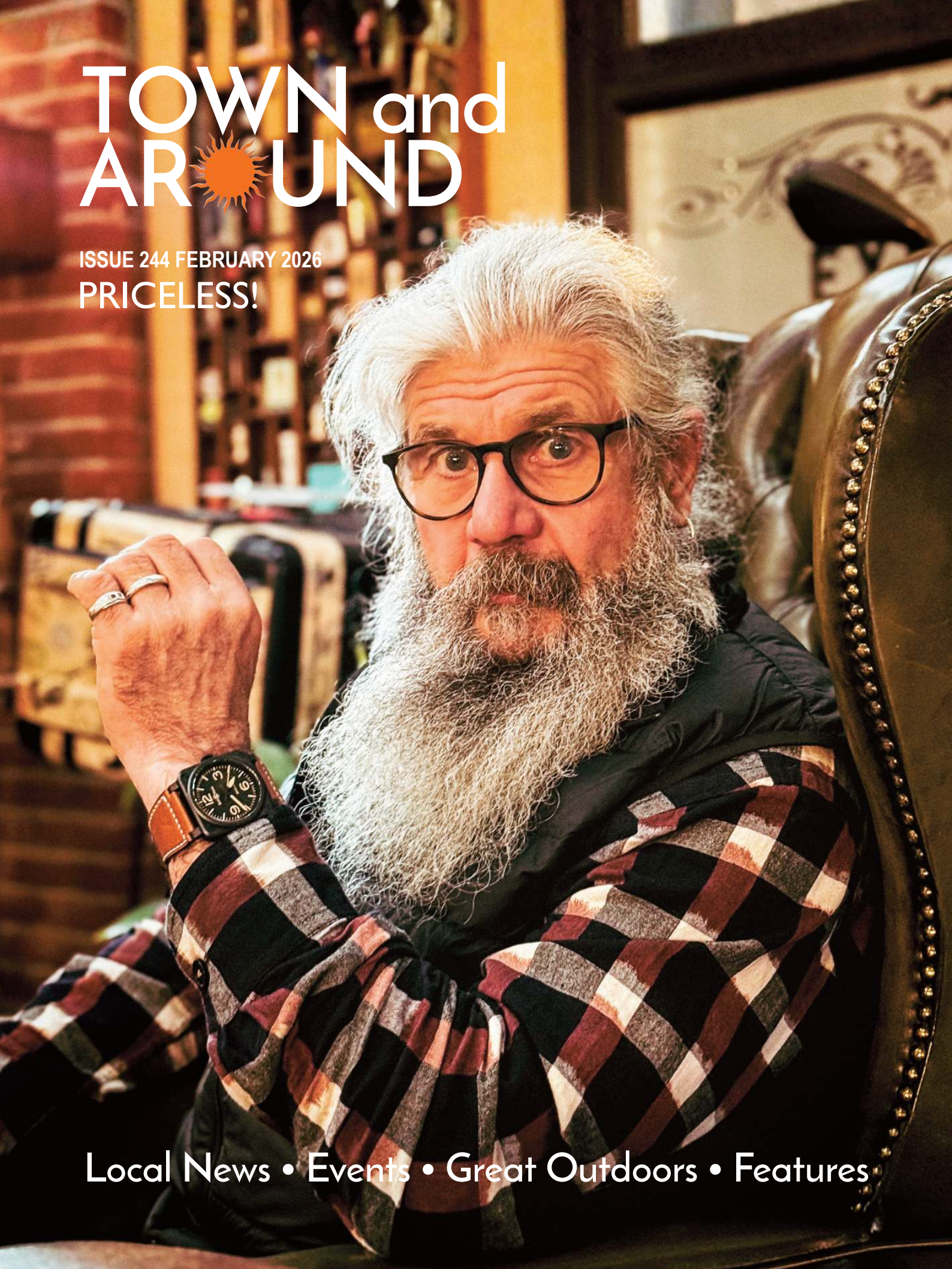


TOWN and AROUND



ISSUE 244 FEBRUARY 2026

PRICELESS!

Local News • Events • Great Outdoors • Features

First word



The ancient festival of Candlemas is on February 2nd. It marks the midway point of winter, halfway between the shortest day and the Spring equinox. Also known as the Feast of the Purification of the Virgin Mary and the presentation of Jesus as the Temple.

There are many sayings about the weather on Candlemas Day; if it is warm and sunny there's more winter ahead, but if it's raining the worst of the winter is over.

Research from the Met Office last year backs up the stereotype that people in the UK are obsessed with the weather. It seems we spend on average 56.6 hours, or two days and 9 hours, talking about it over the course of a year. So next time you are chatting about the weather this month you can drop Candlemas into the conversation.

Celebrity is another thing that people talk about a lot and honestly, I never thought I'd be mentioning Jennifer Lopez in these pages; but turn to page 56 to read Dani Crawshaw's exclusive first UK interview with the Norfolk music producer Harrison whose song for popular TV show Heated Rivalry tops Spotify's weekly playlist - and Jennifer Lopez is a fan, using the song recently to showcase her outfit for the Golden Globes. Huge congratulations Harrison.

Our cover story is about entrepreneur Richard Finney and his King's Lynn based Captain Fawcett business that produces over 200 products which are sold in 48 countries around the world. There's a super video interview with him on our website too.

Also on our website is a What's on section that is updated regularly throughout the month (thank you Glen). Events we know about at the time of going to print can be found on page 60.

There's plenty to read in this month's issue including Vic Dade's 47 years with the Lifeboat station and his MBE in the New Year's Honours List on page 8, the new helipad at the QEH on page 41 and the Dark Skies of West Norfolk on page 12. I hope you'll find them interesting and informative along with the news in our sports section and from the schools, societies, local businesses and elected representatives.

My thanks as always to our advertisers, the income from whom pays for the production of the magazine. Please support them if you are able.

Lastly, it is Valentine's Day on 14th. Don't say I didn't remind you!

Until next month,

Elaine

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I must-ache you a question!

Chatting to Captain Fawcett's founder

Dani Crawshaw



Meet Richie at his Marvellous Barbershop Museum, a treasure trove of all things relating to barbering. The space mirrors him in a way - it's fun, full of curiosities and interesting stories.

He tells me his company, named after the Edwardian explorer Captain Fawcett, came about by accident.

"I was in the movie industry, my job was a boom operator - to get the mic as close to the actor as possible. I always made my own moustache wax, for myself, in my kitchen in a baked bean tin.

"And I met my wife who's a well known hair and make up artist, and one day my wife said can I take some of your moustache wax to work, because the stuff we've got is rubbish.

"So I bought a 100 empty jars on eBay, and to this day it is virtually on every movie set."



It is now a luxury men's grooming brand - with more than 200 products sold in 48 countries. The reason for its success? Apart from the products themselves and a boom in male grooming - it is Richie's passion for it all.



And it's catching. As we walk around he points to various artefacts and brings them to life. Old barber chairs, razors dating back to 1650, it (almost) makes me wish I were a man.

"My passion regarding all the shaving materials - it's something that it doesn't matter who you are, whether you're the richest man in the world or the poorest man

in the world, at some point you've had a hair cut and at a certain age you will have had a shave.

"I remember as a child going into the bathroom, with absolutely no facial hair, you know you take your father's razor out and you put some soap on your face and you kind of pretend."

And this Emporium, which is free to visit, is a space he wants to share with everyone.

"I can imagine some business person coming in and saying well you don't need this and you don't need that, the whole business could be run in a completely different way. But it wouldn't float my boat, because this is not about the bottom line, this is about the journey."

It isn't just a museum, it's the business - literally. Richie takes me through various doors where we meet his team, some are making the beard wax, others are packaging items up.



He stops to chat, he knows their names, you can see how much this company and the people who're part of it mean to him. And that's not all.

"I do think you should give back, my other great passion is motorcycles, and these other 3 guys were thinking about doing a ride.

"We pooled together and 9 years ago we set up Barberside and we've been all around the country, we've raised more than 200 thousand pounds for Make A Wish."

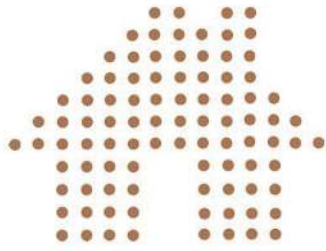
So, how to end an interview with someone who has an MBE - whose brand has won multiple awards, who's helped raise hundreds of thousands for charity? Well, I was curious to know if he'd ever shave his beard.

"That's an interesting question. I don't know, it's so much of me - and I'd be a bit concerned as I'm getting older I'm not sure how many chins would be there! So probably no, because I think I might be shocked."

You can watch the interview with Richie at his museum in King's Lynn and hear him talk about his grooming brand - known for its vintage-inspired products here:

<https://townandaround.net/news/i-must-ache-you-a-question-chatting-to-captain-fawcetts-founder>

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Top tax tips to consider pre-5 April & beyond

By Mapus-Smith & Lemmon LLP incorporating Kathryn Gigg Chartered Accountants, Hunstanton

With the rates of tax on savings and property income going up and the Income Tax thresholds having been reduced or frozen it is more important than ever to review your personal tax affairs.

Pension Contributions

Pensions are a very tax efficient tool, which, subject to the recent changes to the IHT rules, and taking advice from an Independent Financial Adviser, can be used as part of a wider wealth and tax planning strategy, whether via company contributions, workplace pensions, salary sacrifice schemes or personal contributions.

Even non taxpayers (aged under 75) can save up to £2,880 each year, with the government grossing it up to a credit of £3,600 in their pension account. Higher and additional rate taxpayers will be able to claim relief in their tax return; and along with those who are likely to suffer the 60% marginal rate may wish to consult their IFA about investing further in their pension ahead of the tax year end.

Professional advice (both Investment advice and Tax advice) should always be sought before making any contribution.

Capital Gains (CGT)

The Annual Exemption is unfortunately now only £3,000 and cannot be carried forward, so is lost if not used in the year. If capital disposals are planned for the very near future it may make sense to calculate the gains now and, if beneficial/possible, aim to sell before 5 April and hence make good use of the balance of any Basic Rate Band left and the Annual Exemption. Don't forget to claim any losses brought forward or created in the year. Gifts between spouses or those in civil partnerships are not subject CGT so with a bit of forward planning, moving assets between spouses can minimise any CGT liability arising.

Remember that gains on residential property must be separately declared (and tax paid) within 60 days of completion.

Inheritance Tax (IHT)

With the basic Nil Rate band frozen at £325,000 until 2029/30 even those with a house of average value could well be within the scope of this tax by then, as well as those with investments, business assets or pension pots.

Individuals can each make capital gifts of £3,000 annually, and the allowance can be carried forward for one year, so if nothing was gifted in 2024/25 the exemption available up to 5 April this year will be £6,000 (or £12,000 for a married couple). In addition, £250 can be given to anyone who has not received part of the larger amount. There are also allowances for regular "gifts out of income" (but these must be evidenced in line with strict rules) and gifts upon marriage or a civil partnership. Any gifts in excess of these amounts will remain "on the clock" for seven years.

It seems unlikely that the threat of increased IHT liabilities will go away over the next few years, so if nothing else, it is worth calculating the value of your "estate" - the tax rules here are quite complex, but if the answer (including investments, property and pensions) comes to over £325,000 (£650,000 for a married couple), as always, it is worth seeking professional advice sooner rather than later.

Individual Savings Accounts

Individual Savings Accounts (ISAs) are probably the most straightforward way of investing tax efficiently and shouldn't be overlooked.

Personal Allowances

Always make full use of your personal allowance, marriage allowance, savings allowance, dividends allowance, starting and basic rate bands where relevant. Equalisation of income between spouses/civil partners should always be considered as far as is practicable e.g. by moving savings to whichever partner earns the least.

Property Income

Spouses with property income would do well to consider the matter of the default 50:50 assessment of profit before this upcoming tax year end if they wish to elect to benefit from a more tax beneficial profit-sharing ratio for 2026/27 onwards.

Capital Allowances

Businesses with a 5 April or 31 March year end may wish to review capital expenditure plans in the light of expected income, with a view to accelerating or deferring it for best tax effect.

N.B. Please note that the comments above only refer to the TAX consequences of various courses of action. Advice from a qualified Independent Financial Adviser will be needed regarding the investment aspects of any decision. This article was written in January and therefore needs to be considered in the light of any announcements made before 5 April. For further advice please contact either Kate or Nic at Mapus-Smith & Lemmon LLP, Hunstanton office on 01485 534800 or kgigg@mapus.co.uk; ntarry@mapus.co.uk

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Caution: The information listed above is for general guidance only. You should neither act, nor refrain from action, on the basis of any such information. You should take appropriate professional advice on your particular circumstances because the application of laws and regulations will vary depending on particular circumstances and because laws and regulations undergo frequent change. Whilst we endeavour to ensure that the information contained herein is correct, neither we nor our firm shall be liable in damages (including, without limitation, damages for loss of business or loss of profits) arising in contract, tort or otherwise from any information contained in it, or from any action or decision taken as a result of using any such information.



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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.



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Vic Dade - A man for all seasons

Angela Canning

For 47 years, right from the inception of the current lifeboat station in 1979, Vic Dade has served in the Hunstanton RNLI, and has been called to Windsor Castle on the 17th of this month to be made an MBE in the New Year's Honours List.



This is not the first time Vic has been fortunate enough to be honoured by royalty. He and his wife, Dee, and other long-serving RNLI volunteers, were invited by the late Queen to have tea at Buckingham Palace, and in 2023 he also received the Coronation Medal for King Charles III's Coronation.



*Vic and Dee at Buckingham Palace. Photo supplied by Mr Dade**

From the start Vic can recall some of the most dramatic rescues he took part in. In March 1985, boarding the Hunstanton Atlantic 21 Class Lifeboat, they sped in a westerly gale and rough sea to a man and his sailboat close to a wreck in the treacherous Brancaster harbour, and saved both.

He can also remember rescues even performed in total darkness. In February 1988 they landed an injured man in the Wash on his fishing vessel "Portunus" in a southerly gale and raging sea.

In September the following year, again in total darkness, they rescued a man in his yacht "Sanchia" aground in Thornham Harbour bar in a north-north-westerly strong breeze and torrential sea.

Of course things have improved a lot since those days, he reflects. Today we have more sophisticated wet-gear, ear-phones, a mobile pager, and in 2003 our first inshore rescue hovercraft, The Hunstanton Flyer.



The Hunstanton Flyer

We used it for one such rescue on the 4th September, 2017, when the Coastguard radioed that there were four people in the water at Scolt Head Island in Brancaster Harbour. We thought it would be a normal rescue but it turned out to be so serious that it could have meant tragedy.

Molly and Daisy, twelve-year-old twins, with their older sister, Zoe and boy-friend, Nicky, went to investigate mysterious shapes on the island and discovered they were the shipwreck covered with barnacles and embedded in the sand. The sandbank had dried out as usual at low-tide, but within a

minute in rushed an angry sea at 3 – 4 knots and they were marooned. Somehow they managed to swim out to a buoy marking the edge of Brancaster Harbour's deepwater channel, but their weight started to drag it under the water and Nicky swam to get help. Vic was piloting the hovercraft and it took him longer than the normal 15 minutes to get to Scolt Head Island on account of a strong breeze. Once there they found the force of the tide had caused Zoe and Molly to let go of the buoy and float away, with Daisy watching and screaming.

When victims become separated this is the worst crisis that can happen. A gallant crew member, Mike Darby, jumped into the water and swam out to Daisy, while Vic manoeuvred the hovercraft skilfully alongside Molly and Zoe. Both were rescued but it took longer to grasp Zoe who was completely exhausted from holding her young sister afloat for 20 minutes. Straightaway Vic turned the hovercraft to go back to Daisy who was held by Mike, his life-jacket inflated to keep both their heads above water. It was a miracle that all three girls made a full recovery.



The sisters came to the station in 2024 to see Victor. From left: Daisy, Victor, Molly and Zoe

For such dedicated service 24 hours a day Vic's award is well deserved, and how incredible it is, when we live on an island, that our Government gives no financial aid to the RNLI. The charity is maintained purely by fundraising and it is the likes of the butcher, the baker and the candlestick maker who risk their lives voluntarily for us all.

** All other photos. RNLI/Chris Bishop*

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How to avoid problems with Lasting Powers of Attorney

By Yasmin Knock, Solicitor, Hayes + Storr

Lasting Powers of Attorney ("LPAs") are legal documents appointing one or more people ("attorneys") to help manage your affairs. There are two main types. A Financial Decisions LPA allows your attorneys to manage matters such as bank accounts, investments, paying bills, and buying or selling property. A Health Decisions LPA allows your attorneys to make decisions regarding daily routines, medical care, where you live, or whether life-sustaining treatment should continue.

Once registered with the Office of the Public Guardian ("OPG"), Financial LPAs can be used while you have mental capacity (with your consent), and after capacity is lost. In contrast, Health Decisions LPAs can only be used if you lose mental capacity.

LPAs offer benefits including control, flexibility, financial security and peace of mind. The Mental Capacity Act 2005 contains safeguards to help prevent abuse. Because attorneys are given substantial authority, it is vital to appoint individuals you trust completely.

What are an attorney's duties?

Acting in your best interests

Attorneys must always act in your best interests and make decisions reflecting your values, beliefs and preferences. They should follow any instructions you have given them.

Assessing your mental capacity

Attorneys must allow you to make your own decisions whenever you are able to do so. Mental capacity can fluctuate. A medical professional may be asked to assess your capacity.

Duty of skill and care

Attorneys are required to perform their role with a reasonable level of care and skill and should seek professional advice when appropriate.

Conflicts of interest

Attorneys must not use their position to benefit themselves or others at your expense. They are generally not permitted to take fees, aside from reasonable expenses. If a conflict arises - for example, an attorney has a financial interest in a care provider - they must disclose this and seek professional advice.

Accessing your personal information

Attorneys can access necessary personal information, such as medical or financial details, to make decisions they are legally authorised to take and to act in your best interests.

Record-keeping

Attorneys must keep your finances and property separate from their own and maintain clear records of decisions made. Supporting documents such as receipts and statements should be retained, as the Office of Public Guardian may request them.

How can you safeguard against abuse?

Further measures you can put in place to minimise the risk of LPA abuse include:

- Clearly specify within your LPA what your attorneys can and cannot do
- Appoint more than one attorney
- Use a professional certificate provider to confirm your understanding and capacity to make the LPA
- Use an experienced solicitor to draft and register your LPAs to ensure appropriate safeguards are included

For further information, please contact Yasmin Knock in the Private Client Department team on 01328 863231 or email Yasmin.knock@hayes-storr.com



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

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FENLAND FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

Bridget Hunter

Recently my granddaughter asked me about my family history. I started to tell her about our family tree. She stopped me and said, "no I want to know about you and what you did." I was reminded that there were two sides to family history. The research into our families going back generations when they were born, married and died. What they did for a living and their children.

