

Church & Village News

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

October 2020



In Memory of Su Summers - Sunflowers at Baconsthorpe Allotments
Photograph by Karen Hall

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Parish Council Websites or Email Addresses

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Saxthorpe & Corpusty	https://corpustyandsaxthorpeparishcouncil.wordpress.com

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North Walsham, NR28 9JH
duncan@duncanbaker.org.uk
<https://www.duncanbaker.org.uk/>
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01692 558458

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steffan.aquarone.cllr@norfolk.gov.uk
01603 327827

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Lay Minister Judy Rosser	587584
Authorised Worship Assistant Dr Alain Wolf	577292
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Barningham Winter	Amelia Courtauld 577250
Edgefield	Emma Cletheroe 587049 Angela Turner 587292
Hempstead	Airlie Inglis (acting) 577440
Matlaske	Thomas Courtauld 577250
Matlaske	Duncan Wood 570293
Plumstead	Eleanor Faulkner 577868
Saxthorpe with Corpusty	Kevin Beales 585067 Cathy Stern 587014

What's On

THE MAJORITY OF EVENTS ARE CANCELLED OR POSTPONED
UNTIL COVID-19 IS UNDER CONTROL
THIS INCLUDES REGULAR EVENTS AND THE MOBILE LIBRARY VAN

What's On

OCTOBER

Thur 17 - 31

Plumstead Pumpkin & Dahlia Display

St Michael's Church



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Clash Diary 2020

Dec 6 Matlaske Christmas Party
Dec 7 Plumstead PC

If you are arranging an event please check
with Corinne Youngs that there
is not already an event being held that day
577263 / corinne@ayoungs.com

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this publication
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.

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Yvette Gibson	01263 712460	yvettegibson@pondhills.co.uk
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Plumstead

Carolyn & Steve Price	01263 577401	clerkplumsteadparishcouncil@hotmail.com
Mary & John Lintott	01263 577718	mary.lintott57@btinternet.com

Saxthorpe with Corpusty

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

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

Useful Organisations

Silverline: 0800 4708090 www.thesilverline.org.uk Confidential help for over 55s

The Samaritans: 116123 Whatever you are going through the Samaritans will listen.

Social Services in Norfolk: 0344 8008020

Childline: 0800 1111 www.childline.org.uk Confidential help for under 19s

Norfolk Online: community noticeboard: www.norfolkonline.co.uk/

Norfolk County Council:

www.norfolk.gov.uk/care-support-and-health/health-and-wellbeing/adults-health/coronavirus

Love Holt: www./loveholt.com

Fakenham Food Service: www.facebook.com/fakenhamfoodserviceltd/

Letter from the Rector - Revd Canon David Longe

577252 / 07881 950294 / rector@matlaske.org.uk

Dear All

Below is a short meditation on Creation and our role within it. I write this in the hope it may allow a moment of silence and awe at the beauty around us.

To read this, and you may need to read it several times, I suggest you find a quiet spot, away from televisions and mobile phones (perhaps when the children are asleep!). Find a comfortable seat, may be in the garden, or with a view of a garden or a field.

Begin by relaxing and concentrating on your breathing.

Then, close your eyes and listen.

What do you hear? Is it familiar? Is it new? What is that noise telling you?

Open your eyes and look. Wherever we are Creation is alive, its moving, and you are a part of it.

Pause, enjoy.

Now turn the clock back– imagine the place you are 1000 years ago, and then 100 years ago. What would be the same? What would be different?

Creation never stops: it evolves, grows; sometimes unseen and unheard. The sap moving inside a tree; or the smallest of insects nesting in the grass.

And neither do we stop – although we should – we should stop to marvel at what is around us; to know that we play a part in Creation; that every action we make affects that which is around us. We can see it clearly when we imagine what was here 1000 years ago. Perhaps some of what we see is not so pleasant; yet hopefully some of what we have imagined is delightful.

Now imagine the future. What will the place where you are seated be like in a 100 years, in a 1000 years, when this plague is in the history books?

Will it be beautiful? Can it be beautiful? Will the gentle weaving of Creation, through that unknown source, which we often call God, evolve into something more beautiful than we see now?

