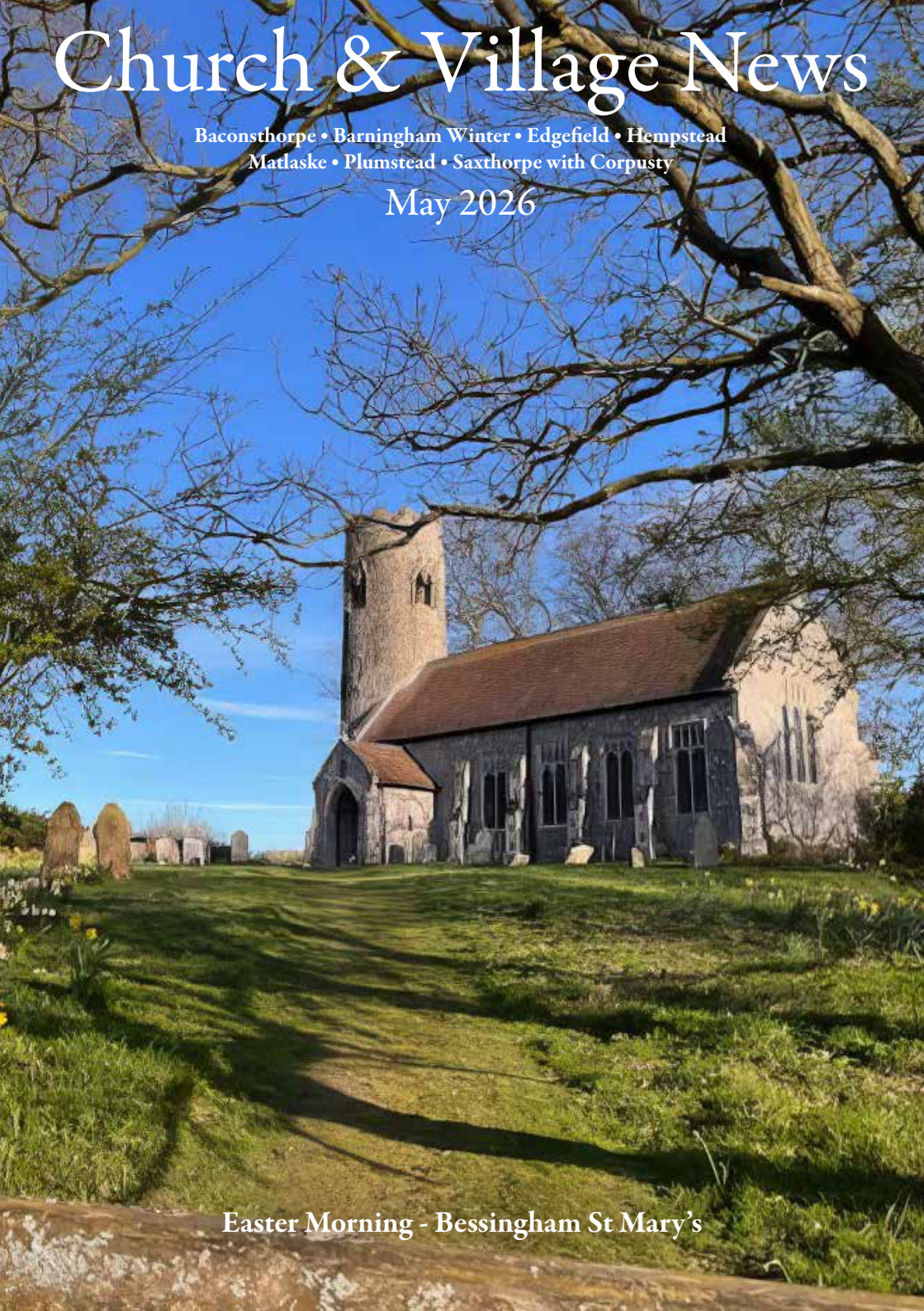


Church & Village News

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

May 2026



Easter Morning - Bessingham St Mary's

Newsletter Team

Issue No 123 / May 2026

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Plumstead	Ruth Champion-Ridge	
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Parish Council Websites

