

Church & Village News

Baconsthorpe • Barningham Winter • Edgefield • Hempstead
Matlaske • Plumstead • Saxthorpe with Corpusty

February 2021



Hempstead in the Snow
Photograph by Jonathan Neville

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Edgefield	Mark Cook	587735
Hempstead	Paul Sanders	713217
Matlaske & Barningham	Sara Buxton	577207
Plumstead	Nick Fulford	577433
Saxthorpe & Corpusty	Imogen Waterson	587610

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Baconthorpe	http://baconthorpepc.wixsite.com/baconthorpepc
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Hempstead	hempsteadpc@gmail.com
Matlaske & Barningham	http://matlaskeparishcouncil.norfolkparishes.gov.uk
Plumstead	https://plumsteadpc.wixsite.com/plumsteadpc
Saxthorpe & Corpusty	https://corpustyandsaxthorpeparishcouncil.wordpress.com

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Lay Minister Judy Rosser	587584
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Harry Steel	07711 890360
Barningham Winter Amelia Courtauld	577250
Edgefield Emma Cletheroe	587049
Angela Turner	587292
Hempstead Airlie Inglis (acting)	577440
Matlaske Thomas Courtauld	577250
Duncan Wood (acting)	570293
Plumstead Eleanor Faulkner	577868
Saxthorpe with Corpusty Kevin Beales (acting)	585067
Cathy Stern	587014

GOVERNMENT IMPOSED RESTRICTIONS HAVE CAUSED THE
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Clash Diary 2021

Mar 29 Plumstead PC
May 10 Plumstead Annual Church Mtg
June 26 + 27 Hempstead Open Gardens
Sept 6 Plumstead PC
Dec 6 Plumstead PC

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577263 / corinne@avyoungs.com

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Village Contacts for Co-ordinating Help & Support

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Saxthorpe with Corpusty

Andrea Bell, Cathy Stern and Imogen Waterson
01263 587998 covidcommunityteam001@hotmail.com

Foodbank Voucher Distributers

If anyone is in need of food please contact the following who can authorise vouchers for the local
Foodbank (we can arrange for individuals to deliver food if necessary):

Revd David Longe 01263 577263 rector@matlaske.org.uk
Michael McMahon 07748 754550 mjmcm25@gmail.com
Cathy Stern 01263 587014 cathy.duffy5@yahoo.com
Corinne Youngs 01263 577263 administraor@matlaske.org.uk

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are not necessarily the views of the Church & Village
News. Apologies if contributed material is not pub-
lished due to space constraints. All facts are believed
to be correct at the time of going to press.

Letter from the Authorised Worship Assistant Dr Alain J E Wolf

Dear All

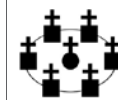
Having recently lived in a place of holiness, St David's, and successfully sailed across the Channel to France hours before food supplies were prevented from coming into the port of Dover, I have returned to this place of beauty where the eye cannot rove around the undulating countryside without seeing a church tower where faith has been lived and God's love known for thousands of years. Full circle. The experience of seeing hundreds of lorries spilling out from over-laden ferries onto the Dover harbour in order to avert food shortages in the UK has led me to reflect on what it means to live on the boundary between native and adopted land. Most of us at some time of our life leave our family, our region, sometimes even our country so that we experience ideas and beliefs beyond those that are familiar to us. This is a necessary condition of our growth. Leaving means going to the land of the future and abandoning the land of our mothers and fathers. This kind of emigration does not have to be geographical; it can be intellectual. Many of us have emigrated in thought through language learning, for example, when one experiences what George Steiner calls 'the almost bewildering bias of the human spirit towards freedom', the freedom not to be trapped in one language skin.

Of course, this kind of cosmopolitanism can be criticised with some justification. In the 18th century, the Marquis de Mirabeau wrote a treatise *L'Ami des Hommes* (*The Friend of Men*) and Thomas Carlyle is supposed to have said "Friend of men, and enemy of almost every man he had to do with". So, as cosmopolitans, we must be realistic, humble and forbearing and be prepared to negotiate the tensions between the global and the local. If, in the words of Bhabha, we are "to bring newness into the world" we must do so with circumspection. Newness cannot be imposed by diktat as a principle, like the freedom to move about and settle wherever unimpeded, for this amounts to invasion. As newcomers we have responsibilities, the responsibility that lies in demonstrating that we can reconcile our diverse identities, the responsibility that lies in managing the temporary abandonment of our first language whilst dwelling with pleasure in our second language: the language of our future.