As our imagination unfolds, perhaps we realise that we have a role in all of this. We are not separate from it; we are a part of it; entwined within it; inescapably bonded to it: we are Creation and so we are constantly being created, learning, adapting and transforming.

Perhaps having sat with this, you may (or may not) find yourself drawn to a new place, to want to engage with Creation, to even want to speak to the Creator (this I would suggest is prayer).

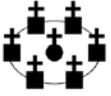
Pray with the Creator who wants us to converse, to respond to creation, to find harmony; or just to be silent to allow the whisper, the wind, the breath to fill us, and allow us to look forward in hope, in trust, and in love.

May God be with this Harvest Time, may Christ inspire you and uplift you, and may the Holy Spirit guide you.

David

The meditation is based on *Earth Meditation* by Jacques St Laurent SJ, Pray-as-you-go: 2020





The Benefice of Matlaske Church Services for October

Virtual Services: We are moving to having virtual services monthly. We are hoping that each community will be able to take 'ownership' of each service, with the readers, and those leading the prayers, and pictures all being from one particular parish. For further details please contact the Rector, Revd David Longe.

Services in Church: All services follow strict COVID-19 guidelines, as published by the Church of England. At the time of publication, it is still not possible to open the smaller churches of Barningham Winter, Hempstead, Matlaske and Plumstead for public worships. All churches with in the Benefice are open for private prayer.

4th	Harvest	
10.30	Eucharist	Barningham Winter
At this service we will celebrate Harvest in the Benefice. Do please bring food for the Food Bank		
7th	Mid-Week Service	
9.00	Eucharist	Saxthorpe
11th	Trinity XVIII	
10.30	Eucharist	Plumstead
18th	Trinity XIX	
10.30	Eucharist	Matlaske
Plumstead Church Pumpkin & Dahlia display begins		
25th	Trinity XX	
10.30	Eucharist	Saxthorpe
1st Nov	Mid-Week Service	
10.30	Eucharist	Hempstead
2nd		
6.30	All Souls	Baconsthorpe
4th	Mid-Week Service	
9.00	Eucharist	Saxthorpe

The Benefice 'Triathlon' The Norfolk Churches Trust Bike Ride 12 September



'Athletes' and Support Staff at All Saints Beeston Regis

Inspired by a couple he was leading through marriage preparation, one of which is a (proper) triathlete, our Rector came up with the dubious brainwave of adding some running and swimming to the sedentary cycling more usually associated with the Norfolk Churches Trust Bike Ride.

Not content to put himself through this alone, he convinced to join him: his wife, a couple of churchwardens (Thomas Courtauld and Harry Steel), the startled soon-to-be-married couple (Joe Tomkins and Tessa Furnivall) and two other gamely chaps (Alex Baily from Gresham and Thomas Abbott from Saxthorpe).

We met at 8.30am at All Saints Beeston Regis, where bikes were left and the 'triathletes' were driven to St Peter's Sheringham, where we registered our visit (the sole visitors ahead of us were Emma, Claire, Lucy and Sarah Cletheroe, from Edgefield at the start of their mammoth 100 church day) and then set off on a gentle jog (the Rector's cartilage prevented us running from the Benefice, despite our enthusiasm for doing so...) to Sheringham East Beach where we stripped off into our speedos and ran Chariots of Fire style into the surf (please see the back cover for photograph). Queen of Logistics Delphine Steel and an equally long suffering wife (Laura Baily) of another 'competitor' provided essential beach assistance in collecting our strewn trainers and t shirts.

The sea could politely be described as bracing, but the Lord had given us calm conditions – a light breeze, in coming tide and current taking us towards Beeston Regis (rather than Belgium). Breast stroke was certainly the most popular method, with bursts of crawl from some. It took us half an hour or so to swim the kilometre to the steps up the cliffs

at Beeston Regis, where we emerged from the sea, with the bearded and fully thatched Rector resembling a biblical figure (or possibly Neptune). We were all pretty cold and glad of the towels provided by the Logistical Goddesses on the beach. We had some surprised looks from the residents of the mobile home park as we emerged up the steps and made our way to Beeston Regis Church car park and our bikes. Our changeover from swimming to cycling was far from Olympian, but much more comfortable: hot, sweet tea, chocolate brownie and a good deal of faffing around before we signed in at All Saints Church and pedalled away.