Then there are family anecdotes - This is a story told to me by my father. He was with my grandfather farming in Hertfordshire between the villages of Barkway and Barley. While working out in the fields, a passerby stopped and asked him. 'Is that Barley over there'. To which my grandfather answered 'No it's Winter wheat' My father reassured the passerby that yes it was the village of Barley. I wonder how many little stories like that we should share with our children and grandchildren. Thinking back, I have so many stories about my own life, maybe I should write them down!

The Society's experienced researchers do not charge for their help with your research. They are able to help no matter where your family originated. You are welcome to attend any of the following sessions:

1st Tuesday of the month - 10 - 12 noon Wisbech Library, with maybe a donation towards the hire of the room. We have a team of our researchers waiting to help you with your research. Just drop in.

2nd Monday of the month - Baytree Garden Centre Hilgay near Downham Market 11- 2.30 we will be in the restaurant. Why not pop in to see us and enjoy a coffee or a meal.

3rd Wednesday of January. Red Lion Pub North Brink Wisbech 6.30 - 8pm These are held every other month. You will find us in the restaurant of the Pub.

Our monthly meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of each month and on 26th February our speaker will be Jonathan Farmer. At our April meeting we welcome back a favourite speaker Alan Johnson.

Visitors always welcome to join us with a donation to help to pay for the hire of the room. For further details contact Bridget on 01945 587723 or bridget25hunter@btinternet.com

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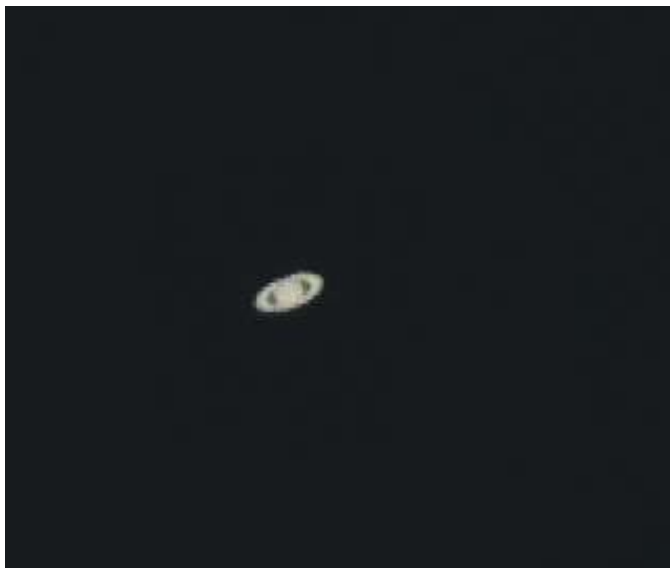
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The dark skies of West Norfolk

Terry Parish

Time marches on, the planets follow their orbits and, this month, Mercury and Venus make an evening showing with Saturn looking on.

From the beginning of February look west after sunset to find a dim Saturn with magnitude +1. The ringed planet sets about 8pm. It is an ethereal, yellowish, dot easy to see once you have seen it. A phone app might help you do that, otherwise a slow scan of the WSW to western sky with binoculars should do the job.



Saturn through big binoculars or small telescope. Heacham

Saturn moves gradually lower in the sky as the month progresses and is just two Moon widths to the left of Neptune on the 20th. Observe the ringed planet at about 6.30pm as it will quickly reach the horizon and set. At magnitude +7.8, around 1/500 of the brightness of dim Saturn, don't expect to see Neptune without very good binoculars or a small telescope. It is worth a little effort to see the green-blue dot of the most distant planet from Earth; currently 30.88 astronomical units or 4.62 billion km.

As the second week starts, after sunset, look out for Mercury to the right and somewhat below Saturn. It will be a bright spark with a magnitude of minus 1.1. You will need a good horizon and a visit to Heacham beaches or Hunstanton cliffs should serve well.

Over the next two weeks Mercury moves further from the Sun, reaching its greatest eastern elongation on 19th and setting at 7pm. However, it also dims to magnitude minus 0.4 and, by the end of the month to +1.8.

Venus appears bright in the west from the middle of the month (magnitude minus 3.9). On the 18th and 18th from 6pm look for a vertical arc of planets in the WSW, Venus at the bottom, Mercury higher and to the left, Saturn much higher and about 900 to the left of Venus.

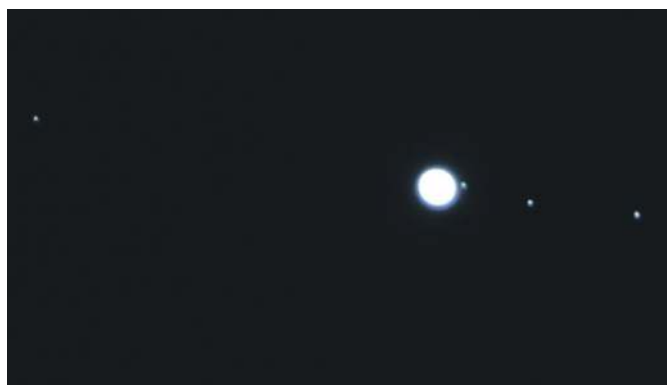
The Crescent Moon adds to the picture. It will be between Venus and Mercury on the 18th and to the right of Saturn on the 19th.

Jupiter is in the sky until the early hours, shining with a magnitude of minus 2.5 it will be easy to spot and the Galilean Moons, discussed in recent editions, will still be there. (See photo top of next column.)

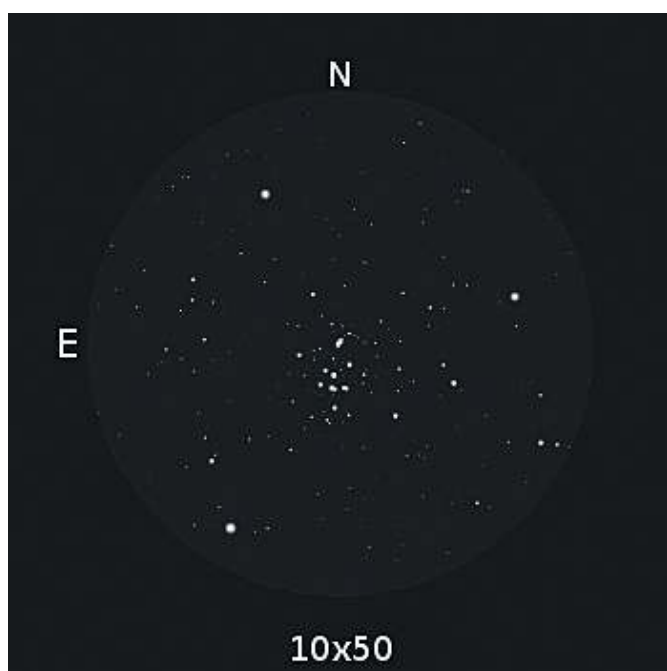
On the last night of the month turn your binoculars to the Moon and look just below it. A host of stars, the Beehive Cluster, Praesepe, will be revealed. An open cluster of 1000 stars some 577 light years away and just 600 million years old. It is a mixture of star types including red giants and white dwarfs. (Photo right marked with 10x50)

The beehive has been observed for thousands of years as its glow is easily seen by the naked eye in dark skies. Galileo turned his telescope towards it and resolved 40 stars.

Orion stands out high in the SW. I have featured this constellation in



Galilean Moons with Io just emerging. Heacham



Beehive cluster through binoculars. Internet

previous issues but it is a true winter sight so use binoculars to scan it, particularly the hazy area below the belt stars. The hazy swirl you see is the Orion Nebulae, birthplace of stars.

The nebulae is 1,350 light years away and is 25 light years across. It is the closest 'star factory' to Earth and the forming of new stars and the protoplanetary discs which surround them have been observed.

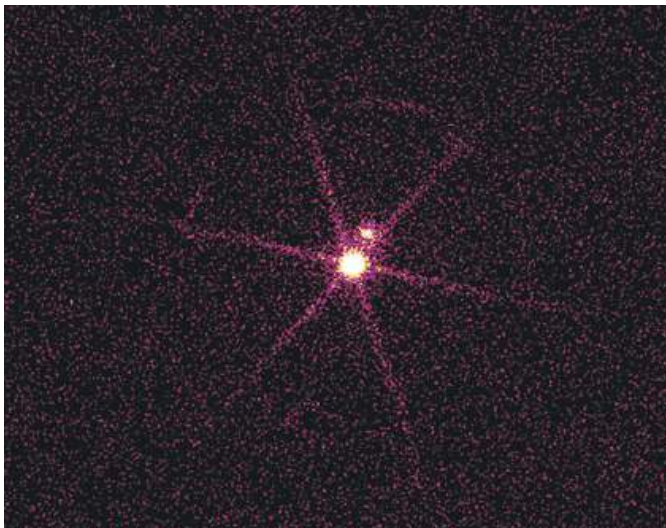


Orion Nebula. Internet

The nebula glows because of 4 large young stars near its centre. They are arranged, from our perspective, in a trapezium shape and can be seen through a reasonable telescope.

A clear, Moon free, night, which is rare, will reveal the winter Milky Way; the faint glow of millions of stars starts due south and flows upwards a little tilted towards the west. Sirius, the dog star, will be the bright star low down. The Milky Way skirts Orion on its right, flows behind the legs of the Gemini twins and then Auriga, a house shaped pattern of stars, containing the bright star Capella.

Sirius, with a magnitude of minus 1.46, is the brightest star in the northern sky. It is very luminous and is only 8.6 light years away. Like many stars it is a binary; a white dwarf (Sirius B) orbits a main sequence, ordinary, star (Sirius A). It takes 50 years for Sirius B to orbit Sirius A with perihelion, its closest, approach at 8.2 astronomical units. This is a little closer than Saturn to our Sun. Aphelion, furthest point from Sirius A, is at 31.5 au, a bit further than Pluto from our Sun.



*Chandra X ray observatory image of Sirius A and Sirius B.
The white dwarf is the bright star because it emits lots of X-rays.
Internet*

Sirius is moving towards us for the next 60,000 years and will then recede. After another 210,000 years it will become the second brightest star in our sky. Vega will take the crown.

Notes on units

Kilometres km

Miles mi

Light Year ly = 9.46 trillion km or 5.88 trillion mi

Parsec is 3.26ly

Apparent magnitude, brightness of an object as seen from Earth. The lower the number, the brighter the object.

Happy 11 months.



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Saturday 7th February - Quiz Night

Saturday 14th February - Music Night with Michael Jackson Tribute

Wednesday 25th February - Afternoon Cream Tea from 3.00pm

Regular Events

Mondays : Strength and Balance Class 4.30pm.

Tuesdays: 12.45pm - 1.30pm - New Seated Yoga with Jackie Lee.

Tuesdays: Cash Bingo starts at 7.30pm.

Tuesdays: 2.00pm - 4.00pm Richard's Country Disco & Line Dancing.

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New venue for Save the Children soiree

Marie and Howard Jarvis Johnston have been opening their home for special musical events in February for the Hunstanton Branch of the Save the Children Fund for several years.



Last year the popular event attracted over sixty guests, and it raised £1300 for the Save the Children Fund. Marie said: "We are moving the soiree to the Town Hall this year because the kitchen is not big enough anymore!"

"Its success has meant that a new venue had to be found"

Once again, the stars of the show will be the 'The Missing Coda', pianists extraordinaire,



Mathew Preston and Marie Jarvis

Mathew Preston and Ben Howell, who perform music that is both exhilarating and humorous.

Guests are asked to bring a savoury plate for the buffet and a raffle prize. Tickets are £25 from Marie Jarvis on 07866 889967 or marie125@btinternet.com

"All are welcome and should contact me if they would like to come. It's a wonderful light-hearted fun musical event with two brilliant classical musicians who know how to entertain, on February 8th at 3.00pm - what else would you be doing on a February afternoon?" Marie added.

SAVE THE CHILDREN FUND SOIREE

The Kitchen Soiree is moving to Hunstanton Town Hall
Sunday afternoon 8th February 2026, 3.00pm

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Matthew Preston and Benjamin Howell



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Save the
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Tickets: £25.00

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Please come and support us in our new venue - the kitchen is not big enough any more!

Learn Art – Focus on Play

Esther Boehm

While back I got to thinking about quotes that I read while studying fine art at uni, mostly by Pablo Picasso and Paul Klee, all to do with art and play. Unfortunately, all my art history books are in storage so I had to ask Google. The closest Picasso quote I found was, "Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up." That sort of fits if we think that children play, but it wasn't quite what I was looking for.

Then, several weeks ago I visited the Grayson Perry exhibition at the Wallace Collection. There it was, "Playfulness is at the heart of being an artist. There is no right way to make art, you just have to play around and see what comes out." Sir Grayson Perry

It's exactly this idea that I wanted to explore. By not trying too hard to get everything right, you open the door to exploring your own creativity.

For me, being an artist means to try new things all the time; I don't want to sit still and do the same thing over and over again. With every new sculpture - every new material there is so much to learn. Things don't always go right the first time.

I remember working on my first marble commission. I made a model for the sculpture that my clients had as reference - it was an abstract bird. Because there wasn't a lot of time to carve the sculpture, I bought an air chisel to speed up the process. I'd never used one before. Everything

was going along nicely and the bird was starting to emerge but when I was refining the tail at the back, it broke. I was mortified. What was I going to do now? After calming down a bit, I took another look and found a solution for the tail which was much better for the sculpture as a whole and my clients found that the sculpture was exactly what they envisaged.

Failure and disappointment are part of the process, but often it's just this aspect that makes your work better. You rethink and push yourself further.

Especially when you are learning, it's important to just relax and try things; preconceived ideas or criticism from the past could be standing in your way. The word learning itself sometimes carries a negative connotation - learning is hard and requires effort. Of course, if something is completely new to you, there is no reason to expect that it's going to be right on your first try, but there are always ways to get the result you want.

In conclusion, I eventually found this quote by Henri Matisse; "Creative people are curious, flexible, persistent, and independent with a tremendous spirit of adventure and a love of play." So let's get playing!



Grayson Perry inspired vase by Lynne made at Studio @ 55

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Nature notes with Carrie Carey

WHY SALTMARSH MATTERS

Take the main path from Titchwell's visitor centre to our wide expanse of beach and you'll encounter a montage of wildlife rich habitats along the way. Rustling reedbeds stand guard over a network of shallow pools and beneath their towering stems lies a world teeming with life. Visitors peer hopefully into this custodial labyrinth hoping to catch sight of an elusive Bittern, a family of Bearded Tits or an otter weaving its silent trail through the reedbed. Further on, freshwater inlets resonate with the sounds of yapping geese and waders. They're coming to the end of their winter sojourn on England's east coast and preparing for the long and arduous flight home to Arctic breeding grounds. Overhead, keen-eyed raptors prowl the skies for a quick meal. They are also shaking off winter's lethargy, arching and stretching powerful wings in practice for forthcoming courtship displays.



Spoonbill
 Credit Les Bunyan.

Leaving bird-filled lagoons behind them, visitors pass by a

mosaic of sinuous muddy channels. To many onlookers this unflattering landscape is a place to hurry past and not hurry to – yet it is an incredibly productive and important ecosystem. These wetlands are not just landscapes; they are living fortresses, filtering water, storing carbon, offering sanctuary to wildlife and standing as sentinels of the freshwater habitats behind them. A medley of twisting creeks, cradled between land and sea, has been sculpted over millennia by the rhythmic ebb and flow of tidal waters. Near the shoreline, fine particles of clay and silt settled with each incoming tide, gradually raising the sediment to a level where vegetation could take hold. Through this continual interplay of sediment deposition and tidal erosion, a delicate network of winding, waterlogged channels has emerged sustaining an extraordinary diversity of life.

Coastal salt marsh is a dynamic habitat that preserves shorelines, protects communities, maintains the health of marine environments and is a vital climate change ally. While man is busy putting carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, salt marshes are working hard to remove it! Sediment deposits encouraged pioneer plant growth to fan out across the salt marsh. As plant material decayed within these channels, it created layers of waterlogged soil and vegetation which effectively locked carbon away. This natural storage can last for centuries, even as sea levels rise, making salt marshes a vital ally in the fight against climate change. In contrast, the shallow channels associated with salt marsh are often low in oxygen. Layers of decaying plant material use up oxygen as they break down.

This together with limited water movement means that fresh oxygen doesn't mix in easily. And beneath the surface, the waterlogged soil creates an environment which oxygen cannot penetrate. This combination creates a unique habitat where only specially adapted plants and animals can thrive. In the squelchy, sticky mud, some species have adapted to this extreme environment by developing telescopic breathing tubes or taking up residence in the air pockets of plants. Burrowing invertebrates such as polychaete worms create tunnels that allow oxygen to penetrate into the sediment. This enables them to be active during high tide and retreat to oxygenated burrows and crevices when the tide is low.

Landscapes such as Titchwell's Volunteer Marsh, may look simple at first glance – but they are bustling hubs of biodiversity. The plants that thrive in these oxygen-poor, salty soils—like Cordgrass and Glasswort—create shelter and food for countless insects, snails, and worms. These small creatures, in turn, attract fish and crabs that feed in the tidal channels. Waders such as Avocets, Oystercatchers and Spoonbills flock to the marsh to hunt for these rich pickings, while ducks and geese graze on surrounding vegetation. This layered food web makes salt marshes a magnet for wildlife, supporting everything from microscopic life to top predators. By providing safe nesting sites, abundant food, and protection from harsh coastal winds, salt marshes become vital stopovers for migratory birds and a year-round haven for many species. The number of bird species that use this habitat for foraging,



Avocet
 Credit Cliff Gilbert

nesting or just as a short refuelling point is extensive and many areas of salt marsh in the UK are now protected landscapes.

Humans have harnessed the bounty of coastal salt marshes for thousands of years. Edible plants such as Samphire and Sea Purslane thrive off the high salinity of the tidal waters and a variety of fish spawn and raise their young here. Man has even modified the landscape to support grazing cattle or grow food. Much of Titchwell reserve's saltmarsh was historically farmland, so is considered 'immature' having only been re-established for the last 70 years. These zones provide a nature-based solution against increasingly high storm surges and tides thereby protecting our communities, homes and local economies. And in addition to all their other roles, they can lock in pollutants in the same way that they secure carbon.