Early this month, we celebrate the accession of Queen Elizabeth II in 1952. In her long reign, Queen Elizabeth has been the perfect illustration of that faithfulness to the local and the global I have just talked about. Her words "I declare before you all that my whole life, whether it be long or short, shall be devoted to your service and the service to our great imperial family to which we all belong" echo down the ages, and still resonate with me as the hallmark of fidelity.

This is the kind of faithfulness to the local that does not exclude the global, the kind of faithfulness God indicates to Abraham when he urges him to leave his familiar surroundings in Genesis 12: "Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee".

Alain



The Benefice of Matlaske Church Services for February

All Churches remain open for private prayer, however public worship in church is suspended and services will be conducted online via Zoom.

If this situation changes, the Rector will inform parishes as soon as possible.

If you would like to join a service, please let Revd David Longe know by emailing him at rector@matlaske.org.uk. Zoom details are sent out on a weekly basis.

Virtual services will continue to be available on the Matlaske Benefice YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3SRmYGfta8vpzhIIQqPR3A>

If you would like to receive weekly email updates please sign-up to the Benefice mailing list available on the Church & Village Newsletter website:

<http://churchandvillagenews.org.uk/>

7 th		
7.00pm	Compline led by Judy Rosser, Lay Minister	Zoom
14 th		
7.00pm	Compline led by David Longe, Rector	Zoom
21 st		
7.00pm	Compline led by Dr Alain Wolf, Authorised Worship Assistant	Zoom
27 th		
7.00pm	Compline led by Judy Rosser, Lay Minister	Zoom
Wednesday Eucharists via Zoom 4.30pm 3 rd / 10 th / 24 th / 3 rd March		



Baconsthorpe Castle Moat - Photograph by Norman Allen

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John 07825 270610

Baconsthorpe

Our worst fears have been realised, here we are in total lock down in a wet, grey January telling ourselves "it could be worse"! Walks have become a challenge involving a lot of paddling and mud sliding. But the days are slowly drawing out, snowdrops are appearing and I have seen a few primroses in sheltered hedgerows.

I am sure every one of us had to make last minute changes to our Christmas plans but some things were able to carry on as usual. Every parish had a carol singing night when David Longe led us in Covid safe groups around our villages.

Here in Baconsthorpe we progressed up the street, singing at most of the houses, until we came to Dales House which was beautifully lit up with Christmas lights, Jonathon played accompaniments on his PA, and he and Maggie provided sloe gin and mince pies – thank you both so much. En route we were given a tub of chocolates and raised £70 for the church. We finished up with mulled wine and more mince pies – all full of Christmas spirit! The midnight service in church was held in Baconsthorpe this year. The church looked very festive and we were able to end the service outside the church singing *O, Come, all ye faithful* by candlelight – a truly surreal experience.

Before Christmas Tessa had the idea to make Christmas wreaths to sell on the church stall and give the proceeds to the Village Hall. Joined by Jane Warner the two of them made dozens of beautiful wreaths and over £300 was raised for the hall. Well done, both of you and thank you so much.

If you are reading this you will know it is only going out on-line to comply with Covid restrictions. We will be printing a few 'news only' copies which will be posted to anyone with no internet access or computer. If you know of anyone in this position please phone me and I can send them a copy.

As if things were not bad enough we must remember June and Eddy Dagless whose grandson James has been tragically killed in a road accident. Our thoughts and prayers go out to them at this saddest of times.



Corinne Youngs
577263



Sunrise over Baconsthorpe - Photograph by Norman Allen

Gary Chapman

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Barningham Winter

I would like to wish everyone a happy New Year.

A reminder that a 'footpath' is what it says it is. They are NOT for cyclists. Everywhere is muddy enough without cyclists churning up the footpaths. And all cyclists please be aware of the very deep pot holes that seemed to have appeared on most minor roads in North Norfolk.



Sara Buxton
577207

Edgefield

Church News

As church services are not able to go ahead in person at the moment, we thank David and his team for the virtual services – they are a great help and provide connectivity at this time. While all is quiet, the church is home to a family of mice feasting on the altar cloth, which we are trying to address. Please don't forget our church is still open for private prayer. Thank you to everyone who joined us for the carol singing around the village; it was a great success, socially distanced and bringing some Christmas joy to people; also, our Christmas Day service was lovely, all guidelines in place but to actually see people and wave at a distance was nice. Let's hope we can meet again soon. Please ring the Covid volunteer team if there is anything you need help with; we are in this together. Stay safe.

