Suffolk, with sweeping new powers, like regional government in China. Suffolk is a lovely County but does not align geographically or economically with Norfolk.

But Government has just doubled West Norfolk's housing targets, having reduced the numbers of homes it expects London to build.

This Elected Mayor would identify priority housing sites, have powers of compulsory purchase, set up a Mayoral Development Corporation (even if the Local Planning Authority objects) control budgets for regeneration, housing, transport and skills. Oh, and could also become Police and Crime Commissioner, chair the Local NHS Integrated Care Board, and take over the Fire Rescue Service.

Far too much power for one person, definitely not right for a County the size and breadth of Norfolk. What attention could West Norfolk expect from this exalted individual? Much less than from our local Borough Council located and rooted in the community.

The Elected Mayor could put a Mayoral Levy on the Council Tax, a Business Levy on businesses, and a Mayoral Levy on the Community Infrastructure Levy.

43% of our current Borough Council Tax goes to the Internal Drainage Boards to stop the Fens flooding. A budget reset by a novice Mayor ignoring local need, will heighten local flood risk.

Yes, the same Elected Mayor and Mayoral Combined Authority idea, that the Norfolk public wisely rejected in the Consultation in 2016, is back. But this time, the Government wants to fast-forward change and has forced Councils' hand to, if you pardon the expression, make turkeys vote for Christmas.

The Government told Councils if they don't apply to join the Government Devolution Priority Scheme for an Elected Mayoral Authority by 10 January - which could mean this year's County Council Elections postponed for 2 years- they could get 'Devolution by Default', that is reorganisation with no say in the matter. So, Norfolk County Council called an Extraordinary General Meeting on 9 January.

I voted against joining the Devolution Scheme and against cancelling this May's County Elections, as it is wrong for Norfolk and undemocratic, but the majority of County Councillors voted for it.

1,000 years of local government in Norfolk that evolved in the market towns, creating real economic growth, locally focused, could be abolished within two years. The Government is so wrong to centralise and call it Devolution.

Norfolk Residents specifically objected to the Elected Mayoral Role in 2016, as people thought it puts too much power in the hands of one person and would lead to remote local government.

In 2016, I pointed out the Mayoral Combined Authority would cost the County, when it could not afford to run vital services; that Norfolk County Council would lose control of Transport and the Fire Rescue Service; and Norfolk could lose its assets, as the Mayor could apply proceeds of sale of Norfolk's public assets, to Suffolk. This shambles was voted down in 2016.

Why should Norfolk Taxpayers and Pensioners who have lost the Winter Fuel Allowance, have to fork out for an Elected Mayor and Mayoral Council?

But the Conservatives running Norfolk County Council has allocated £250,000 to 'Devolution' this year, while switching off West Norfolk streetlights that provide safety on major local roads and industrial estates and closing a good West Norfolk Care Home.



Norfolk County Council wants just one Unitary in Norfolk, but the Conservatives running County tried to build an Incinerator in West Norfolk a decade ago and we all had to campaign to stop it.

So, a County Council takeover could not be trusted either.

Labour says it wants local decisions made close to their community, but abolishing Lynn Borough Council that represents 150, 000 residents, would leave Lynn with no local government at all. This is handing power away from communities.

Replacing our Borough Councils for just one or two 'Unitary' Councils across Norfolk, each representing around 500,000 residents, would make Local Government distant. Norfolk is too large, with too

dispersed a population and poor public transport, for Super Councils. Would there even be a Planning Committee in West Norfolk anymore, that residents could speak at? An Ejected Mayor, sorry that was the Predictive Text, an Elected Mayor, might not understand Norfolk's need. Bristol recently voted to abolish their Elected Mayor.

The White Paper says local authorities should be trusted to make decisions about their local areas. Abolishing them is not trusting them.

County Councillors are elected every 4 years and would be undemocratic to postpone the elections, disrespectful to box Councils into joining the Devolution Programme.

Minister of State for Housing and Local Communities is jim.mcmahon.mp@parliament.uk. Jim represents Oldham in Greater Manchester, but Norfolk is not a metropolitan area with the good public transport Manchester has. The Government should focus on a new settlement for Social Care to complement the 10-year NHS Settlement and leave local democracy in Norfolk, local.

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Wendy Warner's plant of the month - Mahonia

Imagine a few rays of low February sunshine catching sulphur yellow flowers deep in the borders of your garden, wouldn't that be lovely? We tend to have low level colour in the form of delightful, early flowering bulbs such as snowdrops, aconites, crocus, iris reticulatas and miniature narcissi, but there's not much mid-height colour before the new shoots of deciduous shrubs break through.

Mahonias can fill this gap. They are bold, architectural, evergreen, hardy shrubs which in itself ticks quite a few boxes for a plant with all year round interest, but add to that yellow, frost-hardy winter flowers followed by blue-black berries and you have a winner! The leaves are made up of many leathery, green, holly-like leaflets along a central stem which tends to grow horizontally. Most varieties tend to be upright in growth making them ideal back of the border plants creating a focal point. Dependent on variety, in autumn or late winter the flowers appear. These are clusters of tiny yellow, usually on long flower spikes, forming rosettes which are held vertically above the leaves resembling a golden crown. They have a sweet fragrance similar to lily-of-the-valley and are attractive to bumblebees and other early pollinators. Most will then produce black, blue or purple berries.

They thrive in moist soils that drains well and prefer a position in light shade, although full sun and deep shade can be tolerated. They should be allowed space around them so their beauty can be admired, but dislike exposure to cold winds as this can scorch their foliage. Tall Mahonias that become bare lower down can be restored by cutting back to 20cm from the ground in late winter or early spring. They will often bush out more as a result of this too.

Popular varieties include Mahonia x media 'Charity' which is one of the largest growing to 4 metres tall with dark green leaves up to 60cm long with racemes of flowers up to 35cm long in late autumn and winter. Mahonia x media 'Winter Sun' has a similar form but is more compact growing to 3 metres and the flowers stems form a more

open rosette. Smaller than this is Mahonia aquifolium 'Apollo' which has a much more spreading, low growing habit with dense clusters of flowers, rather than spikes and the leaves are more bronze-green turning bronze-red in winter. It will grow to approximately 60cm with a spread of 1 metre and flowers from February through to April. Totally different to most others, a relatively new variety, Mahonia eurybracteata 'Soft Caress' has soft slender, bamboo-like foliage without spikes and flowers in late summer and autumn followed by blue-black berries.

Add a spark of brightness to your garden with a Mahonia, but be careful not to get spiked by it when you are gardening near it!



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Mudpies & Butterflies

with Louise Barby

February is a pivotal month in the UK garden. As winter begins to loosen its grip, signs of spring start to appear, and it's the perfect time to prepare for the growing season ahead. Here are some key gardening ideas to make the most of this month.

Prepare the Soil - Clear debris and weeds from flower beds and vegetable patches. Dig in well-rotted manure or compost to improve soil fertility. Avoid working on waterlogged soil to prevent compaction.

Pruning and Maintenance - Prune deciduous shrubs, fruit trees, and climbers like wisteria. Cut back perennials that were left for winter interest. Tidy up hedges before the nesting season begins in March.

Planting and Sowing - Start sowing hardy annuals like sweet peas indoors. Plant bare-root roses, trees, and shrubs while they are still dormant. Force rhubarb by covering crowns with an upturned pot.

Lawn Care - Rake leaves and debris from the lawn to allow light and air to reach the grass. Edge borders for a neat appearance and easier maintenance later.

Encouraging Wildlife - February is an excellent time to make your garden a haven for wildlife - Keep bird feeders topped up with high-energy foods like sunflower hearts and suet. Provide fresh water for drinking and bathing, ensuring it doesn't freeze. Build or install bird boxes to attract nesting pairs. Leave a pile of logs or branches to offer refuge for insects and small mammals.

Plant for Pollinators - Early flowering plants like snowdrops, crocuses, and hellebores provide essential nectar for emerging bees. Avoid disturbing hibernating creatures such as hedgehogs by checking compost heaps before turning them.

Pond Care - Remove ice carefully to maintain oxygen levels for aquatic life. Introduce floating plants if your pond lacks natural shelter.

Easy Entertaining Spaces - February might seem too cold for outdoor entertaining, but with a few adjustments, your garden can still be a welcoming space for friends and family. Add a fire pit or chiminea for warmth and ambiance.

Container Gardening - Arrange pots with winter-flowering plants like cyclamen, pansies, and heather. Place containers near entrances to brighten up dull areas.

Sustainable Choices - Start a compost heap if you don't already have one. Consider water-saving features like rain barrels and permeable paving.

By tackling these tasks, you'll set the stage for a vibrant, welcoming space as spring approaches.

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Snettisham Gardening Club

We start our 2025 programme with our AGM on Wednesday 29th January at the Memorial Hall, Old Church Road at 7.30pm.

Advance notice is we will be holding our Annual Village Show on Saturday 13th July 2025 which is open to all, not just members, so if you want to plan your entries it is never too soon to think about it and schedules are available.

Our speaker on Wednesday February 26th will be Ash Murray who will talk about Wild West Norfolk (don't worry no cowboys present).

On March 26th Stuart Grant will be updating us on keeping Bees and will hopefully be able to bring along an observation hive and some honey.

For any further information about the club please call Gail on 01485 541279 or Addie on 01485 544754.

Downham Market and District Horticultural Society

Affiliated to: Royal Horticultural Society

Our AGM is looming up in March, and with it an exciting new programme of monthly talks and events. Do come along and see what we're all about!

We organise twelve interesting and useful horticultural-themed talks and demonstrations each year. Each one is followed by a short question and answer session, and often the speaker brings plants or other items related to their talk for members to purchase. There is then complimentary tea, coffee and biscuits, and a chance to catch up with fellow members, find out about any future garden visits and other events, and view any slideshows. We also have a popular raffle and a 'magazine swap' area. Additionally, members enjoy generous discounts from Downham Market Garden Centre and Suttons Seeds, so keen gardeners can recoup the cost in no time.

What a bargain – all this for just £10 per person per year!

2024's highlights included a fascinating demonstration on growing and caring for bonsai trees; a talk on daffodils – who knew there were so many different types? – and butterfly gardening in a changing environment (see photo).

This coming year promises new speakers and different topics, from 'Know your Tomatoes', to a very personal account of the discovery of a local colony of wild bumblebees. Also lined up is 'All Muck and Magic?', a talk on soil improvers and fertilisers, which will tie in nicely with a composting workshop planned for later this year.

Our first garden visit of the year will be to Oxborough Hall later this month to view their stunning display of snowdrops and winter aconites (weather permitting). Look out for photos in a future issue.

Our main event each year is our Summer Show – this year's is on Saturday 12 July 2025. Start thinking now about what to enter, and look out for the free programmes, which will be appearing in local shops from Easter onwards.

If you wish to join our friendly Society, or just find out more, Judith, our membership secretary, would be delighted to hear from you. Contact Judith on 01366 501466 or email jt.mazur@tiscali.co.uk.



Members enjoying a recent talk in Downham Market Town Hall.

It's Snowdrop Festival Time

The garden visiting season is already upon us and four fabulous gardens will be opening for the National Garden Scheme's Snowdrop Festival. How fortunate we are in Norfolk to have these four gardens which have opened their gates for visitors for many years. In the west of the county is Lexham Hall near Litcham, to the north near Docking is Bagthorpe Hall, staying north of the county near Sheringham is Chestnut Farm and north of Norwich is Horstead House. All welcome children who are admitted free. So, bring along the dog, nan too and have an inexpensive day out raising money for the nursing and health charities which we support.

Friday 31st January 11-4

Chestnut Farm, Church Road, West Beckham, Holt, NR25 6NX
Adm £5, chd free. Pre-booking essential. Light refreshments. Dogs welcome on leads. Mature three-acre garden developed over 60 years with collections of many rare and unusual plants and trees. There are over 100 varieties of snowdrops, with drifts of crocus and seasonal flowering shrubs.

Sunday 9th February and Sunday 16th February 11-4

Lexham Hall, nr Litcham, PE32 2QJ.
Adm £6.00 chd free. Light refreshments. Dogs welcome on leads. Parkland with lake and river walks surround C17/18 Hall (not open). Year-round interest and in February enjoy a lovely ramble through the woods and borders carpeted with snowdrops and some winter shrubs. Walk back through the walled-garden with its crinkle-crinkle wall.

Saturday 15th February 11-4.

Also open by arrangement* 8th - 21st Feb

Horstead House, Mill Road, Horstead, Norwich, NR12 7AU.
Adm £5, chd free. Home-made teas. Dogs welcome on leads. Stunning display of beautiful snowdrops carpet the woodland setting with winter-flowering shrubs. Another beautiful feature is the collection of dogwoods growing on a small island in the river Bure, which flows through the garden. There is also a small walled garden. Wheelchair access to main snowdrop area.

Sunday 23rd February 11-4



Bagthorpe Hall, Bagthorpe, Bircham, King's Lynn, PE31 6QY.
Adm £5, chd free. Light refreshments. Dogs welcome on leads. A delightful circular walk which meanders through a splendid display of snowdrops naturally carpeting a woodland floor, and then returns through a walled garden.

Sunday 23rd February 11-4

Chestnut Farm, Church Road, West Beckham, Holt, NR25 6NX
Adm £5, chd free. Light refreshments. Dogs welcome on leads. Mature three-acre garden developed over 60 years with collections of many rare and unusual plants and trees. There are over 100 varieties of snowdrops, with drifts of crocus and seasonal flowering shrubs.