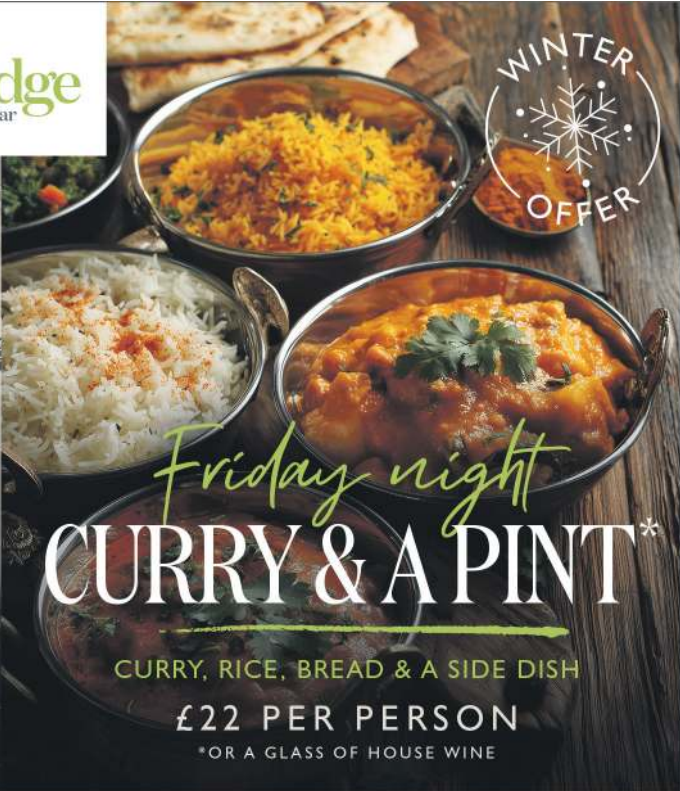
It might only appear to be an expanse of straggly vegetation bound by clumps of muck, but this valuable biome is in reality an industrious ecosystem.



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Wendy Warners plant of the month - Salix

A true sign of Spring to me is the sight, and touch, of the gorgeous catkins of plants of the Salix family. Salix, commonly known as willows, come in many shapes and sizes but most are known for their fuzzy, velvety catkins which are produced on bare stems before the leaves emerge.

Salix alba, the white willow, is a native tree and can grow to a staggering 25 metres tall. It is known as the white willow as the slender, oval leaves are paler than most other willows due to a felty covering of fine, silky, silvery-white hairs on the underside. They are of great benefit to wildlife and caterpillars of a number of moth species feed on white willow leaves, including the puss moth, willow ermine and eyed hawk-moth. The catkins are an important source of early nectar and pollen for bees and other insects, and the branches make good nesting and roosting sites for birds.

The weeping willow, Salix babylonica is another large tree and has a graceful, arching habit. As it ages, its branches 'weep', eventually reaching the ground. The delicate, narrow, light green leaves turn a beautiful shade of yellow in autumn. In spring, catkins appear on the bare branches. When I was a child, we had a mature weeping willow in the garden with a rope ladder in it and in the summer my friends and I would be completely hidden by the pendulous branches when we climbed up there.

The willow varieties we get asked for most often in the garden centre are more manageable sized. Probably the most popular is the one with the most awkward name, Salix integra 'Hakuro-nishiki'. It is a dwarf willow that is chosen for its flamboyant foliage in spring – a marbled mix of green and white, with pink tips. The leaves fade to green in summer and when they drop in autumn revealing orange-red. Before the foliage appears again in spring, yellow catkins appear. Also known as the flamingo tree (due to its pink appearance) is a compact shrub or small tree, perfect for a small garden and often trained as a standard or lollipop tree, grafted on to the rootstock of a different willow variety.



The difficult to pronounce but beautiful Salix integra 'Hakuro-nishiki'. Photo by Jeongho Shin

Salix caprea 'Kilmarnock' is commonly known as the 'pussy willow'. This name is thought to come from the soft, furry catkins that resemble the paws of kittens, reflecting both their appearance and texture. This is a small and compact deciduous tree, ideal for small gardens. The branches form a stiffly weeping 'umbrella' of yellow-green stems which are smothered in the fuzzy silver catkins from late winter to early spring before the rounded green leaves open. The pollen-laden catkins are popular with early bees.

A relatively new willow is Salix gracilistyla 'Mount Aso' sometimes referred to as 'pink pussy willow' or 'red cat' due to its amazing fluffy pink-red catkins. It also has attractive blue-green foliage with silvery undersides.

Most willows prefer a sunny position in a moist but well-drained soil. The smaller varieties mentioned can be grown in a large pot or container such as a whisky barrel. Willows lend themselves to all kinds of garden setting, everything from a contemporary courtyard garden to a relaxed country garden, wildlife garden or they could be used for hedging or screening.

The fresh branches with catkins also make a great addition to a flower arrangement with spring-flowering bulbs.



Credit: Ralphs_Fotos



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Carolyn Hayes

I'm starting this month's article, in the depths of winter and looking out over an exceptionally snowy landscape, by talking about our Summer Show. Yes, let's think about warmer weather and getting out in the garden! If you haven't done so already – please SAVE THE DATE. This year it will be held on Saturday 4 July, the venue as usual being Downham Market Town Hall.

But we are not just about flowers, fruit and vegetables. In fact, to paraphrase by quoting from the inimitable Rowan Atkinson in *Love Actually*, our Summer Show is so much more than that. Did you know that one of the ten sections is Art (the others being Floral Art, Flowers, Pot plants, Fruit, Vegetables, Preserves, Bakery, Crafts and Photography)?

So, calling all artists! We are keen to have more art exhibits in this year's Show. The five classes in this section are:

- An original pen and wash
- An original water colour painting
- An original ink or black graphite pencil drawing
- An original acrylic painting
- An original in any other medium

All Art entries should be mounted and/or framed. If framed, they should be strung for hanging. Please note that all Art exhibits must have a horticultural theme.

Everyone is welcome to enter our Summer Show – any age (including children), whether a member of the Horticultural Society or not, and whether you know anything at all about gardening. As mentioned above, we have ten categories, so there should be something for everyone, whatever your particular interest. And the exhibiting fee is only 30p per item, would you believe, so no excuse. Look out for our colourful advertisement in the Downham Market Advertiser from this month onwards.



We finished 2025 by having a stall and information stand at the Downham Grange Nursing Home Christmas party, as shown in the photograph. We're now planning our 2026 events – watch this space!

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 Our annual membership fee is just £10 a year, which includes a 10% discount from Downham Garden Centre – what a bargain!

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SNETTISHAM GARDENING CLUB

Our meeting on February 25th will be The three S's - Seeds, Seedlings and the usual Swap table to give members the opportunity of swapping, or purchasing for a very small sum Seeds, Seedlings or any surplus plants.

There will be a light hearted Quiz and members are invited to contribute to a Bring and Share a plate with drinks provided.

As always visitors and guests are welcome to join us at our meetings which begin at 7.30 pm in the Memorial Hall, Old Church Road.

For further information please call Gail on 07899933840 or Addie on 01485 544754

NYE Thank you

A big thankyou to everyone who attended our New Year's Eve event Hall, Hunstanton. The event was a huge success and we have received a lot of feedback from people who thoroughly enjoyed the evening and urged us to it again this year.

The event raised £2000 which will be donated to prostate and breast cancer charities. We will be hosting the event again this year, keep your eyes open for more updates during the year; we will be advertising this in the Town and Around.

Thank you again

Kevan / Daniel Fleming

Sportique sports / Cafe Legge

Sedgeford Craft Fayres

Jacqueline Sindle

Important Update! Throughout 2025 the three Sedgeford Craft Fayres raised money from the raffles for three very worthy Charities which were East Anglian Air Ambulance, Royal National Lifeboat Institution and East Anglia Children's Hospice.

The Fayres are not-for-profit events. As the year drew to a close, the accounts revealed a profit. Therefore, we are very pleased to announce that each of the Charities will receive an extra £90.20. Therefore the amounts raised in total for the Charities are: East Anglian Air Ambulance £300.20, RNLI £273.96 and East Anglia Children's Hospice £278.67.

Thank you to everyone involved in the Sedgeford Craft Fayres and to everyone who visits and we look forward to seeing you all again this year.

Watch local Press and advertising for further details.

Old Hunstanton Flower Festival

Friday 24th - Sunday 26th July 2026

This year we are inviting local crafts people to take a stand in the Village Hall Garden at the Flower Festival to exhibit and sell your wares. You can choose to be there for just one day, or exhibit on all three - the choice is yours. If you are interested in pursuing this - or know someone who might be - please contact Simon Carter on 07941 521860 or simoncarter920@btinternet.com.

Hunstanton to Commemorate Lives Lost in Devastating 1953 Flood

Saturday January 31st 2026, 11am

Hunstanton will honour the memory of 31 people who lost their lives when violent gales created a deadly storm surge in the North Sea. 15 local residents died, along with 16 members of the United States Air Force from the 67th Air Rescue Squadron, who were stationed at RAF Sculthorpe and billeted in the town.

A short service will take place at the Flood Memorial in Esplanade Gardens, Hunstanton. For more information contact cllr.marziano@hunstantontowncouncil.gov.uk

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Championing farming

Terry Jermy MP. terry.jermy.mp@parliament.uk

As a rural MP, farming and the environment is at the heart of the constituency, and throughout the election, I made clear it would be one of my top priorities.

It is for this reason I spent the last year campaigning against changes to Agricultural Property Relief. Having met with dozens of South West Norfolk farmers, both in the constituency and in Parliament, and working closely with both the National Farmers' Union (NFU) and the Country Land and Business Association, I promised I would voice their concerns about this policy, and I did so.

I wrote directly to the Prime Minister on a number of occasions, lobbied the Treasury and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), met with Secretaries of State and other Ministers, and spoke in the House of Commons raising these concerns. I took the voices of South West Norfolk farmers with me in every conversation and in every correspondence, urging the Government to find another way and mitigate the worst impacts of this policy.

Just a few weeks ago, the Government showed it had listened, announcing that the threshold would rise from £1 million to £2.5 million per person, meaning up to £5 million for married couples or civil partners.

The change represents a significant boost for family farms and rural businesses, helping to ensure that agricultural land and property can be passed on to the next generation



without forcing sales to meet inheritance tax liabilities. The announcement has been welcomed by the NFU.

Another aspect of farming that has been a core focus of mine has been ensuring the Government quickly re-establishes the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI). SFI is a government scheme that helps fund the implementation of sustainable farming practices and provides much-needed financial assistance for farmers. Though the scheme had aspects that needed addressing, it was a key fund for farmers and growers to access, and I was disappointed with its sudden closure. I urged DEFRA to commit to bringing the scheme back and presented findings from a survey I conducted with local farmers to the Secretary of State and other

Ministers showing ways that the scheme could be improved.

I was very pleased with the announcement in January that the scheme will return, and I look forward to hopefully seeing some of the suggestions proposed by South West Norfolk farmers in its new iteration.

Whilst I recognise these announcements won't solve every issue, they are both significant steps forward and will do much to support small family farms, many of which are right here in the constituency, and they both show that this Government listens.

I will continue to work with my colleagues in the Labour Rural Research Group and as a member of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee to raise concerns and champion farming.

Wild in Westminster and West Norfolk

The importance of the hospitality sector



After a walk in the countryside or along the North Norfolk coast at this time of year, one of my favourite things is ending up in a cosy pub. Across North West Norfolk, we are fortunate to have so many great options to choose from. But they are more than simply a place for a pint and local food; they are at the heart of our communities and often the last hub in villages where people can meet and

socialise. Of course, they are also a big part of what attracts visitors to our beautiful area.

The hospitality sector is one of the largest employers in North West Norfolk, sustaining thousands of jobs directly and indirectly through supply chains that include local growers, farmers, and brewers. For young people, the industry provides valuable entry-level opportunities and part time roles which can then grow into careers.

But life is very tough for hospitality businesses right now. They are facing increased costs for hiring people as well as large rises in business rates. It is worth remembering that the last Conservative government cut VAT to 5% during Covid to support the sector and gave a 75% discount on business rates to hospitality, leisure, and retail businesses. Yet after the election, one of the Chancellor's first decisions

was to scrap that and double their bills. In her second Budget, a business rates raid meant an average pub faced paying £12,900 extra over the next three years.

Speak to any landlord and you will soon learn how unaffordable that burden is coming on top of energy costs, wage pressures, and rising supply costs. It is the cumulative impact that risks a Buckaroo effect with businesses saying enough is enough. 90,000 jobs have been lost in the sector since the Chancellor's first Budget which introduced a £3.4 billion jobs tax cost for hospitality firms.

Given the sectors importance to our area, I have championed it consistently since I was first elected and repeatedly warned Treasury ministers of the damaging impact their increases are having. In October, my party committed to using savings in welfare spending and other areas to abolish business rates for pubs, shops, hotels, and other venues with a rateable value up to £110,000. At Treasury questions in the House of Commons, I even encouraged the Chancellor to adopt our policy. Sadly she refused.

Hospitality businesses along the coast and in our villages and towns are resilient. They must be in the face of such headwinds. With creativity, investment, and high quality staff, they continue to attract customers and support our local communities.

But Government should be making it easier, not harder to do business. So I applaud everyone in the sector battling to succeed and grow. I will continue to do all I can to support it and promote policies that create an environment that ensures their vital role is recognised. Cheers!

james.wild.mp@parliament.uk 020 7219 6968



Please email your MP now about compensating WASPI women

The Government continues to refuse to compensate more than 3.5 million women born in the 1950s who were affected by the DWP's failure to properly inform them of State Pension age increases.

Many women had their retirement plans thrown into chaos and were left with no time to make alternative arrangements. Those affected were forced to spend what little savings they had and were denied the opportunity to make informed decision which turned their lives upside down.

Despite an apology from ministers for their mistakes, the Government is still refusing to comply with the Parliamentary Ombudsman's instruction to compensate WASPI women.

Through its Judicial Review legal action, WASPI has forced the Government to back down and agree to retake the decision on compensation before 2 March 2026.

It's vital that MPs do all they can to urge the Government to make the right decision this time round. Can you spare two minutes to encourage them to support our calls for fair compensation?

The emails of MPs in this area are:

james.wild.mp@parliament.uk
 terry.jermy.mp@parliament.uk
 steff.aquarone.mp@parliament.uk
 jerome.mayhew.mp@parliament.uk

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Allez Chic will close permanently on Friday 27th February

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Thank you and farewell

Made famous by Andrea Bocelli and Sarah Brightman, 'Time to Say Goodbye', or 'Con te partiro' is an Italian song that became a global hit, symbolising new chapters or farewells, and it seems an appropriate theme tune to this month's column.

"After 13 unforgettable years, the time feels right for me to retire," says Cheryl Daubney.

"Saying goodbye to the shop is incredibly bittersweet; Allez Chic has been such a big part of my life, and I will miss the day-to-day buzz, my wonderful staff, and the many familiar faces who have supported the business over the years.

"I am so proud of everything we achieved together - the friendships formed, the money raised for charity through our fashion shows, and those special moments when someone finds an outfit that makes them feel wonderful.

"Even after all these years, it still makes me smile when I see Allez Chic outfits being worn out and about by you all."

The store closes permanently on Friday 27th February and to clear the stock there are genuine bargains across many of the brands you've come to love, including remaining pieces from the Marble collection. This will be Allez Chic's last sale, and the final chance to shop with us before Allez Chic closes.

While it's not easy to close this chapter, I'm also looking forward to a slower pace of life — one with more time for my garden, for friends and family, and for all the things a busy shop life doesn't always allow; it's my time to say goodbye," Cheryl added.



News from The Barking Bugle

Fluffy and Famous: my moment in the spotlight

By Ziggy Bear

Ziggy Bear here — reporter, charity helper, accidental royal lookalike, and, for one very exciting moment, a dog in the national news.

For those of you who follow The Barking Bugle, you'll know that my sister, Miss Zsa Zsa, usually has the spotlight. She's been on TV, in newspapers, and basically everywhere that matters in the dog world. Effortlessly glamorous and adorable, she rarely has to lift a paw to be noticed.

But recently, it was my turn to shine — and in a way that no one could have expected.

But first, some good deeds! Christmas began with a very important mission: a charity collection for PACT Animal Sanctuary at Tesco. Armed with waggy tails, our best sit-stays, and extremely persuasive puppy-dog eyes, a brilliant team of dogs and humans came together to raise funds for animals in need.

With the help of Miss Zsa Zsa, Barley, Marmite, Ollie and our long-suffering pawrents, we raised an incredible £567. That money will make a real difference — helping PACT care for, feed, and rehome animals who are waiting for their second chance.

After the collection, we proudly delivered all the donations to the PACT charity shop in King's Lynn, where the welcome was as warm as ever. If you haven't visited one of their shops, do — they're full of treasures and there's usually a good chance of getting a biscuit!

Then came the moment that added an unforgettable chapter to my canine adventures.

While out on a walk near Sandringham, a crowd had gathered outside the church to see King Charles emerge. Cameras clicked, whispers spread and excitement filled the air. And then — in what can only be described as a moment of pure canine regality — there I was, wearing my very own crown (as one does), standing proudly, looking my absolute best.

Before anyone realized what had happened, some of the



photographers focused on me instead of the human King Charles. For a few glorious minutes, it was Ziggy Bear the Crowned Dog who had captured the media's attention. Cameras snapped, flashes popped, and the next thing I knew, my fluffy face was in the national newspapers!

Things escalated further when BBC Radio Norfolk called to interview me about my sudden rise to fame. Yes, I barked my way through a radio interview with a little help from mum. Yes, I was very professional. And yes, Miss Zsa Zsa questioned the media's judgement insisting she was equally newsworthy and demanded an agent!

So here we are: from planned charity dog to newspaper dog to radio dog — all in one very exciting month.

But if there's one thing I want this moment to highlight, it's not crowns or cameras that matter — it's kindness. Every wag, every donation, every shared smile helps charities like PACT continue their incredible work.

As for me? I'm back to muddy paws, long walks, treat negotiations, and of course, repawting all the latest news for The Barking Bugle... but I'll always remember December as the month Ziggy Bear had her moment.

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Borough Council news

Cllr Terry Parish, Heacham Ward which includes Sedgeford and Fring

Happy New Year to all my readers and even to those not so discerning. The last time I wrote this article was in November. There should be plenty to write about but Christmas occurred.

A key happening in Sedgeford is the resolution of Norfolk County Council's, NCC's, planning application for the development of the school site. It went to planning committee on the 12th January with a recommendation to approve. This follows inclusion of the minimum requirement of two affordable homes in the application. NCC backed down at the end of November when they were told refusal would be recommended if they didn't comply with rules about such provision. Whether other Parish council requests were agreed I won't know until after this article has been sent to press.

There is another side to this development. It's the first new build application since Anglian Water, last year, advised the planning authority that the capacity of Heacham Waste Water Treatment Works, HWWTW, has been reached. That is, they would oppose any new development proposals within its very wide service area which includes Heacham, Sedgeford, Hunstanton, and places in between and around.

In the application agenda for the Sedgeford School it states, 'Anglian Water: OBJECTION The proposal connects to HWWTW which does not currently have capacity.' Planning officers said, 'Comments from Anglian Water are noted – given the Right to Connect and considering the existing drainage infrastructure in place – and it

should be noted that Anglian Water are not a statutory consultee – the principle of foul drainage connection to mains sewer is acceptable.' (words correct, order changed to make sense as other detail omitted).

The Right to Connect is a rather stupid planning law applied across the country. Any developer has the right to connect to a sewer system whether that system can cope or not. The onus is on the water company to ensure the system is adequate. HWWTW has been under pressure for years to cope with increasing tourism (sewage throughput can double in the holiday season) and more housing development. Government dictates seek to increase development beyond that of existing and reasonable plans. HWWTW does need an upgrade but that will have to be substantial and it is currently planned for the early 2030's.

