



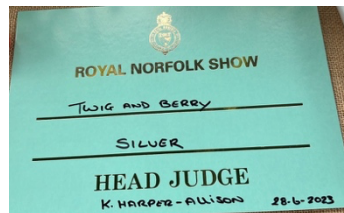
MEAT-EATERS OF THE PLANT WORLD!



Nepenthes and Trumpet Pitcher Plant

Congratulations to Blythburgh original Sharon Knights who won Silver at the Royal Norfolk Show in June.

The Royal Norfolk is the largest two day county show in the UK, with more than 700 trade stands and more than 84,000 visitors. Potential exhibitors must apply in advance, wait nervously to see if they have been accepted, and then meet the exacting standards of the Show organisers. Judges walk round in their bowler hats as



they judge each stand (the perfect time to grab a cup of tea). The judges return to hand out awards. Silver is a great result but what was Sharon exhibiting? I sat down with her to find out more.

Sharon is Blythburgh born-and-bred and proud of it. She has trained as both a chef and a florist – working variously at The Bell (Walberswick), Woottens (Wenhaston) and with Mary Smith in Southwold. Sharon thrives on pressure and juggles a full-time job alongside running her own floristry company Twig and Berry. She initially focused her business on cut flowers – she has provided flowers for the Latitude Festival since 2006, and for other high-profile events such as the BBC Proms in Hyde Park. But this was before she discovered carnivorous plants around four years ago, and hasn't looked back.



Her first was *Nepenthes* (tropical pitcher plant), her second a *Sarracenia* (trumpet pitcher plant). She was captivated, but collected so many that some had to go. Her first attempt at selling them at a car boot sale was a huge success. No one knew what they were! Was this an opportunity to make them accessible to everyone? She then heard a child telling their parents about the plants and how they grew; they had studied them at school. It was quite inspirational – the child was spot on.

Basically, carnivorous plants are the meat-eaters of the plant world. They live in nutrient poor soils so they have evolved to eat bugs (gnats, flies, wasps, hornets) to get their nutrients – they starve without them. The plants attract bugs by giving off a sweet scent and excreting a sticky sap. The bugs get a bit 'high', slip in, and the reverse hairs of these plants trap them inside. The plants digest the bugs for the nutrients they contain.

Carnivorous plants are both weird and unbelievably beautiful but it was the way Sharon had put all aspects of her stand together that led to that coveted Silver award. But – never one to rest on her laurels – Sharon is already thinking about what needs to be done to step up to a Gold next year. And, if we are lucky, we may catch sight of her on *BBC Gardeners World* this autumn.



Sharon sells carnivorous plants both on-line and at various shows. If you would like to know more you can contact her at Twigandberry@outlook.com.
Sonia Boggis

BLYTHBURGH CHURCH
One thousand and counting!

Almost every Thursday morning at 11am, Blythburgh resident Colin Huggins can be found lurking in the church porch. He’s waiting for visitors to arrive for a free church tour. He seldom knows how many people will arrive, but almost every week, someone does – often quite a number. Colin started these tours in 2018 and he has just welcomed his 1,000th visitor!



Colin’s popular and knowledgeable tours of this building, which has stood as a beacon to community travellers for over 600 years, are a real treat. During the hour-long tour everyone is introduced to the stunning, painted roof filled with carved angels, the ‘Seven deadly sins’ pew ends, Jack o’ the Clock, the altarpiece by contemporary artist Laurence Edwards, the list of ‘perpetual curates’ from 1310 onwards, the famous claw-marks of Black Shuck the Devil’s dog, and much more besides.

When Colin can’t be there, he’s ably deputised by Meryl Doney or Sonia Boggis. Blythburgh is proud of its church: the Cathedral of the Marshes. We are glad that it is a favourite destination of visitors to the Suffolk coast, and we’re very grateful for Colin’s willingness to enhance their knowledge and experience of its history, art and unique atmosphere. Congratulations Colin!

Window plaques and the Men’s Shed



Holy Trinity has embarked on a project to install clear glass in all its windows. Thanks to a number of kind donors, we’ve made a good start, and we wanted to acknowledge their valuable contribution. However, it’s difficult to add permanent features in a Grade I listed building, so the PCC

decided to commission a moveable plaque for each window. And the Halesworth Men’s Shed have ridden to the rescue. Their skilled participants have lovingly created a series of oak blocks to hold brass plaques, which are then placed on the church windowsills to commemorate the windows’ donors.

The church goes animal

20 Aug sees Blythburgh’s annual **Blessing of the Animals service**. This is one the church’s most popular services of the year. It starts at **11am**. In previous years, we’ve welcomed, horses, dogs, cats, chickens, snakes, voles, praying mantises, tortoises, ferrets and more. Humans are also welcome.

Coffee and cake

Our next monthly Café and Mini market days will be held on **Friday 25 August and Friday 29 September 10.30am-12.25pm**. The event is a social hub for the village and a friendly destination for visitors.