Readers will be glad to know that no one in the party was squeezed into any unseemly Lycra, as we set off on a fairly motley selection of bikes, up the long, coastal hill towards the A148 where we crossed, a little out of breath, and followed a confident vicar along a footpath which wasn't entirely suitable for road bikes, eventually reaching All Saints Gresham without a puncture. From here we took a more conventional route to St Mary's Bessingham, with its distinct round Saxon tower, before taking a cross country route (much of which required walking...) to St Peter's North Barningham, where we found Maurice de Bunsen on his knees, not praying, but in fact cleaning. After discussing the pigment make up in the colouring on the pink walls, we set off for Baconsthorpe, past Kevin's pig sign and found Tessa McCosh mid-flow with an interested party at the Heydon memorial. Fortified by plums and other miscellaneous home produce, we remounted and made off for St Mary's Barningham Winter, entering the park at the Cromer Lodge, where we enjoyed the tranquillity of this peaceful spot, and admired the Seaman's calves. Last stop was Benefice HQ, St Peter's Matlaske, where we were shown the Rector's quiet corner and the churchwarden's bonfire site, before rather wearily making our way up the path to the Rectory garden and Sara's magnificent and (we felt) well earned lunch, after which most of us returned to domestic duties, but the Rector, with Divine energy, visited the rest of the Benefice by way of Saxthorpe with Corpusty, Edgefield, Hempstead and Plumstead.

Harry Steel

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John 07825 270610

Baconsthorpe

We are now really into autumn and as I write this the sun continues to shine and we are still enjoying glorious weather.

Baconsthorpe was well represented on the bike ride in aid of the Norfolk Churches Trust on 12th September.

Harry Steel joined a group of brave souls who completed the Benefice Triathlon. Harry has written a full account of their efforts and photos which you can read on page 8 with more photographs on the back cover. At the time of writing he has raised £3,560 in sponsorship to be divided between the Norfolk Churches Trust and Baconsthorpe Church. Harry, thank you so much for this amazing effort.



Corinne Youngs
577263

We were sad to hear of the death of John Perry-Warnes. John lived in Baconsthorpe for many years, during which time he served as Church Warden. He was a district and county councillor and will be remembered for his endless hard work on our behalf. He was always available to help and advise, gave unstintingly of his time and energy and did everything he could for the greater good of this community. We remember him and Marion with thanks for all they did.

Sunday services continue to be held, outside the church and hymns weather permitting or inside the church, no hymns and wearing masks, when raining. The virtual You Tube service now happens once a month.

Bottle Bank

Someone left sheets of glass at the bottle bank, these blew over in the strong winds and smashed. We owe thanks to Michael Day who spent a lot of time clearing it all up and disposing of it elsewhere. Please note **THE BOTTLE BANK IS FOR BOTTLES ONLY.**



Autumn morning mist over Baconsthorpe Castle by Norman Allen

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Barningham Winter

Our very best wishes and congratulations to Izzy Pallister and Matilda Courtauld on their A and O level GCSE results, what a very strange end of school year they had and we do hope that they will be able to go on to do great things in the future.

There will be a harvest theme to the benefice service on the 4th October at 10.30am at St Mary's Church, Barningham Winter. Any produce for the local food bank would be most appreciated and we look forward to having a service in St Mary's the first for many months.

Keep watering your dahlias and feeding your pumpkins for the Plumstead Pumpkin and Dahlia Display (see Plumstead news page 19 for details).



Sara Buxton
577207

Edgefield

Church News

There was a good open air service in Edgefield on Sunday 13th September.

We are, as always, extremely grateful to Alison and Iain Mawson for organising, and taking part in, the annual Norfolk Churches Trust Cycle Ride, which raises funds for the upkeep of village churches throughout the county. Our own parish church has benefited from financial help from the Trust in the recent past.