It is unlikely that the Sedgeford development will blow the system but the impact of new development will be incremental. This one has been ignored on the basis it is replacing a school; will the next will follow suit? There is no apparent appetite to heed the warnings. If the system eventually discharges untreated sewage, it will be into The Wash with the resulting impact on the tourist trade, fishing, and locals. Perhaps nothing will happen between now and the planned upgrade and the local planning authority will get away with taking risks. I don't think that is a gamble in the best interests of our corner of West Norfolk. I will be raising this matter at every opportunity.

Leaping to a significant Borough issue which commenced, formally, at the end of the first week of January: The first steps towards a Town Council for King's Lynn were recommended by the Electoral Arrangements Committee, to go to Full Council for ratification. If agreed then consultation and communication will begin. It will be a complex but rapid process as the matter has to be sorted before the government stops any internal council changes prior to local government reorganisation, LGR.

I put King's Lynn Town Council within the corporate plan back in 2023. Feelings then were mixed and it was put on the back burner for action in another year or so.

Since then, the Labour government has decided on LGR and a serious need for a town council to be considered has been realised. It is the most effective way within a Unitary Council to ensure that the assets in Kings Lynn are best retained for the use of residents and that residents will be better able to have influence over how the town is managed.

The Borough Council was created in 1974 and named West Norfolk. In 1981 it was changed to King's Lynn and West Norfolk. A (deliberate) error kept Kings Lynn unparished – no Parish or Town Council to manage its local affairs. Similarly, Borough assets like car parks in Hunstanton were retained by the Borough and were not devolved to that town. Those of you living within a Parished area have a Parish Council. Part of your Council tax is the Parish precept. This money is spent, locally, by the Parish Councils. Kings Lynn does not have such a precept and local services which would be paid for by a Parish are supplied by the Borough. Conversely, Kings Lynn generates a lot of money and significant amounts of it help support services across the Borough. So, there are swings and roundabouts in the current democratic make up of KLWNBC. However, LGR will stir things up and, particularly, if a single unitary is formed, King's Lynn's assets will not be protected and a big reduction in councillors will lessen public representation.

All this will be explained in Borough communications and consultation. This will likely be just with residents of King's Lynn in the first instance. Public consultation on LGR ended on the 11th January. I hope sufficient numbers of you took part and I hope you strongly supported the three unitary model which is the best outcome for West Norfolk. If you are consulted about a Town Council for King's Lynn, I recommend you support that proposal too.

Other local matters. The Lamsey Lane traffic lights appear to be doing a good job. If you have a different opinion, please email me. The new post office in Heacham is enjoying some trade but could, no doubt, do with more. On planning matters; several have come in as retrospective, i.e. the work is done and then an



application made. Please do not do this as it can backfire and if the application eventually makes it to committee, retrospectives are not appreciated. It is always best to talk through your proposals with planning officers prior to making an application.

If you have concerns about an application which may affect you or your property, the correct procedure is to submit your concerns to the planning authority in writing. This may easily be done on the planning portal. You can also contact me and I will look at the proposal and the site so that I can form an opinion and raise questions with officers. It is unreasonable to verbally abuse neighbours or workmen.

Back to the Borough. Significant improvements at Lynnsport are moving closer as consultative and financial aspects move towards resolution. There are also advanced proposals for Padel tennis courts in Hunstanton. This is a sport which has, apparently, caused a 'mania' across the nation. If you want to know more, run a search for it on your devices. Include 'problems with padel' or 'padel noise' in your criteria. You will find that courts should be located well away from residential housing and, even then, have sound mitigation measures in place including full enclosure, and sound proofing. These, of course, are best thought through before complaints about noise occur.

Budget proposals for 2026-2027 are coming forward and councillors will have been briefed in January. The Full Council budget meeting is on the 26th February. I will endeavour to find any aspects detrimental to residents of my Ward. I am particularly looking for positive changes to car parking charges at Heacham but am not holding my breath.

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Launch of Nurture Cafe for Parents in South Lynn Baptist Church



Parents and young people, health professionals and community workers launched the ground-breaking new Nurture Cafe in South Lynn Baptist Church on Tuesday 13 January. Warm, welcoming, friendly and informal, the Nurture Cafe is the brainchild of Rev June Love, based in South Lynn, an area with lots of families, large families, disabled families, and significant need. It will meet every Tuesday 8.45-11.15 am. A meeting place for parents to speak to Health Visitors, Development and Community Workers. For advice and support round the coffee table. Without the need to wait for an appointment in a clinical setting. Baby weighing and pre-booked 1- to- 1's, with the Child Development Worker, are on offer.



I am funding the cafe, from my County Councillor Community Grant, so drinks and snacks are free for families.



Kevin Howard, Commissioning Manager for Children's Services and Advanced Public Health Practitioner Bryony Keeble, came from County Hall. Emily Booth, Chair of the Parents of St Michael's Primary came. Mums and young people, from babies to teenagers.

Wellbeing, help for ADHD, school places and housing conditions, were just some of the topics parents wanted to ask the professionals about.

The aim of this important new initiative is to bring help to parents when they need it, right in the community and without the need to navigate through the minefield of online info. This is Early Intervention and Prevention at its best.



Will the Borough Council Sell off the Land Beneath Older Residents' Feet, and leave them in the Lurch?

Need and vulnerability in South Lynn extends to the older generation. Last week, I discovered the shocking news that the Borough is planning to sell off the freehold of older people's homes in South Lynn on the open market. It's in a list of assets to be sold off. But the leader and deputy never even thought to consult the residents, or local councillors first. Has the Independent-led Borough Council abandoned its values and its retired residents, in a bid to make a quick buck to fund the overspend of major projects? The Hardwick Bridge Park Homes Estate in South Lynn is restricted to the over 55's. This is people's forever homes, not a holiday park. Park Homes are cheaper to buy than other homes. Unlike other housing, residents do not own the land their Park Home sits on. They pay a monthly Pitch Fee to the company that maintains the estate roads and lighting and is regulated by a licence from the Borough.



But Park Homes residents, up and down the land, are notoriously vulnerable to exploitation from unscrupulous developers. If the Borough sells off the freehold, it could put the future of the whole estate at risk. This must stop now. I have spoken with Borough Officers, written to the borough leader and councillors.

I supported the Guildhall Project when it cost £12 million and when it increased to £20 million. But alone of all Borough Councillors, I voted against the soaring increase to £30 million last Summer. Because the Council simply hasn't got £15 million of that £30 million total. So now it's selling off the family silver, to fund a project it will never own. Putting older people's security at risk is a price too great. The Guildhall costs should be pared back to an affordable level. The Borough should never put its older residents at risk.

Stopping the Wisbech Incinerator

I am presenting this Motion to the Borough Council. I hope every Councillor supports it.

Motion to Stop Incinerator on West Norfolk Border:

This Council has a proud tradition of standing up again the South Lynn Incinerator - and held the public poll, in which 65,000 residents voted No. These residents have not gone away. Even after Planning Permission, Government stopped the incinerator. Residents, including Clenchwarton and West Lynn, dread the prospect of being downwind of two 90-metre-high Incinerator Stacks, close to the West Norfolk border in Wisbech, one of the biggest incinerators in Europe. This Council is one of 4 "host" authorities for the Wisbech Incinerator, and instructs the leader to write to Government to halt the projects.

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Brancaster Village Hall (BVH) news

Geoff Wingrove

It has been another eventful year for BVH, ending on a particular high, beginning with the hugely successful Winter Fair at the end of November, followed by Christmas Bingo and the usual events organised by Bar 71. Of special mention were the Community Choir Carols on 18th December and a magnificent children's party and entertainment organised by the Baby and Toddler Group. 2025 ended with the New Year's Party on 31st December – a fitting conclusion to a very successful year.

Dates for your diary

Valentines's Evening: Saturday 14th February 9.00pm to late. Music by BLIS, a band from Wells, and food will be available.

Easter Bash: 4th April. Music by GOZ unplugged and pizza from Bordolis.

Thai Food Night: Saturday 23rd May. The return of our ever-popular Thai food nights.

For enquiries, please contact us at bvhsetup@gmail.com

FROM THE BRANCASTER PARISH ARCHIVE: THE WINTER WATCHES WITH NCI BRANCASTER: DECEMBER 2025

Having joined and reported on the experience of attending a summer watch at Brancaster NCI station two years or so ago, I thought I should join some winter watches to report on the experience of Watchkeepers in this season. I was able to join watches in December on three occasions, which afforded a range of weather and user conditions including strong winds, rain, sunshine and cold.



The two Watchkeepers who kindly allowed me to join them were Jo and Adrian, a husband-and-wife team, who had the 1.00pm to 4.00pm watch on Tuesday afternoons. They relieved John H and Simon T, who covered the 10.00am to 1.00pm shift.

Jo and Adrian are fairly new to the service, having both recently qualified as certified Watchkeepers. Adrian is a retired Design Engineer and Jo was a Veterinary Microbiologist at DEFRA, working on animal disease diagnosis. They moved to Hunstanton ten years ago whilst

still commuting to the Midlands for work and finally settled there on retirement five years ago. They know the area very well and, following retirement, wanted to work in the community on something that would make a real difference.

They heard about the Coastwatch at Brancaster from a friend at the Hunstanton Heritage Centre, whose partner is a Watchkeeper, John H. Both Adrian and Jo had always been interested in the more technical side of tides, mapping and the equipment involved. So, when they saw on Facebook that NCI Brancaster were looking for volunteers, they contacted the Station Manager and joined a watch to experience it. They quickly learned that the service made an important contribution to the community in ensuring safety for people using the beach and coastal waters. They would, after training, be in a position to make a difference.

The training period was thorough and intensive, covering all aspects of the watchkeeping role including observation, chart work, CCTV, weather and tidal conditions and the all-important logbook; they will complete the VHF radio course in the new year. Jo and Adrian's training went smoothly with a lot of support and guidance from their trainer John G. Although at first sight the contents of the NCI manual seem very extensive, an understanding soon fell into place. The certification process, conducted by Richard B, the Deputy Station Manager went well, and they were both awarded their certificates and epaulettes. One incident during the training period that I have already reported on demonstrated to Jo and Adrian the importance of the service they had joined. Jo managed to identify and locate a lost child

on a very crowded beach using her observation skills - much to the relief of distraught parents. The incident also meant that, during training, they experienced the full extent of the incident process, including the interaction with HMCG and Norfolk Constabulary, who attended.

I joined Jo and Adrian on 2nd December for part of their watch; it was a day when the sun shone and there were a great many people on the beach walking dogs, going to see the seals at the western end of the beach, spotting the many waders and geese, or just enjoying a walk. The activity logged involved a number of fishing vessels heading for Brancaster Staithe harbour or making their way to King's Lynn to discharge their catches. Although a relatively quiet time, the all-round observation had to be maintained, as there were always conditions where unwary people could be quickly stranded on sandbanks or the Scolt Head Island by the tidal conditions.

The second observation was very different, as there were strong winds and a scattering of rain at first as storm Bram approached. Fortunately, the storm changed direction and moved north, bypassing East Anglia to a large extent. The dire weather warnings had kept most people from the beach, so during this watch there were few people about - mostly walking dogs in what were still very windy conditions. A small fishing boat made its way to King's Lynn in very rough conditions and there were one or two other fishing boats out. Jo and Adrian kept up the routine tasks that needed to be undertaken, while remaining vigilant to what was happening on the beach and coastal waters. It was interesting on this occasion to hear that during the previous watch, just after I had left, they had observed four members of the public on the island at Scolt Head just after low tide. They clearly intended to return to Brancaster beach and, after hesitating for a while, decided to cross the channel. They did achieve this, but with obvious difficulty as a result of the strong current – even though the water was only thigh deep – and returned to the beach extremely wet and obviously tired. Throughout, the Watchkeepers, Jo and Adrian, had maintained a visual and CCTV watch, ready to call assistance should the need arise.

The third observation was on a day between Christmas and New Year. It started as a bright but cold day, and the beach was quite busy with couples walking dogs and families out for an afternoon stroll. As the tide was fairly high and rising, the dangers of walkers being cut off on the sandbanks or attempting to cross the harbour channel were already past. By mid-afternoon the weather had begun to decline, with rain showers thinning out the walkers on the beach. A National Trust ranger called into the station for a chat and to report that she had come to deal with a dead seal on the beach which had been reported to them by an earlier NCI watch. Although this was a quiet winter watch, it was reassuring to witness that the Watchkeepers maintained their observation throughout to keep beach users safe.

I would like to thank Jo and Adrian for allowing me to join the watches and experience their professionalism and commitment. The photographs show Jo and Adrian on duty in the station and an image taken by Jo of a rainbow which shows the beauty of the beach that attracts so many visitors.



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Suzanne Stevenson



Derrick Soanes

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A message from John Harris: Thank you to everyone who supported my Piano Party in December which raised £570. This has been split between Diabetes UK and the King's Lynn Night Shelter. My next event will be The Queen Elizabeth II Centenary Memorial Concert on 18th April. More details to follow in the March magazine.



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Phobbies Disabilities Activity Club

Mark Shelton

Phobbies, the Dersingham club that provides activities for adults with a range of disabilities, finished off 2025 with a fabulous Christmas party at Dersingham sports and social club on 18th December.

Members of the club were joined by family members and other carers, and everyone got together to make festive paper chains, play pass the parcel and took part in an active rendition of The Twelve Days of Christmas. There was then plenty of festive party food and fruit juice to eat and drink before we joined in with singing and dancing to live music by Jamming Joe. A star of the party was re-homed greyhound Peggy-Sue who came dressed as a reindeer and was stroked by one and all! It was also a great time for family members to catch up with all the Phobbies volunteers and other helpers.



The club then had a break over Christmas and New Year, and resumed its activities on Thursday 8th January. Everyone swapped stories of what they did over Christmas, what presents they received and what celebrations they held to see in the New Year, for those able to stay up that late, over tea and biscuits before we got onto the main activity, which was using papier-mache to cover shoe boxes to eventually make sturdy decorative storage boxes or art pieces. This activity will carry through several weeks to allow the different layers of papier-mache to dry before decorations and pictures can be added.

Maggie Ponder, chair of the club's organising committee said, "Most people came to the Christmas celebration in colourful festive jumpers and everyone had an amazing time at the party. At the end we were nearly all worn out after lots of singing and dancing. It is so good to see everyone involved with Phobbies and their family members and carers having such a wonderful time. It was a great way to finish another year that has been full of activities, and everyone seemed happy and excited to be back in January and were eager to start a new activity".

The club is run entirely by volunteers and if you enjoy assisting the less able, or you can help with fund raising then please come along. No regular commitment is needed. Activities vary from painting, drawing, model making, knitting, rug making or just talking to each other and giving encouragement and support.

Phobbies meets every Thursday from 10.00 am to 2.00 pm at Dersingham social club, Lynn Road. Weekly subscription is £2; tea, coffee and biscuits are provided free but everyone brings a packed lunch. Anyone who is interested in joining can just drop in on a Thursday session or contact Maggie Ponder on 07967 799816.

National Coastwatch Institution (NCI) Brancaster

2025 has been another very busy year for the NCI Brancaster station, as the following statistics show: Reportable incidents dealt with: 18, Vessels logged: 4000, VHF radio weather broadcasts: over 1700, Hours donated by volunteers: over 4300

The 2026 station plan includes strengthening the station structure, with two new Deputy Managers and other volunteers taking on crucial roles: Adrian: Computer and Website, Jo: Fundraising, Publicity and Social Media, Sarah P: Coastal and Water Safety

There has been one new joiner, Luke, who will start his training and two successful assessments – Barrie and Sarah P: we wish them all well.

It was with great sadness that the death of Jonathan was announced shortly before Christmas. Jonathan was a founder member of the station and made a significant contribution by taking on the financial role, which he carried out in an exemplary manner. Our thoughts are with his wife and family at this very sad time.

If you would like more information on NCI Brancaster, or to find out more about becoming a volunteer, please contact Richard Burrows, Deputy Station Manager, on 07535 612777. FB NCI Brancaster.

New coffee shop in Dersingham has 'record breaking first week'



It's been absolutely incredibly busy, we are so, so grateful. Everybody has been so supportive and lovely. Day one we opened it was snowing, we weren't expecting anybody, but people came - it was fantastic."

It's a week since Alex Biagioni and Tony Hares relocated their family business along Manor Road, and reviews so far from customers compliment the 'relaxing atmosphere' and 'excellent coffees and delicious cakes'.

I meet Alex as she's busily preparing for the day ahead, "We've had

a record breaking week for Biagio's in total," she tells me, "It's been a week of chaos but in the best way, and it's been an exhausting week, but in the best way. We're so lucky to be in a village that comes out and supports."

The couple started their business in 2022 after buying a horsebox, then ran a successful store in East Rudham.

"We like a challenge," Alex adds, "We had the other place running until the 23rd of December, and Tony was here trying to renovate alongside my dad, I was coming after work too."

It's a new lease of life for the space - after Petals Tea Room was taken over in 2024 then sadly closed in September due to unpaid debts.

The couple have signed a 5 years lease, and tell me they want to 'ground ourselves here for even longer'.

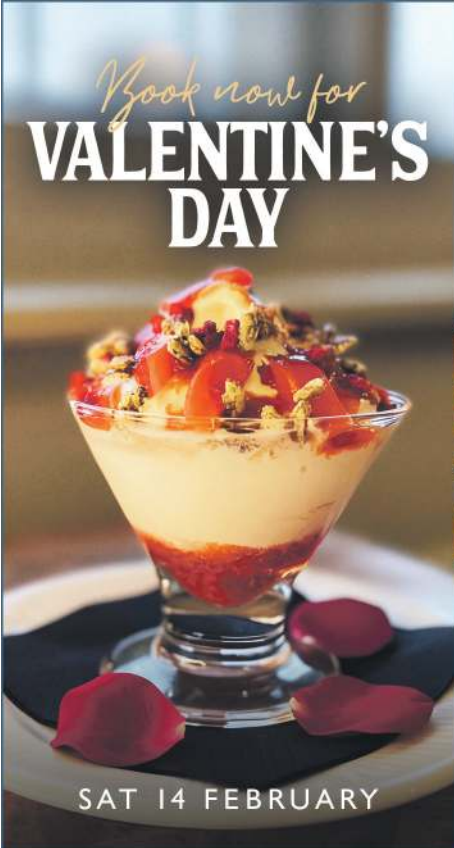
"We love the village - and the community - so when the opportunity came to be here - we just jumped at the chance," says Alex.

"It's been a hard slog to get here, an emotional rollercoaster getting here. But now we're here I think we're all incredibly happy for the future and looking forward to growing the business in a new village."

The menu's appealing - from the Italian coffee to the home made cakes and sandwiches.

Alex says she's excited to welcome new and old customers, "We said from the beginning, we don't want to be just another coffee shop, never wanted to be somewhere where you come in and you're forgotten about.

"We always wanted to be a community, a family - because we care about each person that comes in."