BOWLS BREAK

Earlier in the year, Jim and Sonia Boggis encourage a number of locals to join them to enjoy a regular evening of carpet Bowls in the Village Hall. It started well, but they have decided to suspend carpet bowls for the summer, as numbers have dropped off recently. Watch this space or the Blythburgh Facebook page for further news.

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SOLICITORS & NOTARIES

BLYTHBURGH FIELD NOTES

Late May saw the final spring movement of Northern waders, with good numbers of Whimbrel, Bar-tailed Godwit and Ringed Plover, with a few Turnstone and Ruff, as well as Greenshank, Common and Green Sandpipers and up to three Little Stints.

June is now generally a quiet month for birdwatchers, especially now we have far fewer species and numbers of breeding birds. Many now divert their interests to insect groups, particularly Dragonflies and Butterflies. For us, a few White Admirals have been seen around Fen Covert. Our three regular species of Skipper have also appeared in good numbers. The Skippers are the most moth-like of our local butterflies, these are Large, Common and Essex. The latter two being difficult to separate without seeing the underside of the antenna of the less common Essex, which has yellow tips.

It was thought that this year we had lost Turtle Dove as a breeding bird in the parish, but a pair turned up in early July. This extremely attractive bird is for many the true sound of summer, their soft, almost magical cooing, is almost hypnotic on a warm summers evening. A now rapidly declining summer migrant, it is of considerable conservation concern, having declined by almost 90% in the last few years, Everything about this species is delicate, their nest being a thin platform, constructed of extremely fine twigs, so flimsy that you can normally see the two delicate, white, almost translucent eggs though the bottom.

July 3 saw the first Cattle Egret of the year on the Blyth, and the next day the first of the autumn returning waders, a Greenshank, was found. These early returning Northern waders are often failed breeders, the short Arctic summers not allowing enough time for second breeding attempts. On the 10th, a Common Tern was along the river and over 30, mainly adult, Mediterranean Gulls were on the cleared onion field by the Water Tower.

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INDEPENDENT HOME LIVING

STARRY, STARRY NIGHT

Each year, as the Earth makes it's journey around the Sun, it passes through a dozen or more areas of debris, most of which have been left by passing comets. On each occasion some of this debris burns up in the Earth's atmosphere and results in the bright streaks of light that we know as meteor showers, or shooting stars.

There are six main areas that can generate a good number of bright meteors and August sees the Perseid shower which has the distinct advantage of occurring in the summer and therefore does not involve being outside in cold temperatures! We looked at the Perseids a couple of years ago in *Blythburgh Focus*, but it's worth looking again as this year the conditions should be very favourable.

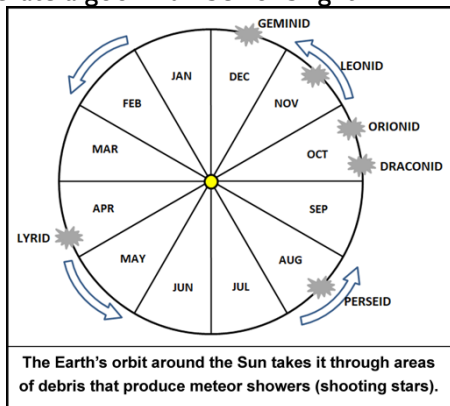
The Perseids are named after the constellation of Perseus from where they appear to emanate, but they can occur anywhere in the sky, so you don't need to know exactly where Perseus is. Look high in the sky (more than half way up) and roughly to the north east to stand the best chance of seeing them.

The comet that deposits the particles that cause these meteors is Swift-Tuttle, which passes our way every 133 years, most recently in 1992. They are at a height of about 60 miles when they vaporise, and generate the streak of light that we see as a shooting star. The peak of the shower will be on the night of Saturday 12 August but it could be worth looking a night either side if the weather forecast is better. The best time to view is from 11pm onwards and viewing conditions should be good as there won't be a Moon. Give your eyes time to adapt to the darkness and try to stay away from bright lights including your phone!

The later you stay up, the more meteors you'll see, as numbers increase into the small hours. No binoculars are required, as you want to be able to see as much sky as possible. You will be looking up for a continuous period so my suggestion would be to use a deckchair or sun lounger if you have one.

Let's hope for clear skies. If I manage to get any pictures I'll put them on the village Facebook page.

Colin Huggins



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Have you ever had a couple of days where everything seems to go wrong?

It's Saturday night, and I'm brushing my teeth. I drop a glass tumbler and it explodes into thousands of tiny shards. The bottom of the sink looks as though I've poured crushed ice into it. And it's all over the floor and shelves and even on the landing. I'm bare-foot and of course Milo (our Siamese who sleeps with us) is also unclad paw-wise. So, it's downstairs to find my ubiquitous crocks and back up with Hoover and brush and pan. Half an hour later the final shard is identified and disposed of and I finally make it to bed.