Baconsthorpe
<https://baconsthorpepc.wixsite.com/baconsthorpepc>
Edgefield
<https://edgefield-pc.gov.uk/>
Hempstead
<https://hempsteadpc.wixsite.com/hempsteadpc>
Matlaske & Barningham
<https://matlaske-pc.gov.uk/>
Plumstead
<https://plumsteadpc.wixsite.com/plumsteadpc>
Saxthorpe & Corpusty
<https://corpustyandsaxthorpe-pc.gov.uk/>

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Village Websites

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

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Lay Minister Dr Jane McLarty 07791 870104
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 Rebecca Hill 07960 739593
Edgefield Emma Cletheroe 01263 587049
 Alison Mawson 01263 587236
Hempstead Airlie Inglis 01263 577440
Matlaske Thomas Courtauld 01263 577250
 Duncan Wood 01263 570293
Plumstead Vacant
Saxwith Corp Lesley Last 01263 587782
 Jill Perry-Warnes 01263 584221

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Safeguarding concerns please contact the Police on 999 or Diocese of Norwich Safeguarding Team
safeguarding@dioceseofnorwich.org or 01603 882345

County Councillor

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

What's On

MAY

Fri 1	10.30am	Hempstead Coffee & Catch-Up	Village Hall
Thurs 7	7.00am	County Council Elections	Check locally for venue details
Sat 9	9.30am	Corpusty & Saxthorpe Willow Weaving Workshop	Village Hall
Sat 9	10.00am	Hempstead Village Hall Clean-Up	Village Hall
Sun 10	9.00am	Corpusty & Saxthorpe Breakfast	Village Hall
Wed 13	9.00am	Corpusty & Saxthorpe Plant Swap, Coffee + Cake	Saxthorpe Church
Thurs 14	10.00am	Hempstead Crafty Creations - Hand-made flowers	Village Hall
Sun 17	10.00am	Blickling Lodge Open Gardens in aid of Benefice	Blickling Lodge
Tues 19	10.00am	Corpusty & Saxthorpe Tea & Tech	Village Hall
Tues 19	12noon	Corpusty & Saxthorpe Lunch Club	Village Hall
Sat 23	2.00pm	Hempstead Crafty Creations - Fabric stitching	Village Hall
Fri 29	6.00pm	Baconsthorpe Pop-up Pub	Village Hall
Sat 30	10.00am	Hempstead Village Hall Clean-Up	Village Hall
Sun 31	6.00pm	Edgefield Concert by The Samphires	Church

JUNE

Sun 14	2.00pm	Hempstead Centenary Hog Roast + Entertainment	Village Hall
Sat 20	2.00pm	Baconsthorpe Fete	Village Hall
Thurs 14	10.00am	Hempstead Music with Harpist Keziah Thomas	Village Hall

Clash Diary to add an event contact

Corinne Youngs 01263 577263 corinne@avyoungs.com

July 11	EdgeFest	July 30	Corpusty Music for a Summer Evening
July 17	Baconsthorpe Play	Sept 5-6	Hempstead Arts
July 18	Corpusty Music	Oct 9	Saxthorpe Harvest Supper
July 22	Saxthorpe Teddy Bears Picnic	Oct 17	Edgefield Craft Fair
July 25	Matlaske Music + Pizza	Nov 21	Baconsthorpe Craft Fair
July 30	Hempstead Music Keziah Thomas		

Holt Library

9 Church Street, Holt NR25 6BB 01263 712202
Staffed Hours
 Tues 10am-7pm / Wed 2pm-7pm
 Fri 10am-7pm / Sat 1pm-4pm
Unstaffed Hours
 8am-7pm weekdays Sat 8am-4pm Sun 10am-2pm
 accessible with Open Library Access

Post Offices

Baconsthorpe Mobile Post Office Van
 Wednesdays 10.45am - 11.30am Village Hall
Corpusty Stores 587726
 Monday-Friday 9.00am - 12.00noon
Iteringham Shop 587325
 Monday + Thursday 9.00am-1.00pm

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.