Before visiting a garden, it is advisable to check the website for up to date information: www.ngs.org.uk

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David Elsey's cryptic crossword

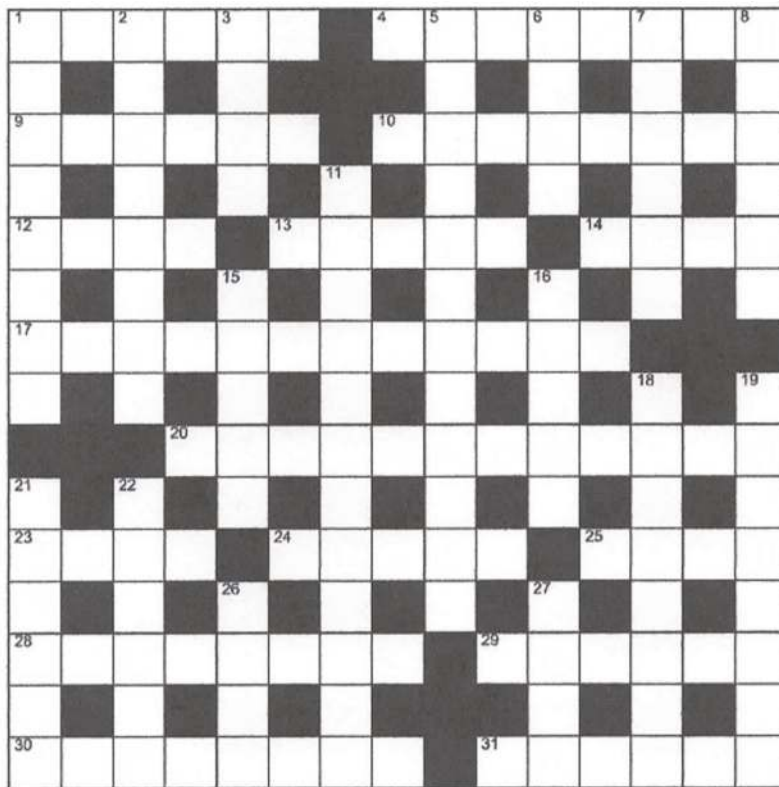
Cryptic clues

Across

1. Maybe climbers left rubbish lying around? (6)
4. Refuse to accommodate French here, as authorized (8)
9. Hamlet, miles away, prepared to meet Laertes, at the outset looking murderous (6)
10. Begin law school before joining firm (8)
12. When on board ship we can work out (4)
13. Gather, wearing something warm, for broadcast (5)
14. Charge of a recurring nature (4)
17. Free agents do tend to hold back deliberately (4,4,4)
20. Hospital worker set to chart with number not without feeling (12)
23. Knock over last skittle and win (4)
24. Rage around tourist centre like a bear (5)
25. Bowler is hard pressed to start limiting overs (4)
28. Attach first of images showing wrong body part (8)
29. Hit a US craft in space (6)
30. Set against job in firm (8)
31. Pay heed to doctor after appointment ends (6)

Down

1. Fence with friend said to be bustling with energy (8)
2. Figure one earns it when working well (8)
3. What to do to become warmer (4)
5. Surrogate pop idol? (6,6)
6. Suffering after medication is cut (4)
7. Kind of home – a manor, so to speak (2,1,3)
8. Brood in bed (6)
11. Ridiculously old-fashioned aunt in Deal dressed around six (12)
15. Bribe Billy to hide loot after John scarpered (3,2)
16. Make fast horse run over fells occasionally (5)
18. Mavis arranged short let (8)
19. Offered union support and does strike (8)
21. Cut through Strand – to take in St Martin's, essentially (6)
22. Nudist, say, could be affected approaching late summer (6)
26. Can I live with this colour? (4)
27. Import last of clothing first (4)



SOLUTION ON PAGE 25

The winner of last month's special prize crossword was Mr Jonathan Moore (Jnr) from South Beach Heacham.

The solution was:

Across: 1. Etched, 4. Stomachs, 10. Converter, 11. Lemur, 12. Slap, 13. Ground rent, 15. Mislead, 16. Snappy, 19. Primal, 21. Psalter, 23. Profligate, 25. Only, 27. Evade, 28. Centurion, 29. Plimsoll, 30. Soused

Down: 1. Excuse me, 2. Canvasser, 3. Eyes, 5. Turn-ups, 6. Melodramas, 7. Comte, 8. Sprite, 9. Stared, 14. Red mullets, 17. Put on airs, 18. Crayoned, 20. Logical, 21. Patent, 22. Upkeep, 24. Okapi, 26. Ludo

FABRICS CURTAINS BLINDS

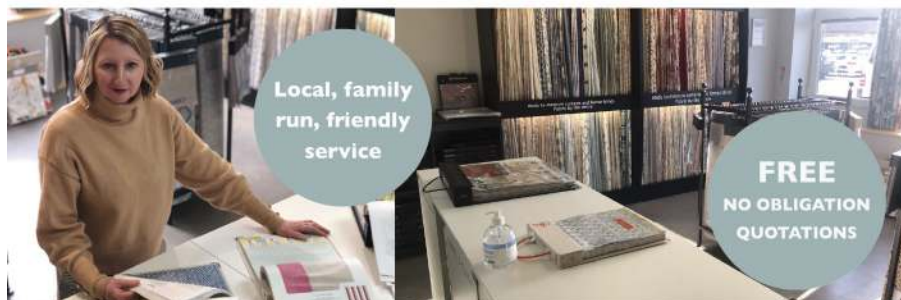
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Barking Bugle News

The New Brancaster Boardwalk

In October last year a brand new accessible boardwalk at Brancaster was installed to make life easier for humans and furry friends to explore this pawsome part of the Norfolk coastline. The one and a half mile flat boardwalk forms part of the Norfolk Coast Path National Trail and the King Charles III England Coast Path.



Right at the beginning of the New Year we decided to go and take a look for ourselves and we were not disappointed. We parked our paw mobile at Brancaster Staithe Harbour and my sister, Ziggy Bear, forever eagle-eyed immediately spotted the well marked signpost for the beginning of the walk. In the warmer weather there is a little hut which sells drinks, filled baguettes, snacks and other goodies. You can also begin the walk at the other end (ie. Beach Road) but there is a lot more space for car parking in the harbour area.

There is a shingle section at the beginning and end of the boardwalk, which itself is wide enough to accommodate humans in wheelchairs and dummies in strollers. If it gets busy there are a number of passing spaces and also benches on which to sit, relax and gaze at the pawsome scenery. We were very impressed to discover that the non-slip surface of the boards provides extra grip compared to traditional wooden boards which can get very slippery.

For a leisurely walk allow around 45 mins to an hour each way. If you want to walk further you can turn left at the end of the boardwalk and then take the first right for about half a mile which will lead you past the golf club and onto Brancaster Beach. There are toilets and a car park near the beach and another hut selling drinks and light snacks during the summer season. Yum yum!!

We thoroughly recommend trying out the boardwalk which is suitable for humans and dummies of all abilities. The views are simply stunning and it would be a fab day out, particularly if you bring a picnic. However, there are no doggy waste bins along the boardwalk so please, please tell your humans to pick up after you and also advise them to keep you on a lead. If you stray from the boardwalk it would be easy to get stuck in the boggy ground and get lost amongst the tall reeds.

If you do go on this walk please bark us your thoughts about your experience. We would love to hear from you.

On another matter entirely, the Barking Bugle team and friends managed to raise the grand sum of £570.66 at the annual Hunstanton Tesco collection just before Christmas, in order to raise funds for PACT Animal Rescue, a cause very dear to our hearts. A huge THANK YOU to all the humans and canines who helped us on the day, but in particular to everyone who donated money and goodies. It really does help!

Woofs Ziggy Bear, Repawter at the Barking Bugle

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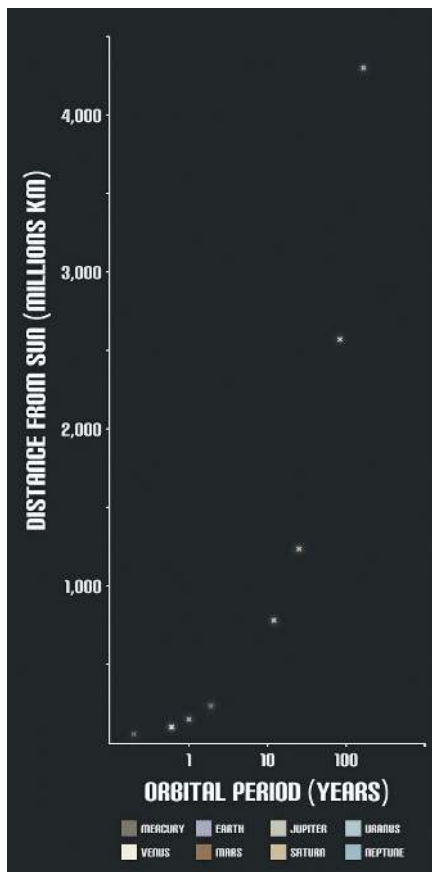
The dark skies of West Norfolk

Terry Parish

I hope some of you observed the phenomena I reported as happening over Christmas and through January. I didn't due to weather or circumstances though I did manage a naked eye view of Mars, Venus and Jupiter (when close to the Moon). No meteors observed on a cold and reasonably clear night. No aurora seen by me, though others did. Anyway, a New Year and all things are possible.

We start February as January finished, with a very bright Venus in the SW. Look for it at teatime, around 6.30pm, though it doesn't set until 9pm. The Evening Star will be close to the Crescent Moon on the 1st (at 6.30pm). A telescope will reveal the phase of Venus which will be a crescent too. On the 19th, Venus will be at its maximum brightness this year with a magnitude of -4.9.

Venus is about the same size as the Earth and can be our closest planetary neighbour. It is a very different world though, with a surface temperature of 4750C; a day length of 243 of our days, and the Sun rising in the west as Venus spins on its axis in the opposite direction to us. Its year is shorter, 225 of our days, which is to be expected as it is closer to the Sun and, consequently, has a smaller orbital path as well as travelling along it faster. There are no seasons on Venus as its polar axis has very little tilt, just 30 compared to Earth's 23.50.



Mercury is bottom left, Neptune top left.
Internet

Venus does not have any moons but it does have a small asteroid, lump of rock, currently gravitationally bound to it. It is named Zoozve due to, apparently, handwriting being difficult to decipher which I understand too well. Anyway, Venus is one night time object we can all see at some time during this month. Do turn telescopes, birding scopes, or good binoculars on it and see if you can discern its phase.

February will see us lose Saturn and bright Mars, so take a look at both any clear night. Saturn can be found below Venus at the beginning of the month, setting about 8pm. It gradually moves further west into the twilight, vanishing by the end of the month. It will reappear as a morning object in May. A telescope, including a birding scope, will reveal Saturn's rings which are currently almost edge on.

Red Mars is up all night, not setting until about 4am. It follows Jupiter across the sky and is sitting in the constellation of Gemini, not far from the two stars, Castor and Pollux. On the 9th, at 6.50pm, Mars will appear to almost touch the Moon. This conjunction should be worth looking for and steady binoculars will give a good view of it. The Earth moves more quickly along its shorter orbital path and draws away from Mars during the month so the God of War diminishes in brightness from magnitude -1.1 to -0.3 which is significant.



Gemini. Note the top left corner of Orion, Betelgeuse, to help you locate the pattern.

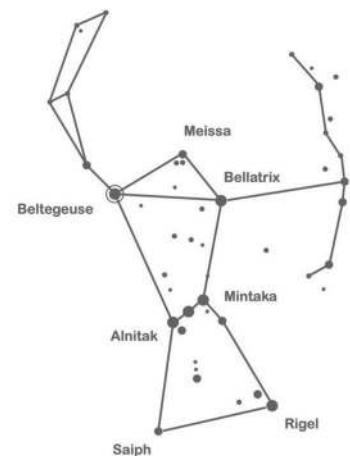
Jupiter has been easy to spot for several months and remains in the sky during February, setting about 3am. It has a magnitude of -2.4, bright but Venus is over 6 times brighter. (For those with a mathematical mind, each change in magnitude by one unit represent a dimming or brightening by a factor of around 2.5; a change of 2 units means brightness altering by 2.5 x 2.5, etc.). As always, turn a telescope or astronomical binoculars on Jupiter to pick up the 4 Galilean Moons.

Neptune and Uranus are hard to spot but dimmer Neptune, magnitude +7.8, poses for us on the 1st as it will be found immediately between the crescent Moon and Venus, a small tad to the left. You will need a telescope

but the blue green dot swimming in front of your eyes is worth seeing as it is the furthest planet from the Sun. Currently about 4.5 billion km away, if you are lucky enough to see it, the light entering your eye set out over 4 hours before!

Mercury is as slippery as the element it shares a name with. From the 9th it begins setting after the Sun has set and, on the 24th and 25th, it will be setting 30 minutes after the Sun and, before it vanishes, there is a chance to see it close to Saturn. It will be low down in the SW and you need a good horizon. Looking across The Wash is the best bet but the view is often spoiled by the murk over Lincolnshire. With a magnitude of -1.1 it will be a bright spark. (A late reminder, negative magnitudes are bright, positive ones are progressively dimmer). Do not use optical instruments until after the Sun has set.

I have jumped around the planets, ordering them in observing significance rather than in their positions within the Solar System. If you tick them off, beginning with Mercury and moving out, you will find that it is possible to observe all 7 during the month. A great planetary alignment will be at the end of the month when Mercury joins in, a planetary alignment of 6 will be earlier. Remember that Uranus and Neptune are telescope objects and Mercury is difficult. See how many you can tick off.

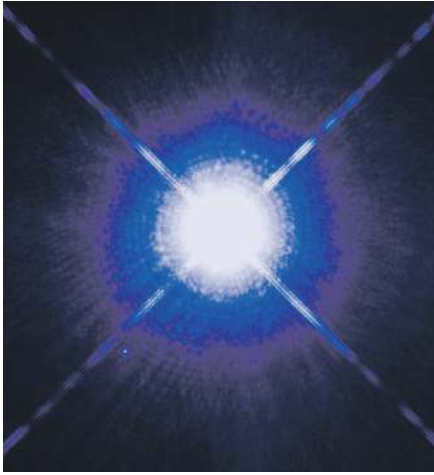


Look in the region of Orion's sword to find M42. Internet

February is still dark in the early evening so take advantage of any clear skies to look at Orion the winter constellation. Find the Hunter's belt, 3 stars in the middle, and use binoculars to look at the fuzzy region below it. This is the Orion Nebulae, Messier 42, a star building region of space some 1344 light years distant. A telescope will reveal 4 stars within the nebula arranged in the figure of a trapezium. Using your eyes, follow the line of the belt left and down to find the brightest star in the sky, Sirius, the Dog Star, just 8.6 light years distant.

Sirius, like many stars, is a binary. Sirius A

is bigger and brighter than our Sun whereas Sirius B is a white dwarf orbiting A every 50 years in an elongated ellipse. Sirius B was once the bigger of the two but expanded much further into a red giant and then collapsed. Events are always happening up there, the trick is to see them and remember that, whatever you see, happened in the past.



*Overexposed image of Sirius A reveals its small companion Sirius B (lower left).
Internet.*

The 'Dog Star' tab came from or led to the naming of the constellation Canis Major of which Sirius is a prominent part. Historically, Sirius rising into the sky heralded the flooding of the Nile in Ancient Egypt so observing priests got the credit for appropriate warnings and agricultural guidance. In Ancient Greece, Sirius rising in the dawn meant the sultry days of summer, the dog days, were upon them. ('Mad dogs and Englishmen', suddenly springs to mind).

Enough chit chat, readers my age might have stalled several paragraphs ago asking themselves, 'What about Pluto?' Well, Pluto lost its planetary status in 2006 and is now designated a dwarf planet amongst 8, possibly 9, others. One of these, Orcus, has a similar orbit to Pluto.

NASA's New Horizons spacecraft flew by Pluto in 2015 and sent back huge amounts of data about the god of the underworld and its moons which is still being unpacked. It seems possible that Charon, the largest moon, may have begun linked to Pluto before moving away. Each body, Pluto and Charon, now orbit a point in the space between them which effectively makes them a binary planet. So, Pluto is still there and is proving a remarkable distant object with an atmosphere, ice mountains and more.



