

Church & Village News

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

August 2021



Plumstead Hollyhocks
Photograph by Karen Hall

Meet the Neighbours

Robert Stern – Saxthorpe



Bob was raised and educated in Pennsylvania, USA and then attended the California Western School of Law in San Diego.

When Bob was seventeen, he went to visit relatives in Washington DC and on 28th August 1963, he and his cousin went to visit the mall and ended up attending the “I have a dream speech” given by Martin Luther King.

From 1974 Bob practised general law in San Francisco and then as the Chief Assistant Public Defender of Placer County in northern California, providing free legal representation to those who needed it. He supervised up to twenty-two employees and over an eight and half year period this office defended 38,700 cases. Bob could represent up to sixteen people a day.

By 1990 Bob needed a break, came to Europe travelling for four months and found himself in Berlin as the Berlin Wall was coming down. With a small pickaxe, lent to him by a man from East Germany, he collected thirty-five pieces of the Berlin Wall and bought thirty-five Certificates of Authentication sold to him by an entrepreneurial young woman. All his friends at home received pieces of the Berlin Wall, many of whom still have them today.

During WWII, Bob's father was stationed at Podington, Bedfordshire with the US Army Air Forces and was a navigator in a B-17 Flying Fortress. His plane was shot down in 1944 and he ended up as a POW in Stalag Luft 3, home of *The Great Escape*. His father's exploits motivated Bob to leave the Public Defender's Office in Placer County and come to England to teach. In 1990, Bob began

his new career at TASIS England, an American school in Surrey. From 1990-1996, he oversaw a boarding house and taught history. He directed the Model United Nations (MUN) programme, ran International Court of Justice ((ICJ)) programmes for students, simulating trials of pending ICJ cases, and advised the Student Council, among other duties.

During the long summer school holidays of 1993, the drama teacher from TASIS got a call from a casting director who needed American extras for a film that was being made. It paid £40.00 a day, you got no credit, all the food you could eat and it would last a week. Bob went along and as he had a big beard at the time he was cast as 'The Evangelist from Minnesota' who had to exorcise a character being played by the actor John Hannah in the film *Four Weddings and a Funeral* – look out for the man in the red tartan jacket!!

In 1996, Bob took on the job of Manager at the Leicester Law Centre, a legal services provider for the disadvantaged population of the City of Leicester, combining two failing offices into one successful one. In July 1999 he returned to TASIS as Head of the Boarding Programme. Eventually, he went back to full time teaching, including courses in history, politics, humanities, and law. As a community service project at TASIS, he took students every February from 2000 to 2013 to Romania, associating with a charity known as Romanian Children's Relief, working with disadvantaged and orphaned children. He has supported a child in Romania named Lavinia since she was 3 and a half. She has just turned 24, got married last year and sees Bob when she is in Spalding visiting friends.

In 2008 Bob met Cathy and they got married in 2011. After retiring in 2013 Bob, Cathy, and Cathy's son, Declan, moved to Saxthorpe in 2015 where they live in a house by the river with a beautiful garden. Now he is running ICJ programs worldwide, volunteering with the Citizens Advice Bureau in Holt, supporting Cathy in her role as church warden of St Andrew's Church in Saxthorpe and is the Deputy President of the Corpusty & Saxthorpe Village Hall Committee.

Bob is a people's person and has a passion for working with children. He loves village life and can occasionally be found chasing Cathy on his 50 cc Vespa, while she rides one of her three vintage motor scooters.

Emma Youngs



Baconsthorpe Castle - Photograph by Jonathan Neville

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

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

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

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Angela Turner 587292

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Matlaske Thomas Courtauld 577250
Duncan Wood 570293

Plumstead Eleanor Faulkner 577868
Saxthorpe with Corpusty Kevin Beales (acting) 585067
Cathy Stern 587014

What's On

AUGUST

Sun 1	10.00am	Hempstead Fête	Playing Field
Wed 4	3.00pm	Hempstead Music in the Garden	Ian Summers's House 710702
Thur 5	10.30am	Plumstead Coffee Morning	St Michael's Church
Fri 6	10.30am	Hempstead Coffee & Catch-Up	Ian Summers's House 710702
Sat 7	10.00am	Edgefield Photography Exhibition	Village Hall
Sun 8	10.00am	Edgefield Photography Exhibition	Village Hall
Fri 27	6.30pm	Baconthorpe Pop-Up Pub	Village Hall