It is with sadness we report the sudden death of Rita Shaw aged 67, of 1 The Bungalows, The Green, Edgefield. Before moving to Edgefield, Rita had lived in Briston, where she was an active member of the WI. Our sympathies to all her family.

Emma Cletheroe

Village Hall News

Being an eternal optimist, I am going to stick my head above the parapet and say that we hope to hold Edgefest 5 in July this year. Look out for publicity in this organ, our Facebook page and the local Nextdoor App. December 200 Club winners were: 1st Peter Pointen (168), 2nd Steve Baker (153) and 3rd Jackie Cole (134).

Jim Frost

Toad Patrol

As we move into early spring and the weather becomes a little milder, the annual migration of amphibians to our village pond will take place. For a few weeks in February and March an enthusiastic team of patrollers will be out and about during the evenings, assisting frogs, toads and newts across the roads, safely into the pond. Please be aware of small creatures and patrollers if driving through the village in the evenings. If anyone would like to join the team of patrollers, please contact me on 01263 587674.

Richard Sear

Hempstead

200 Club

December: J Wood £50, G Lantaff £25, C Matthews £10, I Tyabji, R Hart, M Scarfe, L Wall £5, A Wallace £5, J Buxton £5, M Williams £5, M Weir £5

January: L Matthews £50, J Roy £25, N Sanders £10, P Tomlinson £5, R Carver £5, F Feilden £5



Diana Spalton
711117

Welcome

A hearty welcome to the village to Jessica and James Keen who have come to live at Thistledown in Chapel Lane.

Church News

Calling all budding flower arrangers (with apologies for the pun) and people with a penchant for cleaning: Your Church Needs You! Mo Williams and I have been asked to manage the church's flower and cleaning rotas. First of all, we would like to thank publicly all those people who have, for years, kindly participated in the work necessary to keep our church looking attractive and cared for – and, indeed, Jill Roy and Liz Quinn, who have both recently joined the team. However, we do find ourselves with a few gaps, which have existed for a while now and which we would like to fill if at all possible.

So what is it that we do? Shifts, in both respects, last one calendar month. 'Doing' the flowers requires the two small altar vases to be maintained, with simplicity our watch-word. Some of us also place flowers in the porch: these provide a lovely welcome to visitors but are not essential to what is asked. And cleaning? That's pushing the still relatively new light-weight vacuum cleaner over the carpets and dusting/polishing key hard surfaces such as the area around the altar, and the pews, lectern and font - all of which serves to help things look and smell clean and cared for. We also do a major Spring Clean in late March with everyone piling in to clean surfaces above eye-level and those out of the way nooks and crannies...! That's a broad-brush description of the jobs, then. And the aforementioned gaps? We are presently short of people to do flowers in August and November; and to clean in August and December.

In the ordinary way most people either 'do' flowers, or clean. However, there are two ladies who each currently do two months of both flowers and cleaning and would really like to do just one month if at all possible, albeit still happy to cover both tasks. So, in addition to the gaps identified above, we are also hoping to recruit enough people to provide help with flowers and/or cleaning in May or September and February or October, the present incumbents being happy to retain responsibility for one or the other. We would be extremely glad to hear from anyone able to give up a couple of hours a month, so if you find yourself with a bit of room in your diary do please give either one of us a call – and that includes all you chaps in the village. Other than one gentleman who helps to keep the interior of the church looking trim, everyone else is of the female persuasion! Diane Collier (713004) Mo Williams (712947).

Village Hall News

It seems ironical that after years of trying, and finally achieving to secure the future of the hall for the village, Corona virus and Lockdown come along and prevent any practical use of the hall at this time. So, no wild celebrations, no fireworks, we did at least fly the flag and plant two trees!



Diana Spalton and Ian Summers planting trees on December 4th
in memory of Su Summers and David Watson Cook, Diana's brother

that held the 99 year lease with its board of trustees and constitution are now out of date. Now owners of the freehold, the Trust needs a new constitution and board of trustees appointed. It is hoped by April at the time of the Management Committee's AGM these new arrangements can be confirmed. Like most villages in Norfolk, Hempstead relies on the goodwill of villagers to involve themselves in the community and keep "the show on the road". We need new blood to keep this going. We would be pleased to hear from you if you would like to help, serving on the management committee or becoming a trustee. Let us know if you are interested.