Emma Cletheroe writes: On 12th September, it was the Norfolk Churches Trust bike ride. To do something different, we decided to try and visit 100 churches, not by bike unfortunately, but by car. We started at Upper Sheringham, went to Trimmingham in the east, south to Bawdeswell and out to Houghton St Giles in the west and most of them in between. It was lovely to see so many people taking part in our area and there are so many beautiful churches and buildings, which are so wonderfully kept. Some churches had a quick visit, but it was lovely to chat with the volunteers manning them. As we went around we took a photo of each church, building or notice board we visited. We had a really fun day and wished we could have spent more time at each one. Our churches are such magnificent landmarks in our countryside, we need to support the Norfolk Churches Trust in all that they do. You can still sponsor us on my just giving page: www.justgiving.com/plasesponsor/Emma-Cletheroe.

Thank you and well done to everyone who took part.



Richard Peaver
587486

Angela Turner

Village Hall News

The hall has now reopened for fitness classes and we have additional sanitising stations and signs and after each session we are cleaning the hall. Hopefully it's the first step to operating fully.

Sadly, despite both verbal and written requests, the rubbish bins on the Green continue to have dog waste placed in them, even though we are all supplied with a black bin for general waste. "No dog waste" signs have now been placed thereon and if the problem continues the bins will be removed. Stay safe and we hope to see everyone back in the hall before too much longer.

The August 200 Club winners are: 1st prize: Emma Halliwell; 2nd prize: Timothy Cox; 3rd prize: Joyce Kinsley. The 2020 annual prize draw was won by Shirley Buck.

Jim Frost

Hempstead

200 Club

£50 F Feilden, £25 A Parker, £10 A Udale, £5 L Matthews, G Harris, P Tomlinson



It is with great sadness that we record the death of Su Summers, whose obituary appears below.

Here is a photograph of the wedding on 5 September at Hempstead Church between Gordon Massingham and Rachel Minter, from Chapel Lane, Hempstead. A very happy family occasion, and so lovely to unlock the lockdown church, for thirty guests. The sun came out as they left the church where they were showered with confetti made from rose petals, by friends from the Benefice, and sang the hymn *Morning has Broken* in the churchyard.

NB The Quiz has been cancelled.



Diana Spalton
711117

Su Summers 1949 - 2020



A resident of Hempstead for the last twelve years, Su Summers was a privately-religious person, not one to whom one could attach the moniker 'holier than thou', being perfectly happy to risk making a fool of herself along with the rest of us in the provision of entertainment at village Christmas Parties.

A Parish Councillor until she found her time filled to more than capacity with other ventures, she immersed herself in all aspects of village life, believing as she did in the immense value of community and the cohesion this can bring to otherwise disparate groups of people in a neighbourhood.

A selfless provider of the first order, forever potting and pickling nature's produce for both the benefit of her fellow man and the Church's coffers, she established a produce stall in the village, where her home-made jams and crab-apple jellies were firm favourites. I remember her telling me of the time when a regular visitor to the village, having found the stall bereft of the marmalade she so loved and would regularly buy, knocked on Su's door to ask if there was any left that hadn't yet made it to the stall. There was not - but Su did have fruit in the freezer, so she made a batch. Now, marmalade-making, whilst the final product is hugely rewarding, is not something that is produced without a very great deal of effort - all that paring of the zest and making sure that the pith is removed, followed by squeezing the cooked fruit half to death to get all the pectin out - but Su was prepared, yea, even happy, to do it for someone she barely knew - and for the Church.

She served as Church Warden at All Saints for many years, managing the booking of priests during periods of interregnum in addition to her usual duties and being a listening friend to Reverend Marion Harrison. Su spent many years planning the rotas for church services and during the latest Benefice interregnum organised priests to take the services. She spearheaded the brochure to encourage the right priest to join the Benefice. A job well done.

A chorister from the age of eight, when she could be found singing psalms in the Church choir led by her father, Su took over the leadership of the Benefice Choir a number of years ago. She truly understood the power of choral music to unite and uplift people and her inclusive approach soon encouraged more people from the Benefice who enjoyed singing to become involved. With immense kindness, support and with a tenacity borne of her need to produce a beautiful sound she corralled members into a cohesive group of singers. Beginning with singing at the major Festivals with the occasional Evensong for good measure, and buoyed up by an appreciative congregation, the choir eventually sang at a dozen services a year. Her enthusiasm and passion for music flowed out of her and inspired everyone out of their comfort zones. Her commitment was second to none.