Banking Hub

Barclays Bank, 16 High Street, Holt, NR25 6BQ

9am-5pm weekdays
 Monday NatWest Thursday Santander
 Tuesday TSB Friday Lloyds
 Wednesday Barclays

Mobile Library Van

7 May / 4 June / 2 July

Matlaske	12:40	NR11 7AQ	Old Post Office
Plumstead	13:00	NR11 7LJ	Walnut Farm
Baconsthorpe	14:30	NR25 6LJ	Council Bungalows
	14:50	NR25 6LE	Hare & Hounds
Hempstead	15:05	NR25 6TL	Telephone kiosk
Edgefield	15:45	NR24 2AL	The Memorial
	16:10	NR24 2AX	The Street
Corpusty	16:35	NR11 7BU	Great Farm Cottis

Times and dates sourced from Norfolk County website: <https://bit.ly/2AJdSGA> / Route No CEN 411
 Tel: 01603 222303

Letter from Assistant Priest, Reverend Judy Rosser

Dear All

Welcome everyone to this newsletter. At the time of writing it is a sunny bright but still chilly day, where the intensity of the varied Holy Week services in our seven churches have come to a celebratory end. Akin to the natural world, in Church we follow the seasons too. We have the liturgical colours of green, purple or violet, red, white and gold, which are mirrored in the trees, shrubs and flowers flourishing in this Spring time month of May, which can so often feels like summer. In and outside of Church it is a time to celebrate new life, beginnings and renewal.



Elis Angello, The Crucifixion, c.1420-22 — Public Domain.
"Woe betide them for they do not know what they do."

One such new and momentous beginning is possibly the Artemis II flight mission to the far side of the moon. My thoughts and prayers were with the astronauts as the Easter fire was lit outside Bessingham Church at dawn, under a striking full moon and strong winds. Nature, its beauty and the quest to understand more inspires both scientific discovery and our journeys in faith. Golden light filled this candlelit church as we moved inside, making the sound of the ALLELUIAS more poignant. A visit to Bessingham Church with its abundant Spring flowers and vista from its hilltop location is memorable.

In keeping with the theme of our connection with the natural world, I was excited to hear that a White Tailed Eagle had been spotted soaring over Cley marshes nature reserve, causing a great deal of excitement amongst those who had been fortunate enough to see this magnificent creature. The 'Sea Eagle' has a wing span of nearly eight feet and is the largest bird of prey to be seen in Britain. Eagles are truly majestic creatures and inspire us with their grace, freedom and ability to fly high.

I am reminded of the deep symbolism of the eagle in the Bible. In Psalm 103.5 we hear of God: "who satisfies your desires with good as long as you live so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's."

These words speak of strength hope, and renewal. Seeing such a glorious bird again in our local skies offers a striking living echo of an ancient image, happily reminding me of the eagle lecterns in our churches in this benefice and more widely throughout the County. Hempstead and Baconsthorpe have fine brass examples and Bessingham a wood carved lectern. All worth a trip to see and often with an aged, well thumbed Bible on the eagle's outstretched wings.

So this month of May, in a world full of beauty and yet so lacking in peace, let us renew and refresh how we look after our natural world, our communities and our ability to love each other. Caring for creation and doing no harm to another are the universal truths of all major faith traditions.

I invite you to soar like the eagle in both your journey and practice of faith.

Wishing you every Joy and persistent Peace.

Judy



The Benefice of Matlaske Church Services for May

3rd Easter V		
8.30am	Eucharist	Saxthorpe Matlaske
10.30am	Eucharist	
6th Wednesday		
6.00pm	Meditation	Hempstead
10th Easter VI		
8.30am	Eucharist	Edgefield Barningham Winter
10.30am	Eucharist	
14th Thursday		
9.00am	Ascension Day Eucharist	Saxthorpe
17th Easter VII		
8.30am	Eucharist	Baconsthorpe Matlaske Edgefield
10.30am	Eucharist	
4.00pm	Family Church	
20th Wednesday		
6.00pm	Meditation	Hempstead
24th Pentecost		
8.30am	Eucharist	Hempstead Saxthorpe
10.00am	Breakfast Church	
31st Trinity		
10.30am	Eucharist	Baconsthorpe Bessingham
5.00pm	Evensong	
4th June Thursday		
9.00am	Corpus Christi	Matlaske

John Perry-Warnes Education Fund exists to help those in education who reside in the Matlaske Benefice. If you would like to apply for this fund, please submit an application, stating why the funds are required along with the cost of each item, and a description of your educational situation. Please email submissions to rector@matlaske.org.uk, or post The Rectory, The Street, Matlaske, Norfolk NR11 7AQ by 1 September 2026. For more details email rector@matlaske.org.uk.