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Hunstanton Society

On 18th February we look forward to a talk to be given by the Proprietor of the Princess Theatre, Brian Hallard. He has titled this talk as being 'Life of Brian'.

We expect that this may well be rather popular and attendance is likely to exceed the capacity of the Heritage Centre. As a result Brian has very kindly agreed to hold the talk at the Princess Theatre instead of the Heritage Centre. Entry fees should be paid as usual at the door on the evening. We look forward to a great turn-out. Refreshments will be available after Brian's talk at the Bar of the Theatre.

Smithdon High School Prizes

New Prizes provided by the Hunstanton Society for Smithdon High School were awarded at their Prizegiving Ceremony at the end of November last year. These were acquired as prizes with a difference for the school and helps promote the Society in the Community. We are working with the teachers at the school to bring groups of students to the Centre to find out what they can learn from our displays. The glass trophies were bought from Langham Glass in Fakenham whilst the bases were made by Hunstanton Men's Shed. Depicting a wave as seen on the sea front at Hunstanton.



Harley Stewart Geography Prize



Charlie Leverett – History Prize

Objects of interest – Souvenir China

A previous article looked at the crested china collection in the Heritage Centre. But we also have a large collection of other souvenir china.

These are mass-produced and many were imported. You can imagine Victorians and Edwardians complaining "We don't make anything in this country anymore" (Sound familiar?). The height of the Industrial Revolution in Britain was largely over by the 1820s, and so by the birth of New Hunstanton, the movement of low-cost manufacturing to Europe and Asia was well under way. We have many items made in Germany (some marked "Thuringia" which is a German state) and a few later ones from Japan.

The objects are remarkably varied, and visitors to the centre can get a good look at many examples when it reopens in February, but generally there are two types of design. The first is a generic one, where "A Present from Hunstanton", or similar, is added to an ornate design, but this could be anywhere as there is no specific local image. The second one is specific, not in the object itself, but in the image that was added.

The demand for these continued well into the twentieth century – as evidenced by the "bathing belle" – this is a bit racy for the Victorian or Edwardian period. (pictured top right)

Other "generic" items on display show floral designs, lucky heather, lucky black cats and ladies' shoes.

The following object is an acorn, with a sprig of lucky heather. The



badly placed that it shows neither the wireless station nor the lighthouse?

"From Hunstanton" stamp just fits.



The objects more specific to Hunstanton are made so by the transfer prints showing the famous local landmarks. Who wouldn't want a rather sad-looking china fish, marked "WIRELESS Station and Lighthouse, Hunstanton" where the transfer print is so



This is a common print – you can see it in its entirety on many other objects. The Lighthouse itself is one of the most popular images – another version is shown on the next picture – note this is an "Arcadian China" object (Stoke-on-Trent), also stamped for the agent – Burgess & Co, High Street, Hunstanton. This was a long-established China shop. Other pictures in the collection include the pier, the cross, the promenade (North Prom), the cliffs, and the convalescent home.

Philip Thomas, Hunstanton Society



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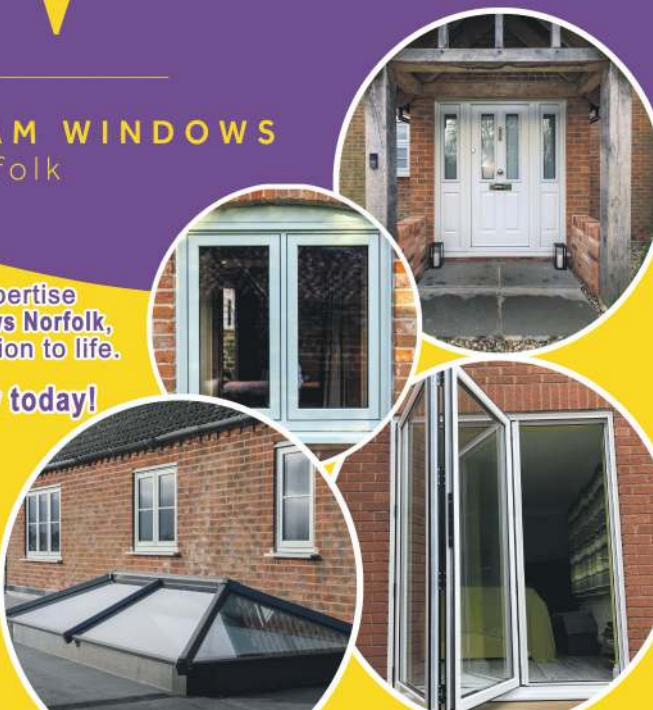
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An anniversary worth remembering

John Maiden

It is a well-known fact that DJ Trump does not believe in man-made climate change. In days gone by this denial of the patently obvious would have seen him out of a job, at the very least. For my part I discovered at a very early age that the majority of people who get away with bullying are really cowards at heart.

If we can stop Trump from pumping oil, or starting World War Three, there is still a good chance that the mid-term elections in the USA will prevent him from making a bigger fool of himself than I believe he is already. In the meantime, we must go out of our way to recognise the things we have in common with the many Americans, with whom we have shared so much over many years.

In the case of my generation this includes World War Two, the Cold War, and the 1953 floods. It is to their credit that our current Town Councillors have informed us all of the date and time our shared loss and the heroism of 1953 will be commemorated at the Floods Memorial on Reis Leming Way, in the Esplanade Gardens, on the last day of January.

It brings to mind the unfortunate youngsters who had been classmates of mine at Hunstanton Primary School, prior to my selection for a boarding place at Wymondham College in September 1951. It was not until I was contacted several months prior to the 60th Floods anniversary by RAF Flt Sgt Mark Service, in his capacity as the official historian of the USAF 67th Special Operations Squadron, which was activated at RAF Sculthorpe on November 14th 1952 as the USAF 67th Air Rescue Squadron.



The facts are recorded on signs at both ends of Reis Leming Way, with a more recent sign on the path branching off towards the sea, dedicated to Freeman A Kilpatrick, the other USAF airman who was also awarded the George Medal.

If I survive my 88th birthday, I hope to be back next month with a message of support for all those people, young and old alike, who are trying a vegan diet as the surest way to prevent cruelty to animals.



King's Lynn Probud Club

Probus stands for Professional and Businessmen, and relates to the National organisation created to provide the social friendship enjoyed by members at their former workplaces when they retire or semi-retired from their full time employment.

Locally, the Probus Club of King's Lynn (which is totally autonomous and therefore not bound by any National rules) was founded in 1978 to provide that social interaction between retired or semi-retired members. So who are we and what do we do? We are a diverse group of men from all sorts of backgrounds and occupations including all three services, and find it most interesting to meet and exchange views and experiences from our former employments, and generally to 'put the world to rights'. We meet at 10am every Wednesday morning at the Knight's Hill Hotel, South Wootton for coffee and biscuits, for a friendly chat, except for the 3rd Wednesday in the month, when we meet at 12 for 12.30pm at the Knights Hill Hotel (main hotel restaurant) for lunch, often with a speaker from a local business or organisation which is always interesting and informative. In September each year, we hold an Annual General Meeting when we elect a new President and a small Committee to guide the Club through the year ahead.

Various outings, visits and events are held throughout the year when our wives or partners and friends join us for the President's Lunch, Strawberry Tea and Christmas Lunch, and recently a tour of the Royal Sandringham Stud followed by a meal at the Anvil at Congham, and a trip on the North Norfolk Railway from Sheringham to Holt with fish and chips and an ice cream! Other outings are being arranged for the near future. The Joining Fee is only £15 and the Annual Subscription is only £15.



Probus Club donation to Tapping House from left: Clare (Tapping House), Secretary Ivan Jordan, President Bob Ward, Club Member Secretary Chris Trick

If this might be of interest to you, simply drop in for a free coffee and biscuit at the Knight's Hill Hotel at 10am any Wednesday morning, for friendly chat (except for the third Wednesday in the month - see paragraph above). You can always contact our President Bob Ward (01553 617374) or our Secretary Ivan Jordan on (01553) 670228, or any member you may know.

Bob and Ivan have lived in the King's Lynn area all their lives and will be well known to many local people, and look forward to renewing acquaintances and having a chat.

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Hunstanton Lifeboat Station

The village church at Docking was packed on January 2 for the funeral of Alan Clarke, a highly-decorated lifeboat helm at our station, who passed away at the age of 77 in December.

His coffin was borne aloft by crew members draped in a RNLI ensign, as fellow volunteers formed a guard of honour with oars aloft, while our standard fluttered in the chill breeze from his beloved North Sea.

Alan joined the crew when Hunstanton RNLI re-opened in 1979, more than four decades after it was mothballed in the 1930s.

He became the first helm on its D-Class lifeboat, which was replaced by a larger B-Class lifeboat which was the forerunner of the fast inshore craft we still operate today.

During a 14-year career, Alan took part in 200 launches which included some of the most courageous rescues carried out by its newly-fledged crew and was honoured three times for his bravery by the charity that saves lives at sea.

In 1985, he was awarded the charity that saves lives at sea's Bronze Medal and a Silk Cut Nautical Award in recognition of his courage, skill and determination at the helm when the crews rescued a man, together with his sailboard, who was in difficulties close to the wreck off Brancaster in a westerly gale and rough seas.

In 1988, he was awarded a Second-Service Clasp to his Bronze Medal for the courage and seamanship he showed when landing an injured man from a fishing vessel in The Wash, in a strong southerly gale, short steep seas and total darkness.

In 1989 he was given the Thanks of the Institution inscribed on Vellum for the seamanship he displayed when rescuing a crew member from a yacht which had run aground at Thornham in rough seas.

He was also awarded a Royal Humane Society certificate of merit in 1981, along with the crew for the rescue of a dog from a



speedboat whose owner had fallen overboard and had been taken to hospital, leaving the speedboat circling at full power.

Alan never lost his love for the sea or the RNLI. In his later years, he would often call in at the station to hear about the latest shouts and spin yarns over a cuppa with the crew.

He was incredibly proud of how the station has evolved and adapted over the years to keep our coastline safe.

Alan's legendary courage and determination have inspired generations of crew at Hunstanton RNLI. They include his grandson Ryan, who is one of our present-day helms.

Bravery came easily to Alan. He would always press on, even through the worst of conditions to reach those in danger.

His picture still looks down on us in the boathouse, while the rescues he carried out are painted on the walls.

We know his spirit will always be with us, whenever we launch to those who need us.

Fair Winds and Following Seas,
Hunstanton RNLI



Alan (right) with grandson Ryan and Rodney Foster in March 2023. Photo T&A



From left Charles LeStrange Meakin, Eric Langford, Rodney Foster and Alan Clarke
Photo T&A

More lifeboat news on page 8.



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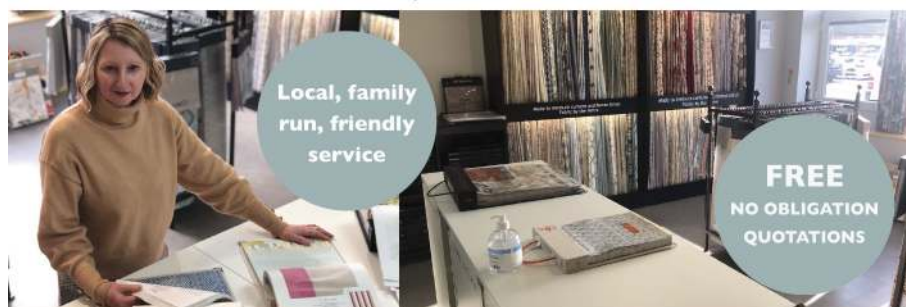
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Helipad relocation marks journey to new hospital

Monday 12 January, marked a monumental moment in the journey towards a new hospital in King's Lynn with the opening of a new purpose-built helipad.



First flight on the new QEH helipad. Photo QEH

The relocated helipad for The Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) in King's Lynn is now fully operational on the opposite side of the road along the B1145. This significant step paves the way for the Trust's new multi-storey car park due to be begun onsite in 2026, which will allow for the New QEH to be built on the current main car park.

The new facility has been generously funded through a donation by the HELP Appeal, the only charity in the country dedicated to funding NHS helipads, which has donated £516,000 to cover the entire cost of the new QEH helipad.

Plans for the new helipad have been worked on with the East Anglian Air Ambulance (EAAA) who use this important resource regularly for operational reasons due to its central location in the eastern region.

Patients arriving at the site who need care at The QEH will be transferred to the Emergency Department via ambulance for further care – as happened from the previous onsite helipad.

The new helipad lighting system is a wholly solar powered, designed to ensure sustainable battery power even in low light and through the winter to give resilience in all weathers. The helipads system uses the latest technology and can be controlled on the ground or with in-flight activation from approaching helicopters. It is all fully compliant to current the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) standards.

As a Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) hospital, The QEH has been prioritised by the government to be rebuilt by the Government's New Hospital Programme.

Find the plans to build a New QEH on the current main car park here: www.newqeh.org.uk.

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EAAA Kings Lynn Fundraising Group

By Trevor Dane, East Anglian Air Ambulance Volunteer

It takes a team to save a life. We're fuelled almost entirely by donations, which means your support powers every single mission. As we look back on another busy year, we're humbled by how far your kindness, and your support for the King's Lynn Fundraising Group took us in 2025.

Here are just a few of our highlights:

September was a very special month. Not only was it Air Ambulance Week, but we marked 25 years of East Anglian Air Ambulance. During that time, we've treated over 27,000 people. It was a humbling milestone only possible thanks to a quarter of a century of your unwavering support.

Throughout the year, our aftercare team continued to ensure patients and their families received any additional support they needed to help with their recovery journeys.

Over 32,000 people learned the skills to save a life by completing our free CPR and defibrillator training. That's 32,000 more lifesavers in communities right across the region. Together, we also reached the incredible milestone of training 100,000 people since our community CPR Training programme began in 2018.

In June, we celebrated the achievements of our volunteers who had collectively given 12,000 hours of time in the previous 12 months.

And you didn't stop there-you gave heartfelt and kind donations, played our lottery, held fundraising events, took on skydives, wing walks, and other epic personal challenges to keep us in the air and on the road, 24/7.

We know there is more work to do in 2026, more lives to save, more families to support-and with you by our side, we can continue to be there for people in the worst moments of their lives. On behalf of our crew, staff, patients and their families thank you so much.

If you'd like to support the East Anglian Air Ambulance Kings Lynn Fundraising Group in 2026, please get in touch with myself or my colleague Terri by emailing: trevordane104@gmail.com or tfaye.100@gmail.com

Sporting corner with Tim Keogh

Local Football Round Up

The weather put paid to many local games throughout December, Christmas and the New Year.

However, the local big guns of King's Lynn Town FC and Heacham FC were in action, with contrasting fortunes.

Lynn sat in a precarious mid table position going into the festive period, knowing a couple of wins would propel them towards the play off places, whilst a sequence of poor results would drag them towards a relegation battle. One point from nine, unfortunately, means the latter is now the case

Whilst off field financial matters have seemingly settled and allowed manager, Ian Calverhouse, to focus on matters on the pitch, this is not an automatic free pass to success. The manager knows this and recent injury woes have hampered Lynn. A 2-2 draw with fellow relegation battlers, Peterborough Sports, on Boxing Day will be seen as two points dropped particularly given the Linnets dominance in the second half. This was followed up with a 4-2 loss at Bedford Town and a tight 1-0 defeat at high flying Merthyr Town.

7	Darlington	24	+6	36
8	Buxton	25	+3	34
9	Curzon Ashton	25	+2	34
10	Spennymoor Town	23	-5	34
11	Marine	23	-5	34
12	Chorley	24	+5	33
13	Chester	25	-2	33
14	Macclesfield	22	-2	33
15	AFC Telford United	24	+4	32
16	Worksop Town	26	-15	29
17	King's Lynn Town	25	-2	28
18	Bedford Town	26	-5	28
19	Oxford City	26	-7	24

Middle of the Conference League North Table

Twenty one games left and 63 points to fight for. Lynn are six points above the drop zone (at the time of going to print). They certainly possess the talent to stay up with the likes of MK Dons loanee Simon Troso, Michael Clunan and Ross Krane in their ranks. The Linnets face all the teams below them in the table before the season is out and it looks like it will be a case of rolling their sleeves up and grinding out results over the next few months, particularly against these teams, if they are to have any chance of maintaining their status at the Conference League North level.

On Saturday, 27th December, Heacham FC put in arguably one of their best ever performances in their 100 year history, or certainly in living memory. Club legend and ex-Chairman, Dave Page, said it was definitely the best display he had witnessed in

over half a century's involvement with the club.

Travelling to high flying local rivals Fakenham Town, Heacham knew a good performance was required, but Heacham are a tougher nut to crack these days under new manager Mark Hunter, as recent performances have shown.

Fakenham did not defy their lofty position in the table taking the game straight to the Magpies from the outset. Heacham were relatively untroubled and it took a penalty from Tom Baird on the half hour for the home side to break the deadlock. Heacham could have levelled before the break but Tommy Hunt's effort fell agonisingly wide.

The game exploded in the second half. Firstly Marley Reynolds was dismissed for a reckless and dangerous challenge. Fakenham's Jake Watts was also sin-binned in the melee leaving the home side temporarily down to nine players. Despite pressing, Heacham could not find a goal. Watts then returned to the fray, and immediately beat the stranded Heacham keeper and Chairman, Sam Pishorn, to make it 2-0. But Heacham have fight nowadays and simply don't know how to give up. So it proved as the effervescent Jack Prentice made it 2-1 with ten minutes left, before Colby Wood amazingly levelled minutes later. Heacham weren't finished yet as they went for the jugular. In the dying moments, it was Prentice again, who met a corner first and steered the ball over the line to make it 3-2. Character and belief, two good traits to possess in any sport. Three points and off the bottom of the table, a great Christmas present for the loyal Magpies fans.



Heacham's Toby Hilliard (black and white) challenging for the ball against Fakenham Town. Credit: Ronnie Heyhoe

Heacham are a relatively young side and teams do try and bully them - Fakenham had six yellow cards to Heacham's one - but, to their credit, Heacham try to rise above it. Relegation is a four horse race, but based on performances of late, this young Heacham side blessed with talent and with games in hand, are more than capable of avoiding the drop. A plainly delighted Hunter said afterwards, "the players are putting in the work, they're putting in the effort and have bought in to what we have asked for. Match intensity and playing identity is starting to develop now and that then becomes a standard that we set but the players meet or exceed. The last two home games prior to the game with

Fakenham, we have been really good in both games. We played out 45 minutes of what I'd



say I was looking for against Stowmarket, and the week after against Ely, we were very good for 70 to 75 minutes.

He added, "in the Fakenham game the players proved to us and also themselves that we can mix it with the best and come out on top to take three points from tough fixtures. We still have a long way to go in terms of moving in the right direction in the league, but we now have a good foundation to build off and that's credit to the playing squad and their attitude".

Elsewhere, all other senior sides still have promotions in their sights and will be hoping for a successful second half of the season. Dersingham, Ingoldisthorpe and Dersingham Women all well positioned in 3rd, 3rd and 4th place respectively in their divisions.