*The binary planet (my opinion) of Pluto and Charon. Remember Pluto, the larger image above, is just about 2/3 size of our Moon.
Internet.*

Make the most of the dark skies of February as the Earth moves ever onward in its orbit; the northern hemisphere becomes more exposed to the Sun's rays; days get longer, and nights get shorter.

CROSSWORD SOLUTION
Across: 1. Plants, 4. Official, 9. Lethal, 10. Stalwart, 12. Sus, 13. Infer, 14. Fare, 17. Drag one's feet, 20. Radiographer, 23. Reap, 24. Furry, 25. Hoop, 28. Appendix, 29. Hiatus, 30. Hardline, 31. Attend
Down: 1. Palliative, 2. Artesian, 3. Thaw, 5. Father figure, 6. Ills, 7. In a way, 8. Litter, 11. Antediluvian, 15. Got at, 16. Belay, 18. Throats, 19. Proposed, 21. Breach, 22. Camper, 26. Anil, 27. Gist



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Snettisham's Vicar and Craftsman

Dan Tansey is the vicar of St Mary's Snettisham but what many people don't know is that he is also a craftsman.

Recently T&A met up with Dan to talk about his work and we learned that he trained as a furniture designer in the nineties, and having developed his woodworking and metalwork skills he worked for a couple of furniture dealerships in the London area.

Living in Walthamstow and attending a local church he became involved with CAP, a charity that provides free debt help across the UK, becoming a centre manager and then a training manager for the London area. This role included giving presentations and talks and he smiled saying: "I realised that actually I like doing this, I seem to be quite good at it, and I'm connecting with people."

Dan felt he had a calling and so in 2015 he went to Ridley Hall, (a theological college in Cambridge that trains people who intend to take Holy orders in the Church of England) and his first post after college was as a full time Curate in the Woottons. The Covid pandemic came along which extended his time there to four and a half years.



Dan as a curate in the Woottons

In July 2021 T&A reported on the Art and Soul Exhibition at St Mary's Church, South Wootton: "Art & Soul was always intended to be a biennial event but we were really uncertain about running it this year," said Rev Dan Tansey. "But then we thought about all the creative ways in which people have used their time during the lockdowns and thought how wonderful it would be to give people the opportunity to exhibit what they've made. And what a fantastic way to celebrate coming out of such a difficult 16 months."

Finding himself looking for a post he didn't imagine moving to a rural church but Bishop Jane asked him to cover Snettisham which is a part-time position and he, wife Beti, and their children settled in to the village. So now Dan is a vicar three and a half days a week and furniture maker, restorer and carpenter on the other days.



"What is it that makes Snettisham such a great place to live? Obviously a fantastic church... with great pubs, cafes and shops too..." he says in St Mary's church magazine. "We all love and value our village."

Talking about the qualities of wood he said: "I like working with wood; it's a complicated material to work with so it calls for a more artistic approach - especially now houses are centrally heated!"

"My first restoration was a farmhouse table that had been badly damaged; it was satisfying to restore a beloved piece of furniture for someone; it took a lot of patience but the result was beautiful."

"I like working on bespoke pieces that mean something to someone; one of my favourite jobs was a bespoke desk for a house in the village."

"Then some days I'll be working on a kitchen unit, a door or a window frame - as long as I'm working with my hands I'm happy."

Dan can be contacted on 07928 825060.



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Geoff Wingrove



NATIONAL COASTWATCH INSTITUTION (NCI) BRANCASTER

It has been a busy and eventful year for NCI Brancaster, with high spots such as winning national recognition for the quality of the service and a visit by HRH The Princess Royal, the Royal Patron of the Institution on 14th January.

The Princess Royal was greeted by children of Brancaster school and local dignities led by the Lord Lieutenant on arrival. She visited the station and then met and talked with all the watchkeepers and guests from the community, RNLI, Coastguard, RWNGC and key supporters. She then unveiled a plaque marking the visit and signed the visitors' book.

The event was a great success in raising everybody's spirits and credit should go to John A and Richard B the station manager and deputy manager for their hard work in organising everything.



Brancaster School staff and children

Christmas proved to be a quiet period, due to weather conditions along the beach and coast, but watchkeeping has continued throughout this time. I visited the station on New Year's Day and joined Watchkeeper John G and trainee Watchkeeper Michael C, pictured here, who were on duty. Despite high winds and rough seas, an intrepid family still went for a brief swim - although I noticed that their two dogs stayed on the beach! There were also six ships anchored in The Wash, waiting to enter ports such as King's Lynn: I felt sorry for the crews, who were being tossed about on the waves across the festive season.

The station staff have taken the opportunity during this period to catch up on refresher training, which is an annual process. During 2024 they completed 3509 watchkeeping hours, logged 3246 vessels (87% leisure),



Station manager John Allen (left) with watchkeepers Hilary and John Warwick

monitored/made 1274 broadcasts on Channel 65 radio and reported 8 serious incidents to the emergency services: a magnificent effort by the Watchkeepers. This month there has been one new joiner, Doug, and three successful certifications, Richard W, Martyn and Ann: congratulations to them.

You can access images from our webcam on the beach through the link Live Brancaster Webcam – National Coastwatch.

For further information about NCI Brancaster, please contact Richard Burrows, Deputy Station Manager and Watchkeeper on 07535 612777. You can also find us on Facebook, if you search NCI Brancaster.



HRH the Princess Royal with Stephen Hand NCI Chairman

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Teacher's Pet takes the biscuit at Lynn school

'Teacher's Pet' took on a whole new meaning when students returning to a Lynn school after the Christmas break were greeted with enthusiastic tail wagging by the newest member of staff.

Yellow Labrador Wren has been appointed Wellbeing Dog at Springwood High School, spending three days a week supporting the mental health needs of staff and students.

Donna Moss, Attendance Officer at Springwood, and Wren's owner, explained: "She is one of our family pets. We also have Wren's mother at home, and when she had a litter of puppies, we fell in love with Wren and decided to keep her, so she has grown up alongside her own mum, and in my family unit of husband and three kids.

"This has led to her being very gentle and loving around children, young people, and adults alike."



Three-year-old Wren now spends Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays in the Attendance Office at Springwood, which is a member of the West Norfolk Academies Trust.

"Wren has staff and children that visit her in the school day," said Mrs Moss. "She has an immediate calming and soothing effect by



just being near the children and makes everyone smile when they meet her.

"It encourages the children to open up and talk, and also helps build a good rapport and relationship between us and the children.

"She will also be involved in attendance challenges we do with the children, where she will visit groups of children each week. She will also be involved with one-to-one sessions with children – this could be cuddle time or walking time round the school.

"This will be used for a variety of reasons – if a child needs calm-down time, talking time, or as a reward to help behaviour, or time to talk about their feelings, or just time to forget their worries and stresses.

"It gives the children something to look forward to in the school day – something to help brighten their day if they are struggling."

While Springwood is currently the only WNAT school to have a therapy dog, the success of the scheme may mean that others will follow in Wren's paw prints.

"In my job role, I see a lot of children struggling with mental health, anxiety, and

stress, and felt having a wellbeing dog would be beneficial in being a positive step to improve our young children's mental health in these areas," continued Mrs Moss.

"The children have been very excited about Wren joining the school, and have said that they look forward to coming to school to see her, and that she makes the school day more fun.

"I've also had some children struggling with their mental health that have asked for one-to-one time with Wren, where they can be quiet whilst petting her and talking about their feelings.

"Time with Wren has also been used as a reward or special time for children that sometimes struggle with behaviour, and has also been used to calm children down when they are feeling heightened. It allows them time to relax, reflect, calm down and manage their thoughts and feelings, whilst petting the dog and receiving affection from Wren."

"This has been an amazing initiative already," added Executive Headteacher Andy Johnson. "Students are so excited and keen to meet Wren."

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Hunstanton Society

We hope that you are all keeping warm at home or even perhaps travelling abroad and finding some warmer climes.

Talks

Our February talk will be on Wednesday 12th at 7.30pm in the Heritage Centre when Anna Biesty and Fiona Borthwick will talk about their Regenerative Farming journey - so far.

HERITAGE CENTRE

We have been closed as from mid-November but we look forward to re-opening on Friday, 14th February. Very soon our volunteers will be contacted by our Rota organising Team to arrange the rota for the second half of February and, possibly, March as well.

We are still selling our 2025 Calendars although we are very grateful for Adrian Eden continuing to sell them as well as our Hunstanton Guide from his wonderful book shop 'By the Book' on the High Street. We are extremely grateful for John Maiden using his Turnstone column in the Lynn News to, amongst his push to put right the wrongs of the past concerning the green and the Pier (or lack of), to promote our Calendars to the local public. We are aware that people have been reading John's article and responded with a visit to Adrian's shop to purchase a Calendar or two. They can be bought there for £7.00 each.

HISTORY GROUP

This group last met just before Christmas on 19th December.

In Hazel Denslow's notes of the meeting, there was discussion about funding for a project collecting stories about USAAF working and living in Norfolk. The group is naturally quite keen to get involved but to date have had no response from Norfolk County Council. Such a pity when we have quite a bit of knowledge and photographs covering this area of our history.

She also reported on the research that Phil Thomas, Tony Armstrong and others have been carrying out attempting to identify what shops were where over the life of Hunstanton. This is quite a full-on project as we know that shops have come and gone really quite speedily over the years and even relocated within the town.

If anyone has any information they would like to contribute please contact the Group's Secretary, Hazel Denslow, on 01485 297097.

EVENTS GROUP

If there is anything that you would like to see happen, please tell us and we will do everything we can to accommodate your suggestions. We are meeting with a representative from the Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Council to discuss the events that they will be organising in Hunstanton, once these events and dates are known, we will be organising complimentary activities and events at the Heritage Centre. Some of these may just be to extend our opening hours - in which case we would welcome additional help from volunteers that "man" the Centre during the regular opening hours.

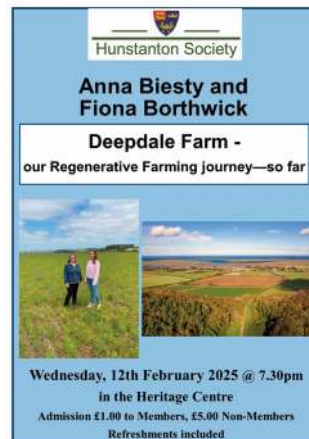
Our first coffee morning of the year will take place on Wednesday 29 January, and we look forward to welcoming you all to the Centre. There will be a "Valentines" themed quiz so if you want to swat up beforehand.... Also to test your knowledge, there will be a Picture Quiz, photographs have been taken around Hunstanton, but do you know where they are?

DONATIONS TO THE HERITAGE CENTRE

Some very kind soul has sent us in the post an 'Official Guide to Hunstanton and Neighbourhood' as issued by Hunstanton Advancement Association. It is not dated but a study of the contents shows inches of rainfall over the years 1934 through to 1937 so one assumes it to be dated about 1938. It arrived without any indication of who the sender was - but, if you happen to be reading this, then thank

you very much. It is a very clean copy and will enhance our collection nicely.

We are always on the lookout for new artifacts for displaying in the Heritage Centre or, at least, storing in our filing cabinets for research reference. If you have such items of interest that relate to the Hunstanton area, please bring them along to the Centre.



FLOODS MEMORIAL SERVICE

Friday, 31st January 2025 at 11.00am

A memorial service has been arranged by Hunstanton Town Council to commemorate the floods of that date in 1953 taking place at the War Memorial/Floods Memorial site in the Heritage Gardens.

If you wish to attend, you could join the Mayor and walk down from the Town Hall leaving at 10.45am. However, you could simply be at the War Memorial/Floods Memorial at 11.00am.

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Dad-of-five and grandfather-of-six changes career in his 70s

A grandfather has followed his heart and become a counsellor after being inspired by his partner to change career.

David Goodman, 72, began studying in January 2021 and is now qualified to offer person-centred counselling out of an office in the South Lynn Community Centre. He previously spent 45 years working in the jewellery industry but was moved to take a new path during the Covid lockdowns in 2020.

“Although Ashleigh is much younger than me, she motivated me to seek a fresh start,” said the South Wootton resident, a dad-of-five and grandfather-of-six.

“She took up a new career as a foot health practitioner during Covid and, while it’s not the norm at my age to be studying for a new career, it’s what convinced me to go back to college when the world opened up again. I have been involved in my own therapy since the age of 40 and the positive effect it has had on my life has fuelled the huge commitment required to qualify as a counsellor.

“I am energised and excited by the knowledge of the great value counselling can provide to people and the help it can give them to learn and get through difficult times. I am doing something that I truly enjoy and derive a great sense of achievement and pleasure from.”

Mr Goodman moved to South Wootton in 2020 having spent his life living in South Africa. For almost 40 years he was the owner of a successful watch and jewellery wholesale company and continued to work in the trade for his son Philip and son-in-law Gavin Merrison’s Wisbech-based Goodman Bros firm after he emigrated.

Gaining a post-graduate diploma in person-centred counselling from The Norwich Centre has allowed him to set up his own venture - which offers in-person and online sessions.

His approach, also referred to as non-directive or client-centred, was pioneered by Carl Rogers in the early 1940s. The client is seen as the expert in their own life and the counsellor’s role is to create a safe, empathetic and non-judgmental space where they can explore their thoughts, emotions and experiences freely.

Mr Goodman added: “My awareness of everyone having a back story has made me loath to form premature negative attitudes or opinions towards anyone. This has, without doubt, impacted my personal life in a positive way.

“When I’ve faced my greatest challenges in life and I’ve opened my heart and my mind, there has always been support and love to help me confront and overcome any obstacles. I now want to give something back to other people who need it so they can begin their own journeys of learning and healing.”

For more information email david@davidgoodmancounselling



National Recognition for Kate Dunbar at the NEC on January 26th

John Maiden

Kate Dunbar is almost the same age as my eldest daughter, Caroline. In fact, they were both students at King's Lynn High School at the same time, but in different academic year groups. It was more recently that Kate became a good friend of mine, when we were both elected to serve on Hunstanton town council in the first decade of the twentieth century. Kate was instrumental in producing an alternative plan to that of the borough council, when it came to regenerating the Westgate Spinney. As a result, the borough's plan to cut down a third of the trees was shelved and no trees were lost.

The bonus for our town is that Kate's creative skill has been recognised by the council and we now have one of the most attractive toilet blocks in the borough, situated on a corner of The Green at Hunstanton.



Merpeople panels at the toilet block

This is all down to the grass roots partnership Kate has built up over the years with council officials such as Roger Partridge. However, in recent years, Kate has become even better known for being a vegan runner, as she explains here in her own words:



"I honestly thought my life was over 21 years ago, as I lay sick in bed with psoriatic arthritis unable to move for several weeks. It took months even to be able to walk again, so I can hardly believe and am astounded at what has happened to me since. Over the past couple of years, I have run three marathons and an ultramarathon, when I never ran at all before. I am so thrilled and amazed to be taking part at the National Running Show at the NEC in Birmingham. Others on the panel are amazing ultra runner women, and then there is me. I am representing Plant-Based Health Professionals UK, Vegan Runners UK and the Running On Plants Campaign, for which I am ambassador. Very exciting! I am hoping to meet some fantastic runners, including Jasmin Parish who was the first ever woman to finish the Berkley Marathons and was on the main news last year. I believe she is only the 20th ever person to finish at all. Another crazy vegan!