Help with energy and household costs: If you know anyone who needs help with their energy or other household costs please contact Revd David Longe rector@matlaske.org.uk Cromer Food bank can also help with food provisions and with following household bills including pre-paid meters, and meters paid on receipt of bills, gas, coal, oil and wood.

Tuesdays 10am-12noon (term time) - **Country Mice Toddler Group** - Baconsthorpe Village Hall
Wednesdays 10am - **Coffee, Cake & Chat** - St Andrew's Saxthorpe
Details of all our services: www.achurchnearyou.com/benefice/26-271D/service-and-events/

Baconsthorpe

200 Club £50 S Martin, £25 R Hardingham, £25 J Regis
We still have tickets available for the 200 Club with a top prize of £50 every month for just a £12 a year subscription. See the village website for details of setting up a BACS payment, or cash if you prefer.



Hazel Martin
07879 414577

Church News

On Easter Sunday St Mary's Church welcomed seventy three people, including fifteen children. Thanks go to Emma Cletheroe and Emma Youngs for providing the activities for the children; to Diana Muir for a wonderful floral display. The refreshments that followed included Easter biscuits from Corrine Youngs, croissants from Jo Brannigan and a Simnel Cake from Emma Clotheroe's father. As each person held a lighted candle they listened to volunteers reading the Easter Story. Musicians played and sang beautifully while Communion was taken: it was a day to remember.

Baconsthorpe Church Stall

Thirty years ago on April 5th 1996 Baconsthorpe Church Stall was opened. Converted from a humble rabbit hut it has stood the test of time and is still in use today, as in the photograph. The stall sells marmalade and jams with fruit from the Youngs' garden. Sometimes there are fresh eggs for sale as well as plants. Over the thirty years it has raised £47,617, money which is an important part of income towards the upkeep of the village church. Our thanks go to all who visit the stall and please continue to support this enterprise.



A Warm Welcome

We are pleased to welcome Terry and Sue to No 2, The Old Farmyard. Having chatted to Sue she explained they had moved in after Christmas and are already enjoying the lovely walks nearby and as National Trust members are keen walkers at Blickling and Sheringham Park. Both Terry and Sue were teachers working over in Germany for many years. I hope they will be happy in their lovely house and we will see them at the monthly coffee morning.

Update on the Shakespeare Play

A Comedy of Errors in the garden at the village hall. The play has been cast and all the actors have their scripts. Rehearsals will begin at the village hall at the start of June. I am very excited as this was always one of my favourite plays. As the name suggests it is funny and as there are two sets of 'identical twins' lots of 'errors' and mistaken identity will occur. Please remember the play is being performed on July 17 (Friday) from 7pm, in the garden at the village hall, please bring own seats (some available.) Food on sale, bar open, no charge – just donations.

Village Hall News

Coffee Morning Wednesday 6 10.30am (first Wednesday of every month) fresh coffee and home-made cheese scones are available, all free of charge. Do come along and meet friends and neighbours.

Pop-up Pub Friday 29 with macaroni cheese on the menu from 6.30pm and the bar opens at 6pm. All welcome.

The Fete is taking place on Saturday 20 June from 2pm to 4.30pm and the Great Baconsthorpe Bake Off is one of the main attractions. Come on everyone, the chefs from Byfords are hoping for at least 30 cakes to sample. They have already signed-up for Slimmers' World. Whatever is your favourite – last year the winner was a crumble cake? What will win this year? We will have lots of stalls and games, all the old favourites and some new ones.

Barningham Winter

By the time you read this our big event - the Little Lifts trail run - will have taken place, so more on that next time.

Otherwise, all is quiet at Barningham Winter, but spring has sprung with primroses and blossom on our lanes, and goslings, calves and lambs in the fields.

Help and Ideas for Fete

We are looking ahead to the Matlaske & Barningham Winter Pizza in the Park fete on Saturday, 25 July. If anyone would like to help or has any ideas for fun things to add please contact Amelia on: amelia@barninghamestate.co.uk.



