

Church & Village News

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

April 2022

Our thoughts and prayers are with all those affected by the war in Ukraine

Photograph by Norman Allen



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www.baconthorpe.org



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What's On

APRIL

Fri 1	6.30pm	Baconthorpe Film Night <i>Ammonite</i>	Village Hall
Thur 7	3.45pm	Hempstead Music	Village Hall
Sat 9	10.00am	Saxthorpe + Corpusty Litter Pick	Dukes Head
Sat 9	11.00am	Barningham Hall Valuation Day	Barningham Hall
Sat 16	12.00noon	Plumstead Easter Thanksgiving Festival until 25 th	Church
Sat 23	7.00pm	Edgefield Bingo Night	Village Hall
Sun 24	4.00pm	Edgefield Concert by the Samphires	Church
Fri 25	6.00pm	Baconthorpe Pop-Up Pub	Village Hall

Clash Diary

May 14	Hempstead Yard + Boot Sale	June 4	Edgefield Platinum Jubilee Afternoon
May 14	Saxthorpe + Corpusty Barn Dance	June 5	Baconthorpe Platinum Jubilee Tea
May 28/9	Plumstead Art Exhibition	June 5	Plumstead Platinum Jubilee Celebration
June 1	Baconthorpe Village Hall AGM	July 23	Baconthorpe Fête
June 3	Matlaske + Barningham Platinum Jubilee	Dec 10	Edgefield Festive Evening

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

Holt Library

9 Church Street, Holt NR25 6BB 712202
Tues 10am-7pm / Wed 2pm-7pm
Fri 10am-7pm / Sat 1pm-4pm

Post Offices

Baconthorpe Mobile Post Office Van
Wednesdays 10.00am Village Hall

Corpusty Stores 587726
Monday-Friday 9.00am – 12.00noon

Itteringham Shop 587325
Monday + Thursday 9.00am-1.00pm

Mobile Library Van

14 April / 12 May / 9 June / 7 July / 4 August

Matlaske	11.40	NR11 7AQ	Old Post Office
Plumstead	12.25	NR11 7LG	Walnut Farm
Edgefield	1.55	NR24 2AL	The Memorial
	2.15	NR24 2AX	The Street
Corpusty	2.45	NR11 6QP	School
	3.40	NR11 7BU	Great Farm Cott's
Saxthorpe	4.10	NR11 7BL	Old Post Office
Corpusty	4.30	NR11 6QJ	Adams Lane
	4.50	NR11 6QL	16 Council Houses

7 April / 5 May / 30 June / 28 July / 25 August

Hempstead	3.40	NR25 6TL	Telephone kiosk
Baconthorpe	4.05	NR25 6LE	Hare & Hounds
	4.20	NR25 6LG	Old Post Office
	4.40	NR25 6LJ	Council Bungalows

Times and dates sourced from Norfolk County website: <https://bit.ly/2AJdSGA>

Parish Council Websites

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

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily the views of the Church & Village News. Apologies if contributed material is not published due to space constraints. All facts are believed to be correct at the time of going to press.

Letter from the Rector - Reverend Canon David Longe

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

Dear All

The travesty in Ukraine is incredibly distressing. Where we ask is the hope? Will Vladimir Putin withdraw? Can the damage be healed? Whatever the outcome the wounds will be deep.

As Easter approaches, the church draws itself into the events and trauma of Holy Week. Here a good man is taken from the midst of his friends, and is horrifically crucified on Good Friday.

Just as the events of Good Friday are turned upside down by the events of Easter, we pray for something extraordinary to happen in the Ukraine. We pray and hold in our hearts the hope that this conflict will end; that Life triumphs over death, that Good will always conquer Evil.

This community, which is such a privilege to serve, has through its incredible outpouring of empathy for those in Ukraine, shown a generosity that I would say is a reflection of the true nature of God. (Look closely at Georgie Rodwell's article later in these pages and see the incredible amount of things gathered for the Ukraine.)

