# Church & Village News

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

December 2022 + January 2023



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Baconsthorpe	Jonathan Cooper	577527
Edgefield	Mark Cook	587735
Hempstead	Paul Sanders	713217
Matlaske & Barningham	Sara Buxton	577207
Plumstead	Nick Fulford	577433
Saxthorpe & Corpusty	Imogen Waterson	587610

#### **Parish Council Websites**

Baconsthorpe

http://baconsthorpepc.wixsite.com/baconsthorpepc

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

#### Village Websites

www.hempstead-norfolk.co.uk www.baconsthorpe.org



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#### **District Councillors**

Corpusty, Edgefield, Saxthorpe Andrew Brown 07970 298695 andrew.brown@north-norfolk.gov.uk

Baconsthorpe, Hempstead, Matlaske & Barningham, Plumstead

Dr Pierre Bütikofer 838306 Pierre.Butikofer@north-norfolk.gov.uk

#### **Church People**

Rector Reverend Canon David Longe 577252 Assistant Curate Reverend Judy Rosser 587584 Lav Minister Gill Peat 734226 Authorised Worship Assistant Dr Alain Wolf 577292

Church Wardens

Tessa McCosh Baconsthorpe 577611 Harry Steel 07711 890360 **B** Winter Amelia Courtauld 577250 Rebecca Hill 07960 739593 Edgefield Emma Cletheroe 587049 Angela Turner 587292 Hempstead Airlie Inglis 577440 Matlaske Thomas Courtauld 577250 Duncan Wood 570293 Eleanor Faulkner Plumstead 577868

Sax with Corpusty TBC **Safeguarding Officers** 

Catherine McMahon 01263 577357 / cmcmahon161@gmail.com Lawrence Williams

01263 577292 / trustlawrence@hotmail.com Safeguarding concerns please contact the Police on 999 or Diocese of Norwich Safeguarding Team safeguarding@dioceseofnorwich.org or 01603 882345

#### What's On

#### **DECEMBER**

Fri 2	10.30am	Hempstead Coffee & Catch-Up	Village Hall
Sat 3	10.00am	Hempstead Christmas Craft Works	hop Village Hall
Sat 3	10.30am	Corpusty Coffee Morning	Village Hall
Sun 4	7.00pm	Matlaske Christmas Party	ТВС
Sat 5	6.00pm	Edgefield Fuel Fund	Village Green
Thur 8	3.45pm	Hempstead Music	Village Hall
Fri 9	10.00am	Baconsthorpe Quiz Night	Village Hall
Sat 10	6.30pm	Edgefield Festival Evening	Village Hall
Sat 10	7.00pm	Hempstead Christmas Party	Village Hall
Mon 12	10.30am	Matlaske Christmas Wreath Making	The Stables, Barningham Hall
Tue 20	5.30pm	Plumstead Christmas Celebrations	St Michael's Church
Fri 30	6.00pm	Baconsthorpe Pop-Up Pub	Village Hall
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#### IANUARY

Jii (Cilici			
Fri 6	10.30am	Hempstead Coffee & Catch-Up	Village Hall
Thur 19	3.45pm	Hempstead Music	Village Hall
Fri 27	6.00pm	Baconsthorpe Pop-Up Pub	Village Hall

#### Clash Diary

Contact Corinne Youngs to add your event

#### Post Offices

Baconsthorpe Mobile Post Office Van

Wednesdays 10.00am Village Hall **Corpusty Stores** 587726 Monday-Friday

Itteringham Shop 587325

9.00am - 12.00noon

Monday + Thursday 9.00am-1.00pm

#### Local MP

Duncan Baker MP Tudor House, Grammar School Lane North Walsham, NR28 9JH duncan@duncanbaker.org.uk https://www.duncanbaker.org.uk/ Monday - Friday 9am - 5pm 01692 557140

#### **County Councillor**

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

#### Mobile Library Van

#### 22 Dec / 19 Jan / 16 Feb

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

#### 15 Dec / 12 Jan / 9 Feb

10 2 00 ; 12 juli ; > 1 00			
Hempstead	3.40	NR25 6TL	Telephone kiosk
Baconsthorpe	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

#### **Holt Library**

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

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

I would like to tell you a story about a cross, not about 'the cross', although this story, I believe, has parallels to the crucifixion and to the birth of Jesus.