Most of our limits are the ones we set ourselves. You never know what you can achieve until you just give it a go! And then keep on going. I became vegan for the animals 19 years ago and had no idea then that



Cromer Marathon

it would set me on such an incredible journey. Now I really want to encourage others to achieve their health and fitness goals. At 61 I am fitter than I was at 20, which wasn't very fit! I am no longer taking medications. I hope people who have been thinking of trying 'Veganuary' feel confident enough to give it a go. It is something I have never once regretted."

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Hunstanton Lifeboat Station

Our New Year started early on December 29, with a launch before dawn for a special exercise.

Every year, we meet up at sea over the festive season with our colleagues across The Wash at Skegness to team up for search and rescue drills. They're all about learning about each other's craft and their capabilities.

That means boarding each other's vessels while they're being put through their paces so we understand how our respective assets and their crews operate, so we can work better together in the event of a joint 'shout'.

Our crew were welcomed aboard for a tour of Skegness's Shannon Class lifeboat Joel and April Grunnill - the latest and most advanced lifeboat in the RNLI's all weather fleet - before some of our volunteers had a spell at the helm.

We welcomed our Lincolnshire counterparts aboard our station's fast inshore lifeboat Spirit of West Norfolk, along with our search and rescue hovercraft Hunstanton Flyer, to show them how we work.

The trio form a powerful lifesaving presence covering The Wash and swathes of the west Norfolk and south Lincolnshire coastlines, along with a D Class inshore lifeboat at Skegness.

Elsewhere around the Norfolk coast, our flanking station at Wells operates both a Shannon and a D Class lifeboat.

Our crews are always ready like more than 230 around the coast of the UK and Ireland whenever anyone's in danger - just like our forebears who took to the sea in wooden rowing boats after Hunstanton's first lifeboat service was founded in 1824, based in what's now the Old Town Beach Café.

As the RNLI enters its third century of saving lives at sea, we're proud of our station's history.

But this is now our watch, looking ahead to the future with our pagers on 24/7, 365 days of the year.

We've seen a clutch of volunteers who joined us over the course of 2023 and 2024 move through their training to bolster our ranks.

Some of our longer-serving hands say our crew is like a family. We have fathers' and sons', mothers' and daughters' and third generation life savers' names scrawled on



*Volunteers from Hunstanton and Skegness on board the hovercraft Hunstanton Flyer
Credit RNLI/Chris Bishop*



Skegness lifeboat Joel and April Grunnill, with search and rescue hovercraft Hunstanton Flyer, taken from Hunstanton lifeboat Spirit of West Norfolk RNLI/Ryan Darby



Hunstanton crew member David Coggles at the wheel of Skegness lifeboat Joel and April Grunnill. Credit Hunstanton RNLI

yellow wellies in the crew room.

Our wider family shows visitors around our station, staffs our souvenir shop, promotes water safety and last but not least raises vital funds for our lifesaving work.

We're all one crew, whatever we do. We all volunteer to help save lives at sea.

We train at the station on Sea Lane on Sunday mornings, if you'd like to come down for a look around and find out more about our work and how you could join us.

Or you can e-mail hunstanton@rnl.org.uk.
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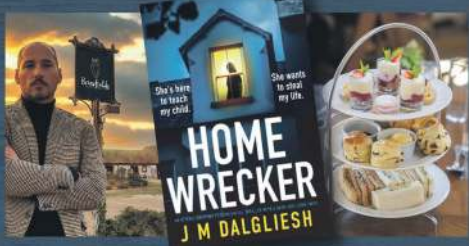
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PROOFREADING

What it is and what it isn't

Caroline Dudley

Last month I described a little about 'structural' copy editing and this month we shall move on to the process of proofreading.

Proofreading is the final process through which a script goes before the printer presses 'Print', which means it is the 'last chance saloon' for correcting mistakes of any kind.

To the uninitiated, copy editing and proofreading may seem to be one and the same thing and, it is true, many freelancers undertake both types of commission.

I have often been asked to 'proofread' an author's work and then been presented with several thousand words of 'raw' copy. At this point, the author needed a copy editor. Therefore, further discussion was required to establish exactly what needed to be done.

Copy editing deals with 'raw' copy and aims to weed out all the grammatical, spelling and punctuation errors, ensures that all captions correspond with the relevant illustrations/diagrams/charts, and fonts, for example the 'running heads' of chapters are consistent throughout, and includes flagging up issues, for example libel, at an early stage of



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Sporting Corner with Tim Keogh

A Published Novelist

Ian Smith is a former international Scottish Rugby Union player. He was also a well-travelled Army dentist before setting up the Grange Dental Practice in Snettisham. He has already written his autobiography, *A Full Back Slower Than Your Average Prop*, about his rugby career. He has now released his first novel, *The Man With Two Graves*. Ian, who is now retired and still lives in Snettisham, has been giving Town & Around's Tim Keogh monthly insights into his fascinating life for over two years now. This month's article focuses on the process involved in Ian's publication of his first novel.

This month's article begins with an apology, because I have just published my first novel, and you may feel this is going to be a

sales pitch! As I'm sure you will understand, I am more than a little excited about it

It was around 2013 when I began the novel. It's not something I will ever forget because I had been talking about writing for some time, and we as a family were on holiday in Spain staying in a rental villa.

It was there that my wife Julie said in no uncertain terms that it was time I stopped talking and began writing. It was one evening after dinner fuelled by a bottle of wine, when at around ten o'clock in the evening that I started my novel.

The next time I looked at my watch it was five in the morning, and I had written solidly for seven hours, and was fifty pages into a novel I called 'Young Willie McBride.'

It was about a man and his wife who had bought a farmhouse in Belgium, and he was knocking down a barn when he found embedded in one of the supports at chest height five bullets. His wife said that could almost have been a firing squad, perhaps from the Great War because there were military cemeteries dotted all around. He took the bullets to a friend in England who told him they were Russian, and had no business being in Belgium, and so began the novel.

Within twenty-four hours that effort had been abandoned, and I began to write a slightly different

story. After a month's worth of writing spread over a year at home and abroad, the book was completed.

I then sent it to two of my more critical friends who both told me it was very enjoyable and so began my battle to get it published. To self-publish all these years ago was very downmarket and almost impossible to make any sales that way, so my first challenge was to find a literary agent.

Over two hundred letters later to agents, I had received no more than a slack handful of responses, and all were standard obviously pre-formatted. This was a huge disappointment, and I stopped trying.

It was around 2020 just after my rugby autobiography had been published 'A Full Back Slower Than Your Average Prop' that a very nice lady patient told me she had a friend called Christopher Little who was the very famous literary agent who introduced JK Rowling and Harry Potter to the world. Wow!

I submitted the usual requirement which included a summary and the first few chapters and received a detailed response. This told me my fortune, in that whilst I could obviously write I just couldn't write novels!

I wrote back asking if he would read it again if I made the changes he suggested, and he said he



would, but not to rush. Well, I didn't, what with Covid and a couple of new knees I was just about ready to send things back when I saw his obituary in the Daily Telegraph.

That was at least two years ago, but he had inspired me enough to look closely at Amazon as a vehicle, and I am proud to say that only a few days ago my first Novel was published and is now available at Amazon either as an ebook or in paperback form. It is called 'The Man With Two Graves' and is in fact based on 'Young Willie McBride'.

It is about the Romanov's, the Russian Royal Family who were all murdered in a cellar by the Bolsheviks in 1918. For years there were claims of survivors, but all proved to be false. What if there was a Romanov who wasn't in the cellar, in fact unknown to the world, his birth kept secret? He wasn't in the cellar because he was already dead, but not before he had fathered a son. This wasn't known until almost a hundred years had passed.

If the book sounds interesting you can find it online at Kindle (with a 30-day free trial on Kindle Unlimited) or, in paperback form, at Amazon (£15).



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February 1st Quiz night starting 7.30pm

February 14th Valentine lunch (pre book)

February 15th Valentine dinner (pre book)

February 26th Cream tea from 3.00pm

February 22nd Music night 'Three of a kind. 60's to 90's music

Yoga for U3A members on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.

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Fridays : NIA at 12.30. Cash Bingo at 7.30pm.

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Sporting Corner with Tim Keogh

Match Report - West Norfolk RFC 18 Wisbech RFC 12

West Norfolk Rugby Union Football Club men's 1st XV are leading the way in the Eastern Counties Division Two as they top the table going into the second half of the season.

They welcomed local foes Wisbech RFC in a tasty derby encounter on Saturday, 21st December. A cold, muddy and wet afternoon meant it would be a game for the forwards and so it proved as the mauls controlled the opening exchanges. However, it was actually a breakaway try that opened the scoring as Hayden Revell found a gap in the stubborn Wisbech defence and weaved a way through to score, converting his own try to put West Norfolk 7-0 up. However, derbies often bely the league table and so it proved as Wisbech rallied. A good phase of mauling by the away side led to a try as Ethan Garford crossed over. Sam Anderson kicked the conversion to level things up. As half time loomed, West Norfolk kept the pressure on and when Finlay Wilcox broke through a gap in the Wisbech defence the ball found its way out to flying winger Josh Burgess in full flow as he touched down. Revell missed the conversion and a late first half penalty, but West Norfolk led 12-7 at the break.

Wisbech certainly hadn't turned up to make the numbers up that was for sure and the second half began much the same way as the first. Again, it was West Norfolk pressure in the mauls that paid dividends as they were awarded a penalty, which Revell kicked making it 15-7. But back came Wisbech again. A dominant passage of play by the visitors resulted in another try as Sam Green crashed over the try line reducing the arrears to 15-12. Anderson's conversion attempt agonisingly hit the post. The game became scrappy in the middle third as both teams looked to break. West Norfolk were then awarded a late penalty which Revell kicked to make it 18-12, allowing the home side to see the game out and secure all the points. Despite a late melee involving nearly all the players, the encounter was played out competitively and in good spirits with only two yellow cards shown in front of over 250 spectators.

West Norfolk Rugby Club are well poised



Team Photo standing from left: Jess Boxall (Physio), Steve Smith (President), Ethan Young, Joe Shirley (Assistant Head Coach), Lewis Stewart, Edney Costa, Josh Burgess, Angus Williams, Will Allen, Tyler Pepper, JJ Hart, Morgan Smith, James Dobbler, Jamie Williamson (Head Coach), Ian Trundle (Chairman), Paul Denton (Coach)
Kneeling from left: Joe Whittaker, Charlie Long, Hayden Revell, Jack Wicks (Captain), Jacob Chapman, Louis Jones, Lewis Rudd, Chin Newton-Walters, George Lemon

for a productive second half of the season over at their excellent Woottons base with silverware anticipated at all levels and, with West Norfolk Warriors Ladies also topping their division and the junior teams flourishing, the future looks very rosy for the local set up indeed. Town & Around will be featuring the Ladies team later on in the season.



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In the spotlight Peter Brooke

In 1932, local businessman Horace Brooke opened the legendary Kit Kat Club in Hunstanton (naming it such after one of his favourite haunts in London). He had seen the potential of the site having originally opened a wooden hut on the land to sell teas and fancy goods. The hut was moved to Holme-next-the-Sea, where it is now a bungalow but still recognisable, and the Kit Kat was formed. Horace's son, Peter, was born at the Kit Kat the same year it opened. He went on to train at the Ritz in London, and subsequently was requested to serve his national service with the Kings Troop Royal Horse Artillery, running the officers mess, before taking over the Kit Kat in the 1960's where it operated mainly as a large restaurant and ball room, featuring the only sprung dance floor in Norfolk, along with extensive bars and a night club.



USAF airman, Reis Leming, who saved so many lives during the terrible floods of 1953, held his wedding reception there to bride Rosemary Joan Ramsay, where Peter helped to make the wedding cake. The Sage, Dick Melton, was head bar man at one point and has fond memories of his time there saying, 'it was the place to be'.

During this time, the Brooke family also operated the Hunstanton pier, the bathing pool cafe, boating lake cafe and Brooklands self service cafe. Brooke and Brooke were also outdoor catering specialists, not only for many well-known farming family weddings, but Sandringham House garden parties and the main pavilion at the Royal Norfolk Show. Peter ran the Katina restaurant and cake shop which supplied the Kit Kat for its bakery requirements and also opened the first Wimpey Bar in Norfolk, perfectly situated on the promenade, with the remaining five shops owned by the company leased out to other well know local businesspeople.

Peter eventually sold the Kit Kat in 1987 but remained in the town, running the Three in One pub (now the Waterside) and overseeing the rental properties. Peter is now happily retired and lives in Old Hunstanton. The Kit Kat sadly burnt down in 1998 and as the site begins a new journey as modern day flats, the spirit of the bustling

Hunstanton venue will live on in Peter's and many people's memories, as the place to go in East Anglia.



Full Name: Peter Brooke

Age: 92 years young

Star Sign: Sagittarius

Where born: Hunstanton, born in Seagate house part of the Kit Kat.

Where live: Old Hunstanton.

Occupation: Retired caterer.

Family: Late wife Mary and son Tony and daughter Kim.

A Cats or dogs person: Dogs

Sports Team Support: Hunstanton Golf Club

Worst injury: A recent fall resulting in a bruised face

Biggest Break: Meeting my late wife Mary.

Funniest memory: Various episodes at the Ritz hotel! One incident involved the chef at the time, a French man named Avignon, who had received a food order from a resident, Nubar Gulbenkian, who just so happened to be the richest man in the world at the time. Avignon asked me to watch closely as he made a steak tartare with the mince meat, anchovies and champagne. However, he plainly did not like the man as he left his mark on the dish (unfortunately unprintable in a family magazine). I ended up as Head Patisserie, and made use of these skills at various Royal functions in Norfolk and the bakery at the Kit Kat.

Hero: wife Mary

Hobbies/interests: Golf, reached a handicap of 7 and gardening. I am Lifetime member of Hunstanton GC.

Best memory: Finally selling my business to relax

Favourite international meal/cuisine: Casseroles and Thai food.

Favourite drink: Red wine

Favourite band/singer: Glenn Miller and Louis Armstrong.

Favourite film: Hobson's Choice

Favourite holiday destination: Lanzarote

Three items for a desert island: A lady companion, a radio and an alcohol still.

An interesting fact about yourself nobody knows: I've run two marathons, London and Norfolk - which started in Holt and you finished by knocking on the door at Norwich Cathedral.

Worst habit: Picking my nose.

Pet hate in others: People pretending to be someone who they aren't.