We cannot by ourselves stop this war, but as this outpouring shows, we have the capacity as a global community to show that there is a different way to life, to this violence; it is a way that is gentle, kind, generous, revealing the peace and hope that is vital to living. This way of life revealed so clearly in Easter makes us look at things afresh and gives us new perspective.

Recently I was sent the below – and if you follow the instructions to **read the poem in reverse** (last line first) this too makes us look at things from a new perspective.

With my prayers for the peoples of Ukraine and for you all this Easter,

David"

Refugees by Brian Bilston

They have no need of our help	Go back to where they came from
So do not tell me	They cannot
These haggard faces could belong to you or me	Share our food
Should life have dealt a different hand	Share our homes
We need to see them for who they really are	Share our countries
Chancers and scroungers	Instead let us
Layabouts and loungers	Build a wall to keep them out
With bombs up their sleeves	It is not okay to say
Cut-throats and thieves	These are people just like us
They are not	A place should only belong to those who are born there
Welcome here	Do not be so stupid to think that
We should make them	(now read from bottom to top)

Please note that the Eucharist on 6th April has been moved to 13th April



The Benefice of Matlaske Church Services for April

3 rd	Lent V	
8.30am	Eucharist	Hempstead
10.30am	Mattins	Barningham Winter
10 th	Palm Sunday	
10.30am	Eucharist with donkey trail around church	Hempstead
11 th	Holy Monday	
6.30pm	Compline	Plumstead
12 th	Holy Tuesday	
10.00am	Craft activities for young people - ends 12noon	Edgefield
6.00pm	Seder Meal (reflecting on Jewish Passover - with food) Please register by emailing administrator@matlaske.org.uk	Baconsthorpe Village Hall
13 th	Holy Wednesday	
9.00am	Eucharist	Saxthorpe
6.30pm	Contemplative Prayer	Hempstead
14 th	Maundy Thursday	
6.30pm	Eucharist with foot washing Preacher - Revd Canon Chris Copsey	Matlaske
15 th	Good Friday	
10.30am	Easter Story Play & Hot Cross Buns	Baconsthorpe
2.00pm	Meditation	Barningham Winter
16 th	Holy Saturday	
10.30am	Creating Easter Gardens - ends 12noon	Plumstead & Saxthorpe
17 th	Easter Day	
10.30am	Easter Service & Easter Egg Hunt	Edgefield
18 th	Easter Monday	
All Day	Easter Egg Hunts	All churchyards
All Day	Easter Activity Trails	Baconsthorpe / Hempstead / Plumstead / Saxthorpe
24 th	Easter II	
8.30am	Eucharist	Hempstead
10.30am	Eucharist	Baconsthorpe
1 st May	Easter III	
9.00am	Church Breakfast & Model Makers Exhibition	Corpusty Village Hall
5.00pm	Eucharist	Matlaske
Wednesday 4 th May 9.00am Eucharist Saxthorpe		

Baconsthorpe Village Hall Cinema

January - April 2022

School Lane, Baconsthorpe, Holt, NR25 6LJ

Tickets £5.00 on the door
Licenced Bar from 6.30pm
Film Starts 7.30pm



secretary.baconsthorpevillagehall@outlook.com



Friday 1st April 2022

Baconsthorpe

March 200 Club

£50 H Steel, £25 E Gee, £10 H Steel, £5 R Youngs, K Benton Warboys, J Benton Warboys

Well done Baconsthorpe

I would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who has contributed to the mass of clothes and gifts heading for Ukraine. The church porch this morning was full of bags containing items which hopefully may help alleviate the dreadful situation these poor people are in.

Did You Know?

Did you know that in the 1960s the Hare & Hounds pub was a very popular and interesting venue? Located on the left as you leave the village and head for Holt, it was owned and run by quite a character – Major Gerald Sutherland. The Major was born in Brancaster and in his own words was ‘dropped on a mussel bed’. The pub at that time housed quite a menagerie of animals including fox cubs, ducks and parrots. One evening a very grumpy African Grey parrot managed to remove a



Hazel Martin
07879 414577

customer's fingernail! Another used to be allowed to fly freely around the village removing pegs from various people's washing lines. The Major was a very colourful character and the rule was ‘if the light was on then the pub was open and drinks were being served’ – he did not worry too much about rules and official opening hours. The Major ran the Hare & Hounds from 1955 until his death in 1970. Such a shame that the public house is no longer open.