Mike Thody - Chair of the Management Committee

Hempstead Defibrillator

Pammie Wallis had the original idea for a village defibrillator and competed in the Prudential 100 cycling event to raise funds and a big thank you is due to all those people who sponsored or donated. Significant contributions were made by the Village Hall Committee, the Parochial Church Council and the Parish Council. The defibrillator will soon be housed in a cabinet inside the old telephone kiosk near the village hall on The Street, Hempstead. When the ambulance service confirm registration of the machine, then signage will added to the kiosk and the Zoll AED Plus Defibrillator will be installed. Look out for a further announcement in the next newsletter.

Andy Wallis

Graveyard Records

I am planning to put the graveyard records on the church website <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/10333/> and Jonathan Neville has kindly said he would do the same on the village website <http://www.hempstead-norfolk.co.uk/church.html>. While I have been copying out the names from David Durst's excellent records, I have been intrigued to know more about their lives. If anyone knows any of the people buried in the churchyard, could they perhaps send me a brief history about them and perhaps a picture if it exists, ie where they lived, what they did, who they married and whether they had any children would be a great start. It would be a good way of collecting some village history and provide information for people researching their family and village history in the future. For example, I noticed one of the names that appeared was Moneys. I know that one of the woods in Pond Hills is called Moneys... was it named after one of them? Please do send any information to charles.inglis@holefarm.co.uk

Charles Inglis

www.hempstead-norfolk.co.uk www.instagram.com/hempsteadallsaints

Matlaske

100 Club

This year's draw will start in February. We hope that you will continue to support. It will be great if we are able to have a Christmas party this year! Any new members are always welcome, please contact Cherry on 577827 or Marion on 577521 for details. Last year's members have already been contacted.

I hope that everyone has kept well and safe during these uncertain times. If you do need any support please contact me on 577521 or David Longe on 577252. Many thanks to Amelia who so kindly thought of, arranged and purchased the 'Chocolate Drop Off' to each house, a little gesture that meant a lot!



Marion Shepherd
577521

Defibrillator

The battery and pads have just been replaced and we had sufficient funds, from our previous fund raising, to cover the cost of £236.00. They have been installed and will last until roughly 2024. The usual check to ensure it is working correctly has been carried out.

Recycling Bins

Just a reminder that the bins for glass and paper, near the eastern entrance to Matlaske Airfield, are a useful source of income to the village community, when used. Many thanks to the individual who cleared up the remnants of a takeaway and beer cans, that had been dumped nearby.

Plumstead

A New Year, another lockdown, the occasional storm continues to hit us but the days are getting longer and by the time you read this it will be February and a touch closer to Spring. Let's hope that it brings renewal and a sense of the new normal will be clearer. There is, of course, little news – only of uncertainty and postponed events apart from a few moments over the Christmas period which now seems relegated to the dim and distant past.



Mary Lintott
577718

Church News

A small group enjoyed singing carols along Church Street one evening in December, which helped to raise the Christmas spirit for those who opened their doors to listen. The church was beautifully decorated in time for the only service in our church over Christmas. The PCC are so grateful to the Flower Team for all the thought and effort that was put into this.

A Reminder – The church is open for all who would like to spend a few minutes in peaceful thought, meditation or prayer.

There was mention in the December newsletter of a Daffodil Day in the church in March – for now this has not been cancelled but we will keep you posted in the next newsletter.

Eleanor Faulkner still has a few copies of *Eileen's Story* a charming little book of Eileen Gibbons' memories of her life-time in the village. The price is £1.50, of which 50p is donated to St Michael's Church.

Parish Council News

With the continued uncertainty over the Covid Pandemic, the PC have decided that the Boules Competition is to be put on hold.

If you wish to join a survey regarding Covid please do look at the link below.

The National Institute for Health Research has funded a research project, based at the University of Southampton, who are looking to recruit members of the public to take part in a large-scale survey on the preventative behaviours people are taking to avoid catching COVID-19 and the long-term effect of those that have suffered from COVID-19 during the pandemic. If you are interested in completing the survey, please follow the link:

<https://pharma.unige.ch/limesurvey/index.php/326544?lang=en>

I wish you all well at the start of 2021 and hope that by next month there will be more comforting news.