You can catch up with all the local weekend results every Monday in the Weekly Sports Update at www.townandaround.net

POS	Team	P	W	D	L	GD	PTS
1	Mulbarton Wanderers	19	17	0	2	49	51
2	Soham Town Rangers	23	15	0	8	17	45
3	Ely City	21	12	3	6	19	39
4	Thetford Town	21	11	4	6	13	37
5	Great Yarmouth Town	20	11	3	6	8	36
6	Fakenham Town	18	11	2	5	17	35
7	Harleston Town	22	9	6	7	-1	33
8	Walsham Le Willows	20	9	5	6	14	32
9	Haverhill Rovers	16	9	3	4	8	30
10	Dereham Town	21	8	4	9	3	28
11	Ipswich Wanderers	20	8	2	10	-5	26
12	Stowmarket Town	20	8	2	10	-7	26
13	Kirkley & Pakefield	21	8	2	11	-7	26
14	Woodbridge Town	21	8	2	11	-13	26
15	Hadleigh United	22	4	3	15	-34	15
16	Cornard United	23	3	4	16	-36	13
17	Heacham	19	3	3	13	-30	12
18	Lakenheath	17	2	4	11	-15	10

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Sporting corner with Tim Keogh

Hunstanton Indoor Bowls teams on a roll

With the Ladies ending 2025 on a high with three key wins, including maximum points hauls against the top two (Gallow 'B' and Norfolk 'B'), leapfrogging both to top their division in the Norfolk County Indoor Bowls League, they were brought back down to earth in their first match of 2026 by Gallow 'B' who gained their revenge with an 8-0 (60-47) win to return to the top.



Hunstanton's Men were also back in action as they welcomed local rivals and Division Four leaders, Lynnsport 'B' in an eagerly anticipated encounter on Saturday, 10th January.



The Rink Three team of Adam Wells (pictured above), Frazer Clement, Chris Wright and Paul Hallifax gave the local outfit the perfect start, storming into an unassailable lead before triumphing 27-5, virtually single handedly securing 3 points for the overall aggregate score and a point for winning the rink.

That left the other three rinks playing for an additional point each, although, with just two ends to go, all three were behind. Rink Four managed to win their game on the last end,



whilst Rink Two were beaten by two points.

That left the Rink One team, who had been behind all game, battling for another point. However, an amazing last end saw the team of Graham Keeley (pictured above), David Ilsley, Ian Cain and Stuart Davidson bag a whopping and very rare 7 points, to win the game 19-14.

The impressive overall 6-1 (73-46) win has pushed Hunstanton up the table and they will now hope to build on this and put a promotion run together.

Competition winners

Town and Around held two competitions in December's edition. The first was to win a Tesco Christmas Hamper.



The question was 'In which town was well known Tesco employee Damo Cabot born?'. The correct answer was Chippenham and Layla O'Quigley was the lucky person drawn out of the hat.

The second competition was to win a Christmas seafood hamper from Brancaster Oysters if you could answer the question, 'What was Cyril Southerland's first paid job?'. The answer was Golf Caddy. The first name to be drawn was Gary Groom.

Thank you to everyone who entered and congratulations to the winners, we hope you enjoyed your hampers.



Armchair Sports Trivia

W in a delicious afternoon tea for two (worth £19.95 pp, total £39.90) courtesy of Berni Beans.

QUESTION: There are over 200 countries affiliated to FIFA. How many and who are the countries that start with an 'A' but don't end with an 'A'.

ANSWERS TO:

editor@townandaround.net

or by post to: The Editor, Town & Around,

18 Tapping Close, Snettisham PE31 7FF

Please note we do not accept entries by any social media channels or text.

CLOSING DATE 15.02.2026.

Last month's question was: With the FIFA World Cup taking place next year in the US, Canada and Mexico, which two countries made their debut in the 2018 World Cup in Russia? The answer was Iceland and Panama and the lucky winner was Tracy Ellis.



Sweet success



Jason Smith, Carolanne Smith, Joe Smith

The original Thompson's sweet stall was first established in 1876 and the family run business still trades under the name Thompson's to this day, having been handed down through the generations.

They continue to operate with a shop based on Greevegate as well as mobile sweet stalls across the region. Now known as Thompson's Candy 'n Cream, they sell over 250 varieties of sweets ranging from traditional seaside rock, fudge and floss favourites all the way through to more fashionable sweets such as American candy.

To celebrate this momentous milestone they are releasing an original pink and white nougat, with nougat having been sold way back in 1876.

The Smith family - Joe (better known as Jamm'in Joe), Jason, Rob and Terry - are still well known locally, although it is Jason who now oversees operations.

Jason said, "I'm proud to continue the long tradition first started by my great grandmother, Synthia, all those years ago". In those days they just sold basic sweets such as brandy snaps, coconut ice, rock bars and nougat, with the latter having been supplied by the Draper family from Nottingham for nearly 100 years.

Traditionally, the King's Lynn Mart, that starts on Valentine's Day in February, is the beginning of the season where Thompson's will have a stall which then travels around various locations throughout the area. To celebrate 150 years of the family run business Thompson's will be selling their original pink and white nougat and candy floss for just £1.50 for the duration of the Mart at all their locations.

It is amazing to think that this very same business was running as far back as 1876.



3 Generations in one photo!

Left Terry, Cynthia (Nana George), Husband George Smith
and Synthia Thompson

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In The Spotlight - George Brotherton & Rhys O'Quigley

It is a unique duet this month as well known and popular local entrepreneurs, George Brotherton and Rhys O'Quigley, take on the mantle of ITS. They co-own GR Coastal Groundworks & Construction specialising in driveways, fencing, drainage, foundations, landscaping and patios. Whilst he was born in Croydon, George has spent the majority of his life in Hunstanton. He also organises a popular annual charity golf day at Heacham Manor in aid of the local community which attracts around 30 players each year. Rhys is very much a local person, having lived in the area all of his life.

Name: George Brotherton and Rhys O'Quigley

Age: 31 & 31

Star Sign: Scorpio & Gemini

Occupation: Both GR Coastal Groundworks & Construction



Family: Wife Molly, daughters Milly and Daisy, mother Monica and two brothers: Two daughters, Lily Mai and Aoife and a son, Finnley



A Cats or dogs person: Both dogs
Sports Team Support: Birmingham City and Liverpool
Worst injury: Cruciate ligament and knee surgery : Nearly losing all four fingers which had to be sewn back on
Hero: Mikael Forssell : John Aldridge
Hobbies/interests: Golf : Liverpool !
Best memory: None in particular, life is one big memory : My family

Favourite international meal/cuisine: Italian : Thai and a traditional roast

Favourite drink: Guinness : Apple & Blackcurrant Squash

Favourite holiday destination: Rhodes : Caribbean

Favourite film/play: Godfather II : The Wolf of Wall Street

Favourite actor/actress: Al Pacino : Stephen Graham

Three items for a desert island: My cockatoo, Sam, Molly and as many family members I can get there on a canoe : A clarinet, bow & arrow and my budgie

Favourite band/singer: Frank Sinatra : Oasis

Pet hate: Lateness : People who are too early

Worst habit: Overthinking : Underthinking

Biggest achievement in life: My Children : My Children

Best advice ever given: It's time to go home (work wise!) : Don't take life too seriously

What would you change in the world: Less hate in the world : Create social and economic equality in Norfolk and England

Like to live forever: Yes : Yes



GR Coastal Groundworks project

West Acre Wild 10K Team Donate to King's Lynn Night Shelter

This year's popular West Acre Wild charity fund raising 10K run was dedicated to raising funds for the King's Lynn Night Shelter and a group of organisers met at the Night Shelter to make the presentation.

The run which is takes place each October, was the brain child of farmer Alex Birbec, who is also a keen environmentalist and having cleared a footpath around some of his farmland thought it an ideal route for a race with a difference, having a number of obstacles for runners to attempt as they go round. The run is so popular that next year's event is already sold out.

This year's run raised £3,800 for the Shelter which was accepted by Shelter Director Lucy McKitterick who gave the group a guided tour of the facility.

Race Director, Gary Walker said "It's great to know that our efforts go to a really good cause and will hopefully make a difference to those who would otherwise be sleeping rough, particularly at this time of year. I'm also sure all those who participate in our event will be pleased to know they have all contributed towards the Shelter".



From left: Gary Walker, Lucy McKitterick, Geraldine Jordan, Lucy Birbeck, Alex Birbeck

Hunstanton Primary School

The school enjoyed a wonderfully busy and festive December, packed with community events, performances and celebrations.

The festivities began on 5 December with the school's much-loved Christmas Fair, organised by the PTA. Families enjoyed a range of festive games and activities, delicious homemade cakes, and the excitement of the raffle and tombola. Year 6 pupils also played their part by making and selling hot chocolate reindeer cones, raising money towards their Leavers' Books.



Festive fun continued on 11 December with a PTA-organised movie night for all pupils. Children arrived in their cosiest clothes and pyjamas to enjoy popcorn and Christmas films, with Key Stage 1 watching Arthur Christmas and Key Stage 2 enjoying Nativity. On the same day, Year 5 enjoyed a morning visit to Smithdon High School, where they watched the school's production of Sister Act, which was amazing.

Pupils also took part in a festive Reindeer Run, raising money for the local charity Nelson's Journey, which supports children and young people who have experienced the loss of a loved one. Wearing antlers and festive outfits, children from across the school ran with enthusiasm and determination, combining fun and fitness with an important cause. The event not only raised vital funds but also helped pupils develop a deeper understanding of kindness, empathy and supporting others in their community.

The school choir had an especially busy schedule throughout December, performing at the Hunstanton Christmas Light Switch-On, singing at local care homes, and taking part in the Masonic Carol Service at St Mary's Church in Old Hunstanton. During the final week of term, Key Stage 1 pupils delighted families with their nativity performance, while Key Stage 2 visited St Edmund's Church to take part in a carol service.

The term ended on a high note when the whole school walked to the Princess Theatre to enjoy a performance of Aladdin. Pupils and staff alike thoroughly enjoyed the festive outing, bringing a joyful and memorable close to a wonderful December at Hunstanton Primary School.

Hunstanton Primary School currently has spaces available across all year groups and warmly welcomes new families to join its thriving school community. Parents and carers are encouraged to book a personal tour with the Headteacher, offering the opportunity to see the school in action, meet staff and pupils, and learn more about the nurturing, high-quality education on offer. Appointments can be arranged at a convenient time through the office, ensuring every family receives a friendly and informative introduction to the school.



ADMISSIONS FOR 2026 PERSONAL SCHOOL TOURS

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Glebe House School & Nursery update

Hannah Searle

Although we're now in the New Year, each month we love reflecting on the highlights of the month before. December was full of festive cheer, community spirit and memorable moments at Glebe House, from Christmas performances and celebrations to sporting competitions and special trips. As we look back, we hope this update brings a little warmth and sparkle to your day, brightening even the dullest February morning!



Community Update

Our Pre-Prep pupils were delighted to take part in this year's Hunstanton Christmas Tree Festival. Six children enjoyed a special trip to the Town Hall to decorate our Christmas tree, chatting to other local groups and volunteers as they worked together to prepare the festival. Our tree proudly displayed handmade decorations created using repurposed materials. The whole Pre-Prep later visited to admire the festival in all its festive glory. We were thrilled to be awarded second place in the Children's category and we were pleased to support this wonderful community event and the many organisations and charities involved.

Month Highlights



The Pre-Prep had lots of fun performing the Nativity story to the Nursery, Prep pupils and their

own families. This year they took on a brand new production. 'The Twinkly Nativity' and goodness they certainly did twinkle and shine! Their delightful performance included some eye-catching costumes, some fabulous dance moves and some very catchy songs.



The Year 1 teacher led this year's Nativity and did a wonderful job in getting all our Pre-Prep children ready for their three performances. The children did such a fantastic job. For some it was their first time performing on a stage in front of an audience and for others it was their last performance in Pre-Prep. Well done to everyone!

Public Speaking Finals



Early December we held the finals of our Junior and Senior Prep Public Speaking Competitions. Pupils spoke with confidence and enthusiasm on a wide range of engaging topics, from much-loved pets and personal experiences to inspirational figures and important social issues. Judges

and audiences alike were impressed, particularly by the courage of first-time speakers from Year 3. Congratulations to all finalists and to our overall winners, Harriet (Junior Prep) and Verity (Senior Prep). We are very grateful to our judges and families for their valued support. We now look forward to the Inter House Poetry Competition next term.



Boarders' Christmas Party



December naturally saw many festive celebrations, and one of those highlights was enjoyed by our boarders who had a wonderful Christmas party in the Dining Room, filled with festive food, traditional games and plenty of laughter. It was a lovely

way to celebrate the boarding community and the friendships formed this term. After the party the children enjoyed exchanging Secret Santa gifts in the respective boarding houses, another much-loved tradition here at Glebe House.

Carol Service



The term concluded with our Carol Service at St Mary's, Old Hunstanton, a truly heartwarming occasion. Pupils from Years 3 to 8 shared the Christmas story, the Prep School choir gave some beautiful performances and Pre-Prep delighted everyone with their singing of Away in a Manger. Families joined in singing traditional carols, filling the church with festive joy. With FoGHS serving mulled wine and mince pies, it was a wonderful celebration of community, tradition and togetherness, a perfect way to end the term.

Sports Update



A sunny, crisp afternoon set the scene for our annual Inter House Rugby tournament, with Years 3 to 8 giving their all across junior, intermediate and senior tag games. Despite muddy fields, spirits were high, with parents cheering from the sidelines. Matches showcased excellent attacking and defensive skills, teamwork and sportsmanship across all age groups. Refereed by staff, the competition highlighted the talent and determination of our pupils and was a brilliant celebration of Glebe spirit. Well done to everyone involved!



Our final Inter House event of 2025 was the ever-popular hockey tournament at Pelicans. With sunny skies and plenty of energy, pupils from Years 3 to 8

competed in Quiksticks and seven-a-side matches, with some playing up an age group with great skill. The afternoon showcased fantastic teamwork, sportsmanship and leadership, with children giving their all for their houses. Thanks to Mrs Bower, the games staff and parents for making the event such a memorable celebration of effort and Glebe spirit.

Out & About

Thanks to the generosity of the Friends of Glebe House School and their fundraising throughout the year, all our pupils got to enjoy two very special festive treats. Pre-Prep were thrilled by a magical trip to the pantomime Aladdin at Hunstanton's Princess Theatre where they delighted in the lively music and much-loved characters. Meanwhile, Prep pupils took to the rink at Skaters for a much-enjoyed Christmas skating outing, with plenty of encouragement and teamwork on display. Both events not only created some memorable moments, but highlighted the wonderful support FoGHS provides to enrich our school life.

Come and see us!

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Find out more about life at Glebe House School. Contact Mrs Fraulo on 01485 532809 or email tjf@glebehouseschool.co.uk to book a visit.

Kings Lynn Society of Arts and Sciences

We have two talks this month both starting at 7.30 pm in The Small Barn, Knights Hill Hotel where there is ample parking and a bar for refreshments.

On Tuesday 3rd February Lindsay Greer will introduce us to the career and achievements of Geoffrey Ingram Taylor a leading 20th century physicist and engineer in "To bend or break: Everest to the Manhattan Project"

On Tuesday 24th February, conservationist and climate campaigner, Charlie Gardner will consider the future of our vulnerable coast "Walking in water: Climate change and the future of Norfolk"

Visitors are very welcome. Entry is just £7 or why not join one of the longest running societies in Kings Lynn?

Hope to see you there.



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Family donates £10,000 to provide school canopy

Young learners can enjoy the benefits of their outdoor learning area whatever the weather thanks to the help of a local family who funded a purpose-built canopy for them. And the children at Wells-next-the-Sea Primary and Nursery don't mind that it's still the middle of winter.

The new addition to the STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) outdoor classroom has been made possible thanks to a £10,000 donation from a local business.

French's award-winning fish and chip shop marked 100 years in business in 2025 and very generously donated the entire £10,000 cost of the canopy to fund the project.

"My family has a strong connection to Wells Nursery and Primary School. All three generations of our family attended the school and now a fourth generation has started with my son at the nursery. My great grandfather also helped build the school so it means a lot to us to be able to make the donation as the



children in Wells will benefit, along with the whole town," said Alanna French.

Local companies also offered to help build the canopy which



measures 46ft by 13ft and will keep the worst of the weather off the children throughout the year. There was even a special STEM cake to mark the occasion.

The new canopy was officially opened on Thursday (Jan 8) with a special ceremony at the school where guests included representatives from the Holkham Charitable Foundation and members of the French family.

"We were delighted to welcome everyone to the official opening of our new canopy and want to thank everyone involved in bringing this project to fruition," said Rachel Stroulger, Headteacher.

"It is an essential part of the plans for the Early Years outdoor learning provision, and it will make such a difference to the quality of the early years education we can offer the children of Wells," she added.

Credit: Barking Dog Media/Ian Burt Photography.



One hundred birthday cards appeal for school centenary



Staff and students are aiming high for their West Norfolk school's centenary and are making plans for a fantastic event to mark the milestone in July.

Marshland High School, in West Walton, hopes to hear from Sir David Attenborough, who turns 100 next year as well, as a house is named after him. Dame Jessica Ennis Hill also has a house in her name and the school will be contacting her as well.

And it also wants to receive 100 birthday cards in time for a special celebration party planned for next July. Former staff and students have been written to, along with the big names attached to two of the school's houses.

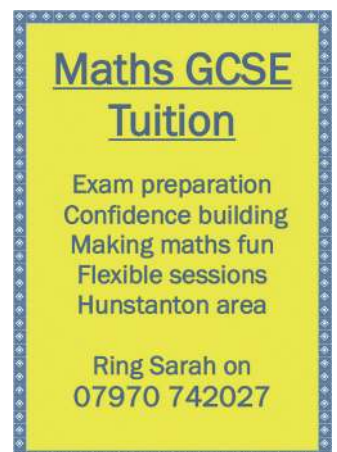
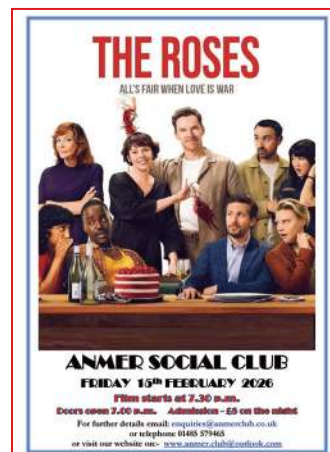
Memories and photographs of former students and staff are also needed to help create a nostalgic evening of memories from across the decades.

The school, a member of the West Norfolk Academies Trust, would like to hear from anyone with memories or photographs of past times at Marshland High, and they needn't be ex pupils.

"We would love to hear from anyone with memories of the school, and the school council is going to reach out to different people connected to our school to ask for cards," said Lydia Beatty, Head of PSHCE and Religious Studies and history teacher.