Church Cleaning

Masses of thanks to the lovely people who gave up their time on a sunny Monday morning to join me in sprucing up St Mary's church. The ‘dream team’ included Rosemary Hardingham; Jane and Piers Warner; Delphine and Harry Steel; Stanley Martin; Corinne Youngs and Tessa McCosh. I am including a photograph, although some were rather camera shy. Anyone calling into St Mary's will be greeted by gleaming pews and the smell of polish.



Take A Bow

Take a bow, Harry Steel, for raising £1,927 towards church funds following his amazing feat of stamina during the Norfolk Churches Trust Bike Ride in September 2021. May I say not just cycling, but also swimming from Sheringham to Beeston Regis. This was followed by a rather precarious climb up the cliff steps, before setting off on his bicycle on a route which included visits to ten churches which were variously located in West Runton, Sheringham, Upper Sheringham, Weybourne, Holt and finally back to Baconsthorpe.

An Important Invitation

Today nestling amongst the pages of your newsletter is your invitation to Afternoon Tea in Baconsthorpe village hall. As you will see this is a free event for us all to come together to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth. There will be sandwiches, scones, cakes and other various nibbles. Please do let Corinne know if you are able to come and join us.

Village Hall News

The Village Fête will be held on 23 July this year, at the Village Hall. We would welcome volunteers to help on the day and we would also love to have donations of cakes/biscuits, books, prizes for the stalls. Please contact Piers on 07493 227591.

The 200 Club still has some numbers available at £1 a month. Top prize is £50. If you would like a number for this monthly prize draw please contact secretary.baconsthorpevillagehall@outlook.com

Film Night Friday 1st April

Features *Ammonite* a period drama starring Kate Winslet and Saoirse Ronan. Mary Anning (Winslet), an acclaimed fossil hunter, is forced to care for a rich visitor's sick wife (Ronan), and the two develop an intense bond. Set on the Jurassic coast of Dorset. Doors and bar open 6.30pm, film starts 7.30pm. £5 on the door.

Pop-Up Pub Friday 29th April 6pm-10pm with chicken tray bake and veg plus a vegetarian option.

Piers Warner

Church News

Friday April 15th (Good Friday) the church will be hosting a short play of the Easter Story; this will begin at 10.30am and be followed by Hot Cross buns.

Barningham Winter

Bring your family treasures
to be valued at
Barningham Antique Day
with Keys of Aylsham
Saturday 9th April
11am – 3pm
Barningham Hall Stableyard
Matlaske, NR11 7HY
Free Entry
Valuation £5 for max. 2 items
All funds raised for St Mary's Church,
Barningham Winter
Refreshments
Bric-a-Brac & Home Produce Stall

Thank you to all who helped make the little church of St Mary's sparkle again when they gave it a good 'spring clean'.

We welcome Rebecca Hill who has kindly agreed to be a churchwarden with Amelia Courtauld.

On Saturday 9th April there is going to be an 'Antique Day' in the Stables at Barningham Hall. From 11am till 3pm. Entry is free and the valuation will be £5.00 for two items. Do please come along. Refreshments will be served and there will be a bric-a-brac and home produce stall.



Sara Buxton
577207

Edgefield

Church News

The response for goods for Ukraine has been really amazing. The pile of boxes and bags in the church has grown ever larger, and shows such kindness and generosity. There is no doubt that financial help will continue to be very badly needed for food and medical supplies for the relief agencies in Ukraine and neighbouring countries for a long time to come.

With the very sad death of Bebe Mason, and Joyce no longer able to help us, we are now very short of flower arrangers for the church. We have enjoyed their lovely flowers for many, many years. If you, or any of your friends, like doing flowers, and would be willing to help us, do please let me know. They make such a difference! With Easter approaching, would anyone like to come and help decorate the church ready for our 10.30am service on Easter Day, 17th April? We'll be busy in the church on Saturday 16th. Look forward to seeing you on Easter Day. A Happy Easter to everyone.