Biggest achievement in life: Apart from running the London Marathon, when I undertook my National Service I was the only person to be promoted on entry to a Lance Bombadier One Stripe in the King's Troop Horse Artillery in St. John's Wood.

Best advice ever given: Leave it alone if you can't afford it at that time. Like to live forever: No.



新年快乐 (Happy Chinese New Year)

Tim Keogh

The Chinese Lunar New Year begins on Wednesday, 29th January and lasts until the Lantern Festival on Wednesday, 12th February celebrated by an estimated 1/5th of the world population.

There are twelve Chinese zodiac signs each named after an animal with its own unique characteristics. This year it will be the year of the Snake (or Little Dragon), so if you were born in 1929, 1941, 1953, 1965, 1977, 1989, 2001 or 2013 then it is your year!

People born as Snakes tend to be mysterious and smart. They think deeply and can solve problems well. Snakes are considered to be good at figuring things out and making thoughtful decisions. Snakes tend to be wise and like to learn new things. They enjoy thinking about big ideas and understanding how things work. Snakes value knowledge and always want to know more about the world. Although they can be considered cold blooded and indifferent, snakes are known to be lucky and authoritative.

The Great Wall Chinese Takeaway in Heacham re-opened last year under the management of Jack Loh. They will be celebrating the New Year in true Chinese fashion, offering some mouth-watering seasonal dishes. Jack says, "we have recruited two excellent Malaysian chefs in the form of Andy Lai and Tony Lim who are experienced in Chinese, Cantonese and the fusion of multi-cultural Eastern cuisines".



Andy Lai



Tony Lim

Competition

Town & Around are running a competition with a prize of a takeaway meal for two from the set menus kindly donated by the Great Wall. For your chance of winning, please email your answers to the question below to tim@townandaround.net by no later than Friday, 21st February.

What colour is deemed lucky in China?

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QUESTION: What is the inside of Rugby Union's Six Nations Championship Trophy coat plated with and why?

ANSWERS TO: editor@townandaround.net or by post to:
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 Please note we do not accept entries by any social media channels or text message. **CLOSING DATE 15.02.2025.**

The answer to last month's question: Which team has scored the most points in a Super Bowl game and in what year? was San Francisco 49ers, 1990 (55 points) and Sue Piggins of Sedgeford was the lucky winner.

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Hunstanton Croquet Club

Zena Penty

Despite the Croquet Lawns and Clubhouse still being in hibernation, the committee have been working together to plan a varied itinerary for next season.

The committee has two new members this year, Roddy Willett (Chairperson) and Mary Williams (Treasurer), both are excited to be taking on these roles as part of our organising team. Roddy said "I'm very much hoping to increase the popularity of this absorbing sport and in particular finding new ways to support less experienced players to improve their confidence and skills whilst also encouraging greater involvement in club competitions."

Following its success at the beginning of last season an 'Introduction to Croquet Course' for beginners will be run again in April this year. The 4 week format will cover basic rules, mallet technique, tactics etc. The loan of all equipment is included. The course dates are 7th, 14th, 22nd and 28th April 10.30am – 12.30pm and ideally you need to be available for all sessions. The course cost of £20 can be deducted from your membership should you decide to join the club following the course. To enroll on the 4 week course please email Andrew Vickery at abvickery@hotmail.co.uk

Annual membership forms can be downloaded online www.hunstantoncroquetclub.co.uk

Croquet is an enjoyable skillful and sociable outdoor activity often played in later life – if you are interested in chatting to some existing members to find out more, why not pop along to our next Coffee Morning at Mill Kitchen, Norfolk Lavender on Wednesday 5th February 10am – 12 noon and have a chat. Roll on April!!!



RAF Marham Hosts The Marham Flyers New Years Eve 10K

RAF Marham was once again the setting for the final running event of both the area and the year, hosting, under the guise of the Marham Flyers, its annual New Years Eve 10K

Now in its 10th year, the event saw the biggest sign up yet with a sell out 500 places. Such is the popularity of the race there were also 80 unfortunate applicants on the waiting list.

The weather was quite mild and dry when the runners started gathering for registration, with participants covering all the local clubs. There were large contingents from Ryston Runners, West Norfolk AC, Fenland AC and Three Counties RC and with many more from much further afield.

The Station Commander, Gp Capt Leonie Boyd was unfortunately away but her predecessor, Gp Capt Fred Wigglesworth was on hand to not only take part but to also welcome the crowd to Marham. He also started the race off on her behalf.

Organiser and Race Director Gary Walker expressed his satisfaction with this year's event saying: "Each year we try to make the New Year's Eve 10K bigger and better, this year exceeding all expectations, with the race having sold out by the end of October."

It is also great to see so many from the local running community taking part. All the funds raised from the event were for the RAF Benevolent Fund, the RAF's leading welfare charity".

The race saw impressive performances, with Andrew Jakeman from March AC finishing first in a time of 32:45, while Katie Vargeson from Three Counties Running Club led the women's race, finishing in an equally impressive time of 38:47.

This year also saw the events first wheelchair entrant, Royal Navy veteran and West Norfolk AC member, Susi Rogers-Harley, who finished in 1:16. Susi is also a regular at King's Lynn parkrun and was supported on her way round by parkrun Run Director Jon Plumb, who has also signed on as her support runner in this year's TCS London Marathon.

Hunstanton parkrun's 200th event

Mike Shaw

Between celebrating Christmas and New Year our parkrun celebrated its 200th event!

We were grateful to have 171 runners, joggers and walkers take part on a misty prom.



We were pleased to welcome Hunstanton mayor, Michael Ruston who said some kind words prior to the start of the event.

Our small and friendly parkrun has only been made possible over the past 5 years due to the collective efforts of our volunteers. Our volunteers include many local people who run themselves, whilst others are non-runners who just want to support a healthy and inclusive weekly local event. Some people volunteer virtually every Saturday morning whereas others help out from time to time. The volunteer roles they carry out include marshaling, timekeeping (don't worry we always have 2 timekeepers as mistakes do happen), barcode scanning, parkwalking and tailwalking. (i.e. volunteering to be the last person through the funnel).



Those taking part include diehard runners of all ages some of which run very fast times (e.g, under 20 minutes for 5km), those striving for a personal best (signed up parkrunners receive their result by email after the event), some who are trying to change their lifestyle (e.g. couch to 5k) and families and friends who just enjoy a weekly walk and chat together (sometimes with a dog) on the prom!

If we have sparked your interest in getting involved at our parkrun please feel free to get in touch to by emailing the core team at hunstantonpromenade@parkrun.com or take a look at our Facebook page.

Alternatively, just register at <https://www.parkrun.org.uk/register/> and turn up outside Hunstanton Sailing Club one Saturday morning at just before 8:55am to listen to our pre event briefing and take part!

THE MAGPIE CENTRE, HOME OF WEST NORFOLK RDA SEEKS A NEW CHAIRPERSON

Our Chairwoman stepped down for personal reasons some time ago and the Board of Trustees is on the lookout for a replacement for this voluntary role.

The Magpie Centre is based at Wallington Hall, near Downham Market and provides riding, carriage driving and Equine Assisted Therapy for people of all ages and with a variety of physical and learning disabilities.

The Centre is staffed by a manager, a team of stable yard assistants/instructors and an administrator, supported by a team of loyal volunteers.

Main responsibilities of the Chairperson would be to lead the Trustees, working with them to develop plans and budgets to maintain the financial viability of the Centre, and to manage, support and motivate the Centre Manager, staff and volunteers.

A further aspect of the role is to act as the Centre's ambassador, raising its profile and promoting its services.

This role might suit someone who has recently retired from a career in management and who has the ability to communicate with staff and service users at all levels.

Experience of working with horses and/or people living with disabilities, although desirable, is not essential.

If you feel you have what it takes, please contact Sue Wilson, Trustee Secretary at suewilson2101@gmail.com to find out more.

And turning now to our social programme, don't forget to book your places for the Ceilidh-Barn Dance with Hog Roast supper, (with veggie option), scheduled for 7.30 pm – 11.00 pm Saturday 8 March at Stowbridge Village Hall, Holme Road, Stowbridge PE34 3PW. Bring your own drinks and glasses. To book tickets @ £17.50 (adults) or £7.50 (children 13 yrs and under), call 01760 337056 or email suer2006@hotmail.co.uk

Hunstanton u3a

We held our annual Christmas party at Old Hunstanton Village Hall on Monday 16th December which was much enjoyed by all who attended. We enjoyed a light lunch with a festive theme and were entertained by soloist John Rushmer and Hunstanton Voices (Hunstanton Community Choir).



Our January meeting was on Monday 20th January back at the Community Hall, Avenue Road, Hunstanton at 2.00pm when Jan Smith updated us on the situation with Hedgehogs and how we can help them.

On Monday 17th February we will be welcoming Allan Howlings who will talk about the ancient Chinese mind-body practice of Tai Chi.

For further information please see our website hunstantonu3a.org Telephone 07443763679

From John Harris

Another heartfelt vote of thanks - this time to the many friends who contributed to the success of my December Piano Party. Thanks to some very generous donations received after the event the amount raised came to very nearly £650, so I rounded it up and have sent cheques for £325 each to Diabetes UK and Action for Children.

I have agreed to present a charity concert to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of VE Day. The 'Victory Gala' is due to take place on the stage of Hunstanton Town Hall on Saturday 10th May at 2.30pm. Full details to follow, but in the meantime, please book the date.

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A recipe from the Prudent Pensioner

There are some lovely cauliflowers available just now, ideal for cauliflower cheese and a nice soup

Cauliflower & Celery Soup

2 large sticks Celery
Cauliflower approx. 340g/12oz.
1 medium size Shallot or small Onion
1 medium size Potato
Chicken stock cube dissolved in 500ml hot water
A knob of butter
Salt and pepper

Peel potato and cut into small pieces. Peel onion/shallot and slice fairly thinly.

Put butter into a saucepan and soften over a low to medium heat, add onion/shallot stir well. Cook for a minute stirring frequently.

Add potato and stock to saucepan and bring to boil. Reduce heat, cover and leave gently simmering, stirring occasionally.

Cut off cauliflower florets and place in a bowl of lightly salted cold water.

Remove and discard discoloured base of cauliflower. Cut stalk into small pieces, rinse in cold water and add to saucepan.

Trim off and discard ends from celery, clean and slice fairly thinly.

Strain water off florets and rinse in cold water.

Add celery slices and florets to saucepan, stir well. Bring to the boil then reduce heat, cover and leave simmering, stirring often, for 10 minutes, or until potato is fairly soft. Season to taste.

Strain off most of the liquid into a jug, and put aside while you either put vegetables into a liquidiser or use a hand blender and whizz until pureed.

Carefully return liquid to pureed vegetables in a saucepan, stirring gently to mix well. Reheat, serve and enjoy.

To make it even more delicious crumble a little stilton, or similar cheese, on the top.

This recipe is on page 75 of "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 Robert & Christine Bradbeer home shopping. A search in Amazon for Doreen Reed will find recipe books (together with my books of light hearted poems & tales) Copies are available to borrow from Heacham Library & Hinckley Library See lots more recipes on The Prudent Pensioner Facebook page.

Old Hunstanton Village news

The New Years Eve party was a great success. It was a full house and guests danced until late and dined on thai curry and a wide range of desserts.



Glebe House Rotakids Celebrates First Anniversary



Formed in 2024 following discussion by Rotarian John Crofts and Glebe House School, the Rotakids Club meet weekly during term-time to try something new, to make friends and to make a difference in the community. Rotakids is a project of Rotary International for children aged 7 to 12 years and is supported by Hunstanton and District Rotary.



The Glebe House School Rotakids Club is approaching its first Charter anniversary and last September appointed its new officers for the year. Hunstanton and District Rotary are proud to work with Rotakids and President Jean-Marie Vernon and President Elect Hilary Farrell attended a special assembly where the new officers were presented with their officer badges. Every Rotakid also received a button badge that they proudly wear on their school uniform.

The Rotakids are very keen to help their community and have taken part in a litter pick on the beach locally as well as supporting Lend With Care internationally. They recently organised a marathon event at the school in aid of MacMillan Cancer Support which was enjoyed by all and raised an incredible £1827 for the charity.



One of their projects for this year is to collect for the Rotary Shoebox Scheme, these special boxes will be filled by the Rotakids with good quality items designated for a child, a teenager or a household. The boxes are then distributed by Rotary Clubs and other tried and trusted partners ensuring that the gift goes to those most in need. Every year the scheme sends 50,000 boxes or gifts to countries in Eastern Europe to orphanages, homes and hospitals. This is a year-round project and Rotakids are hoping to fill 50 boxes that will be sent off for underprivileged children.

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Hunstanton & District Inner Wheel

Reunion Lunch to celebrate Inner Wheel Day
Coral Campbell

We got the New Year off to a good start on Wednesday 8th January when we had a Celebration Lunch at The Le Strange Arms Hotel. We invited recent past members to join us. We were celebrating Inner Wheel Day. Inner Wheel Day is on the 10th January and we celebrate it each year as it is the day that the original Manchester group adopted the name "Inner Wheel" in 1924. As you all know IW was born in 1924 in Manchester.



It was a lovely reunion and a very happy occasion. It was great to see old friends and catch up. We reflected on what we had accomplished together over the past few years. All the hard work – especially catering at Norton Hill and the Kite Festival in Hunstanton not to forget all the wonderful craft items members made for Craft Fairs etc. Despite the hard work we had fun and friendship together. The reward was that local, national and overseas charities benefited from our efforts. We were all younger in those days and had more energy! It was great to hear the buzz of everyone enjoying themselves.

We held a Bring and Buy Sale which turned into an auction! Great entertainment! The result was that we raised £130 which will be donated to The Purfleet Trust in Kings Lynn which provides day care for the homeless. This is the charity we are supporting this year.

A happy occasion which we hope to repeat.

Eating Out in Norfolk

My wife and I enjoy eating out, we are fortunate enough to be able to do it regularly, but here in West Norfolk in particular we find the policy of most eateries accepting dogs unacceptable. Let me stress all my family are dog owners, but they never take them into anywhere that food is served. In this area alone it seems that dogs are welcome everywhere you go, they bark, they smell when it is wet, not very hygienic and many don't settle, that does not make for relaxed eating. No doubt many readers will disagree with me, I have nothing against dogs, but they should not be allowed where food is served.

A good hotel or restaurant that is dog free is impossible to find, but I will keep trying.

Geoff Harris, Holme-next-the-Sea

Valentine's Day - and Cake!

Kyra Cruise



Valentine's Day is a special time when people show their affection for another person by sending cards, flowers or chocolates with messages of love.

Why did this day come about?

The main suggestion is that Saint Valentine, a third century Roman saint, officially known as Saint Valentine of Rome, was commonly associated with 'courtly love'.

However, very little is known about Saint Valentine's life. There is also some debate as to whether or not the stories involve two different saints by the same name. Two 'Valentines' were executed on February 14 in different years by the Roman Emperor Claudius II. It is thought that the Catholic Church may have established St. Valentine's Day to honour these two martyrs.