Clash Diary 2021

Sept 6	Hempstead PC
Sept 6	Plumstead PC
Sept 11	Norfolk Churches Trust Bike Ride
Oct 3	Baconthorpe Treasure Hunt
Nov 1	Hempstead PC
Dec 6	Plumstead PC

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

Post Offices

Baconthorpe Mobile Post Office Van

Wednesdays 10.00am Village Hall

Corpusty Stores 587202

Monday-Saturday 9.00am – 12.00noon

All services including Euros

Itteringham Shop 587325

Monday + Thursday 9.00am-1.00pm

The Church & Village News is grateful for the support of the National Lottery Community Fund



Holt Library

9 Church Street, Holt NR25 6BB 712202
Mon Wed Sat 9.30am-1.00pm
Fri 9.30am-6.00pm

Mobile Library Van

5 August / 2 September

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

26 August / 23 September

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

You will be required to wear a face covering. One customer (or one household of up to 3 people) at a time. Your contact details will be needed for test and trace. Hand sanitiser will be available and surfaces that are commonly touched will be regularly wiped down. Returned items will be quarantined for up to 72 hours. Times and dates sourced from Norfolk County website: <https://bit.ly/2AJdSGA>

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

As the long summer holiday begins, I would like to invite all young people in the Benefice aged under 16 to submit a photo of something beautiful and/or fascinating in creation in North Norfolk with a short description of what it is and why it is beautiful and send it to me (via the below email) by 5pm 10th September 2021.



Every photo entered will receive a prize and there will be a larger prize for the winner of each age category, which will be selected by Jake Fiennes. Jake is the Director of Holkham National Nature Reserve & General Manager, Conservation; he is passionate about biodiversity, and he represents the NFU Environmental Forum for the East of England, and sits on the RSPB England's Committee. He is regularly called on to speak to forums discussing how communities respond to the environmental challenges of our times - many of these discussions can be found on YouTube, if you want to look him up.

Entries must:

- be submitted by a guardian/parent to administrator@matlaske.org.uk by 5pm 10th September;
- include one photograph of something beautiful and/or fascinating in North Norfolk;
- include a short description of the submitted photograph;
- provide contact details of parent/guardian;
- state name of applicant (optional);
- state which year group the applicant will be as at 10th September.

If the entrant is a member of Corpusty School, submissions are to be sent to: office@corpustyprimary.org.uk

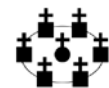
Loving creation, which I pray this competition will inspire, is something right at the heart of what it is to be a Christian since early times. On page 7 is an extract of a poem¹ by the Anglican Monk, Richard Carter.

With my prayer that we cherish this single island planet and move gently upon it,

David

Bungalow Contents Sale

The sale held on the weekend of 3rd and 4th July was a great success, when the contents of Keith Crossland's bungalow, which had been left to his brother Ian, who subsequently bequeathed it to the benefice, raised over £3,000. Ian also very kindly agreed that all the kitchen equipment and bedroom furnishings should be kept back and donated to the St Vincent de Paul Society's emergency homeless projects based in Sheringham and Cromer. All the surplus bric-a-bac was given to local charity shops. Keith and Pam Crossland are now commemorated by a portable lectern in St Andrew's Saxthorpe.



The Benefice of Matlaske Church Services for August

1 st August	Trinity IX	
10.30am	Eucharist No Evening Prayer	Plumstead
8 th	Trinity X	
10.30am	Mattins	Baconsthorpe
5.00pm	Eucharist	Matlaske
15 th	Feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary	
10.30am	Eucharist	Saxthorpe
5.00pm	Evening Prayer	Plumstead
22 nd	Trinity XII	
10.30am	Eucharist	Baconsthorpe
5.00pm	Evening Prayer	Edgefield
29 th	Trinity XIII	
10.30am	Eucharist	Barningham Winter
5.00pm	Evening Prayer	Hempstead
Wednesday 4 th 10.00am Eucharist Saxthorpe		