Angela Turner

Concert in Church – Sunday 24th April 4.00pm

The Samphires, a female vocal ensemble who perform across the county, will give a concert in Edgefield church with the theme *A Celebration of Spring*. It will last under an hour and the programme, including pieces chosen to be uplifting, will include a wide variety of genres. Refreshments will be provided. Admission will be free, but donations for church funds will be very welcome.

Richard Peaver

Farewell to Bebe Mason

Bebe passed away on 19th February. He and her husband John, with their children Belinda and James, came to live in Rectory Road in Edgefield in 1966. Bebe joined the church and got



Richard Peaver
587486

The Samphires
present
**A CELEBRATION
of SPRING in song**



Sunday April 24th 4:00 pm
St Peter & Paul church
Edgefield

Admission free ~ retiring collection
Refreshments provided

involved with arranging flowers, cleaning and decorating it at Easter and Christmas. She became a member of the Social Committee who raised funds for the harvest supper and Christmas party for the over-60s. Bebe was Chairman of the Ladies Club and they raised funds for a new blue velvet curtain to go in front of the organ. At the time, she realised the names were fading on the war memorial, so she and the Ladies Club raised funds to rewrite the names on stone plaques. Together we also raised money for the repair of the Village Hall wall, and we did a lot of fundraising for charities. Bebe and I helped with the hot cross bun coffee mornings at Church Farm. She will be missed by all her friends and all those who knew her.

Joyce Kinsley

Village Hall News

A reminder that Bingo Night is on Saturday 23rd April from 7.00pm. Tickets £5 to include a bowl of chips. Our Jubilee celebration is on Saturday 4th June from 2 – 6 pm. Cream teas, a licensed bar and entertainment provided, but feel free to bring your own food for a community picnic. January and February 200 Club winners: January: 1st Christine Todd (258), 2nd William Longe (38), 3rd Liz Ward (7). February: 1st Tricia Maile (8), 2nd Ian Stewart (179), 3rd Shelagh Barber (9).

Jim Frost

Sponsored Cycle Ride

A reminder that in May, Catherine Longe will be taking part in a 3-day cycle ride covering 230 miles, in aid of East Anglian Children's Hospices. Any donations to help her reach her £600 fundraising target would be gratefully received: <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Catherine-Longe1>

Hempstead

February 200 Club

£50 D Spalton, £25 A Wallis, £10 A Price, £5 W Mack, R Hall, C Brooks

Village Hall Committee

In the January magazine the Village Hall Committee placed an appeal for volunteers to strengthen the committee and in particular to take responsibility for organising one of the customary annual events based in the hall. The organiser delegates specific roles and tasks to others and keeps the preparations running to time. There is normally no shortage of willing expertise for these contributory jobs. The yard sale is going ahead on this basis, using the hall as an important resource. Disappointingly there was zero response to the appeal. Also after many years of dedicated and useful service to the Committee Mike Thody has resigned as Chairman. So the hall will honour existing and new bookings over the next few months, but if there is to be a Fête this year or a Jubilee Celebration then there will need to be an impetus from the PC, the PCC or other group or individuals. The hall stands ready and the Committee will help. Happily, Yvette is now leading a broad team to organise a lunch with barbecue for the Jubilee (see below). In May or June there will be an AGM when it is hoped a viable new Committee can be formed.