In 1969, the Roman Catholic Church removed Saint Valentine from the general Roman Calendar because so little is known about him. However, the church still recognises him as a saint today.

But what has all this got to do with the commercialisation of the 14th of February? Over history many customs and traditions have been associated with this day which ensured Valentine's Day took its place in history. These include:

- Gift giving: a tradition that dates back to Saxon England
- Pairing off: in the Middle Ages, young men and women would choose their Valentine by picking names from a bowl
- Greetings cards: a tradition of Victorian cards which were often made of lace paper and ribbons
- Vinegar valentines: this time the Victorians would use these to turn down a suitor. They were often a cheeky postcard decorated with a caricature and an insulting poem!
- Secret notes: cards with hidden panels would contain secret notes
- Anonymous notes within cards: a tradition that has become customary throughout the world.

Nowadays Valentine's Day is often linked to flowers, special meals, chocolates and cakes.

There is a 'Love Cake' that is rooted in folklore with tales of Sri Lankan women baking this cake to win the hearts of Portuguese sailors. Some say making Love Cake is a labour of love, hence the name. The recipe uses ingredients that were considered rich and exotic – cashews, butter and spices.

The Cupid cupcake is usually a heart-shaped cake with a base layer of vanilla sponge and a centre of red velvet cake topped cream cheese icing. The cake is 'perfectly sized for two' so you can share with your significant other. (Not that many people would want to share a cupcake!) Another type of Cupid cake is a vertically-striped red velvet cake with a Swiss meringue buttercream icing. It's usually topped with heart-shaped ruby chocolate decorations.

There is also a modern recipe for a 'Marie Antoinette' cake which is a vintage style cake suitable for a romantic occasion. Usually in pastel colours with lashings of buttercream swirls and frills. These are almost too pretty to cut!

But, what is the most loved cake in the world? There are so many different lists. My top contenders would include: Chocolate Cake, Red Velvet Cake, Carrot Cake, Vanilla Cake (a Victoria Sponge or Sandwich), Cheese Cake (although not officially a cake!), Black Forest Cake, Lemon Drizzle Cake, Coffee and Walnut, Pineapple Upside-Down Cake, and many, many more...

Whether you celebrate Valentine's Day or not, it is definitely be a good excuse to eat cake!

Now, it is your turn... Petals Tea Room in Dersingham are running a competition that starts on Monday 15 January and runs until Monday 10 February. Please submit your recipe for the cake that you think best represents Valentine's Day. The winner will be decided by a panel of Petals' chefs and then your cake will be baked and available in the tea room for Valentine's Day!

You can give us your recipes by emailing petalstearoom@gmail.com or pop in with a written recipe instead. We look forward to receiving them.

Happy Valentine's Day!

Wildlife Artists on Massingham Heath

Tim Baldwin, Chair of Great Massingham Biodiversity Project. See also www.swla.co.uk

An exciting project that will be of interest to anyone with an enthusiasm for wildlife and art is launching in Great Massingham this year. Artists from the renowned Society of Wildlife Artists will be embarking upon a year-long project to document the landscape and wildlife of the heath and adjoining farmland through art. There will be opportunities to see artists at work and join in various activities locally during May and later in the year, when work will also be shown at the prestigious Mall Galleries in London.

The Society of Wildlife Artists has a history of running such projects elsewhere and it is testament to the success of the Little Massingham Estate's heathland restoration scheme that the Society has chosen our local area in which to work. In order to introduce the project, there will be a presentation in Great Massingham Village Hall at 7.30 p.m. on Saturday 15th March. This will be an opportunity to hear about past SWLA projects and learn more about what is planned, how you can become involved and help to support the project. All are welcome to attend the presentation which will be led by SWLA President and sculptor Harriet Mead with an introduction from NWT Ambassador Nick Acheson.

Harriet writes:

I first visited Massingham Heath on a damp November day in 2022 and despite the fact that it was the depths of winter, the masses of spent seed heads were evidence of the wonders that spring and summer would bring. A habitat rich in native plants will provide food and cover for a myriad of wildlife, so it was clear that this place would be full of inspiration for SWLA artists.

Tim introduced me to Olly Birkbeck and the idea of inviting our member artists to spend time here to celebrate the heath and be inspired by the creatures and plants that make it their home, soon developed into a more ambitious project to follow the changing landscape through a full year. The artists will use their own unique approaches to document the heath and capture some of the key moments of the year. The continuity of multiple visits to a relatively small project area will bring into focus the importance of these spaces within the productive agricultural land and I hope inspire other landowners to follow Olly's lead. The project will culminate in a book, and there will be local exhibitions, talks and workshops during and after the project.

The launch of the Heath Project is in May, with all the artists spending a week working on site, with an open house event on the final day. We are very grateful to Olly for embracing the project and for accommodating us for the launch week.



Harriet Mead: Battle of the Planets

Although no artist myself, I have been a lover of wildlife art since my earliest days, initially inspired by such classics as the Observer's Book of Birds and the Ladybird What to Look for in... series. I have held a voluntary role with the SWLA for several years and some of our village Biodiversity Project volunteers are Friends of the Society who will be helping to support the project throughout the year.

We would welcome more people becoming involved as we plan - please do come along on 15th March to learn more!

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A December to Remember: Festive Fun at Hunstanton Primary School

December was an extraordinary month at Hunstanton Primary School, brimming with festive cheer and community spirit. From dazzling performances to joyous events, our school was the heart of holiday celebrations, making memories to treasure for years to come.

Lighting Up the Festive Season

We kicked off the holiday season with a heart-warming performance at the Hunstanton Christmas Light Switch-On, teaming up with Your Choir to fill the air with joyful Christmas songs. The turnout was overwhelming, with children, parents, and community members gathering to create a magical atmosphere. A huge thank you to everyone who joined us – your support and enthusiasm made the day truly special.

Our school also shone brightly at this year's HDFA Christmas Tree Festival. The children showcased their creativity by designing and crafting unique tree ornaments. A special shout out to Mrs. Milner and the After School Provision team for their incredible efforts in decorating and setting up our tree in the Town Hall. It was a fantastic team effort that made us all proud!

A Christmas Fair to Remember

The PTA Christmas Fair was nothing short of spectacular! From tombolas, and festive treats, there was something for everyone. Father Christmas himself made an appearance in his cozy grotto, delighting children with festive cheer.

A heartfelt thank you to our amazing PTA, the dedicated children, and the parents and families who contributed cakes, biscuits, and other goodies. Your generosity and hard work brought smiles to so many faces. We're also incredibly grateful to the local businesses that donated raffle prizes to school throughout the season too – your support means the world to us!

Festive Performances and Traditions

The spirit of Christmas filled our halls as the children rehearsed and performed their hearts out. Highlights included our traditional Christmas Jumper Day, the much-anticipated



Traditional Christmas Lunch, the enchanting 'Whoopsie Daisy Angel Nativity' performed by EYFS and KS1 students and the beautiful KS2 Carol Service at St. Edmunds Church. Their hard work and talent left parents, staff, and classmates brimming with pride.

A Special Thank You to Mike Tandy

We'd like to extend our heartfelt thanks to Mike Tandy from Your Choir for his incredible support and dedication. Mike ran engaging sessions with some of our children, helping to form our wonderful Christmas Choir.

Thanks to his guidance, the children had the opportunity to perform at various venues, spreading festive cheer throughout our local community. Their performances brought smiles to so many faces and truly captured the spirit of the season.

Thank you, Mike, for helping create such a memorable experience for our students and for sharing the joy of music with everyone!

Adding to the festive excitement, the whole school enjoyed a trip to The Princess Theatre in Hunstanton for a performance of Snow White. The panto had everyone laughing and cheering – and even some of our staff got to join in the fun on stage!

Stay Connected with Us

Hunstanton Primary School is always buzzing with activities and events, and now you can follow along on our Facebook page! Stay updated with our latest highlights and celebrations by following us @HunstantonPrimary.

If you're considering our school for your child, we'd love to show you around. Book a tour by calling 01485 533373 or emailing office@hunstanton.norfolk.sch.uk.

From all of us at Hunstanton Primary School, we wish you a Happy New Year! Here's to an exciting 2025 filled with new adventures, laughter, and learning.

The Bridge for Heroes Festive Review

Kerry Allison, Charity Coordinator

Christmas is over and the new year has begun, and at The Bridge for Heroes, beneficiaries continue to enjoy a warm welcome, home cooked meals, and social activities. For those that struggled with the festive season, staff and volunteers went above and beyond to keep spirits high and to keep beneficiaries feeling connected. With permission from the Borough Council, The Bridge kicked off the season with their Christmas Fair. As much about raising awareness as fundraising, The Bridge was delighted to not only thank the public for £208.65 in donations, but to welcome new beneficiaries who signed up as a direct result of speaking to the team on the day. Throughout December, the food budget was kindly supplemented by donations of mince pies, Christmas cakes, and other festive treats. Making full use of the kitchen facilities, volunteers and trustees enjoyed a curry evening as a 'thank you' for all their hard work and dedicated service.

The Bridge was also excited to distribute Christmas cards to their veterans, hand made by the 'Mini Vinnies' of St Martha's Primary School. These brought many smiles (and a few tears too!). By far the highlight of the season was the Christmas dinner, bringing together beneficiaries who would otherwise have been alone on Christmas Day. An able team of volunteers provided transport, prepared, cooked and served a full Christmas dinner for eight beneficiaries, and took care of the washing-up. Army veteran and beneficiary Barry summed up what it meant to him, 'What was going to be the day I dreaded most all year, became the day I enjoyed most all year'.

The Bridge for Heroes works hard to make a difference in the lives of veterans like Barry and needs your support to continue. Why not pop-in and find out about the volunteer roles on offer and start making a difference in your local community?

Find The Bridge for Heroes online at www.thebridgeforheroes.org, email contact@thebridgeforheroes.org, call 01553 760230, or in person at 52A South Clough Lane, opposite St James Car Park.



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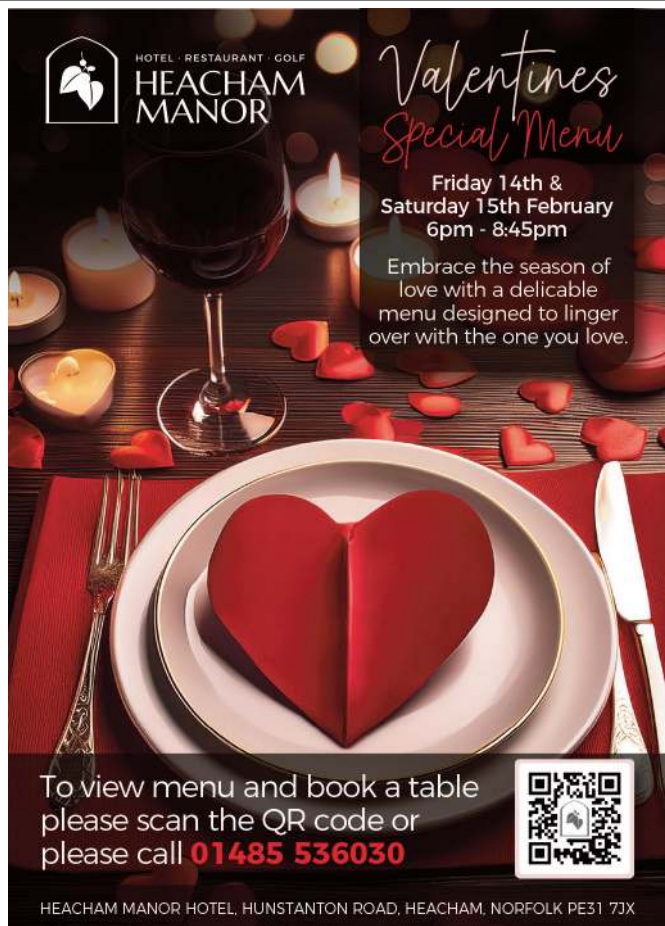
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GLEBE HOUSE SCHOOL & NURSERY UPDATE

Writing an update from last month at Glebe House brings sparkle to these dull, damp, cold January mornings as we are looking back on December - not only one of our busiest, but certainly our most glittering month! It might only be a short update, as we were enjoying our Christmas break for half the month, but we hope you enjoy hearing what our children got up to. And of course, a very Happy New Year!!

Pre Prep Nativity - 'Whoops-a-Daisy Angel' Delights Once Again

The Pre-Prep 'Nativity' production 'Whoops-a-Daisy Angel' has been a cherished tradition at our school for nearly 20 years and is a firm favourite with children and staff alike (Mrs Playford's daughter took part 17 years ago!).



This year, it was Mrs Maud's turn to direct the much-loved play. Every child in the Pre-Prep was given a role, and they all worked very hard to learn their parts, along with the words and actions of the fabulous, catchy songs.



They stepped into their costumes and performed the first of three performances in front of an audience of Nursery children and the Prep school. On the Tuesday and Wednesday, they shone on stage once again in two more shows, this time for their families and friends. We were incredibly proud of how well the children did, confidently putting on a fantastic show.

A Festive Finale to 2024

On Friday, 13th December we marked the close of the Autumn Term and the end of the year at Glebe House School with a day was filled with festive activities and celebrations.

Starting with the Collections Assembly - our termly celebration of all our pupils' achievements, whether through effort or

attainment. At Glebe House, our pupils constantly challenge themselves, pushing outside their comfort zones, embracing every opportunity, and trying new things, all while supporting their peers and leading by example. This term, the House Flag was awarded to Barbers, and the House Cup went to St. Edmunds. Presentations were made by Mrs. Maud, Mrs. Haslam, Mr. Turner, Mrs. Bower, and Mrs. Fraulo. Congratulations to all who were recognised this term.



Following the assembly, the whole school enjoyed a beautiful traditional two-course Christmas lunch served to all pupils, staff and governors. It's always a fun occasion as the roles are reversed, with staff waiting on the pupils, whereas it's usually the children waiting on the staff. The Dining Hall looked fantastic and everyone had a fabulous time. A big thank you to Mrs. Handley and her team for such a wonderful meal.



The day concluded with the annual Carol Service, which brought our families and community together for a very special afternoon. Held at St. Mary's Church in Old Hunstanton, this wonderfully traditional end to the year featured readings from children in Divisions III to VIII, performances from the Prep School Choir led by Mrs. Hawkins, and "Away in a Manger" sung by Pre Prep.

Mulled wine and mince pies, served by Friends of Glebe House School, added to the festive atmosphere.

It was a memorable day filled with joy, celebration and community spirit, perfectly wrapping up the term and the year at Glebe House School.