Amelia Courtauld
01263 577250

Edgefield

Church News

Plant Stall: Now that Spring is here, don't forget to visit the stall outside the church porch, where there is a wide selection of plants to choose from. Feel free to add any surplus plants you have to the table; all proceeds go to the upkeep of the church and churchyard.

Book Stall: The book stall inside church is constantly being refreshed, so do have a look when you're passing and feel free to add to that too!

Samphires Concert: We are delighted to be welcoming back the very talented female singing group The Samphires, for a concert at 6pm on Sunday 31 May in Edgefield Church. The theme will be "Fly Away Home" and there will be a glass of wine or a soft drink on arrival. No charge and no need to book tickets, but donations towards the church will be much appreciated.

Family Service: Our May service is at 4pm on Sunday 17 May. All are welcome to join us to celebrate Pentecost with a short service where we will find out more about the Holy Spirit, some crafts and the sharing of light refreshments.

Alison Mawson



Richard Peaver
01263 587486

The Samphires present.....
fly away home

St. Peter & St. Paul
Edgefield NR24 2AF
Sunday May 31st 6.00pm

wine and cheese

free admission
donations welcome

Village Hall News

Edgefest 8 is approaching! Saturday 11 July from 7pm on The Green. Featuring 'Phil B' and 'The Hot Crumbs' plus a hog roast, all for £15. Tickets on sale from Jim on 07946 854901 or James. frost59@hotmail.co.uk or via our Village Hall Facebook page.

200 Club winners for March were: 1st Josie Manson (£50,) 2nd Josh Hulbert (£30) and 3rd Harris Dewar (£20).

Poor's Fuel Allotment (from the Trustees)

In these difficult times we are aware that people may have been unexpectedly financially affected by the rising costs of off-grid heating oil and LPG. These issues might be causing some short-term financial problems. The Trustees might be able to offer some financial assistance to people resident in the parish of Edgefield. Please write to 'The Trustees', and send your letter to Mulberry House, The Green, Edgefield, Melton Constable, Norfolk, NR24 2AL. The letter should explain what assistance you require. Please include your full name, address, phone number, and email address if you have one.

Depending on demand we will deal with any requests as soon as possible, but please allow 7-10 days before receiving an acknowledgement.

Hempstead

April Winners: £50 A Inglis; £25 G Gurney; £15 M Sewell; £10 K Hill

Crafty Creations - May meeting dates

Thursday 12 10am-12noon - hand-made flowers using different mediums

Saturday 23 2-4pm - fabric stitching

No Monday meeting due to Bank Holiday

Music in Hempstead Thursday 30 July at 3.30pm 4pm

We welcome the return of internationally acclaimed harpist Keziah Thomas. She will be joining local musicians to play an arrangement of Debussy's *Petite Suite* and d'Indy's *Sarabande & Menuet*. Both lovely pieces to play and listen to. Join us for tea and cake followed by the music at 4pm.

100 years of Hempstead Village Hall!

Following on from last month's 'Save the date' here are more details on our centenary event to take place at the Village Hall on Sunday 14 June. We have organised a Hog Roast with Fire and Fork of Fakenham to start at 3pm. We will be adding salads and vegetarian options along with desserts. There will be live music from Mike the Music Man from 5pm onwards to hopefully get the party going. This will be a ticketed event booked in advance to help us prepare correctly. Please contact me (see below) to book your tickets and for details on how to make the payment of £12 per head and £6 for children under 12. Let's make this a lovely family event for our village. All welcome! Lesley Lennox 07446 777660 lesley.lennox@project21.ltd.uk



Jonathan Neville
07836 675369

Help Spruce-Up the Village Hall

We would like to smarten up our village hall for its 100th birthday. To help this along we are holding a couple of working parties in May. Anyone that can help even if only for half an hour your help is much appreciated. If you are able, please join us on these two Saturday mornings - Saturday 9 and Saturday 30 from 10am onwards. Weather allowing, we will start preparing the outside walls of the hall for painting during the spring and we need to clean out the guttering. We also want to give a fresh coat of paint inside the hall to the cupboard doors etc, so if the weather is inclement on our first working party we will be inside the hall. If you would like to help us but are unable to join either of the Saturday sessions, please contact a member of the hall committee. We would love your help. Many thanks.