Music in Hempstead - Thursday 7 April 3.45pm refreshments/ Music 4pm-4.30pm

You are invited to experience live chamber music in the village hall. We will be playing an octet by Hoffman (two violins, viola, cello, flute, clarinet, bassoon and horn). Please join us for refreshments at 3.45pm. Music starts at 4pm and we should be finished at about 4.30pm. There is no charge. Please be sensible with COVID precautions and let me know if you are hoping to come so that I can make a good guess as to how many chairs to put out - Ian Summers: 07712 7559



Diana Spalton
711117

Queen's Jubilee Celebrations

Hempstead will celebrate on Friday 3rd June with a Jubilee Lunch starting at 12.30pm - outside the Village Hall or inside if wet. Provisional plans are: please bring your own food and to share with neighbours; we plan to provide barbecues if people wish to cook their own food. Jubilee punch and lemonade will be served. Dress code: wear what you like but consider red, white and blue. All children are invited to wear fancy dress with a royal theme and there will be prizes for the best dressed. This event is organised with the support of the PCC, the Village Hall Committee and the Parish Council and it will be the first village social gathering for over two years - please save the date! (If you can help in any way – eg provide a barbecue, or musical or any other entertainment, or have any suggestions to make this a memorable occasion please contact Yvette Gibson 712460.)

Christening at All Saints' Church

On Sunday 13th March, Henry Robert Hunter was Christened in Hempstead Church. Henry is the Grandson of Marianne Scarfe and son of proud parents Emily and Dylan. There was a congregation of over fifty in the church and drinks were served after the service in the Church, followed by Christening cake and sandwiches for everyone in the Village Hall. Henry was beautifully behaved and smiled throughout. It was a wonderful family and village celebration.



Yard Sale Trail & Car Boot - Saturday 14th May

Sell your unwanted things or donate them to the Village Hall & Church. Register your Yard (£10) or book a Car Boot Pitch (£7) on the playing field - email jneville@hempstead-norfolk.co.uk or phone 07973 712829 to reserve your space.

Matlaske

200 Club

February £25 J Cox, £10 E Walton, £5A Gillard

March £25 R March (donated), £10 K Baynes, £5 A Courtauld

Ruth March passed away aged 89 on 9th March after a short illness. She is to be buried in a sunny and pleasant spot in St Peter's churchyard on 21st, after a loving farewell from her family and friends. The sunny location of the grave reflects Ruth's warm personality. This writer recalls her kindly smiling welcome to the village. She will be much missed, but long remembered. Our condolences go to Donny, Marion, Jim and Chanelle, who would like to thank those in the village who gave support to Mum when she was at home, and everyone for their kind words.

Please note that the village bottle bank is back in operation near the airfield memorial.



Marion Shepherd
577521

Plumstead

Easter at St Michael's

It is traditional to make an Easter Garden in churches and St Michael's is no exception. This year, children are invited to join Eleanor Faulkner on Easter Saturday, at 10am to create one at the foot of the font. Come along with some bunches of small flowers and foliage, some mosses or a small potted plant and we'll see what we can do and hear the story. There will also be an Egg Hunt in the churchyard on Easter Monday and a donkey activity trail for young children over the next few days. This will run alongside the spring flower display and sale of cakes, biscuits, crafts plants and books, all in aid of the church. Do drop in to enjoy the flowers and see what else is on offer!



Harriet Rossi
577239

Church Improvements

St Michael's will be benefiting from some new features in the coming months. A new church path should be constructed in April or May, making disabled access to the building easier in future. This will be laid in memory of Thomas Wormald, a long serving churchwarden of Plumstead.

Our church architect has visited the church to start drawing up plans for alterations in the nave, to open up more space for community activities.

Morning Coffee

Meanwhile, Monday morning coffees continue - drop in for a quick coffee - or, indeed, a slow one, if you prefer! Browse the bookstall or buy a craft item to help raise funds.

Macmillan Cancer Support – Norfolk Coast Mighty Hike

David Ramsbotham has set himself the challenge of hiking 26 miles on 14 May to raise money for this very worthy cause. More details can be found at:

<https://mightyhikes.macmillan.org.uk/choose-a-hike/norfolk-coast/>

If anyone would like to offer their support by making a donation David's link is:

<http://www.justgiving.com/davidramsbotham>.

Farewell and Welcome

Whilst we say goodbye to Emma Stimpson and family from Cherry Tree Road and wish them all the best in their move, we also welcome Sally and Adrian to the village and look forward to meeting them once they have settled in.