We plan the holiday in advance

But the holy day is today

The monks knew the ancient wisdom of giving each part of the day to God

So that they tasted the height, breadth and depth of God's presence

The coming of the light, the hopes and struggles of the day,

The intensity of noon,

The shadows of evening bringing the toil to an end,

Food and refreshment, the silence and darkness of the night

But we no longer notice the movements of the sun

We do not see the sky just the screen

We have used the remote and become remote

We who have no time for God

Have become time's prisoners

We have pulled the curtains on the sun and moon and have closed the windows so that we no longer smell the rain or breathe the air of the changing seasons

We have been given this treasure beyond price and yet we scarcely notice it.

¹ Carter R, *The City Is My Monastery: A Contemporary Rule of Life* (Paraclete Press: Massachusetts, pp.xix-xx)

Baconsthorpe

200 Club

£50 J Thurtell, £25 M Rowe, £10 T McCosh, £5 E Youngs, I Benton-Worboys and H Steel

Welcome

At least four houses have changed hands in the village over the past few months. We do welcome all newcomers to the village and hope they will be very happy living here. If you wish to meet your neighbours do come to the village Pop-up Pub held in the village hall every last Friday of the month. You may have a drink and something to eat and enjoy spending an evening with other village residents.

Church Stall

Thank you to everyone who supports this and remember Tessa is still putting out interesting and unusual plants on a Saturday.

Village Hall News

By the time you read this item we hope the new windows will have been installed at the village hall and we will have enjoyed our first Pop-Up Pub (Friday 30th July) evening for well over a year. The Pop-Up Pub is planned to return on the last Friday of the month, the next one will be Friday 27th August. As before we will offer a set menu most months and will occasionally bring in an outside caterer, to give the volunteers a breather. Food will be served from 6.30pm. The bar will open from 6pm until 10pm. For the moment we will still only take CASH.

We plan to restart the Film Nights in September, Friday 3rd, with a view to holding these monthly on the first Friday of the month, September to April. More details in the next newsletter and online.

A quick reminder to those who have yet to renew their 200 Club subscription that this is due now if you wish to participate. It is £1 per number, per month and you could win up to £50! We still have numbers available. Contact baconsthorpe.villagehall@gmail.com for details.

Annual General Meeting – this will be held on Thursday 9th September at 7pm, all are welcome.

We are looking for volunteers to assist with events, so please contact us if you can give any help at all: Piers Warner 07493 227591.

Piers Warner



Corinne Youngs
577263

Barningham Winter

We send our best wishes to Julian and Clare who with their dear little daughters Juliet and Frances have moved from Primrose Cottage to Briston. We do hope they will be very happy in their new home.



Sara Buxton
577207

Edgefield

Church News

We were delighted and very relieved to have wonderful help from newcomers to the village for our annual churchyard clear-up. Lesley and Andrew Rainsford, together with Kay and Kevin Harvey, worked flat out for one and a half hours, strimming around the graves, clipping the beech by the little gate, weeding graves, and helping to remove plastic and broken pots and vases. A very big thank you to you all! It was sad and disappointing that none of our usual helpers came... We get complimented on the state of the churchyard by some people, but only if it is sorted out when the grass is growing all around the graves and dead plastic flowers (which are not allowed by the diocese) are falling out of vases and blowing around the place. There is more to do. Please could we have more help? Tuesday 27th July has been mentioned, but after the magazine comes out, could you let me know if you are willing to help at a future date? Does anyone like sanding down doors? Please telephone: 587292.

We are pleased to report that our parish church has achieved a Bronze Eco-Church Award. The Eco-Church Programme, run via Arocha UK, a Christian charity working for the protection of the natural world, enables churches to gauge how they are responding to the challenge of climate change, from carbon usage in buildings, to how we pray for God's creation, cultivate biodiversity, preach and lead on environmental issues and engage with the wider community. Angela Turner

Village Hall News

It is the "200 Club" time of year for collection as the last draw of the year takes place at the end of August. Once again the annual price of £6 remains the same with prizes of £25, £15 and £10 per month, plus the annual prize of £100. This means we give away £700 per annum and potentially there could be 37 different winners - a far better chance than the National Lottery, except we cannot make your dreams come true! Many thanks to all who enter each year.