Parts of the school's buildings date back to 1925 although there has been extensive work during the intervening years, including a new humanities block which opened in 2020 after a £1.2m investment.

Birthday cards can be sent to: History Dept, Marshland High School, School Road, West Walton, Wisbech PE14 7HA. And a dedicated email address is also available: centenary@marshlandhigh.co.uk



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Hunstanton and District Rotary Club

Roger Raven

The club had a busy December and start to the new year doing the things that Rotary do best, raising funds for good causes, assisting the local community and being involved in projects to increase awareness.



Hospital Bags Presentations to QEH Staff

Firstly, we presented 100 emergency toiletry bags prepared by members to the QE accident and emergency department for patients

that do not have immediate access to washing and cleaning equipment, they were presented in lovely cloth drawstring bags handmade by our member Mary Harpley, (shown in the picture above).

We held a two-day bucket collection by kind permission of Tesco's at Hunstanton, and despite the present economic climate raised £ 780 for local charities and good causes. We supported the reverse advent calendar project run by the Purfleet Trust, the local charity that supports homeless people, by members collecting goods and clothing to be distributed to the homeless.

We presented a cheque for £500 to Tapping House the local end of life care hospice. We represented the club at the Hunstanton Xmas tree festival with a tree beautifully decorated by our President Hilary. We held our annual post Xmas lunch for some local elderly residents held at the United Services club and have just had our annual Frugal Lunch consisting of soup and sandwiches, where half of the cost of the meal is donated to the Presidents charity which this year is Homestart.

We look forward to the New Year with optimism as we have several charitable projects planned. It is also our 50th year in existence and plans to celebrate this historic event are well advanced.

Rotary is an international charitable organisation, and our main aim is to support charities and mainly local good causes both financially and physically where possible, achieved in an atmosphere of friendship following our motto (' Service above Self '). This can only be achieved by the efforts of our volunteer members, and we are always looking for new members who would like to make a difference in their community. If you are someone who could make a difference and would like to become a member, then please use the contact details below.

We have funds available to support local community groups, so if you are a member of a local charity or good cause, or you know of one that needs support please contact us using the details below, and your request will be considered by the club.

Boost For Tapping House; Rotary Funds Syringe Drivers For Patients

Bob Foster

The collections for Santa's Musical Sleigh in December raised a massive £2800 for Syringe Drivers for Tapping House patients. Organised by Trinity Rotary Club, it means that patients across West Norfolk will receive faster, more responsive symptom relief.

After enquiring whether the Hospice needed any help with equipment and other facilities, Lindsey Atkin, their Community and Corporate Fundraising Manager responded, "As promised, I have asked around the hospice for items Rotary might kindly help to purchase. The overwhelming priority is for two syringe drivers.

They are £1500 each. We require 2 of these, 1 for each of our Hospice at Home teams.

These are something that we have been trying to find the funds for over a year now. If our Hospice at Home teams can have syringe drivers in their vehicles, ready for use this will mean patients receive the right symptom management more promptly.

We cover a large geographical area, visiting patients registered with a West Norfolk GP. If a patient needs a syringe driver, the nurse can provide it immediately without returning to the Hillington base to borrow equipment from the Inpatient Unit and delaying much needed treatment."

A syringe driver is a small battery-operated device that can be used to give a continuous flow of medication under the skin. It can be used to administer a combination of medications and as alternative to having lots of injections at any stage of illness.

Rotary President Peter Harris expressed the Club's pride in supporting the Hospice: "The Club is delighted to help the Hospice for the patients, and the staff to make their job easier and more worthwhile. We dedicated our Santa Sleigh collections and topped it up to the £3000 required."



Organiser, John Hodson, added "Another fantastic result which makes enjoying standing out in the cold weather very worthwhile. We hope our shoppers liked the festive atmosphere we try to encourage. Thanks to Asda at South Wootton, Sainsbury's and Tesco at Hardwick allowing us to have Santa's Sleigh at their stores. We are grateful for their help and their donations".

We welcome anyone interested in supporting the Club's initiatives to contact us. Contact Malcolm Wood on 07710 762588.

The photo shows the handing over of the cheque by President, Peter Harris with Bob Foster of Trinity Rotary, to Hospice at Home staff at Tapping House.

We are having a celebration of our circuit twinning with Matjinge circuit in Zimbabwe on Sunday March 8th, from 2pm, at the Methodist Church , London Rd, King's Lynn, with music from The Dersingham Choir, FenSong performing arts and some Zimbabwean singers.

The speaker is Rev Andrew Ashdown, Partnership Coordinator for World Missions in Africa.

Refreshments from 4-5pm, followed by a circuit service. All are welcome!

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Rotary Youth Speaks Competition



*Darcie Butters, Poppy Foster and Star Dean.
(Terrington St Clement)*

Four teams recently took part in the local round of this public speaking competition organised by the Rotary Club of King's Lynn – King Edward VII Academy, Smithdon High School, Springwood High School and Terrington St Clement's High School. The debates covered topics relating to animal testing, the effects of social media on mental health, the use of smart phones by children and the effects of Year 6 SATS on mental health.

For the second year running the winners were from St Clement's High School. Star Dean explained the reasons why animal testing took place while Darcie Butters set out the arguments against. The debate was ably chaired by Poppy Foster. The team go forward to the District Round of the competition which will be held at the Council Chamber in Norwich in February.

The Rotary Club is very grateful for the continuing support and expertise of the judges - Dr Bob Rogers and Mrs Diane Scoles, to Springwood High School, for hosting the event and also to the school staff involved with the teams.

Thornham Village Hall

Big Screen, Good Food and Community Events

From theatre and cinema to talks and social events, Thornham Village Hall is packed with reasons to get out and about this winter and spring.

A standout offering is Theatre Sundays — a chance to enjoy a National Theatre Live performance on the big screen, paired with a two-course meal at award-winning pub, The Orange Tree in Thornham. The meal can be taken either before or after the screening, and the whole experience costs £35. Prefer just the show? Screening-only tickets are available for £10.

Film lovers are also well catered for with free monthly Thursday Film Nights. While licensing rules mean that film titles can't be shared online or in print, posters at the Hall reveal the upcoming choices. New from February, audiences can pre-order a charcuterie platter (vegetarian or non-vegetarian) for £7.50 to make a real evening of it.

This season's much-loved Winter Warmer talks finish on 27 February, when Her Honour Wendy Joseph KC shares a rare glimpse behind the scenes of the courtroom.

Coming up in spring are a pre-loved fashion sale on 28 March and a quiz night (date to be announced), alongside a full programme of fitness and yoga classes held at the Hall throughout the week.

Find out more and book online at

www.thornhamvillagehall.co.uk/events



Do something brilliant this year!

Have you made any New Year's resolutions for 2026? If not, here's one we'd like to suggest - why not join Hunstanton u3a this year?

Hunstanton u3a currently has a membership of around 350, who together run and enjoy participating in all sorts of activities and events, including Art Appreciation, Backgammon, Bridge, Flower Arranging, Mah Jong, Playreading, Puzzles and Games, Rock Music, Strollers & much much more.

All these groups are run by the members for each other and once you've paid your annual joining fee of just £13, the groups are free to enjoy! Some groups take place in members' homes, some are weekly, some are monthly, but all of them are designed to be sociable, fun and interesting.

As well as the many groups available - and more are being added all the time - members can attend the monthly meetings held at Hunstanton's Community Centre on the third Monday of the month at 2pm when we invite a speaker to entertain and inform followed by tea and biscuits for a bit of socialising and chatting.

In January we heard from Wally Webb - Forty Years of BBC Radio Norfolk and coming up in February, Sean Garrett, General Manager of Cromer Pier will be telling us about the history of Cromer Pier Show, now in its 41st year! You can find out more about upcoming speakers and events for 2026 as well as find the full list of groups and some background information on our website <https://hunstanton.u3asite.uk/>

So what are you waiting for? Come and visit us at our next monthly meeting where you'll be greeted by our welcome team and get the chance to find out why joining Hunstanton u3a could be the most brilliant resolution you make this year!



Wild Downham Market

Saturday 7 February Downham Market Town Hall 10am-2pm

Photographic exhibition of wildlife in Downham Market

You will be amazed at the wildlife living on your doorstep!

Local wildlife photographer Dave McGough

Learn about and join the Downham Market Wildlife Group

Hear about the Downham Market Swift Tower and the life cycle of these amazing birds

Learn how you can help local wildlife

Meet local people like you who are interested and want to help local wildlife

Other organisations who will be there include: NVN - Nature Volunteer Network

NARVOS - Nar Valley Ornithological Society | Toad Patrol | Ryston Rachel's hedgehogs

WINGS - Swifts In West Norfolk Group | Nigel's Nature Walks



The art of church stained glass

Pat Bray

Stained glass has a very long and interesting history, and this short article can only give the briefest of outlines. Stained glass is an ancient art which is still made the way our medieval glaziers would recognise. Firstly, a design was drawn, this was enlarged to the size of the window, pieces of coloured and plain glass were cut to the required shapes and any painting done in black. They were then fixed together with H-shaped strips of lead, which were soldered together and then sealed to the glass with a special cement to keep out the weather. In the early 13th century, the art of staining glass was discovered and this enabled more details to be added, particularly faces.

But why go to all this trouble? Medieval churches were full of colour, depicting scenes from the Bible and the light streaming through the windows brought the pictures to life. At that time we made only clear glass in England as coloured glass was expensive and had to be imported from the continent, mainly from Normandy, the Rhineland and Burgundy. Surprisingly, many panels of medieval glass survive all around Norfolk, often high up in the tracery windows, such as at South Acre (1200's), South Creake, Narborough and Heacham.

The style of architecture progressed from the round-headed Norman openings through to the pointed styles of the Decorated and Perpendicular periods and the shape of the windows had to change. As methods advanced, many national disasters happened to delay construction or destroy this fragile material, but all the time the wind, rain and sunshine were also doing their damage, and often sheer lack of money or inclination to repair the decaying windows completed the cycle of demise. Lead starts to decay, rarely lasting more than 100 years and with this the windows begin to buckle. Now there is another hazard – the rotary lawn mower, causing many of the small holes seen in windows today!

After the upheaval of the established church in Tudor times very little stained glass was made for churches until the early 1800s, by which time the old art had been largely forgotten, and continental glass was being imported after the Napoleonic wars. It took several decades for English glass to be perfected again and some of the early attempts have faded badly. By the 1850s there were hundreds of glass makers all over the country and their work varies greatly, but the top 10 to 15 firms produced some excellent windows, as the local Church Records have found in Harpley, Ingoldisthorpe, Middleton, North Creake, Sculthorpe, Stanhoe and others. Some makers left their signatures or symbols and it's exciting to find them, usually in the bottom right corner, sometimes the left and occasionally elsewhere. So next time you visit a church take some binoculars and see what you can find! Occasionally we find more modern glass but it's quite rare in country churches.

We are lucky here in that the best place to visit to learn about this craft is the excellent Stained Glass Museum in Ely Cathedral. There are also hundreds of books to read, with the Pitkin or Shire guides being good places to start, and much information is available on-line.

The Arts Society North West Norfolk supports the King's Lynn Church Records, who have recorded 26 churches in this area. If you would like further information and how to volunteer to become a Church Recorder please go to our website www.artsocietynwnorfolk.org.uk and click on the link to "Volunteering".

The next lecture of The Arts Society North West Norfolk explores Notre Dame Cathedral – the Soul of Paris. This takes place at Sedgeford Village Hall at 2pm on Monday 9th February. You will find details about us and membership on our website www.theartsocietynwnorfolk.org.uk.

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 9th February

Exploring Notre Dame - the Soul of Paris

Lecturer: Carole Petipher

The role of Notre Dame in the French psyche, exploring the characters and events that have shaped it.

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Track by Norfolk music producer a global viral sensation - even Jennifer Lopez is a fan!

Dani Crawshaw

Exclusive first UK interview with Harrison, whose song for popular TV show *Heated Rivalry* tops Spotify's weekly playlist - the most talked-about songs worldwide.

Harrison is full of excitement and feeling slightly overwhelmed when we chat, which is understandable.

The music producer's version of the 2002 hit 'All The Things She Said' by tATu - has been the most viral song in America for over a fortnight and has topped Spotify's global weekly playlist.

It's thanks to the explosive popularity of the new Canadian TV Show, *Heated Rivalry*, which features the track.

It aired in Canada and the States at the end of last year, based on the novel by Rachel Reid about a gay romance between ice hockey rivals.

"It's just absolutely crazy to think that this is even possible," Harrison tells me, "It was the 15th of December when it was played, that's when it aired, my phone had 10 thousand messages, everyone wondering how this came about - so yeah unbelievable." Even stars like Jennifer Lopez are fans, using the song recently to showcase her outfit for the Golden Globes.

Harrison, from Norwich, has been a music producer for 13 years, having worked alongside DJ David Guetta, but says he's never experienced anything like this before.

"It's very intense, it's hard to understand what's happening. I'm unbelievably overwhelmed, my phone's ringing, everything's going on, it's a lot.

"Record deals, record labels, people that are in the industry, interviewers - I've got a full day of it.

"Obviously the most special thing is that it seems to be having some kind of moment with people, and they seem to be really loving it."

He adds he's thankful to his family that are keeping him grounded, especially cuddles



from his 9 month old daughter. And gives a special mention to his grandad, Keith.

"Without him I never would have been doing this in the first place, he's the one that was my driving force in the beginning of my life, it's just phenomenal to get to this kind of level.

"It's a huge opportunity and I'm so lucky to be in this situation."

And, quite rightly, he's got big plans, "I'm going to take this live, we're going to do loads of shows all over the world. I love making music, mostly the aspect of DJing it live, because numbers on a screen is something but real life energy is another.

"I think it's what all artists strive for is to make some kind of connection, I think the best time to see that connection is seeing people's faces react to what you've made."

It's fair to say the artist is running through a lot of people's heads right now, many probably wondering when his next song's out.

"I'm going to wait for this one to peak - and then right at the top I'm going to hit it just then, but it is ready."

I end by wishing him the best of luck, before he has to rush off he adds, "I think if this month has taught me one thing about life, it's that you just don't know what is possible, it's unbelievable."



"The show (*Heated Rivalry*) contacted me about October time, and I just didn't see this coming, how could anybody know it was going to be the most viral song in America, and Jennifer Lopez was going to post you, and all these things that have happened are possible?!"

<https://open.spotify.com/track/2ihHDb5epUtpn97W0pOsOA?si=09udRAToS3Wx77I53oTJTQ>

West Norfolk GILBERT & SULLIVAN Society
PRESENTS

**A MUSICAL MOSAIC OF
GILBERT & SULLIVAN**

Downham Market Town Hall
February 6th at 7:30pm

London Road Methodist Church, King's Lynn
Saturday 7th at 2:30pm & 7:30pm
Sunday 8th at 2:30pm

Tickets from The Corn Exchange Box Office
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February Events

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This monthly magazine is distributed to the major supermarkets in King's Lynn, Hunstanton, Dersingham, Wells, Downham Market and Fakenham, plus smaller outlets in the villages.

Sizes and prices are on page 2

Call 01485 540620 to book your space or email editor@townandaround.net





The King's Lynn Community Cinema Club is screening Santosh on Thursday 12th February in Screen 2 at The Majestic on Thursday at 7.30pm.

Santosh is a widow of a police constable who inherits his job in rural Northern India. When the body of a murdered girl of the Dalit caste is found she gets involved in the investigation working under a charismatic feminist inspector Sharma. The film is in Hindi and subtitled and it explores misogyny, Hindu-Muslim tensions and caste discrimination. The film was banned by the Indian Central Board of Certification.



KLCCC is open to anyone over 18 and costs £20 a season. There are 2 seasons a year each with 8 scheduled films that are free for members. Membership can be arranged by emailing communitycinemaclub@googlemail.com. Alternatively, you can just come along to any film as a day member for £6 cash on the door. Full details of all the club's films and events can be found on the club website www.klccc.uk and Facebook page.

Brancaster Camera Club

Chris Lovelock

The Brancaster Camera Club meets once a month on Tuesday evenings starting at 7pm. Whether you are a happy snapper, a professional or a keen amateur, all are all equally welcomed, regardless of whether you're local or just visiting. We are a small friendly group open to everyone regardless of ability or equipment, from point and shoot through to more complicated cameras. Why not come and see us and have a tea or coffee?

At our meetings we have a projected display of members' images on a theme that was set previously, with discussion. Sometimes we have a lecture on a particular aspect of photography, or a competition between Members or another Club.

We recently held our Annual Print Exhibition, the first three winning photographs are here. If this might be of interest to you, please do come along for a couple of evenings, free of charge. We look forward to welcoming you.

bsbdvh.secretary@gmail.com 07779 166975



The Arts Society King's Lynn



The Arts Society King's Lynn continues the 2025-26 season on Thursday 12 February 2026 when they welcome Cindy Polemis to give a talk on John Singer Sargent's Art of Fashion and Fame.

Cindy Polemis is an art historian, independent lecturer and art guide. She has a BA in Modern History from Oxford University and as a mature student she went back to university to

study first for a BA and then for a Masters in History of Art at Birkbeck College, London University. Before that she spent many years as a radio producer and presenter for the BBC World Service working in news and current affairs. Since 2016 Cindy has worked as an official art guide at Tate Britain and Tate Modern. She has also been a trustee at the Museum of the Home, formerly the Geffrye Museum. Cindy has accumulated a wide range of art historical knowledge ranging from 18th European and British art to the contemporary international art scene. She has been an official guide for both Frieze Masters and Frieze Art Fairs in London. She is particularly keen to draw parallels with art and social history and her lectures are accessible and engaging, drawing out the stories of art and artists which are steeped in human emotions and experiences which we all share.

John Singer Sargent was THE international art star of the Gilded Age. He was most famous for his dramatic and stylish portraits of the elegant and wealthy. He brought his subjects to life, but also used fashion as a powerful tool to depict identity and personality. Cindy Polemis explores how John Singer Sargent 'fashioned' his world.

The lecture will take place in West Winch Village Hall where there is ample free parking available and starts at 2.30pm. 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. We are offering a special membership fee of £30 for the remainder of the year. 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 01760 724823 or via email at info@theartsocietykingslynn.org.uk.

CLASSICAL MUSIC ROCKS (CMR)

Need for Trustees and Treasurer

CMR is a very successful music charity for children, bringing top class musicians direct to primary schools. The children love the classical music played for them, which mostly they have never heard before.

Over a period of 9 years we have reached 60,000 children mostly in West Norfolk. Hunstanton, Snettisham, Sandringham, Dersingham and Ingoldisthorpe primary schools have benefitted from 3 visits per year.

We receive modest funding from the Norfolk Music Hub, but otherwise raise money from external charities.

As a Charity, we have relied hugely on volunteer help, but from January 26 we will have a paid Project Manager, Julie Atkins, who will shortly be returning to live in Snettisham, her place of birth.

Right now, it is a major priority to find a new Trustee prepared to act as Treasurer. This volunteer role requires about 2 hours per week and attendance at 4 x 1 hour Trustee meetings per annum. This rewarding role is available from April and will include opportunities to observe some of our musician's visits to local schools.