Out & About

Pre Prep - Hunstanton pantomime Prep - Skaters Walpole Highway

Thanks to the support of Friends of Glebe House School, all our children were treated to an end of term trip. Our Pre Prep children enjoyed a visit to the fantastic Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs pantomime at the Princess Theatre Hunstanton. They had a fabulous morning, made even better by Mrs Stuart and Miss Richardson going up on stage to take part!! Our Prep pupils had an exciting trip to Skaters Walpole Highway. Their two hours flew by, and there were smiles all round. What a treat at the end of a very busy first term.



Christmas Bake Sale raises funds for Easter Celebration Activities and Treats

The Friends of Glebe House School have been very busy this half term, as they also hosted an incredible bake sale in the Dining Hall on the penultimate day of term. There was a host of delicious treats which families (and staff!) generously purchased supporting the event which was organised to raise funds for the Easter activities and treats that are traditionally part of our last week of the Spring Term.

Come and see us!

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Hunstanton Pantomime audiences contribute to Children's Hospice



From left: Brian Hallard, Ellie Miller and Anna Hallard

The Princess Theatre's annual Pantomime collection this season was for The Children's East Anglian Children's Hospice. EACH.

Theatre Directors – Brian and Diana Hallard and Anna Hallard presented a cheque of £5500-00 to Ellie Miller, Senior Community Fundraiser. The Money raised will support Norfolk families.

"We were overjoyed to see such generosity from the audiences at the Panto and the EACH charity were speechless when they received the donation."

EACH delivers all-encompassing, lifelong care that includes a comprehensive range of services to support both bereaved and non-bereaved families.

The aim is to ensure the best possible quality of life for babies, children and young people.

The hospices are happy, homely places for children to be children, and a dependable, supportive and restful space for families to be families.

We hope to support this incredible charity again. Thank you once again to the Panto audiences.

Message of hope at West Norfolk school

Dancers from a West Norfolk secondary school drew inspiration from the diversity of nature when they staged a climate change-themed performance as part of a collaborative project between theatre groups in King's Lynn and Italy.

The 18 students from St Clement's High School in Terrington St Clement were participants in the Hope Trees Project, which had been organised by performing arts charity The Garage through its Workshop theatre company, with support from Italian theatre group Dance In.

"Two groups of our Year 9 students have been working on the Hope Trees Project," said Poppy Brockman-Smith, Assistant Headteacher at St Clement's, which is a member of the West Norfolk Academies Trust.

"Initially they visited The Garage in Norwich for two days, where they watched a performance, and took part in a drama workshop. Students were involved with lots of physical theatre activities – using their bodies to symbolise different ideas.

"Since then they have worked on their performances in sessions led by staff from the Workshop in King's Lynn."

Performances by the two groups took place in the school's Drama Studio and were live-streamed to audiences in both Italy and South Africa.

Described by the organisers as an 'inspiring, inclusive dance performance', Hope Trees was inspired by a centuries-old yew tree in Italy, which survived flooding and under which Dante supposedly wrote some of The Divine Comedy. It explores the diversity of the planet, and takes a hopeful view of the climate crisis and the lessons to be learned from the natural world.

Brancaster School news

Last term finished well with trips to see the Christmas decorations at Holkham (amazing!) and our traditional panto at the Corn Exchange (wow!), our very successful Nativity Service and Christmas Fayre, and our Christmas parties.



A massive thank you to everyone who helped with the Fayre - particularly to all those who donated raffle prizes, baked the very delicious cakes, and organised and ran games. It was much appreciated by all the staff (who were so very busy), and all the children and the community who had such a wonderful time.



We said our goodbyes to Mr Johnson and we all hope he really enjoys his retirement - and Spain!

This term we have all returned ready and eager to learn and, on our first day back, we spent a very enjoyable and productive whole school day learning about and celebrating Epiphany.

With the absence of Mr Johnson, it has been all change - Mrs Robinson is now teaching the Year 3/4 group and Mrs Willis is teaching Year 5/6. Mrs Bocking remains in Thrift Class with Year 1 and 2.

Thrift Class are learning about "Our Wonderful World" with a particular emphasis on plants, and the topic for KS2 is "Chocolate!"

We have now been informed that no changes to the school (merger/closure etc) will be made before the end of the school year, so a massive thank you to everyone who worked so hard to achieve this. A huge relief to the whole school community. We are told further updates will be issued in due course.

Half Term starts on 14th February, and school restarts on 24th February. Our Easter holidays start on 4th April.



Sweet spell of success for West Norfolk pupil

Top performers from four secondary schools were put through their paces when the West Norfolk Academies Trust held its annual Spelling Bee.

Students from Years 7 and 8 across the Trust took part in the event, with participating member high schools including Marshland in West Walton, St Clement's in Terrington St Clement, Smithdon in Hunstanton, and Springwood in King's Lynn.



"All students in Years 7 and 8 did internal rounds of spelling in their tutor groups," explained WNAT English Lead Sarah Murkin, who co-ordinated and organised the event.

"Each tutor group put forward their best two spellers to the school's final. Each school was allowed up to three students to represent them in the Trust final."

The competing schools take turns to host the Spelling Bee Final, with this year's event taking place at St Clement's, where Year 7 students were on hand to support the contestants.



"The final consisted of the finalists sitting in front of a group of students, who were the audience," continued Mrs Murkin. "Each finalist was asked to spell out their word. If they got it right, they went through to the next round."

"Words they had to spell correctly included 'core' to 'chloroplast', 'proton' to 'perjurer', and 'atom' to 'ambidextrous'. Other words included 'phlegmatic', 'narcissism', 'logorrhea', up to the more tricky words, such as 'trichotillomania'."

Poppy Brockman-Smith, Assistant Headteacher at St Clement's, read out the words to be spelled, while the school librarian, Jenny Ford, acted as adjudicator. Fellow librarian Rachel Raffan helped to organise earlier rounds, along with Heads of English Jenny Maddocks and Joe Brown from Marshland, Amanda Wright from Smithdon, and Lucy Clark from Springwood.



After an epic battle, the winner emerged as Daryus Barrett from Marshland High School. The Year 8 student successfully spelled 'philanthropic' to earn himself a certificate and the first prize of a Kindle Fire.

Froehliche Weihnachten for Hunstanton students



Young linguists from Hunstanton had the opportunity to practise their language skills when they travelled to Germany to enjoy a Christmas shopping trip with a difference.

Forty-one Year 10 and 11 students from Smithdon High School spent a weekend visiting the famous Christmas Market in Aachen, where they had the opportunity to hone their German while browsing for presents for friends and family.

"They went to the Aachen Christmas Market and practised their language skills by buying food, drinks, gifts and souvenirs," said Modern Foreign Languages Teacher Bernice Robinson, who led the trip.

The group also had the chance to visit Aachen's historic cathedral, the site of over 40 coronation ceremonies.

"The cathedral, where 31 kings and 12 queens have been crowned, was stunningly beautiful," continued Mrs Robinson. "The Lindt chocolate outlet was also very popular!"

It was the first time Smithdon, which is part of the West Norfolk Academies Trust, had run the event.

"It was a whirlwind trip, but very much enjoyed, and the excitement around the school before we left was tangible," added Mrs Robinson.

"All the pupils on the trip have taken a language as a GCSE option, and for many this was their first opportunity to go to a German-speaking country and experience German culture first hand – and, equally important, it was an opportunity to practise their language skills."

"For several, this was the first time abroad, and, no matter what you try to teach in school, there is nothing that can replace actually experiencing another country for yourself, from the smells of the food and drink at the Christmas Market, to the sounds of a different language all around you."

"The pupils were fabulously well behaved, and I am sure they will never forget their trip to Germany."

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Exploring Totems



There are a couple of things about me that come from being born in Canada. One is a sense of freedom and love of wide open spaces. Another is an deep affinity for the First Nations people. They have a rich culture of beliefs, legends and practices.

Unfortunately, as early as the 18th century, when the 'white man' arrived, these beliefs were disallowed. This had tragic consequences. Indigenous children were sent to Christian schools in an effort to assimilate them, often causing a loss of identity.

However, their stories and culture did shine through. From 2008 politicians and religious groups started apologising for the past creating an atmosphere for healing.

Reading books of 'Indian legends' was one of my favourites in elementary school. A colourful world so different to what I had known – full of animal spirits, religious ceremonies and mysticism. Each member of a tribe has a personal totem (spirit being, sacred object, or symbol that serves as an emblem) – often represented by an animal.

Totems play an integral part in the lives of the First Nations people portraying individual legends and stories. There are several types of totems and reasons to build them. There is a mystical connection between man and other living beings. Totems tell this story.

In Northwest British Columbia, totem poles were carved out of cedar. Once erected, they were left to the elements. One example, a chief on Queen Charlotte Islands was honoured with a totem pole carved with symbols of the Moon (personal symbol of the chief for height), a mountain goat (nobility), faces, a grizzly bear (strength and ferocity), and a killer whale (as ruler of the seas and the underworld). Other animals found on totems are beavers, eagles, frogs, hawks, ravens, snakes, thunderbirds and wolves.

A Haida totem pole stood in Jasper, a place of many childhood vacations – an early sculptural influence.

In 2003, I had the opportunity to run an art weekend workshop with the children in the village where I lived. I chose to share this story and make totem poles. The area was quite rural, so as luck would have it, we received a donation of long tree trunks with diameters of about 10-16 centimetres. Each child made their individual totem choosing animals that were important to them. The animals were constructed of chicken wire, fixed to the branches draped with plaster drenched cloth and then painted. It was immediate, exciting and worked. Looking back at it now, it's amazing that such striking large scale totems were made in just one weekend.



In another totem pole workshop, we used clay to create personal totems. This is something that would be fun to do again with the children of Heacham and surrounding area. It is my dream to be able to offer this as a free workshop at The Old Dairy!

With the help of almost £6000 in donations we have put in an offer for

the barn at The Old Dairy. It's a start. We hope that the Parish Council support us in our enterprise to convert The Old Dairy into an art and community space, putting the heart back into Heacham and saving it from developers.

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Polished performance by Pocohontas Players

Gingerella the Pantomime delighted the audience at Heacham Public Hall in January.



"Pantomimes should be full of fun and help pass the dark winter months on the way to spring and sunshine," says Gingerella Director Peter Everingham, and this pantomime more than lived up to expectations.

The Gingerella script by Sharon Yates is terrific, full of surprises and cultural references from Shakespeare to the Beatles. The jokes are funny, and on the first night (Thursday 16th January) the audience needed very little encouragement to participate in the Cinderella story that has not only been updated but has a twist in the tale.

Music is important in a pantomime too and the clever choice of songs only added to the story.

Gary Pearce's performance as King Norbert had the audience in stitches and his impersonation skills were a joy to behold. Ann Smith's accent as Mel-Ting was hilarious and the Witches' scenes provided more than a nod to the sixteenth century. Becca Whybrow played the sweet (Ginger) Ella and Maria Corleone played by Rachel Fletcher - had her own introductory fanfare!

Josh Chilvers played the picky Prince to perfection and Ryan Chivers as Zips was brilliant, in fact all the cast made this a pantomime perfect for all the family.

If I had to pick out one performer that I think is destined for greater things it would be Lauren Matthews as Sioux - look out for her in the future!

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The Arts Society King's Lynn

The Arts Society King's Lynn continues the 2024-2025 season on Thursday 13 February 2025 when they welcome Jane Gardiner to speak on the topic of "Chinamania – The Impact of Chinese Porcelain on European Taste, Collecting and Display". Our lecturer will be Jane Gardiner who has an MA in History of Art, University of London. She trained at the V&A and continues to lecture there.



Jane was Senior Lecturer at Sotheby's Institute of Art for 17 years, becoming a Deputy Director of Sotheby's Buckingham University, l'Institut d'Etudes Supérieures des Arts in Paris, a private women's college in Saudi Arabia, on cruise ships and at antiques fairs and interior design conferences in America and the UK. Jane has also lectured for the National Trust, the Art Fund, London University.

When the very first Chinese porcelains found their way to Europe, the beauty and fragility of the material led to their being mounted with precious metal and treasured alongside other rare and exotic objects

such as ostrich eggs and rock crystal vessels. They were housed in cabinets of curiosities and exchanged as diplomatic gifts between great European rulers. This early and exclusive ownership of Chinese porcelain spread enormously in the 17th century with the opening up of trading routes between Europe and the Far East and led to a widespread fashion for housing and displaying collections of Chinese 'blue-and-white'; and spawned a whole range of European imitations. This talk will examine the enormous and long-lasting influence that these Chinese porcelains had on European taste and culture and the whole history of interior design.



The lecture will take place in West Winch Village Hall where there is ample free parking available and starts at 2.30pm. (Note new time). TASKL meets once a month on the second Thursday from September to May and anyone is welcome to become a member. The annual subscription is just £55 or you can go along to individual talks as a guest for £10. Just £30 gets you the remaining 4 lectures of the season. Anyone interested in finding out more about TASKL can visit their website at www.theartsocietykingslynn.org.uk or to join the Society contact the membership secretary on 01366 328648 or via email at info@theartsocietykingslynn.org.uk.

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THE ARTS SOCIETY NORTH WEST NORFOLK

More art for more people

Lesley Nadel

People have had a relationship with art since time immemorial. Art will forever be part of our existence, with no regard to race, culture, politics, or religion. Art is not to be regarded as 'elitist', only for the wealthy, the educated, the privileged few. Paintings, music, literature, dancing, designing, any creative roles, all play a huge part in our lives, particularly emotionally, but also psychologically and financially. It influences our personal and collective behaviour. Artists are often driven to produce art to express their soul and talent because they feel the need to create. Art is not just a product to make money, though some have become very rich; its purpose is to produce thinking, introspection, contemplation and reaction. It should be a myth that only experts understand art, though knowledge may often increase appreciation.

Access to the arts increases knowledge and understanding. The UK has some of the best museums, galleries, theatres, cinemas, art societies and venues in the world. When they were closed for the longest time since World War II in 2020, due to the pandemic, new and creative ways had to be found to keep access available. The art world will forever be grateful to the technology of Zoom, YouTube, Virtual Tours, etc., through which levels of interest in the arts increased considerably throughout 2020/2021. During that period, it is acknowledged that the education of young people suffered disproportionately, and particularly in the creative arts. We know that

exposure to art at school can play an important part in developing their creative, cognitive, communication and social skills. Just being able to look and think is crucial. In the 1940s, artists, including Picasso, Henry Moore and Henri Matisse, created prints for schools, giving children access to high quality art. Many leading artists acknowledge that their love of art began with exposure at school. There have been other initiatives, like the Hepworth Wakefield project which has run a schools' print programme with the aim of expanding the imagination and perspectives of the young minds that not all artists in the world are male and white. More funding for school budgets and reorganisation of timetables is required to expand the horizons of our young people to enable a visit to an art gallery, working with an artist, watching a craftsman work, being part of an audience at a good production of a play or opera. All could spark a lifelong interest in the arts.