Saxthorpe with Corpusty

I would like, belatedly as there was no January edition, to wish you a happy new year, with promise of better things to come. We are locked-in and life can become insular, but there are things to be positive about. The snowdrops have started to flower. Many fellow villagers are getting out locally for exercise and it is really good, however briefly and from a safe distance, to share company. And, I was lucky enough to be able to have Christmas lunch with my 89-year-old, recently vaccinated mother who lives in Norwich. I hope that it will not be too long before I shall be able to see her again. Looking more broadly, and beyond the sad statistics that we see, the prospect of early vaccination for those most at risk, and then the whole adult population, is a cause for hope.



Sophia Hodgson
587510

Tree Planting

As some of you will have seen in the *EDP*, the children of Corpusty Primary School have been busy planting 30 saplings near the Village Hall to mark National Tree Planting Week. Armed with spades and trowels, the children, aged 7–11 planted rowan, wild cherry and silver birch, which they hope will be enjoyed by the community for many years to come. The trees were donated by the Woodland Trust who want to make sure that everybody has the chance to plant a tree in our effort to help wildlife and reach the UK's 2050 carbon net zero target.



Local Priorities

The Parish Council periodically considers priorities for its attention and budget allocation. The areas on which the Parish Council (PC) has been focusing are apparent from the minutes of meetings. These are posted on the PC website: <https://corpustyandsaxthorpeparishcouncil.wordpress.com/agenda-and-minutes/>

If villagers have views as to the priorities that the PC should address, please contact a councillor or the PC clerk, Kirsty Cotgrove (c.sparishclerk@gmail.com), to pass on that information. The PC would like to hear from you.

Good Neighbours

I am sure that we all try to be good neighbours, but in these locked-in days, it is more difficult to be aware of how other villagers are coping. In this context a few thoughts. If you are aware of anyone who may be eligible for vaccination, but who lacks the transport to get to their vaccination centre, please contact our village contacts for co-ordinating help and support. They are Andrea Bell, Cathy Stern and Imogen Waterson. You will be able to contact one of them by calling 01263 587998 or emailing covidcommunityteam001@hotmail.com. Similarly, if you have not seen villagers who you would normally expect to see, either call on them direct (observing social distancing of course) to check that they are okay or contact one of the village contacts mentioned above.



Photograph by Carol Brown
Saxthorpe Church in the Frost

Annual Toad Watch - Tim Venes



Photograph by Tim Venes

North Norfolk is fortunate in still having a large number of ponds in the countryside, often old marl-pits where chalky clay was formerly extracted to put on farmland, or drinking ponds for farm animals. Because of this, we still have a good population of amphibians – toads, frogs and newts. Other parts of the country are less fortunate and populations are low and decreasing in many areas.

Toads often live a good distance from the pond where they were born, and migrate at night during February and March perhaps a mile or more back to this pond to breed. This makes them particularly vulnerable to road traffic on migration to and from the pond, and they often use roads and tracks as it's easier for them to crawl along these. Also, male toads will often sit in roads where they can see around them, waiting for a female to grab and hitch a lift to the pond, where they are in 'pole position' for fertilising her eggs.

There is a toad patrol by local volunteers at Rookery Pit, just west of Hempstead near Green Farm on the road to Holt, where we aim to move toads off the road to avoid the risk of them being squashed by traffic. There are also patrols at Edgefield, North Barningham and Selbrigg Pond.

How you can help:

- Volunteer to help with patrols. Although there may be lower traffic levels during Lockdown, one vehicle can squash a large number of toads when lots of them are migrating. This doesn't mean being available every evening, people usually do one or two 90 minutes shifts a week between dusk and the first couple of hours of darkness.
- Be aware of where toad patrols take place during February and March, and drive carefully near these.
- Develop 'toad awareness' if you are driving on rural roads at night, especially in February and March, but also any time over the spring and summer, as toads still come out to hunt at night when migration is over. They're most likely to be out in mild and wet or damp weather. If you drive reasonably slowly and watch the road carefully, you can see them on the road in the car headlights and hopefully avoid them with your wheels.