Jim Frost

Janet Hopkinson

It is with sadness that I have to report that Janet, John Hopkinson's partner, died aged 91, two months after his sad death. Janet was an active member of the Tuesday and Ladies Clubs. She will be remembered particularly for her contributions to the quarterly issues of the Edgefield News, which is now defunct. Her articles were chatty and the subjects ranged from anything that stirred her about politics, to writing about the weather, events in the village, the vegetables of John's allotment, outings she had with John to restaurants and visits to relations. She wrote about her wider family, but especially about her son Alan and the places around the world his work took him. She wrote about his wife Lee and her granddaughters Cody and Callee, their sporting and academic achievements at school. She was very proud of them all. Our thoughts are with Alan and Lee and their children. Alan and Lee have been looking after Janet devotedly at home until she had to be admitted to hospital.

Hubs Sharp

Edgefield Cottage Trust

The Trust will shortly have a bungalow to rent on The Green. Under the terms of the Trust, preference is to be given to a retired resident of Edgefield or those with a connection to Edgefield or neighbouring village. All applications to be sent in writing to: Mrs. Irene Allsop, Ambergate, Ramsgate Street, Edgefield, NR24 2AY.

Dawn Hulbert



Richard Peaver
587486

Hempstead

200 Club

£50 M Thody, £25 A Udale, £10 J Buxton, £5 M Scarff, M Thody and M Williams

Music in the Garden - Wednesday 4 August - 3pm

Following on from the very successful series of Music in Hempstead Village Hall, there will be Music in Ian Summers's Garden which is next door to the village hall. Enter either by the steps near the phone box or (to avoid the nine steps) through the gap in the hedge by the side of the village hall. You might like to go that way anyway where village hall chairs will be available should more chairs be needed. You are invited to turn up halfway through the rehearsal at 3 pm. There will be a short break (about 20 minutes) before a run through at 4pm of what we have rehearsed. There will be five wind players who will be playing a selection pieces some of which you may know and others new to you. None of us wants to get soaked so this event will be dependent on the weather. More details from Ian 710702 (but not after 1.45pm on the day unless to confirm rain stop play). Unlike the Music in Hempstead there will be no refreshments provided.

Coffee & Catch-Up - Friday 6 August - 10.30am

Please note the new name. This will also be in Ian Summers's garden and be weather-dependent. Last month £90 was collected for the local branch of the Motor Neurone Disease Association (in memory of Su Summers). For August there will be a collection for a charity I have only recently heard of: 'Unique' supporting the Understanding of Rare Chromosome and Gene Disorders - more details about this disease on www.rarechromo.org - Contact Ian 710702 to request charities for future Coffee & Catch-Ups.

Hempstead Arts 2021

This will be taking place on the weekend of 4-5 September from 10.00am to 5.00pm. Free entry and refreshments will be available. Please see www.hempsteadarts.co.uk for more details.

Open Gardens



Duncan Baker MP & Dick Roy - Photograph by Jonathan Neville

A successful first for Hempstead, I think. My (Jill's) mother-in-law, Ena Roy, was a keen gardener and lived here for many years before us and didn't ever mention open gardens so feel confident in declaring it a first.

We have had delightful visits to Edgefield and Plumstead gardens before Covid. They showed us the way, thank you! It was unfortunate that after all our communications we clashed rather

closely, but we don't think it made a scrap of difference to our successes. The populace were just so keen to use the semi-freedom from Covid to get out into the great outdoors and enjoy themselves. We also drew on the experience of open gardens in Mears Ashby in Northants and Gringley in Notts.



Diana Spalton
711117



Classic Rovers and a Classic Fiat- Photograph by Jonathan Neville

The classic cars, about 30 in all, provided yet another interest, as did the carvings, sculptures, moths, textiles, jewellery, plants and dogs agility course. To our knowledge amongst a wealth of positive comment and appreciation we have had only two complaints, there were not enough dog poo bins (we welcomed dogs) and the queue for lunch. We will learn for another time!

We have made copious notes on dos and don'ts for then.