It is thought that over 40 years ago the brass cross from St Andrew's Church in Saxthorpe was stolen. It was lost for some time, and while it was lost, those in the church commissioned the new wooden cross which you can see at the high altar.

Eventually the cross was found. It was found in a rubbish heap, desecrated: the beautiful glass ornaments representing the five wounds of Christ (hands, feet and side) had been wrenched off. When the cross returned, all were at a loss what to do with it, so for 40 odd years it sat under a dust sheet in the corner of the vestry (the room which the anchorite Cecily lived if you recall from an earlier letter this year).

About 6 weeks ago I looked at it again and thought long and hard about what to do with it: should we finally get rid of it? If so, how? A brass cross is difficult to destroy. Was it too desecrated for the church? Then someone pointed out to me that Jesus was also buried in a rubbish heap (Golgotha was outside the walls of Jerusalem and would have been full of the city's rubbish) and that the wounded body of Christ did not look beautiful – Christ had been desecrated - wrenched and hurt.

Thinking on this, I took the cross to the next Church council meeting. We placed it on the table and lit two

The cross in situ in 1947 picture kindly provided by Roger Last The desecrated cross

candles at its base, and discussed its story. We reflected not only on Jesus's death but also his birth and how he was and is hailed as "The Prince of Peace". Yet Jesus commenced his life not in a beautiful palace but in a stable as no one wanted to help the heavily pregnant Mary. There was no room at the Inn.

Perhaps this forgotten cross is more important than we thought: its shows that even if we are wounded and ignored, we are valued. That God loves everything and everyone.

This is the message of Christmas: it powerful for us to hear again at this time of uncertainty.

May I wish you, your family, friends and your neighbours a wonderful Christmas and a hope filled New Year.

David

***	The Benefice of Mat Church Services for De	
$4^{ m th}$	Advent II	
8.30am 10.30am	Eucharist Eucharist	Plumstead Edgefield
$7^{ m th}$	Wednesday Eucharist	
9.00am	Eucharist followed by refreshments	Saxthorpe
11 <sup>th</sup>	Advent III	
8.30am 10.30am	Eucharist Eucharist	Barningham Winter Hempstead
$17^{ m th}$	Saturday Carol Service	
5.00pm	Carol Service	Edgefield
18 <sup>th</sup>	Advent IV	
10.30am	Eucharist	Plumstead
20 <sup>th</sup>	Tuesday Children's Activities	
10.30am	Children's Activities until 12noon	Edgefield
21st	Wednesday Nativity with Carols	
3.00pm	Nativity with Carols (a young cast)	Plumstead
$23^{\rm rd}$	Friday Nativity with Carols	
4.00pm	Nativity with Carols (an older cast)	Baconsthorpe
24 <sup>th</sup>	Christmas Eve	
5.00pm 11.00pm	Candlelit Service Midnight Mass	Saxthorpe Matlaske
25 <sup>th</sup>	Christmas Day	
4.00pm	Eucharist	Saxthorpe

Carol Singing			
$15^{\text{th}}$	6.00pm	Hempstead	Meet at the church gate
$16^{\text{th}}$	5.30pm	Corpusty	Meet at the school
$20^{\text{th}}$	6.00pm	Edgefield	Meet at the War Memorial
$21^{st}$	6.00pm	Baconsthorpe	Meet at the beginning of Stonefield Road
$22^{\rm nd}$	6.00pm	Matlaske	Meet at the church

***	The Benefice of Matlaske Church Services for January	
1 <sup>st</sup>	Christmas II	
10.30am	Eucharist	Barningham Winter
8 <sup>th</sup>	Epiphany I	
8.30am 10.30am	Eucharist Eucharist	Edgefield Baconsthorpe
15 <sup>th</sup>	Epiphany II	
8.30am 10.30am	Eucharist Mattins & Eucharist	Plumstead Hempstead
22 <sup>nd</sup>	Epiphany III	
8.30am 10.30am	Eucharist Eucharist with Christening	Matlaske Saxthorpe
29 <sup>th</sup>	Epiphany IV / Candlemas	
8.30am 10.30am	Eucharist Eucharist	Barningham Winter Plumstead
5 <sup>th</sup> Feb	Sunday Before Lent	
8.30am 10.30am	Eucharist Eucharist	Baconsthorpe Matlaske

#### ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETINGS

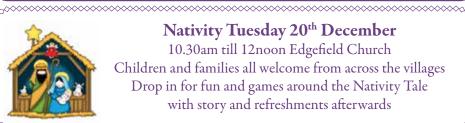
All seven parishes will be holding their annual Parochial Church Council meetings on Tuesday 7th February 2023 at 6pm Baconsthorpe Village Hall

Anyone in the benefice may attend this meeting

#### HELP WITH ENERGY & HOUSEHOLD COSTS

If you know anyone who need help with their energy costs please contact Revd David Longe: 01263 577252 rector@matlaske.org.uk

Cromer Food Bank can help with both food provisions and with household bills. The Matlaske Benefice Support Fund can help with the above and other issues.



## Nativity Tuesday 20th December

10.30am till 12noon Edgefield Church Children and families all welcome from across the villages Drop in for fun and games around the Nativity Tale with story and refreshments afterwards

#### Baconsthorpe

£50 M Honeyman, £25 W Peck, £10 K Tester, £5 M Day, J Benton, R Hall

#### Carol Singing Wednesday 21st

A trusty brave band of singers will be doing their best to bring the spirit of Christmas to your door. Last year we sang along Long Lane so this year we will try for a different section of the village. The plan is to meet the beginning of Stonefield road at 6 00pm. Everyone is welcome to join us.



Hazel Martin 07879 414577

#### **Country Mice**

As we approach the end of the year, I would like to applaud the work done by Kay Harvey with her group the Country Mice. This group meets at Baconsthorpe village hall every Tuesday from 10am-12noon. Kay welcomes parents, grandparents, babies and toddlers. She has also welcomed families from other countries. I have followed with interest the huge range of activities which Kay provides, thanks to her WhatsApp page – to name just a few – messy play with jelly and cornflour; climbing equipment; nature activities and I was recently intrigued with the Scandinavian session called the 'hygge' session. This involved sensory play with natural materials followed by toast and hot chocolate. What's not to like?

#### Did You Know?

In my last newsletter I mentioned meeting with Kim Brittingham from the USA who is an avid reader of our newsletter. I am now pleased to share a little more information regarding Kim's link to Baconsthorpe. Kim's 12th great grandfather, William Brittingham was born in 1505. He owned land in Baconsthorpe and Hempstead, but he lived in Baconsthorpe and his will requested that he should be buried in Baconsthorpe churchyard. He died in 1573 and left instructions that on the day of his burial food and drink should be provided for the poor. William's great, great, grandson also lived in Hempstead and left for the colonies in 1658. Kim is working on a book to preserve information about the Brittingham family and she will send a copy when completed. If anyone has any information that would help Kim, I will gladly pass it on to her.

#### Mobile Post Office Van

Just a reminder that the post office van calls at the car park opposite the village hall every Wednesday from 9.40am to 10.40am. I am told that they offer a range of services and on board there is also stationary, cards, cakes and even pet treats!

Finally, as 2022 draws to a close I would like to wish everyone a Happy Christmas and a very peaceful 2023.

#### Village Hall News

Pop-Up Pub – Friday 30 December 6pm Baked potatoes with a variety of fillings from 6.30pm

Pop-Up Pub - Friday 27 January 6pm Lasagne. Reluctantly we have had to increase the price of the meal by 50p, as all our costs are rising. This is the first price rise for several years, sorry about that. 200 Club – as you will have all seen on the flyer last month, we still have some numbers available in the 200 Club. Please support the Village Hall by subscribing, plus you could win £50! Every month! At the end of January the hall will be fully redecorated. Your support makes this possible.

Piers Warner

### **Barningham Winter**

We send Matilda Coutauld our very best wishes on her travels to Malaysia. Have a wonderful time Matilda and enjoy every minute. We look forward to hearing of your stories on your return.