The Arts Society North West Norfolk invites you to come and join us on Monday 10th February 2025 at 2pm at Sedgeford Village Hall for our talk on Animals – their image in art. Dr John-Paul Stonard is our entertaining speaker who also happens to be a trained painter, art historian and author of several books. We aim to make our events welcoming places of fun and friendship for all those who have a curiosity and passion for the arts and who want to hear expert lecturers sharing their specialist knowledge across a



THE ARTS SOCIETY
North West Norfolk

Have you always wanted to learn more about the arts?

Then start now with our next talk at Sedgeford Village Hall at 2:00pm on Monday 10th February 2025

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



Animals - their place in art
Lecturer: Dr John-Paul Stonard

Animals were the first great subject of art; after covering images from cave walls, constellations, and hunting scenes, we come to more recent artists' views.

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- * A social event with a warm welcome

For more information and how to join, visit
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wide range of topics. We organise nine talks per year, two in-depth study days, outings to historic places, art galleries, theatre evenings and trips further afield and abroad. Our strength is our membership; annual fee £45 per person. A £5 donation will enable you to come to one lecture to see if it is for you. Book your place with the Membership Secretary 07768 821737. Large free car park. www.theartsocietynwnorfolk.org.uk



King's Lynn Community Cinema Club will be screening their fifth film of their winter season on Thursday 13th February in screen 2 of the Majestic Cinema. Members have already enjoyed the facilities at the Majestic including the comfortable seating, the large screen, excellent sound system, a pre film bar and easy accessibility.

Being shown is Touch an Icelandic film which, was released in the summer of 2024 and was described in Variety as a gentle and unfussy romance with a heart-clutching finale. It has been nominated for 4 awards including the 2025 Palm Spring Awards in the category of Best Foreign Film and the Dublin Film Critics Circle Awards in the category of Best Film.

Touch stars Egill Ólafsson, Kōki, and Palmi Kormakur and is a story spanning decades and continents following a man trying to find his first love who disappeared 50 years ago.

It is possible to join KLCC for just £10 for the rest of the winter season and guarantee free entry to all the remaining screenings of this season, (a full season's membership is £17). This can be paid in cash on the door at the December film or BACs payments for membership can be arranged by simply emailing communitycinemaclub@googlegmail.com. Anyone over 18 is welcome to become a member. Alternatively, you can just come along to any individual film as a day member for £5. Please note only cash payments can be made on the door. Full details of all the club's films and events can be found on the club website www.klcc.uk and Facebook page.

Wrought Iron and Brass Bed Company Awarded His Majesty The King's Royal Warrant, Celebrating Legacy of Excellence

This prestigious honour marks a new chapter in the company's illustrious history, further cementing its reputation for excellence in craftsmanship, service, and quality. The company had previously been granted a Royal Warrant by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, and this new appointment by King Charles III signifies the continuity of a tradition of service to the British royal family that spans decades.

The Royal Warrant of Appointment is granted to companies that have demonstrated excellence in their field and have consistently provided goods or services to the royal family for at least five years. It is a mark of distinction that acknowledges a business's commitment to high standards and its contribution to British craftsmanship. The Wrought Iron and Brass Bed Company, with its rich heritage of producing beautifully crafted and durable wrought iron and brass beds, is proud to have earned this rare and coveted recognition.

The Wrought Iron and Brass Bed Company continues to innovate while honouring its legacy of excellence. With plans to expand their range of bespoke bedroom furniture and offer new designs that blend traditional aesthetics with contemporary sensibilities, the company is well-positioned for continued success in the years ahead.

The recent Royal Warrant is a milestone that will further inspire the team to uphold the highest standards of quality and service. The company's commitment to upholding the values of craftsmanship, sustainability, and customer satisfaction has earned it the recognition of His Majesty The King and the continued admiration and loyalty of customers worldwide.

What's This? 30 years!?

Janice Curtis

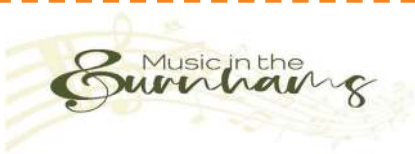
Calling past, present (and future?) Pocahontas Players! On Friday May 16th 7.30 pm and Saturday May 17th 2 pm - 7.30 pm 2025, the group is staging a celebration of those 30 years. With a short acting drama written by Joshy Chilvers.

Followed by many facts and amusing past entertainment acts. If you would like to rekindle your acting, singing, dancing skills of years gone by, or be it your first time of 'treading the boards' please join us.

We meet in Heacham Village Hall from 7pm - 9.30pm every Tuesday evening, starting January 21st, for read through/auditions/rehearsals. The very important all day dress rehearsal will be either Sunday 11th May or Tuesday evening of the 13th May (depending on The Public Hall availability).

If you are over 16 years of age and can make the production dates, rehearsals dates etc. please come along and join us or either phone Members Dave Curtis 01485 570402 or Jim Race 01485 571267 to find out more.

This is going to be fun, fun, fun! With thanks from The Pocahontas Players.



We are back in 2025

To launch our 2025 series join us at 7pm on Saturday February 1st at Burnham Overly Village Hall for an evening of canapes, wine, and fun entertainment with songs and stories from Gilbert and Sullivan.

Tim Hurst-Brown and Peter Hewitt will relate how these fun and entertaining songs were created.

Book at www.musicintheburnhams.com or call Marian on 07989 177079. Adults £20, under 18s FREE. Friends if Music in the Burnhams £10.

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In the Limelight

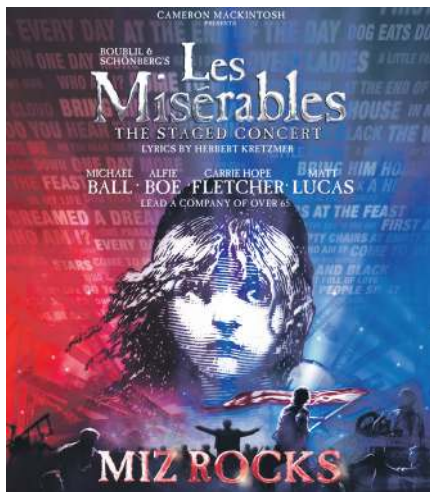
February, a month where we uncurl and start or emerge from the depths of winter! We have plenty to look forward to here at the Princess Theatre this month.

Our website has had an upgrade – please do take some time to have a look and please don't hesitate to call the Box Office if are a little uncertain.

We hit the ground running this month with a cornucopia of Live Music, Cookery Shows, Tributes, Films and Plays. Whether you are a fan of Barry White, ELO, Totally Tina, Soul Kinda Wonderful, Story of Guitar Heros, or Lionel Ritchie or TV legends such as Su Pollard, or Jake Quickenden!

Let's start with the return of The Princess Theatre Film Club.

On Tuesday 4th February at 7pm we have a screening of the performance "Les Misérables" - The Staged Concert Live! (40th Anniversary celebration). A spectacular sell-out staged concert version at the Gielgud Theatre featuring an all-star cast including Michael Ball, Alfie Boe, Carrie Hope Fletcher, Matt Lucas and John Owen Jones. We have many more of these wonderful screenings coming up later this year combined with a mix of some wonderful films for you to come and watch.



Tuesday 18th February come and enjoy the Film "Thelma" a feisty 93-year-old grandmother who gets conned by a phone scammer pretending to be her grandson (The White Lotus' Fred Hechinger) and sets out on a treacherous quest across Los Angeles, accompanied by an aging friend (Roundtree) and his motorized scooter, to reclaim what was taken from her. Showing from 7pm.

On Tuesday 25th February we have a screening of The Girl From The North Country. Written and directed by celebrated playwright Conor McPherson and featuring Tony Award-winning orchestrations by Simon Hale, Girl From The North Country reimagines 20 legendary songs of Bob Dylan as they've never been heard before, including "Forever Young," "All Along The

Watchtower," "Hurricane," and "Like A Rolling Stone." It's 1934 in Duluth, Minnesota. We meet a group of wayward travellers whose lives intersect in a guesthouse filled with music, life and hope. Experience this "profoundly beautiful" Broadway production (The New York Times) brought to vivid life by an extraordinary company of actors and musicians.

Why not make a night of it and go for a warm meal beforehand?

Please do pop into the Princess Theatre to pick up the schedule for the next month or visit our website for our film listings supplement.

When I think of February I am a hopeless romantic - hearts and flowers come to mind. I dare you to look up the true meaning and origin of Valentines Day? It's not quite what it's become. For me it's an opportunity for people to show one another that they care, be reminded of kindness whether it's with a loved one, remembering a loved one or a declaration of love. Make it what you want it to be – you may be surprised to read the 13th February is now being referred to on social media as "Galantines Day"!

We have plenty of ways to demonstrate our love for entertainment in our programme this month!

"There is no love sincerer than the love of food." - George Bernard Shaw – so we bring you "Posh Tea and Artisan Cheese" the first Cookery Show at the Theatre when we hope you will enjoy an afternoon with two culinary champions, Rosemary Shrager and Sean Wilson, who team up for their first ever live tour of the UK in which the two chalk-and-cheese experts will showcase their succulent skills with mouth-watering recipes and hot tips that the audience can try at home, and even better it's a 3pm on a Friday!

Which leads me neatly into another "first", play on a run of nights at the Princess Theatre. You asked, and we have been seeking plays to bring to the venue for 2025. "Rita Sue and Bob too" starts its annual tour this month and we are excited to have a stellar cast come to Hunstanton for 4 days!

TV favourite **Jake Quickenden** heads the cast as Bob in the production.

Jake will be joined by Hollyoaks' Jessica Ellis as Michelle, Shameless and Coronation Street's Warren Donnelly as Dad, Britain's Got Talent's Siobhan Phillips as Mum, Kay Nicholson as Rita and Jenna Sian O'Hara as Sue.

The play tells the story of Rita and Sue, two working class girls from a rundown council estate who are about to finish their final year at school. In their spare time, they earn money babysitting for married couple Bob and Michelle. Behind Michelle's back, Bob embarks on an affair with both Rita and Sue, who take it in turns with him in his car in the



Anna Hallard

countryside. Michelle eventually finds out and leaves lothario Bob. When Bob later develops a preference for Rita, the two girls fall out but when Sue ends up in an abusive relationship, the trio are reunited. Please note **ADULTS ONLY! (18+)** scenes of a sexual theme.

Tickets are £28.00 – Special Offer for Group Bookings 1 in 10 goes free. Please call the Box Office to book in groups.

Why not get a group outing together in the week 10th – 14th February! Spending time with other is another way to show people you love them!



Live Music is a passion for so many of us. There is nothing better than a show with musicians playing live and even better when its music from an Artiste you have always admired. We welcome back "The Barry White Tribute Show - Let The Music Play". Did you know **"Just Another Way to Say I Love You"** is the self-produced fourth album by released in 1975 – 50 years ago!

"The ELO Encounter Blue Sky Tour" Not only flawlessly recreating the wonderful music of ELO, it's a spectacular live show from start to finish. Stunning lights and special effects create an atmosphere that will have you fully immersed in the whole experience. As the ELO Encounter reel off ELO classic hit after hit, it's guaranteed to have the hairs on the back of your neck dancing in time to the music! This hits our stage on Sunday 9th February.

You might be asking – *what's love got to do*

with it? Well - We are excited to welcome back **TOTALLY TINA** on Sunday 16th February. The Internationally acclaimed, award winning tribute revue show to the Queen of Rock. The show re-creates the spectacle and energy of her live shows with a six-piece live band, four stunning dancers and Justine's incredible impersonation of the Queen of Rock and Soul.

'Save the Last Dance for Me', 'Up On The Roof', 'Kissing In The Back Row of The Movies'. All of these songs and more can be enjoyed if you come to see "Soul Kinda Wonderful" they will be appearing on Friday 21st February.

Expect classic hits from legends including *Hank Marvin, Chuck Berry, Eric Clapton,*

Jimi Hendrix, Brian May, Jimmy Page, Mark Knopfler, David Gilmour, Tony Iommi, Van Halen, Slash and many more.

National treasure "Su Pollard – Still Fully Charged" on Sunday 23rd February. Meet Su and her accompanist live on stage to celebrate her **50 years** in show business with a night of hilarious laughter, fabulous songs and wonderful stories!

We wrap up February with "The Music of Lionel Richie". Malcolm Pitt delivers a powerhouse and breathtaking performance in this high-octane show celebrating the music of Lionel Richie and the Commodores.

Fundraising is at the Heart of our Theatre! Amount to be announced For EACH as our Panto Charity during the Pantomime run of

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. A cheque will be presented to this wonderful charity soon.

Thanks for reading - have a lovely month of February.



"All you need is love." — The Beatles, so, in whatever form it may appear – just look for it!

Anna

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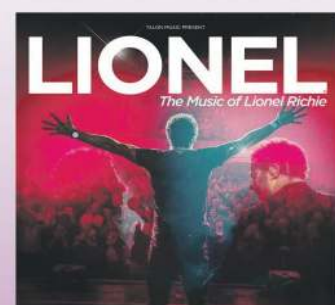
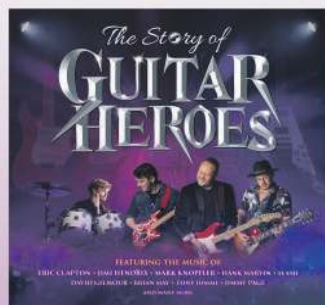
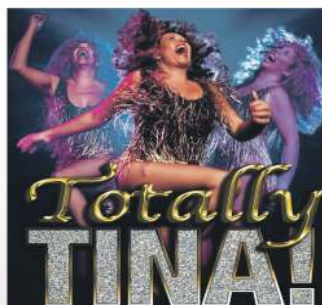
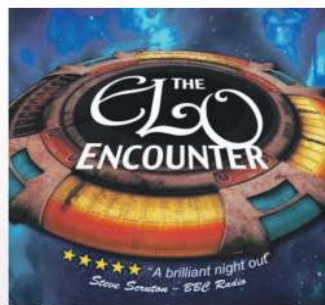
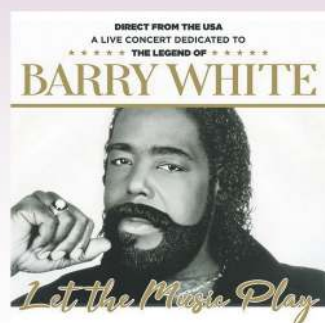
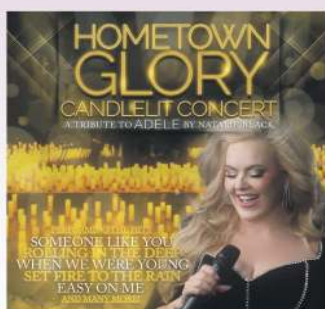
A playlist is available on request.

Have a chat with David on 07754 497562 or 01485 534220 or email solosaxclarinet@btinternet.com.

More information on www.solosaxclarinet.com



This Month is full of choice!
From candlelight concerts,
cookery shows, a celebrity
play run, music tributes &
comedy!



See Website & Theatre Programme for dates & more!
There's so much on at "The Little Theatre with BIG Shows"!

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