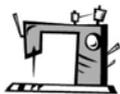
Su established a host of social activities for the benefit of people and the environment alike such as Toad Watch at Green Farm, annually hosting an event each February at The Feathers in Holt with the aim of recruiting more people to populate the rota. Once the job of spending cold, dark, wet evenings picking up God's creatures and moving them to a place of safety (the pond - all the while keeping count ...) for a month or more was done, she would host an Annual Toad Lunch in her garden so that people could enjoy a treat after their efforts, and also get to see what their fellow 'toaders' looked like in daylight!

Monthly Coffee & Gossip Meetings were established in the Village Hall and then, of course, there was Hempstead Arts. This was never just Friday evening through to Sunday, which was what most people saw. Well in advance, signs had to be put out at road-sides far and wide and flyers distributed for display in local retail outlets; women (usually) engaged to cook food for sale throughout the week-end and, indeed, cajoled to man the café. Other willing helpers were busy throughout the previous week smartening up the Hall and environs, re-painting and erecting the staging and then finally hanging the art. During this time, Su was busy making and also buying victuals to keep visitors refreshed, and putting final touches to her own stained glass work that would go on sale.

But before any of this could happen, Su and Ian trawled Norfolk during the Open Studios season looking for new artists to show. And after everything had been taken down and the Village Hall returned to normal, the books balanced and determinations made concerning the monies due to artists, most of the 'support staff', as it were, breathed a sigh of relief for a job well-done and went

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home. But Su's job was not yet done for during the following week she worked with her fellow Church Warden, Ann Udale, to send out the artists' cheques, accompanied by hand-written letters thanking them for their participation and expressing a hope to see them again next year. Even in February this year, despite her failing health and determined that the show would go on, Su convened a meeting to begin the planning of Hempstead Arts 2020 and died right in the middle of when the exhibition would have taken place had it not been for Coronavirus.

All of the profits from Hempstead Arts went to the Church and the profits from Coffee & Gossip were distributed to various organisations from the Newsletter, Village Hall, Church and a few charities.

There is so much more: the Church Charity Lunches she organised and her input to first participating in, and then in latter years helping to manage, the delivery of the Church and Village Fête. She not only managed Village Hall bookings, forever sending takings to the Treasurer, she cleaned it regularly too.

And we should not forget the Play-Reading Group, established for all those desperate to have their 'footlights' moment without the fear of forgetting lines! Having run for many years and always with a Group Supper for members every November (reading hugely entertaining Fawley Towers plays), the level of work that had to be undertaken before each meeting was really quite phenomenal, with characters to be allotted and sometimes re-allotted at short notice when someone couldn't make a meeting - and always with the pressure of trying to make sure that, for those who wanted them, 'starring roles' were allocated evenly over the year. Its demise toward the end of last year was indicative of just what a remarkable character Su was. It foundered as a result of her failing health and members' reluctance, for many and different reasons, to pick up what was a sometimes trying and very difficult mantle.

Su was rarely the only person involved in any of her ventures, but she was certainly the driver. She wanted the community to thrive. People who knew her talk about her keen sense of responsibility; her self-effacing and conciliatory character; and the way that she just got on with things.

And let us not forget the contribution to all of this made by Ian, the man Su described as her 'rock', always there to support actively every new venture she embarked upon. Just before she died, Su apologised to Ian for "dragging him through so many things".

He has said that when he was editing this newsletter and reached that stage of production which required somebody to proof-read it, she, in turn, would drop everything for him.

Sounds like a good partnership to me.

Diane Collier

Matlaske

100 Club

£25 Mavis Hughes, £10 Chuffy de Bunsen £5 Scarlett Norton

Matlaske Parish Council have given a £50 donation to St Peter's Church



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Plumstead

Here we are moving into October and as I write this the weather has been typically true of September, beautifully warm days and cool nights. However the blot on the landscape is a further concern about Covid and the restrictions have increased again. This means that village social events and any fund-raising is pushed back to some point in the distant future. As a result our Pumpkin & Dahlia event in its original format has been cancelled – however, we have conjured up a different way to enable those of you who have grown pumpkins and dahlias to feel fulfilled and their labours to be displayed. Our wish is also to engage the children in the Benefice who enjoy creating bizarre Halloween faces on pumpkins. So...