Village Hall's 100 Year History Project

We want to create a history of the hall for interest to all this year. If you have an anecdote of interest or humorous story from over the years about the hall's activities, please let us know. What has the hall been used for in the past? Who's been Involved in looking after the hall during its long life? Contact us with your note: Village HallCommittee - thank you. lesley.lennox@project21.ltd.uk

Hempstead Arts

Hempstead Arts takes place this year on 5 and 6 September, with the Hempstead residents and artists private view on Friday 4. Please put the date in your diaries, more information to follow nearer the time!

Church Clean

This was a very successful morning with sixteen helpers overall, including the vicar and his mother who both turned out to be excellent brass polishers! Thank you to all the volunteers who helped look after our delightful parish church and its surroundings and to those who brought coffee and biscuits to sustain everyone throughout the dusting and strimming. It was a happy village occasion with lots of chat on what was a wonderfully hot sunny day.

Airlie Inglis

Litter Clearing

Several Hempstead folk have been involved in litter clearing along roads in the village during the last few weeks - thanks to all of you. At the beginning of the month, it was the turn of Court Green to Hempstead Mill. Sadly, some more rubbish had reappeared within a week!



Toad Patrols 2026

This year we operated patrols at both Rookery Pit, to the west of the village, and at Pond Hills, to the south. Although this stretched our volunteer resources, we managed to mount a patrol at both sites on evenings when conditions suggested that there was a possibility of toads migrating to or from the ponds.

The first evening that we found toads out was 11 February - mainly at Pond Hills - but colder weather after that put a stop to activity until 21 February, when the migration got going properly. Toads were then active until 15 March, after which pretty much all toads appeared to have left the ponds and we ended patrols. The migration window was much the same for the other patrols in Norfolk and although there was nothing exceptional about the date the migration started, this was the earliest end to the migration ever recorded in Norfolk. Maybe a one-off or perhaps another sign of climate change affecting wildlife. The total moved off the road at Rookery Pit was 163 -

by far the lowest total since patrols started in 2012, pointing to a continued decline in the toad population using the pond. Numbers at Pond Hills were better, where the total was 794, although it seems quite low for a pond of this size. An otter was seen on a few evenings, apparently eating frogs and toads (despite the latter's poison glands), which probably didn't help, but this is just part of the natural hazards faced by amphibians.

We also moved over 50 frogs and a few smooth newts off the road, mainly at Pond Hills, although rather worryingly I didn't see any frog spawn at either pond. There don't appear to be clear reasons for the decline in toad numbers. Numbers held up well at many other Norfolk sites this year, so it doesn't appear to be county-wide.

Thanks to the patrollers who turned out on sometimes cool and damp evenings to help our local amphibians, and to drivers who slowed down and looked ahead to avoid both patrollers and toads!

On a final note, the two large triangular signs that we put up at Rookery Pit to alert vehicle drivers to the presence of toads and patrollers disappeared towards the end of the migration period and despite enquiries have not turned up (the signs at Selbrigg Pond also disappeared at about the same time). If anyone has any information about these, please get in touch with me!

Tim Venes

Hempstead Losses

Following Paula Tomlinson's death last year, we have heard that John Tomlinson died a few weeks ago. They bought 3 White Horse Cottages over 25 years ago as a second home and became very much committed to Hempstead and over the years generously and enthusiastically supported village events. To their regret their visits in recent years became less frequent as they were both afflicted by serious health problems but they were always keen to hear whatever news there might be (not always easy to think of any) and it was clear that their link with the village and the friends they made here was a valued part of their lives. We shall miss them.

Yvette Gibson

Matlaske

100 Club winners: £25 B O'Sullivan; £10 J Shepherd; £5 T Courtauld

Bric-a-Brac Wanted!

It's time to start looking through your cupboards for any good quality unwanted things that you could donate to the Bric-a-Brac stall at Matlaske Music & Pizza in The Park. This year the Committee will do a doorstep pickup in Matlaske and Barningham Winter on 10 July. On this date please leave any donations for Bric-A-Brac, Raffle & Tombola in a bag/box and these will be collected after 9am. Anything large please e-mail: cherrywestgate@hotmail.co.uk.