The annual wreath making is taking place at The Stables, Barningham Hall on Monday  $12^{\text{th}}$  December at 10.30am. This year will be slightly different as Tessa won't be there but we are going to do a 'DIY' wreath!! We will provide the basics (greenery, wire etc) but do bring along any treasures that you have that you would like



Sara Buxton 577207

to use on your wreath. Coffee and lunch will be included in the cost which is £20. Dress warmly. All proceeds from this event will go to our little church. Please email amelia@barninghamestate.co.uk to reserve a place.

### Edgefield

#### Church News

Thank you to Judy Rosser for taking our Remembrance Day service, and for the splendid trumpet rendition of the Last Post via her mobile! Thanks also to those who took part in what is always a very special annual event. We start our preparations for Christmas with decorating the church and the Christmas tree on Saturday, 10<sup>th</sup> at 10am. We will be so grateful to anyone who will come and help us? This is earlier than usual because our Carol Service is the following Saturday



Richard Peaver 587486

17<sup>th</sup>, due to the World Cup Final due on the Sunday 18<sup>th</sup>! Do come and start off the Christmas with some wonderful carols, followed by mulled wine or juice, and mince pies. Carol singing will be on Tuesday, 20<sup>th</sup> December, starting at 6pm and meeting at the end of Canon Marcon Way. Also on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> there will be fun and games around the Nativity tale with story and refreshments afterwards: 10.30am–12noon in the church. Everyone very welcome to all events. There is no newsletter in January. Have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year.

Angela Turner

#### Edgefield Open Gardens 2023

Next year, for a change, the Open Gardens weekend will be  $20^{th}$ - $21^{st}$  May so that visitors can see the gardens in a different season. Six gardens have already been signed up, but we are keen to hear from anyone else who would agree to open their garden. We also need help with refreshments, raffle prizes, books and plants to sell. Please get in touch if you can help in any way: tel 587236.

Alison Mawson

### Village Hall News

Our Christmas party is on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> at 6.30pm. Tickets (if still available) are £10 per head and £5 for juniors. Food, a licensed bar and silly games are the order of the night. Call Jim on 01263 587110. The Committee of the Hall wish you all a Happy Christmas and here's to a great 2023! Results of the October 200 Club draw: 1st Barry Thornton (70); 2nd Richard Morton (150); 3rd Fabian Vizard (168).

Jim Frost

#### Parish Council

Edgefield Parish Council are looking into placing a flagpole next to the War Memorial near the Village Green. The cost is reasonable and the proposed height would be 4.6 metres (15 feet) high, which does not need planning permission. The flags do need permissions and it will only be used for special occasions. If anyone has any helpful suggestions or comments, please contact the Parish Clerk at edgefieldpc@yahoo.com.

#### **Edgefield Fuel Fund**

Do you live in Edgefield and are struggling to pay your energy bills this winter? The Fuel Fund may be able to help by paying an energy bill or providing a voucher for prepayment costs. If you would like us to try and help, please either email us at edgefieldfuelallotment@gmail.com or write to: Edgefield Fuel Fund, Hill House, Holt Road, Edgefield NR24 2RP. All applications will be dealt with in the strictest of confidence.

### Hempstead

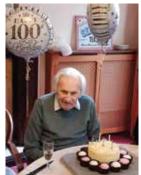
#### 200 Club

£50 P Wallis, £25 R Hall, £10 R Carver, £5 I Summers, A Matthews, M Sewell

Coffee & Catch-Up Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> Dec + Friday 6<sup>th</sup> Jan 10.30am-12noon Village Hall



Diana Spalton 711117



#### David Durst's 100th birthday

David, Robert, Jenny and Claire write: David was in good form and overwhelmed by the

most amazing number of cards and good wishes from everyone in Hempstead. Please can you give a huge heartfelt thank you to everyone; the cards, messages and thoughtfulness was so kind and really much appreciated. I would love to thank everyone individually! He had a happy day culminating with a tea in the afternoon when the singing of "Happy Birthday" was accompanied by a fellow resident playing his cornet. Cake enjoyed by all! His room is now festooned with cards.