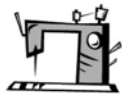
Contact Tim Venes and Sarah Wilson for Hempstead pond (timvenes01@gmail.com / 577200) and Richard Sear for Edgefield pond (richard.sear@mac.com)

Not all local ponds with breeding toads have a patrol – please also be especially careful in early spring near Pond Hills, Hempstead and Plumstead Hall Farm up to Baconsthorpe.

Thank you for helping our local toads!

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Baconsthorpe 1950s Fruit Picking

Recollections by Arthur Pentney



Fruit picking was once big in our village sixty-odd years ago. Large fields were turned over predominantly for growing strawberries and raspberries. Before the advent of pick-your-own (even that now seems to have died out) fruit picking was always done for money, and the more you picked, the more you were paid. You turned up, collected suitable baskets, and were directed to the line of fruit you were expected to pick from. My experience showed that pickers came from three different groups: professionals, who moved from farm to farm and appeared to make a living from fruit, and later in the year, potato picking; locals, mainly housewives, who were looking to supplement what was usually a frugal income; and youngsters, like myself, hoping to earn a few bob for some of life's luxuries, such as a trip to the Holt pictures and maybe a bag of chips.

The professionals moved rapidly up the rows, picking at speed, selecting the best, biggest and easiest fruit that would fill their baskets quickly. Only when several had been filled would they resort to carrying them up to the paying out point where the fruit would be weighed and cash handed out. The locals and children would move at a slower pace, content to take just one or two baskets to be paid for.

When let loose on your first day there was always a temptation to eat some of this lovely fruit as you picked it. I don't recall that this was ever actively discouraged, for as the days passed you soon acquired an aversion both to the look and taste of strawberries, and when lying in bed trying to drop off to sleep, visions of picking them invaded your thoughts.

Generally it was a happy time, the weather was usually clement, and dinner breaks would be taken in the yard of the buildings that were later to be named 'Strawberry Barn' in a nod to their earlier use in days of yore. The only nefarious act that I can recall is when someone's basket supposedly secreted in a row had been swiped by some miscreant to get the money for it.

There was an art of just getting the right weight of fruit in your basket. Too little and you would be sent away to pick more to make that weight up. Too much and the surplus was tipped into a separate container which may have been perks for the supervisory staff – I never found out.

It fell to the farm foreman, Albert Scarff, to oversee all actions on the fields, a job he never relished. He was heard to say he would rather be working with the men on normal farm work than with a field full of women!

The final pick in each field would always be destined for the jam factory. This delighted us youngsters as it meant 'anything goes'. Ripe, over-ripe, or rotten – in they all went together, accompanied by a great deal of laughter.

My mother remarked that at a Women's Institute trip to the Chivers jam factory in Cambridge, the ladies were never shown the raw fruit prior to processing, they just saw it being boiled up in the first part of the production process. Us pickers knew exactly why the raw ingredient was never shown in this way, and grinned accordingly.

So there we have it, more memories from a lost age, sadly gone forever.



Photograph by Jonathan Neville
Robin at Selbrigg Pond



Photograph by Guy Hodgson
Winter Scene

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NEWS RELEASE

05/01/2021

Postal Voting in 2021 Elections

On Thursday 6 May 2021 elections will be taking place in North Norfolk with electors voting in the Norfolk County Council elections and the Norfolk Police and Crime Commissioner Election. There are also several Parish Council by-elections also scheduled to be held on this day.

Given the ongoing situation with the Covid-19 pandemic we want to give electors as much time as possible to change voting arrangements if voting in a Polling Station during the pandemic is not desired.

If you wish to vote by post contact us by email at postalvotes@north-norfolk.gov.uk or by phone on 01263 516046 and we will send you a form.

Local Returning Officer and Chief Executive Steve Blatch said:

"Whilst we are making arrangements for the safe delivery of elections at Polling Stations within North Norfolk at the forthcoming elections we are aware that a higher number of our electorate may wish to conduct their vote by post on this occasion, given the ongoing Covid-19 situation.

The North Norfolk district has the oldest average age demographic in the UK, so by nature we will be seeing a larger number of our residents having a higher level of vulnerability from the virus, so applying for a Postal Vote is an effective way for our local electors to still have their say on Thursday 6 May"

Please note that any application for a postal vote must be completed by hand using 'wet ink' and we are unable to accept any digitally signed applications.