Duncan Wood
01263 570293

Plumstead

The renovation to St Michael's is well underway and we hope to be back in action by the middle of May. A sincere thank you to the other churches in the Benefice who have kindly held our services in the interim.

Bric a Brac Sale

At the time of writing this is still underway and seems to be a great success. More to follow next time.



Harriet Rossi
01263 577239

Saxthorpe with Corpusty

Plant swap with Coffee & Cake!

At this time of year keen gardeners often have too many young plants for borders or veg beds, while the less green-fingered are looking for more. Whether you have too many or too few, come along to the Plant Swap Coffee, Cake & Chat at St Andrews on Wednesday May 13 (10-11am). Bring any plants that need a new home, and swap them for something else. A great way to try new varieties of tomatoes, peppers and other fruit and veg, and to fill up the flower beds.



John Birchall
07810 016976



Belated Thanks

Many thanks to Kay Corbett, who fitted these splendid new handles on to the repainted plough. They were actually on before Christmas and are the finishing touch that the restoration needed.

Village Spring Clean

This impressive heap of rubbish was the result of the Corpusty & Saxthorpe litter pic at the end of March. Many thanks to the band of volunteers who tramped the lanes, meticulously bagging litter of all sorts, including some strange items such as badly-struck golf balls and a sad-looking doll that a child must have lost many moons ago. It is likely that many of the bottles, cans, fast food cartons and sweet wrappers were thrown from vehicles. The bypass was particularly productive.



Keep Banking your Bottles!

The bottles and jars you have taken the bottle bank at the Village Green are helping the excellent Coffee, Cake & Chat that is held every Wednesday at St Andrews Church (10am) and has now been going for three years. The Parish Council agreed that this year the bottle bank money should go towards a sideboard (pictured) that has replaced some rather doubtful tables in the tower.



Willow Weaving at the Village Hall

Rich Love is bringing his willow weaving workshop (gazing hare or flying owl) to the village hall on Saturday 9 May (9.30am-2pm). Rich's willow creations are simply amazing (see lifeinwillow.co.uk) so don't miss this chance to learn some of his secrets. £45; bring own lunch. Book at richalove@icloud.com.

Dates for Other Village Hall Favourites in May

Sun10: 9am-11am Sunday breakfast; Tues 19 10am-11.30am Tech & Tea + 1.30pm Lunch Club
See website for more information: www.corpustyandsaxthorpevillagehall.org.uk.

Easter morning at Bessingham St Mary's

Just before daybreak on Easter morning we met at the beautiful church of St Mary's in Bessingham in the dark starlit night. The moon was setting in the west. The owls were making their last call outs of the night, while the morning birds prepared their song for the new day. As we saw the sunlight



beginning to break in the east, the fire was lit to dispel the darkness and welcome the new light of Easter day.

We had a battle against the elements with the tail end of storm Dave whipping up the wind and threatening to set light to the clergy (David and Judy). The Paschal candle was successfully lit from this fire and processed indoors. This candle light was passed on to the candles of the congregation and the celebration of the Easter eucharist continued inside in the soft candlelight. This little church was full of friends from the benefice.

Thank you for joining with us. It was a beautiful and symbolic service celebrating the resurrection and praying for peace in the world.

Lisa & Andy Clegg

The Village Gardener - To Plant a Garden is to Believe in Tomorrow



Beautiful beautiful May, quite the loveliest month in the garden where everything is new, fresh and hopeful! Even though everything is good in the garden I still wouldn't be complacent about frosts until we are properly in June, especially if your garden is exposed like ours.

There's lots to do in the kitchen garden, you can now direct sow French beans, sweetcorn and carrots. I would still set courgettes, squashes and pumpkins in pots where you can keep an eye on them, I always set more than I need, because I think that slugs and snails like nothing more than the fresh new growth of a courgette seedling, so backup is always required! I would also not set them out until there

was no chance of a frost, which is always tricky timing as you want the young plant to retain its growing vigour and if they sit about in pots for too long then they tend to sulk and not come to much.