Open gardens are not practical to do every year but certainly something to repeat in the future. However communication and use of the church magazine clash diary is of the essence in the future as we try to get back to some normality with Covid.

We were pleased to welcome Duncan Baker MP who enjoyed himself and was impressed with Hempstead's efforts.

We send our thanks to everybody who worked so hard to make open gardens possible and to all our guests who numbered approximately 500 over the two days. A total of just over £4,000 was made and divided equally between the church and village hall. Well done everybody and now it's all hands to the pump for the village fête on August 1st.

Jill Roy & Jo Hurrell

On behalf of Hempstead Village Hall I would like to thank Jill and Jo for organising such a wonderful and successful event (a first for the village) and a big thank you to all those who opened their wonderful gardens and made the weekend possible. From the funds raised we intend to carry out some much needed improvements to the hall - there is a quite extensive list! Now that the village is the owner of the hall we may also be able to contemplate furthermore ambitious plans and take advantage of grants that come available.

Mike Thody

The PCC would like to thank all those that contributed to making the open gardens such a success. We really appreciate the hard work that all put in, especially by Jill and Jo for organising it all and coping with ever changing 'rules'. The funds raised were split between the church and village hall. The church portion (just over £2000) is being set aside, separate from our main funds, towards the internal refurbishment of our lovely little church. This will include redecoration and addition of a toilet for the disabled. Decoration of our church is complicated, as previously a modern paint has been used, causing the following layer to flake away. If you visit the church you may notice patches where we are trying various remedies - and pencil labels on the walls - it is not graffiti! Many thanks again.

Francis Feilden PCC Treasurer

Village Fête & Fun Dog Show Sunday 1st August

The fête is almost upon us! At the time of writing we are hoping to find more volunteers to help run stalls and games. Can you help? If so please contact Yvette Gibson (712460) or Liz Buxton (714082). We would also be grateful for any last minute donations of raffle and tombola prizes (including the separate children's tombola stall), plants and produce, books and bric-a-brac. Donations can be left at the village hall from Tuesday 27th to Friday 30th 10am to 12noon. On

the day we hope to have lots of cakes for our famed cake stall and teas - these to be brought to the stalls on the day, but Mo 712947 (cakes) and Yvette (refreshments) would like to hear from you in advance so they know what to expect. **Setting up for the fête will take place on Saturday 31st July at 10am - help very much needed!** Please turn up on the playing field if you can spare an hour or so. Last but not least - we look forward to seeing you at the fête.

Norfolk Churches Trust Bike Ride 11th September

It is fantastic to be able to report some good news as 2020 turned out to be a record-breaking year, with the event raising a staggering £174,382 for Norfolk Churches. 831 people took part last year compared to 570 in 2019. Our local area did phenomenally well with Holt Deanery coming in second place, by raising £27,437 (£10,455 in 2019). Baconsthorpe and Hempstead came second and third respectively in terms of top-performing parishes. The benefice 'triathlon team' led by David played a big part in the success locally.

With many of the Norfolk Churches Trust fundraising events cancelled this year I am hoping that it will be another bumper year. I want to stress that it is a really good way for people to have some fun exploring Norfolk's magnificent churches, taking some exercise and raising money for your local church and the Norfolk Churches Trust.

A new Norfolk Churches Trust website will soon go live which will make the whole process of registering easier and finding out how to take part:

<https://norfolkchurchestrust.org.uk/bike-ride/>

Charles Inglis

Matlaske - No News This Month!

100 Club

£25 Sally Chandler, £10 Chanelle Shepherd, £ 5 Andy Bere

Plumstead

Guest Correspondent
Richard King

Parish Council News

The benches at the Flagpole Garden and the village pond have been given a new lease of life, along with the notice boards. Many thanks to the wonderful local handyman, Douglas, for this and his other maintenance works carried out for the village.

The Plumstead Parish Council have secured a pre-order of a heritage fruit tree as a memorial to the Duke of Edinburgh. The Norfolk Royal apple tree, first found in North Walsham in 1908, will be planted in winter at the Flagpole Garden and will surely produce fruits for the residents of Plumstead for many years ahead.