Cake Sale for Ukraine

A very big thank you to everyone who came to the Cake Sale on Monday 14th March, in aid of Ukraine. £110 was raised and sent to Sunflowers for Peace - a fantastic result from such a quickly organised event!

Plumstead Art Exhibition & Sale

May 28/29th in St Michael's Church

Local artist John Durdin has offered a selection of his wonderful oil paintings for this event.



For further details please contact

Kirsty O'Leary-Leeson

kirstyoleary@outlook.com

07918520204

Saxthorpe with Corpusty

Barn Dance

On Saturday 14th May a barn dance will be held at the Corpusty & Saxthorpe Village Hall. Further information will follow. So, save the date and watch this space.

Supporting Ukrainian Refugees

Some villagers have volunteered to host Ukrainian refugees. If you wish to offer accommodation and have not yet done so, please volunteer via the government scheme:

<https://homesforukraine.campaign.gov.uk>

If you are not able to offer to host refugees, but would like to help, perhaps by providing respite care, language skills and/or transport support, please contact Imogen Waterson who will coordinate such support: [watersonimogen@gmail.com](mailto:watsonimogen@gmail.com), 587610.



Sophia Hodgson
587510

Covid 19 Plaque Presentation



Deputy Lieutenant Thomas Courtauld, on behalf of the Lord-Lieutenant of Norfolk, Lady Dannatt, presented a plaque to Andrea Bell, Cathy Stern and Imogen Waterson, for their work in providing covid support to the community.

The Queen's Platinum Jubilee

Many wish to celebrate this event, but to date no events have been organised for our villages. If you have any suggestions and want to get involved, please contact:

Sue Ferrol, who has volunteered to organise and coordinate, on 07765 885555.

Village Litter Pick

It is time for the litter in and around our villages to be cleared, and a litter pick has been organised for Saturday 9th April. As usual, please meet by the phone box opposite the Dukes Head at 10am if you are able to help.

Heating Oil Thefts

Norfolk Constabulary warn of oil thefts as prices increase. They suggest turning up the heat on oil thieves by:

Keeping your tank in a well overlooked position

Using security lights

Keeping gates closed and locked

Investing in a good quality oil tank locks

Checking your oil level regularly to alert you to any potential theft

The Village Gardener

To Plant a Garden is to Believe in Tomorrow



Here we are in April, a month of hope actualised – well, that was the plan, but sadly with all the very real and desperate struggles in the world today, hope might feel a bit thin on the ground. Yesterday was an absolute beauty of a day here, brilliant blue skies, a sun with warmth a gentle breeze that eased rather than had you reaching for another layer and everyone I bumped into or spoke to felt hopeful and happy, basically the perfect day for pottering in the garden! A beautiful day in Norfolk might make no difference to the troubles in the world but if it gives us all a momentary respite so we have a bit more in the tank for the difficulties ahead, then I personally am all for it.

This month I am focusing on making the most of what we do have and a rather lengthy list of garden chores, as it all really starts to happen in April. Now is a good time to look at how you use your garden as the seasons turn, so that's finding that nice spot in the sun for a cup of tea or making a cheerful area for an impromptu lunch. We've been cooped up all winter so it's good to brush off the outside chairs and grab whatever moments the easier weather gives us. Also ask yourself what worked well last year or what needs more thought this year, I think the trick is to keep things as simple as possible then you are far more likely to make the most of a space.

Now we are off to the borders, try and get on top of the weeding this month, April is when growth really starts to accelerate so if you can keep the weeds in check and then water and mulch well, you will be off to a flying start! Lots to do in the veg patch too, if you've a nice warm windowsill then you can get courgettes, squashes, tomatoes, sweetcorn and French beans going. Outside as long as the soil feels warm enough you can set peas, mangetout, carrots and radishes. Parsley, dill, marjoram and thyme can all be sown in April, although you will need to be a bit more patient to set basil as it needs to be properly warm. Last year we sowed our basil in a very simple cold frame in May and managed to (happily!) grow an abundance of it.