Mary Lintott
577718

17th – 31st October Pumpkin & Dahlia Festival

You are welcome to bring any pumpkins squashes etc and of course dahlias that you have grown and we shall put on a Festival of Autumn Fruits and Colours for anyone to enjoy. It will be a feast for the eyes. Children in the Benefice are welcome to bring (by Sunday 25th October) their carved pumpkins to be displayed. There will be a prize for the best carved pumpkin. All Covid restrictions will be adhered to but hopefully it will be an opportunity for some of us to enjoy a little taste of autumn.

Sadly it is unlikely that we shall be able to provide refreshments but we hope that you will feel able to give a small donation for the continuing support of the Church

Pumpkin and Dahlia Display
St Michael & All Angels Church Plumstead
Saturday 17th - Saturday 31st October
Pop-in Anytime



If you have dahlias, pumpkins or carved pumpkins
for the display please ring
Diana Muir 577817 or 07435 294510
by October 13th

Donations in aid of church funds welcome

Ring Diana Muir (577817) if you have anything to offer before Tuesday 13th October. Please do come and support this event - our Church will be open all day during those two weeks for you to visit.

Church Bike Ride

Saturday 12th September was a warm, sunny and breezy day, just right for the Norfolk Churches Trust sponsored cycle ride. Three cyclists from Plumstead took part. Eleanor covered thirteen miles, visited eight churches, picked 1.5lbs of blackberries and thoroughly enjoyed the excursion! Jonathan did a quick trip around ten churches and between them they have raised over £325. Five year old Eli visited four churches an amazing achievement. Thank you to all who have sponsored us. The church was manned throughout the day and was visited by thirty-two folk cycling for their churches and one driver.

Saxthorpe with Corpusty

Churches Trust Bike Ride

Charles Tyndall wishes to thank very much everyone that participated in the fund-raising event for our two churches. Please ensure that all sponsorship money is given to him no later than 23rd October. Please make this either cash or cheques payable to Norfolk Churches Trust.



Sophia Hodgson
587510

Lesley Pike

Sadly, Lesley Pike died during September. Lesley was the profoundly deaf man who lived along The Street in Corpusty in the little house next to the what was once the lawnmower shop owned by Wayne Southgate. He cultivated a beautiful front garden year after year, full of roses and hollyhocks. It gave great pleasure to many who passed that way, and he often smiled and communicated with those who bade him good day. He had been a stone picker in his youth among other local agricultural tasks and lived for many years with his mother who also died at a good age. When we had a consultative tea party at the village hall as a part of the Neighbourhood Plan consultation, Lesley arrived eager to participate and showed us a registration card from an earlier time, his membership of a mutual aid club which had existed in the village in the 1950s, of which he had been a member and which he thought should be resuscitated. He had a strong friendship with his next door neighbours who looked after him in later years. Many people will miss his presence among us for despite his limited ability to communicate verbally, he did communicate in other ways and was a cheerful presence when one encountered him. He seemed a kind man. He was in his early 90s when he died.

Proposed development off Adams Lane and Norwich Rd

Broadland Housing association has bought the land on either side of Adam's Lane and proposes to build about 38 dwellings. Plans are at a very early stage with no designs submitted yet, but previously completed schemes are to be posted on the Parish Council website for villagers to consider.

Adams Lane

The Parish Council has supported the application to upgrade Adams Lane from a public footpath to a restricted byway, to reflect historic use and ensure that the right of way is available for future generations to use it on horseback or bicycle, as well as on foot. The legal order confirming status as a byway was confirmed on 30th July.

Pelipods

I am pleased to confirm that site of the unsightly pelipods, that dominated the car park of the telephone exchange, have been removed.