Church News

Thanks to all who returned their completed questionnaires. It was widely agreed that the church building should be kept open and be used. A summary of the responses has been put up in the church for all to see and the PCC will include the findings in their decision making in the coming months.

Following the suggestions of some form of bookstall, a book table will be available at the back of the church, under the tower - buy, exchange or borrow. Donations welcome towards church upkeep. Thank you again to all for such a good response.

Another suggestion in the survey returns was for opportunities for having coffee together and so, throughout August, coffees and teas will be served from 10.30am on Thursdays, starting August 5th, either inside or outside the church. Do put the dates in your diaries and come if you can!



Saxthorpe with Corpusty

Church Cycle Ride

A date for your diary - Saturday 11th September is the day for the annual sponsored church cycle ride. Now is the time to find your bike in the back of the shed, apply the 3-in-1 and get in some practice ready for then. Sponsorship forms will be available on line from Norfolk Churches Trust or at the churches of St Andrew's, Saxthorpe, and St Peter's, Corpusty. If you can help by being a recorder at one of the two churches, please get in touch with Charles Tyndall.



Sophia Hodgson
587510

Corpusty School

Corpusty School receives book tokens thanks to the John Perry-Warnes Educational Fund. The Fund (started in 2020) provides educational gifts to all pupils completing Year 6 at Corpusty Primary School. It also provides educational grants to pupils in, or about to start secondary or further education who are resident within the parish of Saxthorpe with Corpusty. The committee administering these grants are hoping the fund will grow, so that it may be able to provide educational support for future generations in the community. The Parochial Church Council made a commitment earlier this year to raise money to help the fund.



The Village Gardener

To Plant a Garden is to Believe in Tomorrow



Finally summer has got into its stride! Although I admit writing that with a wary eye on the forecast...after a relatively erratic start to July as we head nearer to August the days have become (finally!!!) warmer...I hope.

Off to the garden! August can be a tricky month as the lovely fresh early spring and summer growth has faded and it's all too easy for the garden to look somewhat jaded. One way to revitalise your garden is to trim your hedges. The freshly defined edges can give a positive edge to your garden and a good contrast to August's slightly lush overblown look in the border. We've both noted that due to the rain and cooler start to the summer everything (hedges included) have put on a tremendous amount of growth this year...so don't go into this task lightly. Do remember the golden rule...avoid cutting on a bright sunny day as you're more likely to risk scorching to the cut areas.

Next stop is the veg patch: to get the most out of your harvest, the trick is to keep a close daily eye....courgettes are the worst you seem to turn your back for a moment and they've grown from slightly too small for the kitchen to huge battleships...that even the most resourceful cook would be at a loss to use. Tomatoes too need a lot of attention, once all your trusses have fruit on them then start to remove the lower leaves...little and often is better than mass defoliation in one hit, which can I feel be too much of a shock for the plant, you don't want to stress the plants when blight is lurking in the background. The trick is to keep the air circulating round the plants if possible and to expose the fruit to the sun so they can ripen well. Make sure you feed them well too. Start planning and prepping for sowing autumn lettuces too, you will thank yourself later if you do. Have a good tidy up in the strawberry patch, cut off any remaining foliage to the crown apart from any runners you are trying to grow on, it's worth keeping a note of how old your plants are and prepare to rotate old plants with new after four years, otherwise the old plants will lose their vitality/productivity and quite simply not earn their keep.

Now for the border...do take time to ensure any late summer flowering plants are well supported, keep on top of deadheading any late flowering roses and dahlias, make sure your dahlias are well fed and watered to get the best show out of them.

This month's question is from Ian Brown who asks how he can rejuvenate a leggy and woody patch of lavender. First the lecture, Ian! In an ideal world it's best to keep on top of lavender, rather than rejuvenate it, but in saying that it can be done, you need to cut the lavender right back hard - but do make sure there are some new shoots on each stem, lavender is fussy and will often not regrow from old wood, so go careful. Try and get this job done sooner than later so the new growth can establish well before the winter knocks it back. In future always prune roughly at this time of year ...every year and it will keep your lavender in good shape...Lecture over!

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

Michelle & Mick McCarter



Louis playing hide and seek in a barley field - Photograph by Charlotte Hodgson

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