It's Sunday, the following day, and we're sitting in the back garden enjoying the wonderful sun. There's a crack almost like a bomb going off. I rush round to the front of the house and there's a large branch of a tree which has ripped the electricity bracket off the wall and the wire is laying in disarray on the front lawn. Emergency call to EDF and several hours later 'they' arrive and a couple of hours later, we are back in business.

The following day, I phone my friend in Bristol to ask him advice on some matter or other and, after I put the phone down and pick it up again to make another call, no dialling tone and the phone is obviously dead. Assuming my friend hasn't cancelled the call and the line is still open, I Facetime his son-in-law in Bath, email his wife, probably at work, and finally a friend who lives in the same village: "Can you go and see him and tell him to turn his phone off please?" He does, and there's nothing wrong. The fault is my end.

Is there something about these things happening in threes? In the end I came down the following morning and all was back to normal.

For the last 35 years, I've been writing a regular letter to all our friends. Hopefully it's not one of those of those ghastly 'round robin letters', containing information about relatives or people you don't know and will never meet, but rather a series of anecdotes similar to the above.

Recently, I went through a period of getting unsure as to whether I should carry on writing it or not. It all started years ago, when I had fallen on financially hard times and decided to send letters rather than make expensive phone calls. Now of course it's mostly emails.

But I've decided to continue and all because of the amazing picture of Her Majesty sitting in my neighbours' front garden which came about as a result of the jubilee scarecrow competition. I was so impressed with it, I just had to pass the picture on to the 60-odd people – some of whom live all over the world. Sue next door is very clever artistically, besides being a wonderful gardener and that particular picture needed to have a bigger audience.

So there.

Paul Bennett

GARDEN SAFARI AND MORE

We had a fantastic turnout for our Garden Safari on 1 July. The weather was glorious, as 42 members visited three gardens along Dunwich Road before finishing with an afternoon tea hosted by Jenny Allen, with delicious scones provide by Sue Ireland-Cutting and Carol Nichols.



There were highlights at every turn, as members were guided around the gardens by our gracious hosts: Peggy Meredith, Claire Lyth Orr-Ewing & Roderick Orr-Ewing, and Cilla & David Wilson.

Photographs from each garden have been provided by Paul Lacey and the group photograph by Christine Fisher.



Our Horticultural Society summer garden party is on 12 August when we hope the weather will be kind as we enjoy food and drinks in the beautiful surroundings of

Stephanie and John Simmonds's garden. We thank them very much for opening their garden to members of the Hort Soc.

Sonia Boggis
Secretary, Blythburgh Horticultural Society



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WILDWATCH

By now, one of our most charismatic summer visitors will have departed after a mere three-and-a-half month-long stay. Blythburgh's swifts are on their way back to their overwintering grounds south of the Sahara.

Actually, the word 'grounds' is something of a misnomer! Swifts are one of the most aerial bird families on Earth and, in its first year, a juvenile swift will be continuously airborne. Feeding on winged insects, which are most numerous over water, their migration routes typically follow coastal areas and major rivers.

While swifts resemble swallows, the two families are not closely related. Swifts belong to the family *Apodiformes* (meaning 'footless'), which includes the tree swifts of South East Asia and the hummingbirds of the Americas. Their resemblance to swallows stems through what is known as 'convergent evolution', where unrelated species adapt similar body-forms through behavioural or dietary requirements.



Despite their generic name, swifts do have feet and, in fact, can take off from a level surface, although they prefer an elevated launch site. Their preference for nesting under the eaves of buildings probably originates from the birds' use of caves, rock faces and overhangs, as well as tree holes made by other species.

We're used to seeing groups of birds screaming over the rooftops in July and

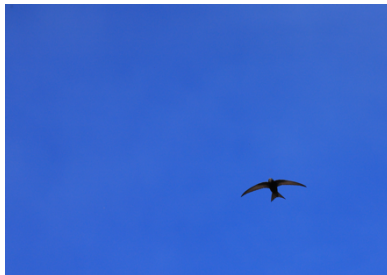
these cries sum up the long, warm days of summer perfectly. Their sheer speed is also impressive – swifts and their relatives are some of our fastest-flying birds – but they can hover, as when inspecting a possible nest site.

At the third biennial International Swift Conference in Cambridge, the RSPB presented a paper calling for changes in building practices to favour swifts. By then, the birds had become a species of concern, partly caused by a shortage of house building sites. It was feared, however, that new-build homes for people would be of no use to nesting swifts.

So, new built-in swift nest boxes have been developed that offer the birds ready-made accommodation, and these are now being incorporated into newly built homes and offices. Externally-mounted boxes are also available to add to existing houses, just like those that Jenny Allen has fixed to her home in the village.

Many other countries have now recognised that this iconic bird can play a part in changing the way we develop our towns that cater for species other than just we humans. Sharing our built environment with biodiversity shouldn't be impossible to achieve.

Paul Lacey



Holy Trinity, Blythburgh

Blessing of the Animals

Sunday 20 August

11.00 am

All creatures great & small very welcome