Music in Hempstead Tea + Cake at 3.45pm / Music at 4pm

Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> December Trios for Clarinet,
Bassoon & Horn Plus, a rendition of the A
A Milne poem *The King's Breakfast*. Think
pantomime and I think you'll get the idea.

Thursday, 19<sup>th</sup> January Malcolm Arnold Quintets Further dates are 16<sup>th</sup> Feb; 9<sup>th</sup> March; and 14<sup>th</sup> April. Let me know if you'd like a timely reminder of these events: ian@isdata.co.uk

Remember there will be no Magazine in January. All good wishes for a Merry Christmas and for a Healthy and Happy New Year.

#### **Christmas Party**

A free event for all at the Village Hall Saturday 10th December 7pm
Festive family fun for all to enjoy!
Welcome mulled wine with festive nibbles
Variety of Soups / Cheese Board
Selection of Desserts and Mince Pies
All of the above is provided but
please bring your own drinks for the evening
Raffle with some great prizes!
To join us please contact Lesley Lennox
lesley.lennox@project21.ltd.uk
07446 777660



#### **Christmas Craft Workshop**

Saturday 3rd December 10am to 4pm
Hempstead Village Hall
Open to all age groups
Pop in for an hour or stay all day
£3 per person

Table Decorations • Children's Felt Bunting
Light Bottles • Decorated Glasses

Array of items provided plus bring along any personal items to add to your table decoration or bring your own empty bottle or glass to decorate. For table decorations please bring along your own secateurs. Thank you!

#### Matlaske

100 Club £25 Jemma Carr, £10 Brian Gough, £5 Ben O'Sullivan

Congratulations to Duncan and Mandy Wood on the baptism of their two young grandchildren in Somerset on 20<sup>th</sup> November.



Duncan Woo 570293



#### Plumstead

The end of the year is upon us already, with many exciting events coming up to cheer up the winter gloom.

#### **Plumstead Christmas Celebration**

We are very pleased to invite everyone to a Plumstead Christmas Celebration to be held at St Michael's Church Plumstead on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> at 5.30pm. Please see the flyer enclosed here for more details, we look forward to seeing you all and enjoying a lovely get together.



Harriet Rossi 577239

#### Advent Service

All are very welcome to join us in Plumstead for the Advent Christmas Service to be held at St Michael's on the 18<sup>th</sup> at 10.30am where you can enjoy the beautiful decorations which will be put up by our wonderful team of volunteers who did such an amazing job of decorating for the Pumpkin & Dahlia Festival.

#### Candlelit Carols & Nativity

On the 21st at 3pm we will be holding a Candlelit Carols & Nativity Service to which all are welcome. The under 11s who live in Plumstead are invited to participate in this, which will be able to take place in the church this year.

#### Remembrance Service

Twenty people attended our remembrance service on 13<sup>th</sup> November to commemorate all those from Hempstead and Plumstead who died in war. The service was taken by the Reverend Brian Faulkner and accompanied at the last minute by Catherine McMahon on the organ.

#### **Coffee Mornings**

Our coffee mornings will continue throughout December and January, unless the weather is too cold and we look forward to seeing you all there. Although Karen High has left the village, she will continue to send us her wonderful sewing for sale in the church alongside books and jigsaw puzzles.

#### Pumpkin and Dahlia Festival

Another wonderful event for which we thank the participation of all involved, both as organisers and visitors. The church looked stunning and many hours of hard work went into the displays. An impressive £213 was raised for which we are very grateful. Thank you to Mike for the lovely photos.



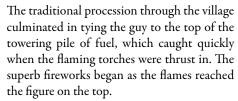
## Saxthorpe with Corpusty

# Bonfire Burns Brightly November 5<sup>th</sup> saw thousands of people packing the centre of Corpusty for the return of the

of people packing the centre of Corpusty for the return of the bonfire and fireworks on the village green - the first since 2019.



John Birchall 584290



As well as great evening out, Corpusty's biggest event of the year raised money for Macmillan Cancer Support and local causes. The voluntary Bonfire Committee is still totalling up the figures, which will be



reported in the February edition. Congratulations to all who made the welcome return of the bonfire possible, especially the committee, and the volunteers who helped on the day.