This month in our garden I will planting out my young tomato plants in our green house and hopefully getting our dahlias planted out too. There's always a few weeks of a log jam in our greenhouse where some plants aren't quite ready to come out and other seedlings are quite keen to get in! But somehow it all ends up working and everyone ends up where they should be...eventually!

This year we have added yet more galvanised tanks to our kitchen garden/cutting garden, the tanks work well and as we are so over run by the dreaded bindweed in that part of our garden, the raised beds help slow the progression of the bindweed down (not much else does to be honest!) We also want to try growing carrots again, the plan is to set them in a tank too so that hopefully being raised up that will thwart the flight path of the pesky carrot fly. It's all change in that part of the garden, because we (reluctantly) had to take down a poplar tree whose roots had somehow found our high water table and was putting a tremendous yet terrifying amount of growth each year, whilst also badly shading the greenhouse too. But the tree is so missed, not only for climbing up by our daring tiny cat but for the completely charming noise its leaves used to make in the wind. To attempt to absolve our Tree karma we have plans for more tree planting in the autumn, primarily Polstead Cherry trees, these trees originated from the neighbouring village in Suffolk where I grew up. Once upon a time these ancient fruiting trees were quite prolific but are now on the decline, so we are joining the intuitive to help build up the numbers, albeit over the border!

Before we head to this months question, we would like to remind you of this year's NGS Open Garden Day at Blickling Lodge (NR11 6PS) on May 17th from noon till 5pm all proceeds from the refreshments go towards the Matlaske Benefice. We hope to see you there!

Many Thanks this month to Arthur Pentney who has two questions for us, the first relates to a troublesome invasive plant that had invaded his friend's garden. Which we have identified as Alexanders or Smyrnum Olusatrum, which was supposedly introduced to this country by the Romans as a useful source of food, with its leaves being used like parsley, its stems like celery or angelica, its roots as parsnips and the seeds of the plant as a pepper like spice. So a complete all-rounder! Part two of Arthur's questions next month.

Please do also keep the questions coming in. Email us at redmapple@btinternet.com. As ever, the most interesting question will be published next month.

Michelle & Mick McCarter



History Watch - Arthur Pentney Rounded Towered Churches



Despite pride supposedly being one of the seven deadly sins I still feel that Norfolk should be justly proud of its churches with those distinctive round towers. Our county has 124 of them which means there are only about 60 odd elsewhere, quite a record. There are numerous arguments about just how old they are, and also their reason for being there anyway.

Undoubtedly some are very ancient and are classed as Saxon/Norman which tends to hedge the bets somewhat as to their real age, but late 11th to 12th century seems about right. With regard to their original use some experts feel they were initially built as look out towers with the church itself joined on later. Others consider the tower was merely there for the hanging of the bells. So please, you choose, for nothing is really certain on these issues.

Within our Benefice we have two that almost fit the bill. Matlaske and Edgefield. Some will say "but Edgefield has that more later square tower" and yes, so it does. But go along the Hunworth Road and there down the hill on the left is the remains of the old church of SS Peter & Paul with its 'round' (actually octagon) tower still standing. The Black Death had resulted in the village moving to another site leaving the church isolated and in poor condition. Then in 1876 Canon Walter Marcon became the local rector and arranged for the old church to be moved stone by stone to its new site. Taking two years, opening in 1884 and costing some £2,100 this must go down as one of the most remarkable achievements in our local history.

I'm a great enthusiast for churches of this type and one favourite of mine is All Saints Thwaite on the Matlaske to Alby Road. Standing on a hill, away from any buildings, it epitomises for me that classic church that our county is justly famous for. So please, go out and seek them out and enjoy them.



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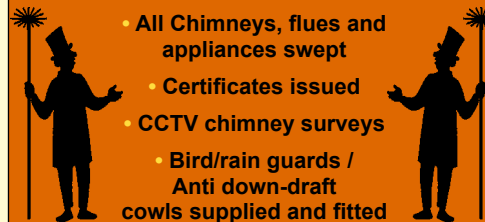
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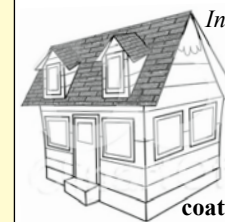
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