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Doing a Harvest - Part Two

The sixth in a series of recollections by Arthur Pentney



On some farms horses would still have been used to pull wagons loaded up from the now dried-out shocks. Once a base for the stack had been prepared, stack making could begin. Shoofs were thrown from the waggon onto the newly emerging stack, and it was my job to catch the shoof on a pitchfork and pass it on to the stack maker. His was the most important job of all and on

our farm this fell to my uncle Ernest, who was master of the craft. By estimating the size of the crop he could determine exactly how big the stack was to be, when it needed to be tapered off at the top, and that as those last few shoofs were placed they would exactly fill the small gap remaining. Next, the stack needed to be thatched to keep out the rain, and again, Ernest was the man for the job, and a completed thatched stack really was a work of art – one sadly now lost for ever.

Large farms had a stackyard where were clustered together to save moving the troshing (threshing) tackle around from field to field. These stackyards were a magnet for us boys. At dusk, armed with a torch and air pistol we would shine a light into the stack, and if a pair of eyes looked back at you, then – bang – and another Roland wouldn't be eating any more corn that or any other night.

Troshing required a steam engine, an elevator, and a gang of men. The engine had a prodigious appetite for both coal and water, and emitted great clouds of smoke and steam, thereby making a dirty job even filthier. The elevator was driven by a horse tethered to a pole, and by walking round in circles continuously, shoofs were deposited to the top of the threshing machine.



The shoofs were thrown into the top of the machine, loose straw was deposited and corn collected in sacks, weighed and carted off to the barn. Dozens of rodents whose winter hibernation had been disturbed would make a run for it to be chased with delight by the local kids.

A simplified version of the whole troshing procedure can be seen in one episode of *Dad's Army*, when the platoon are helping out with the harvest on the farm of a one-time lady friend of Godfrey.

What a grand sight it was to see a barn full of sacks of corn, and the farm cats on parade and ready to pounce on any rodent that attempted to steal any of it!

Troshing, you could say, finally completed the farming year, and preparations would now be put in place to start the new one.

The Village Gardener

To Plant a Garden is to Believe in Tomorrow



As I write this we are having the last hurrah of summer, I am somewhat assuming by the time you get to read this we will properly be in autumn...although who knows? The rulebook appears to be out of the window at present. Now for October: as the nights start to draw in (something we can at least count on) there is a sense of urgency in the garden to get everything in order before we lose the light, clearing and sorting is the order of the day. In the veg patch a good tidy up is nice way to enter into the colder months. If you have empty beds think about either sowing green manures or if that's too late to organise, perhaps some manure, which can take its time breaking down over the winter months so your beds are revitalised for the new growing season. This is especially important if you have raised beds. We've noticed a lack of vitality in our walled garden raised beds this year, so this autumn we are ensuring we are putting enough good stuff back on the beds for a better harvest next year. The other big (literally) excitement in the veg patch this year is the pumpkins which have been prolific, so it's now a race to get them to finish ripening-up. A handy way to ensure they get enough light is to raise them (carefully!) up on bricks. Make sure you keep tender herbs covered up to protect them from possible frosts to keep them as happy as possible. This is also the time to plant garlic, so make sure you have some in stock.

Now to the flower garden! It's not quite the time to plant tulip bulbs, best to wait till it's a bit cooler but again like the garlic make sure you have them in stock so if the weather turns colder at the end of October you can get them in the ground. Have a good tidy up in the border to remove weeds and bring in and store carefully any plant supports so you're all set for next year. This is also the time to lift dahlia tubers and store carefully to prevent frost damage, do remember to label carefully... so frustrating when you don't as one tuber very much looks like another! Finally if you haven't done so already then finish off pruning any rambling roses.

I think this year has been particularly good for apples! So if you find yourself with a happy glut of them then do think about storing them for the winter, just chose a nice cool airy spot and take the time to store them carefully, do check them over from time to time, just in case one unhappy apple makes them all unhappy. Failing that get in the kitchen and make some chutney or pickle!

This month's question comes from Tim Hughes who asks, "My oak tree has been producing these strange apple like fruits...any ideas?" These sound like oak galls Tim, a rather curious result of certain species of gall wasp larvae, whose secretions modify the oak tree to create these oak galls for them to live in and live off the oak tree, interesting but faintly sinister! Oak galls were also used as one of the ingredients that went into some of the earliest forms of ink.

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



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