#### Pupils Plant Tree as St Andrew's Strikes Silver

Corpusty Primary School pupils braved wind and rain to plant a crab apple tree in the churchyard at St Andrew's Church as part of their re-scheduled Harvest Festival celebration, led by the Rev David Longe.

St Andrews is also celebrating Silver accreditation in the Eco-Church scheme, and is aiming for Gold. "While we are only one of 5 churches in the Diocese to achieve silver, I feel that the standard is easier in a rural setting such as St Andrew's," said David. Some of the graveyard has already been set aside to improve biodiversity, and further tree planting is planned over the next few weeks.

"To achieve Gold accreditation will be challenging," continued David Longe. "This would be a good witness to the community about how serious we think caring for God's creation is. Edgefield are exploring how to reach the Gold standard and I hope we will be able to work alongside them."

#### Remembrance at St Andrew's

A moving Remembrance service was held at St Andrew's Church. Fifty people were present, including the Brownies, who led the prayers and sang the Lord's Prayer. Heather Monks and Merlin Waterson took the service and the names of the fallen of Corpusty and Saxthorpe were read by Niven. Their sacrifice was contemplated with quiet respect.

#### Return of Candlelit Service

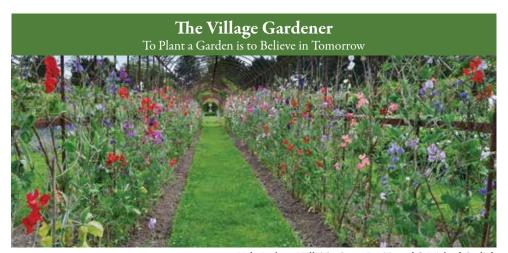
After two years braving the weather in the churchyard, the Candlelit Service returns to St Andrew's, Saxthorpe, on Christmas Eve. The service starts at 5.30pm.



#### Bishop's First Official Visit



The Rt Rev Graham Usher, Bishop of Norwich, made his first official visit to St Andrew's, Saxthorpe, on November 20<sup>th</sup> - although he revealed that he has been paying incognito visits to churches - 656 in all - in his diocese. Bishop Graham preached at the Eucharist service before joining the Rev David Longe in planting a crab apple tree in the churchyard, close to where Corpusty school planted a similar tree a few days earlier. The Bishop has a degree in ecology and last year was appointed lead bishop on the environment by the Archbishop of Canterbury.



Helmingham Hall: The Sweet Pea Tunnel © Michael Garlick

As I write December's article (part of the way through November) I do have my fingers crossed for a frost. November (so far) has felt uneasy with its double figure temperatures and at times almost balmy days. Much as I absolutely love nothing more than a snowy day, I never normally look forward to cold weather, yet this month I have found myself willing the temperatures to drop, just for it all to feel more 'normal' – whatever that is. The designated lawnmower operative in our household is also less than impressed to be still needing to cut the lawns in November, even after weeks off in the summer, it's all rather unnerving and as we go into the most tradition-based month of the year – it would be a lot more comforting if the weather was playing along too. Here's hoping!

However if there is anything that gardening has taught me that is to work well with what you have, so here goes! Whilst there might not be much too actually physically plant or sow in the garden, there are still lots of tasks for a brisk winter's day. Choose a good moment to go round your garden properly - this time of year you can find yourself just scuttling in and out for firewood or herbs from the garden and avoiding the majority of it. So, grab yourself a mug of something cosy and have a good look around everything. First up is to check that all plants in pots that don't need bringing in under shelter are raised off the ground so they don't run the risk of getting waterlogged and rotting. Next, check over all outdoor sheds to see if they are all sound for the months ahead, or if they need adding to the to-do list. It's so much easier to nip issues in the bud rather than waiting for a calamity to occur on a brutal day in January. Next, actually make a list of tasks that need doing, like the leaves raking-up and collecting and the last of the climbing roses that need pruning. If you haven't found enough time in November to get your tulips in the ground then there is (just enough) time to get them sorted in December. Because gardening in December is more challenging both time and weather wise, an actual tick list will leave you feeling that you do actually have the whole situation in hand rather than it all running away from you, especially when there is so much to do for Christmas.