This month's question is from Arthur Pentney and it's regarding zinnias! Arthur, who did National Service in Cyprus, and saw them flourish in searing heat and poor soil, asks if it is at all possible to grow them in this country, thanks very much for your question Arthur! My confession is that like you, I too love zinnias but have had no joy myself, but I do know that they can be grown in this country. If you had failed germination from a whole packet of seed, I would suggest you do have another go this year (just in case it was a dud packet), I would also think hard about where you

place them eventually (that's if you manage to get them to germinate). I thought ours would do well in our walled garden, as the soil is very well drained in there and not too rich, but they didn't thrive and then because they were miserable they got decimated by snails, so obviously something wasn't right for them there, however, an acquaintance of mine managed to grow stacks of them just a mile up the road, so I do know it can be done! And in deepest darkest North Norfolk too! Best of luck Arthur, and do let us know how you get on.

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

Michelle & Mick McCarter

Nature Watch - Bird Nesting – A long-forbidden hobby

Arthur Pentney



Peewit's Nest

Seventy odd years ago the Easter school holiday would be used by boys for seeking out birds' nests and collecting their eggs. It's unheard of these days, of course: it has been illegal to take the eggs of most wild birds since 1954. But when I was a boy, the only rule was an unwritten one: that only one egg was ever taken from a nest, and only then if the example just discovered was not in your collection.

Back then, with the arrival of spring, trees were climbed, hedges scrambled up, ponds and streams explored, all with the object of adding to your collection. A great deal of knowledge was gained through this activity. You could soon identify the breed of bird by the eggs found in the nest, and also the way the nest was constructed would tell immediately which bird had made it.

Nests varied enormously. The smaller birds made beautiful neat little circular nests with moss, and a tiny hole to gain entry and exit. Slightly larger birds, such as the blackbird, had what we would call a conventional open-topped nest made with small twigs and feathers. The larger the bird, the less care there seemed to be in the nest's construction – pigeons, rooks and crows seemed to use a haphazard collection of twigs lumped together and with the possibility of an egg falling between the gaps. The peewit's (lapwing's) nest was the most precarious, its eggs being laid in a depression of earth in the middle of a field, with little protection apart from the egg's mottled colour. In the days of the horse, the eggs would be carefully removed by the worker, put to one side and then replaced, maybe several times as the field was cultivated, and this lovely tradition continued even when small tractors took over. Our photograph is interesting as the peewit's normal four eggs has been reduced to three, perhaps one having been stolen by a crow. The hen bird, recognising that something was amiss, has replaced the missing egg with a clod of earth of similar shape.

There was a schoolboy myth that the nests of rooks and crows were always built in trees that were impossible to climb, and they were certainly always at the very top of tall trees. The myth was exploded for us when one day a lad successfully climbed such a tree, bringing an egg safely down in his mouth! Egg collecting had its dangers, especially when climbing trees, but I can only recall one nasty incident when about 15 feet up a branch gave way and the lad fell directly onto a barbed wire fence, badly lacerating the backs of his legs.

The most prized egg in my own collection was that of a cuckoo. Unusually, this was discovered in a blackbird's nest. Normally, the favourite haunt of the cuckoo was the nest of a smaller bird, such as a warbler. Our Reverend Allen once confided in me that he would agonise over what to do if he ever discovered a cuckoo's egg – does he leave it, or take it? I had no such compunction, The egg joined my collection, and five blackbird chicks now had a chance of survival, which with a cuckoo in their nest, they most definitely would not have had.

Caveat: egg collecting was perfectly legal 70 years ago, but it is certainly not in the present day. Heavy fines and even prison sentences can result for offenders, so don't do it!