In order to apply for a postal vote, you must be a registered elector within North Norfolk. If you need to register the easiest way to do so is online at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote but again alternatively you can contact us by phone on 01263 516046 to do so.

Completed applications can either be returned by email to postalvotes@north-norfolk.gov.uk or posted to Electoral Services, North Norfolk District Council, Holt Road, Cromer, NR27 9EN

Given the anticipated high volume of applications for postal votes we advise you to make your applications as soon as possible.

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Firstly I would like to wish you all a Happy New Year! Admittedly not the start of the year that any of us wanted, but sometimes we just don't get to choose the path we have to take. Now back to the garden!

As ever there is lots to do and also lots to plan and think about. Now is a good time to top up any raised beds that are looking low, a good task for a dry chilly day. Make sure any vulnerable pots you have are covered up and if possible move them into a sheltered spot. Take the time to wash down any glass on cold frames or cloches; the same applies to your greenhouse if you haven't got round to that already. Choose a nice bright day for that task so it doesn't feel as onerous! Later this month you can start to chit your potatoes in readiness for planting; try and remember what varieties were met with enthusiasm in your household and also what varieties thrived in your garden. It is so much easier to grow a variety that is happy where it is grown.

Moving onto the fruit garden, now is a good time to finish off any winter pruning of pear and apple trees. You can also give any fruit bushes you have a boost by placing fertilizer around them. Later this month plan to give your gooseberries a prune, you will need to shorten any side shoots and also remove any inward growing branches; the trick with gooseberries is to create an open goblet-like shape this is so you can easily see what's going on so you can be watchful for the dreaded sawfly.

Now is the time to finish planning what you might want to grow in both the veg patch and border, probably nothing nicer than being warm by the fire planning what you'd like to grow in the spring. The nights are drawing out, although it very much does NOT feel like that at 7am in the morning when it's determinedly dark, but the nights will get shorter and the days will get longer - that is something we can rely on.

This month's question is from Chris Downes, who asks "I have a lovely but somewhat congested display of snowdrops in my garden. I would really like to spread them out, how should I go about it?" Thanks for your question, Chris! Snowdrops cope well with being moved when they are in the green, so after the peak of flowering and using a sharp spade split and redistribute your display then...Good Luck!

Do keep the questions coming in! Email us at redmaple@btinternet as ever the most interesting question will be published next month....keep safe!

Michelle & Mick McCarter



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Meet the Neighbours

Jonathan Neville – Hempstead



Jonathan was brought up at Itteringham Mill, his parents ran it as guest house, tea rooms and a book shop. He attended Itteringham Primary School where he was the first child in seven years to pass the eleven plus! From there he went to boarding school in Saffron Walden. His headmaster wanted him to stay on for A-levels and then go to university but Jonathan didn't follow that path, he knew he didn't want to spend years at university but wanted to make his own way in life.

Having left school at sixteen Jonathan did a variety of jobs including signing the Official Secrets act to work with the scientific staff at the Warren Springs Laboratories in Stevenage and then by way of contrast became a long distance lorry driver.

In the 1970s Jonathan started working in the mailing industry - initially for Clive Brockdorff (late of Hempstead Vicarage). One of the most notable events of this job involved moving a whole factory operation from Reading to Norwich - moving a factory 170 miles was no mean feat. In the 1980's Jonathan went out on his own launching Polyprint, a company of flexographic printers and converters (printing and making bags for magazines and latterly the food industry). Polyprint was sold in 2017 and Jonathan retired.

As a child he was always interested in wildlife and collected Brooke Bond Tea cards - and still has the whole set of African Wildlife. He knew each and every card intimately and longed to see the animals and birds in their natural habitats. This became a reality in the 1990s and it was even better than he had imagined when looking at the Brooke Bond Tea cards. He now visits Africa every year and has many thousands of photographs, some of which can be viewed at www.digitalwild.co.uk.

Living at Itteringham Mill gave Jonathan an interest in mills and in the 1970's the plan was to write a book on mills. By 2003 the book had instead turned into a website where now there are over 1,200 Norfolk watermills and windmills recorded at www.norfolkmills.co.uk.

Jonathan clearly likes discovering and researching things. His latest project is the history of Hempstead, where he has lived for the last twelve years. It is not unusual for me to find an email from Jonathan with a photo attached with a note "This is not Hempstead, is it Baconsthorpe?". To see more about Hempstead please visit www.hempstead-norfolk.co.uk