Do also remember to check any fruit or veg you have stored. Like many others we had a really big crop of apples this year, it's been hugely satisfying to have been able to store a good amount of them for the months ahead. It is worth checking them at least every week, as apples especially can turn so quickly.

Now to probably my best bit of Christmas, the lovely few days between the day itself and New Year, with the majority of the hard work done and with the house still sparkly and cheering. Those few calm days are perfect for not only going through a happy pile of seed catalogues by a snug fire but also to make plans for the season ahead. In readiness for the former I will earmark a few clear hours to ruthlessly go through the seed tin, discarding any out of date seeds or rather any I know that don't keep well. The next task is to pack away any seeds you might have saved yourself, making sure you date and label them well. Then it's on with planning for the next year, checking through this year's notes to see what worked and what was a miss. So for us we had a tremendous year for dahlias so the plan is to build some more raised beds in the kitchen garden to enable us to grow more next year. The kitchen garden has very good light levels and is lower (so happily nearer the water table so it's a bonus as less watering) however it is much more exposed, and we are susceptible to the wind here so the plan is to grow some bare root hazel hedging to offer some protection. The muntjac deer will simply love that! The fussy dahlias like the glorious Thomas Edison I will keep in the more sheltered walled garden, the braver ones I will plant in the new beds. Our next plan is to also plant a small orchard, partly because want to replace the tree count in the garden (we sadly lost some of our lovely larch trees in the heatwave) partly because we wanted to make a good space for a couple of quince trees and some sturdy cooking varieties. Looking forward and working towards the next season is what gardening is all about - thank goodness!

This month's question is actually a suggestion. May we suggest if you find yourself battling with the winter blues (and who doesn't!) then try setting some sweet pea seeds for next summer. There is something rather magical about setting something that absolutely sums up summer in the depths of winter, it is also a form of reverse self-care, by tending for the seeds and enabling them to thrive, we take ourselves away from the everyday grind and end up helping ourselves and more importantly we then look forward to easier lighter times.

As we move into the New Year we would like to thank everyone that takes the time to read our article and those who take the time to write in with questions, it's always so lovely to hear from you and on that note we would also both like to wish you all the Merriest of Christmases and the Happiest of New Years!

Do keep the questions coming in! Email us at redmaple@btinternet.com. As ever, the most interesting question will be published in February.

Michelle & Mick McCarter



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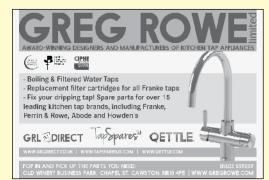
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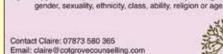
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#### History Watch – Hell Hole – North Barningham Arthur Pentney



Check out the accompanying picture and ask yourselves why a property could be so named – it's not exactly 'Honeysuckle Cottage', is it? Well, the answer, as old Walter Gabriel from the Archers would have said, "lies in the soil".

Yes, Hell Hole was an aptly named sand and gravel pit, for it would have been hell on earth for the unfortunates who were forced to toil there. Maps of 1907 show Hell

Hole as a disused pit. Go back to an earlier map of 1886 and the pit was active and probably dates back to the early part of that century. Its location is interesting as it is placed at the convergence of perhaps four parish boundaries: North Barningham, Matlask, Baconsthorpe and Gresham. This allowed each of these parishes to extract materials from the pit. Also close by was that infamous Erpingham Union Workhouse, built at West Beckham following the passing of the Poor Law. 'Workhouse' meant just that and any inmates would be set to work down at Hell Hole. Dickensian England existed in our rural areas just as much as the inner cities.

Baconsthorpe School, built in 1816, was financed by subscription, but those without wealth also contributed by hauling sands and gravel for free and almost certainly these materials would have emanated from Hell Hole, an altruistic act from two centuries ago.

Should anyone reading this wish to see Hell Hole, I suggest taking the footpath opposite Upwood Farm, North Barningham. At the top of the track, turn left, tackle the jungle and Hell Hole can be seen to your left as a group of trees, totally inaccessible!

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