If you enjoy music and would like to make a difference for children, please contact Julie at: cmrwestnorfolk@gmail.com

For more information, check out our website: cmrschoolswestnorfolk.com

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February events - see also <https://townandaround.net/whats-on/february>**Sunday 1st**

Indoor Car Boot Sale at
Wereham Village Hall from 8am
01366 501330 or 07759 033492

Wolferton Cash Bingo 6.30pm
Social Club . 01485 541919

United Services Club PE36 5HL
Find the joker draw. Mark
Joseph 3.30pm. Karaoke 8pm

Monday 2nd

Anmer Social Club Coffee
Morning 10am-12.
lee.suckling78@outlook.com
or 07899 872351

Hunstanton Masterplan public
drop-in Hunstanton Town Hall
10am-7pm 01553 616716

Anmer Social Club Bingo 7pm
enquiries@anmerclub.co.uk
07899872351

Tuesday 3rd

Norfolk and Waveney Mind
Group 11-6.30pm every
Tuesday. Info: 0300 330 5488

King's Lynn Society of Arts and
Sciences. see page 49

Friday 6th

King's Lynn Festival Coffee
Concert at King's Lynn Town
Hall 11am Regency String
Quartet. 01533 765565

A musical mosaic of Gilbert &
Sullivan at Downham Market
Town Hall 7.30pm. Tickets from
the Corn Exchange Box Office
01553 764 864

Saturday 7th

Sandringham parkrun San
Sandringham Royal Park 8.40
for 9am start. First timers
briefing 8.45. Start & finish on
the vista by the children's play
area. Car parking for parkrun is
free until 11am. Info:
Sandringham@parkrun.com
07913 439222

Hunstanton Promenade parkrun
9am. Meet outside the Sailing
Club Info
hunstantonpromenade@parkrun.
com 07804927764

Wild Downham Market
photographic exhibition at
Downham Market Town Hall
10am-2pm. Free entry

A musical mosaic of Gilbert &
Sullivan at London Road
Methodist church, King's Lynn
2.30 and 7.30pm. Tickets from
the Corn Exchange Box Office
01553 764 864

Ingoldisthorpe Sports & Social
Club PE31 6NW Bingo Doors
7.00pm 07901 924223

Hunstanton Conservative Club
Quiz Night 01485 532462

United Services Club PE36 5HL
Pagan - rock & roll+ 8.30pm

Sunday 8th

Save the Children Fund Soiree
see page 14

Marriotts Warehouse Trust Stalk
- Ben Colson - Edward VII and
Sandringham. 2.30 pm 2nd
Floor Marriotts Warehouse.

Thornham Village Hall Doors
3.30, screening 4pm National
Theatre Live Hamlet.
thornhamvillagehall.co.uk
07502 265305

United Services Club PE36 5HL
Find the joker draw. 2.30pm.
music - Lewis Owen, 3.30pm
Karaoke with Mick Covey 8pm

Monday 9th

The Arts society NW Norfolk
see page 55

Wednesday 11th

Snettisham MIDIs Ladies Group
talk.2pm at the British Legion
Hall PE31 7NH 07808 936842
syoun4060@aol.com

Thursday 12th

The Arts Society King's Lynn
2.30pm see page 58

King's Lynn Community
Cinema see page 58

Friday 13th

Anmer Social Club Film Night
The Roses (15) 7pm £5
enquiries@anmerclub.co.uk or
telephone 01485 579465

Saturday 14th

King's Lynn parkrun. See 7th
Hunstanton Promenade parkrun
9am. see 7th

Coffee morning at the
Community Centre, Orchard
Close, Dersingham PE31 2LU,
10am to midday, fundraising for
Dersingham Choir Kate: 07513
986858 for more info.

Ingoldisthorpe Sports & Social
Club PE31 6NW Fabulous Live
Music & Entertainment 6.00pm
Contact Diane on 07901924223

Hunstanton Conservative Club
Music Night with Michael
Jackson Tribute 01485 532462

United Services Club PE36 5HL
Simon Lee, all eras 8.30pm

Sat 14th - Sat 28th

The opening to the travelling
fair season - King's Lynn Mart
at the Tuesday Market Place.
Fairground rides, food stalls and
games.

Sunday 15th

United Services Club PE36 5HL
Find the joker draw 2.30pm.
followed by Toni G. 3.30pm
Karaoke with Mick Covey 8pm

Monday 16th

Anmer Social Club Coffee
Morning 10am-midday. See 2nd
Hunstanton u3a Hunstanton
Community Centre 2pm. Sean
Garrett's talk on the History of
Cromer Pier. All welcome.

Tuesday 17th

Old Hunstanton village Hall
Knit and Natter 10am-12noon.
£3 coffee and cake provided.
Info Carol 07763 466325

Wednesday 18th

Hunstanton Society presentation
'Life of Brian' at The Princess
Theatre 7.30pm (doors 7pm).
Members £1, visitors £5. Bar.

Thursday 19th

Thornham Village Hall Film
Night Doors 6.30pm, Film 7pm
thornhamvillagehall.co.uk
07502 265305

Friday 20th

Massingham Historical Society
at 7.30 talk by Tim Baldwin:
Massingham Heath, past,
present and future. Bar open
Info: 01485 520455

United Services Club PE36 5HL
Quiz night, first prize £50 teams
up to 4 persons. £3pp 8pm

Saturday 21st

Snettisham Flea Market at the
Snettisham Memorial Hall PE31
7LX 9am-3pm 50p U16s free.
Debbie: 07790 789235

Sandringham parkrun see 7th
Hunstanton Promenade parkrun
9am. See 7th

Anmer Social Club Music and
movie icons karaoke + supper. .
Booking essential. email
farmboy24@sky.com or
07899872351 Fancy Dress

United Services Club PE36 5HL
After Party Duo 8.30pm

Sunday 22nd

United Services Club PE36 5HL
Find the joker draw. 2.30pm.
music: Graham James 3.30pm

Tuesday 24th

Dersingham Village Cinema
7.30pm at Dersingham Village
Centre. Four letters of love (12)
Entry £6, U16s £3. Includes
tea/coffee/squash. Bar available.
King's Lynn Society of Arts and
Sciences. see page 49



Scan here for
up to date
event
information

**Wednesday 25th**

Hunstanton Conservative Club
Afternoon Cream Tea from 3pm
01485 532462

Snettisham Gardening Club See
page 20

Thursday 26th

National Theatre Live – The
Audience 1-4pm at Hunstanton
Town Hall 'Pay What You Can'
Info 01953 713390

New Hunstanton WI 2.15pm at
the Methodist Church Hall
Austin St, Hunstanton. Talk by
Amanda Stapleton: The Magic
of Alpacas.. WI members £4,
Please contact 07789687893 or
24wisec@gmail.com

The Wolf Folk Club Flitcham at
Flitcham Social Club PE31 6BU
7.30-11pm 07803 725583

Friday 27th

King's Lynn Festival Coffee
Concert at King's Lynn Town
Hall 11am Pianist Ariel Lanyi.
01533 765565

Thornham Village Hall Winter
Warmer 6.30 for 7pm start. Her
Honour Wendy Joseph KC
'Trials and Tribulations' £30pp
thornhamvillagehall.co.uk
07502 265305

Ingoldisthorpe Sports & Social
Club PE31 6NW -Open Mic
night 7.30 pm Contact Diane on
07901924223 for details

Anmer Social Club Quiz night
Doors 7pm. Quiz 7.30 £3pp.
enquiries@anmerclub.co.uk
07899872351

Saturday 28th

Hunstanton Promenade parkrun
9am. See 7th

5K Your Way Sandringham
Royal Park 8.40 for 9am start.
For anyone affected by cancer,
friends and healthcare
professionals. More info:
Sandringhamgroup@5kyourway
.org 07913 43922

United Services Club PE36 5HL
Cecil Farayi Motown & soul
man 8.30pm

Funding the Next Generation of Stars

Liz Brewer

Westacre Theatre exists to enrich lives through creative participation, cultural connection and inclusive access to the arts. At a time when performing arts are quietly disappearing from school timetables, our role feels more vital than ever, particularly for young people growing up in rural West Norfolk.

Each year, our small but mighty theatre presents over 80 live events, from in-house productions and touring theatre to film, music and community arts. Alongside what happens on stage for audiences, another story unfolds behind the scenes, one centred on young people, creativity and opportunity.

Over the past decade, access to creative subjects in schools has significantly declined. Since 2010, GCSE entries in arts subjects have fallen by almost half*, with dramatic drops in drama, music and dance. For many young people - especially in rural areas - opportunities to explore performing arts during the school day are now limited, or no longer available at all. Community theatres like Westacre help bridge that gap - nurturing confidence, imagination and future skills when formal provision falls away.

A stage for every young voice

At the heart of Westacre Theatre is a deep commitment to empowering children and teenagers through inclusive creative opportunities. Every year, we support hundreds of young people, many from low-income or geographically isolated backgrounds, to engage with theatre both on and off stage.

From acting, singing and musical theatre to scriptwriting, visual art and technical production, our youth programme helps young people build confidence, learn collaboration and discover their voice. Some arrive bursting with confidence; others take their first tentative steps onto a stage. All leave having found a space where they belong. Our rural location is not a barrier - it is the very reason we exist. We believe young people in the countryside deserve the same cultural opportunities as those growing up in cities, and we are here to make that a reality.

Creativity without barriers

Removing barriers to participation is central to everything we do. Through weekly youth theatre sessions, school and home education outreach, and a bursary scheme for performing arts training, we work to ensure no one is excluded because of background, postcode or income. Whether a young person loves singing into a hairbrush, filling sketchbooks with ideas, acting out scenes from stories, writing film scripts or simply needs a safe space to express themselves creatively, or has professional aspirations in the arts, there is a place for them at Westacre Theatre.

Supporting schools and young people

With performing arts increasingly under pressure within the curriculum, many schools, particularly rural ones, no longer have the facilities or specialist staff to offer drama, dance or music. Westacre Theatre proudly supports schools and families, helping young people understand that creativity matters and that there is a professional theatre on their doorstep ready to welcome them. We are always happy to visit schools to deliver assemblies and introduce students to the creative opportunities available.

What's on for Young People (Term Time)

Saturday Morning Drama Club
Act 1 (Ages 7-9): 9:30-10:30am
Act 2 (Ages 9-11): 11am-12:30pm
Act 3 (Ages 12-15): 1-2:30pm
Thursday (Home Education) Drama Club
Ages 6-11: 9:30-11am
Ages 12-16: 11:15am-12:45pm
OffScript (Home Education) Fortnightly - Writing Club
Prologues (Ages 8-11): Tuesdays 9:30 - 10:30am
Epilogues (Ages 12-15): Tuesdays 11am - 12pm
Glee Club - Musical Theatre
Majors (Ages 11-18): Mondays 4:30-5:30pm
Minors (Ages 6-11): Wednesdays 4.30-5:30pm
Artful Dodgers - Art & Design

After School (Ages 6-16): Tuesdays 4-5:15pm
Home Education (Ages 6-16): Wednesdays 11:30am-1pm
LAMDA Tuition

One-to-one LAMDA coaching delivered by MissAdventures Theatre Company, with a 100% pass rate and many students achieving Distinctions.

"So many have walked into Westacre as one kind of kid and come out another. Camilla has guided groups through challenging topics with care and respect. Our family, and so many others, have been deeply enriched by what Westacre offers." - Paula Cleary, Parent and Home Educator

How you can support the next generation

The UK's creative industries contribute well over £100 billion* to the national economy each year, yet access to creative education is shrinking.

Becoming a Friend of Westacre Theatre is one of the simplest ways to help. Friends support our youth programmes, bursaries and theatre space, while enjoying priority booking, exclusive updates and a closer connection to theatre life. Visit www.westacretheatre.com/friends

Westacre Theatre inspiring generations since 1999

Whether you're a supporter, a teacher, or a family nurturing a budding performer, Westacre Theatre is here. Together, we can ensure creativity flourishes and the next generation of stars has a place to shine.

Visit www.westacretheatre.com

Location: Westacre Theatre, near Swaffham

Box Office: 01760 755 007

*<https://www.campaignforthearts.org/reports/the-state-of-the-arts/>

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Sat 9th, Sat 16th

Tickets | £16
£10 (under 21's)

Audience Reviews of Westacre Theatre

"How fortunate we are to have this calibre of performance in our great little theatre in the heart of the County."

"A super professional Theatre! A rare gem set in such a gorgeous setting."

**6 - 16
MAY**

Directed by Matt Grist
Written by Yazmina Reza

When two sets of parents meet to discuss a playground incident between their children, civility is the first casualty. What begins as a polite exchange soon unravels into a razor-sharp comedy of manners (and bad manners), as wine flows, tempers flare, and chaos reigns.

Brilliantly funny, brutally honest, and wickedly relatable, *God of Carnage* is a masterclass in social meltdown - a fast, furious, and gloriously uncomfortable night at the theatre.

What's On
westacretheatre.com

Find Us
River Road
West Acre
Norfolk
PE32 1UA

Get In Touch
admin@westacretheatre.com

In the Limelight

Fundraising at the Heart of Our Theatre

Giving back is at the very heart of everything we do at the Princess Theatre, and this pantomime season has been truly special. During the run of Aladdin, we were proud to support EACH – East Anglian Children's Hospice as our Panto Charity.

Thanks to the incredible generosity of our audiences, with donations collected at the end of every performance, we raised an amazing £7000. That's a record total, and we couldn't be more delighted.

A huge thank you to everyone who donated and helped make such a meaningful difference, your support means the world to us.

We might still have some gloomy nights in February, however the chance to step out to the Theatre to catch a show or one of our screenings will look perfect in your diary.

Calling any Westlife Fans? You don't want to miss this on the BIG screen, Westlife: 25th Anniversary Concert, Tuesday 3rd February. Celebrate 25 years of unforgettable hits with a spectacular concert experience on the big screen.



We have also added a little Film Night this month to screen, Downton Abbey: The Grand Finale, on Tuesday 17th February. Join us for the final chapter of the Downton Abbey story.

Now onto what's on this month and there's so much to look forward to at the Princess Theatre!

From foot-stomping folk and legendary rock tributes to Irish celebrations, soul classics and laugh-out-loud comedy, February is packed with unmissable live entertainment.

We begin on Saturday 7th February with The Mumford & Sons Story, telling the epic rise of the folk-rock giants through a high-energy live show. Four powerhouse musicians, dressed in waistcoats, skinny jeans and sporting some truly impressive beards, bring Mumford & Sons' unmistakable sound and global success to life on our stage.

The following evening, Sunday 8th February, we welcome Roll Over Beethoven – The ELO Tribute Band. Widely regarded as the UK's greatest Electric Light Orchestra tribute act, this spectacular show spans every era of ELO, from 10538 Overture through to the iconic Time album, complete with lights, projections, lasers and a catalogue of unforgettable hits.



On Friday 13th February, it's time to party Irish-style with The Irish House Party. Featuring All-Ireland champion musicians and world champion dancers, this lively and humorous show combines live

music, Irish dancing, fascinating stories and plenty of audience interaction, a guaranteed feel-good night out.

Valentine's weekend kicks off in style on Saturday 14th February as Money for Nothing return to the Princess Theatre. After their huge success last year, they're back to celebrate 25 years of performing their acclaimed tribute to Dire Straits, the perfect choice for a rock-filled night out.

On Sunday 15th February, we slow things down with soul as Let The Music Play – Celebrating Barry White takes to the stage. Direct from the USA, this critically acclaimed revue stars William Hicks, delivering all the romance, richness and timeless hits of the great Barry White.

For those looking for something a little more cheeky, Friday 20th and Saturday 21st February bring the adults-only comedy Jack Off The Beanstalk. Packed with outrageous humour and already earning rave reviews, this show promises a night of non-stop laughter.

We round off the month on Sunday 22nd February with a very special evening of blues. Founder members of The Blues Band, Dave Kelly and Paul Jones, bring their deep musical roots and personal connections with blues legends to the Princess Theatre. Their intimate acoustic set blends original material with classics from the greats they knew and performed alongside, an unmissable night for true blues fans.

With such a varied and exciting programme, February really does have something for everyone. We look forward to welcoming you to the Princess Theatre soon.

Looking for the perfect Valentine's Day Gift or a romantic night? Get ready for a night of pure feel-good nostalgia with Endless Love – A Tribute to Diana Ross and Lionel Richie. Starring a sensational cast, breathtaking vocals and a stellar live band, this wonderfully produced show celebrates two of music's most iconic legends with a glittering mix of Motown classics and timeless smash hits, including I'm Coming Out, Upside Down, Dancing on the Ceiling, Hello, Chain Reaction, All Night Long, Ain't No Mountain High Enough and many more. Featuring authentic live arrangements inspired by Diana's and Lionel's original touring shows, Endless Love is an electrifying, joyful and emotional rollercoaster that captures all the glitz, glamour and romance of these unforgettable songs – making it the perfect way to celebrate the season of love. Guaranteed to have you singing along and dancing in the aisles. Catch the party on Sunday 8th March.



As we creep into the spring months we hope you can pop in for a cuppa or choose the Sunset Wine Bar to meet friends, socialise and look at what we have scheduled for the year ahead.

Once again, please share your theatre joy with us on our socials. We love seeing you check in and let us know you have enjoyed a show. Don't forget, we would be delighted to see some happy reviews too, on our reviews section on Facebook or good old Google reviews.

Thanks for reading - have a lovely month of February.

Anna H



Anna



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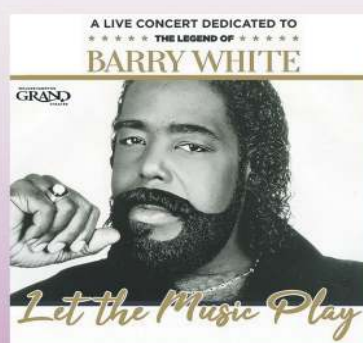
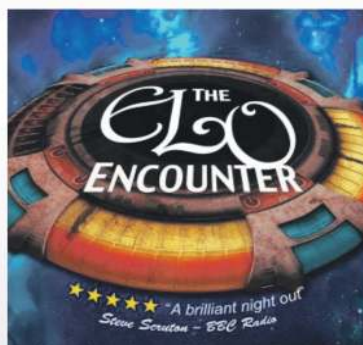
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What's on February

Tues 3rd Feb — Cinema Live; Westlife 25th Anniversary Concert.
Sat 7th Feb — The Mumford & Sons Story
Sun 8th Feb — The ELO Encounter
Fri 13th Feb — The Irish House Party
Sat 14th Feb — Money For Nothing—Dire Straits Tribute
Sun 15th Feb — Let The Music Play—Barry White Tribute
Tues 17th Feb — Film Night; Downton Abbey — The Grand Finale
Fri 20th & Sat 21st Feb — Adult Panto Jack Off The Beanstalk
Sun 22nd Feb — Dave Kelly & Paul Jones

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