Ukrainian Collection

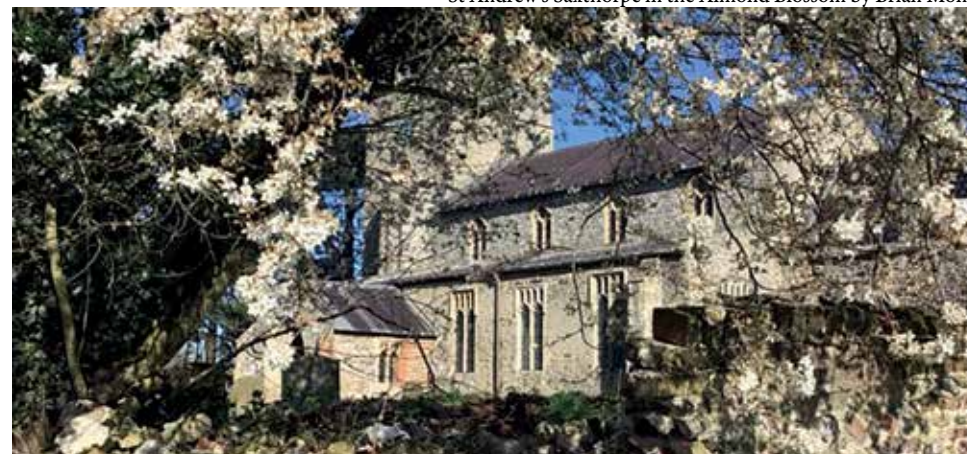
Georgie Rodwell



Jamie's truck and trailer loaded up and ready to go!

We would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who generously donated much needed supplies and essentials for the crisis unfolding in Ukraine. The group of people behind the collection have been absolutely overwhelmed by the amount of support, so much so that the first trip (which consisted of 27 pallets!) had to leave ahead of schedule to enable a third trip to be fitted in before the end of March. We ferried your donations over to the drop off point in vans, cars & trailers. Luckily we were greeted by a team of helpers to unload everything, as there was a huge amount of bags and boxes! Although our efforts are a tiny drop in the ocean, we hope they will go a small way to providing some much needed relief and support to those in need.

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Meet the Neighbours

Jeff Shea from Edgefield



Jeff and his equine friends live in Edgefield – Alex, a Suffolk Punch heavy horse, Arco, a Ardennais/Comtois heavy horse and their pony pal Billy. The heavy horses are working animals used as an environmentally friendly and versatile alternative to machinery, mostly in forestry and nature conservation.

Jeff bought Alex when he was two years old from the renowned Suffolk Punch trainer Cheryl Grover. He was bred at Easton Farm Park, Woodbridge. He was broken to harness and has a lovely temperament. Arco was bred and trained in Scotland by respected horse logger Jim Johnston, was also ready to work and he has a slightly calmer and more docile manner. Billy is a lively and intelligent pony who was bought originally as a companion for Alex. He does not work and begrudgingly stays at the farm while Jeff, Alex and Arco go out to woodlands all over Norfolk.

The horses are kept on an area of old heathland that is well drained and the grass is not too lush. These horses do not need rich grass as they are very efficient at turning food into energy for work, and can easily become overweight. They eat grass and hay and are only given extra food when they are working very hard.

Jeff uses the horses to extract timber harvested from woodlands. This has numerous environmental benefits. They cause much less damage and compaction to the woodland floor than machinery. They do not need fossil fuels to operate. They are also much more manoeuvrable. Jeff tries to minimise the amount the horses are transported to work sites as the greatest risk to the horses is being injured in a road traffic accident and he does not want to use lots of fossil fuel taking them to work.

Jeff knows his horses extremely well which is important when asking them to move very heavy loads or in difficult places. To get tree trunks moving they often need a “big pull” and Jeff has to know what they are capable of and the best way to apply their strength. They can move bigger loads once the timber is on the open rides, the two horses can pull up to three tons of wood on a one ton trailer, a huge four tons. Jeff sometimes works the horses from behind with reins but in small areas where there is no room for him, he controls the horses with voice commands. Alex is very instinctive in the woodland and will often know at which angle to move a tree.

Jeff has lived and worked in Norfolk for about thirty years in wildlife, countryside and woodland management. He set up his forestry contracting business using horses to extract the trees after many years spent working on the Wolterton and Mannington estates. If you need a forestry contractor, please contact Jeff at 07899 743351, jeff.shea@btinternet.com or visit him on Facebook at “Norfolk Horse Logging”.

Emma Youngs