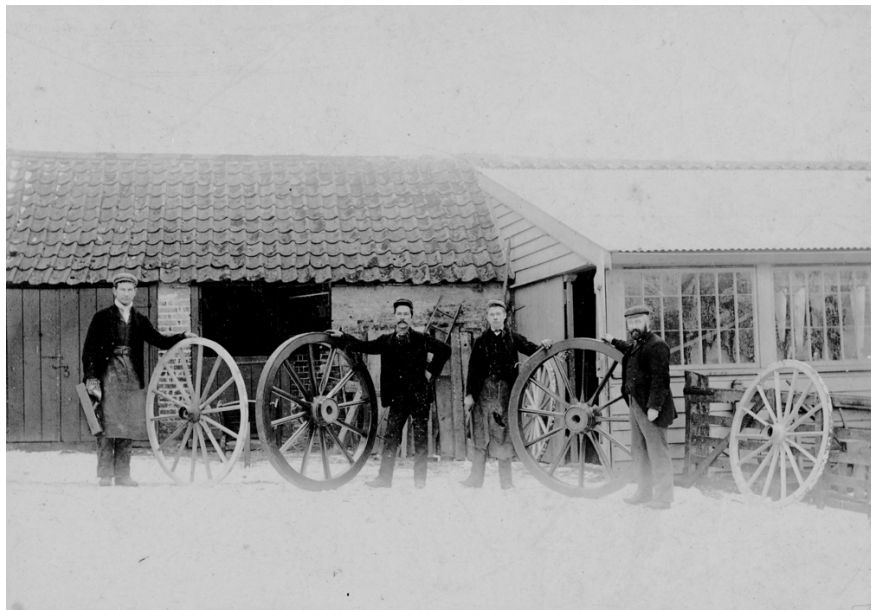




RECOLLECTIONS OF A TRUE LIFE: PART I



The document looks a bit like a school project from the 1970s. A pale blue cover containing 21 single-spaced pages held together with three large staples. A short forward by STRADBROKE explains what follows is the recollections

of Mr Leonard Everson: for 43 years a member and for over 20 years the head of the Henham estate staff.

The document is dated August 1971 which, based on Leonard Everson being 12 years old when the First World War started, makes him 69 years old when he tells his story.

The youngest of three boys, he was just a year old when his father was killed at Fools Watering, Henham driving a carriage and pair of horses. The family moved to Frostenden, with his mother earning just a little money as a dressmaker – times were hard. Leonard joined the Boy Scouts in Wangford where he learned boxing: something he remembers coming in handy at school where you had to be tough, as there were regular fist fights.

Leaving school aged 12, he started work as a delivery boy for a drapery shop in Wrentham. His old bike had a carrier on the front and, when loaded up with parcels, he was barely able to see over them – he cycled miles. The working day was 8am to 8pm and the two-mile ride home in the evening was often in the dark: no lights were allowed because of the threat from zeppelins. At 14, he took work closer to home in Wangford to learn wheelwrighting and undertaking; still a 12-hour day earning just 2 shillings (10p) a week.

After the war, work became scarce and he was laid off. Taking whatever jobs was available often meant cycling many miles. He worked on the roads, drove a steamroller, loaded trucks with granite on Southwold Quay, and took joinery work wherever it was available.

His carpentry skills were much needed by the Air Force, but he failed the education tests and –somewhat disheartened – took a job at Heveningham Hall working for Lord Huntingfield (MP). A London firm had been engaged to lay electric light throughout the Hall and he was to work alongside them doing the carpentry. Once this was completed, he moved to the carpentry shop on the Estate, but just four years later he was again laid off.



Work was still hard to find, but Leonard found a job cleaning out the rivers between Martlesham Lion and Grundisburgh. After six months, the floods came and he returned home to Wangford. Joe Utting kept the Wangford Plough and he employed Leonard to build him a large garage because he wanted to have a petrol station and space for someone to repair cars and sell car parts.

While he was building the garage, Leonard was approached by the Earl of Stradbroke’s agent and asked to work on the Henham Estate as a wheelwright – replacing old William Spencer. Leonard little thought this job would last more than 40 years.

Sonia Boggis

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BLYTHBURGH CHURCH

Christmas past

The church had a splendid Christmas, with hearty and happy congregations at all our services and events. All together we raised (with gift Aid) £1,334 for our two nominated charities: Crisis and Children of Peace (which gives non-partisan support to children in Palestine and Israel).

Quiet Day

On **Saturday 17 February from 9.30am to 4pm**, we’re gathering at Quiet Waters, a beautiful retreat house just outside Bungay. Bishop Tim Stevens, former Bishop of Dunwich and of Leicester, will be leading a day of teaching and quiet reflection for us, on a theme suitable for the beginning of Lent. Places are limited, and members of Holy Trinity’s worshipping community will be given priority, so please book as soon as possible with Jenny Allen (jennyanddick@aol.com /01502 478314). The cost is £25 which includes a full, cooked lunch.

Easter is coming

It’s an early Easter this year, Lent too. **Ash Wednesday** coincides with Valentines Day (14 February) and, while there’s no service in Blythburgh, there is on at **10am at St Andrew’s, Walberswick**, and another at **7pm at St Margaret’s, Reydon**.

At Easter, there will be a service in **Holy Trinity, Blythburgh on Palm Sunday 24 March**, and a service on **Easter Sunday at 11am**.

HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

We kick off our 2024 programme in early February with a talk by Bob Coutts, who for a number of years has been our Summer Show vegetable judge. The title of his talk is **Getting Your Veg Show Ready** and the early date is aimed at leaving us all enough time to be inspired to get planting in time for our summer show on 20 July (remember to save the date).

We already have a healthy membership of 75 for 2024 and it’s not too late to join us. Membership is just £5 a year, so if you are interested please email sonia.boggis@btinternet.com

Sonia Boggis
Secretary



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BLYTHBURGH FIELD NOTES

The Blyth Estuary has been exceptional quiet during this winter period, one would have expected far more Northern species to have arrived, although 220 Golden Plover occurred on 9 January, and two Spotted Redshank and a Great White Egret have regularly frequented the Estuary. The only less common species being a Merlin on 22 November, and two beautiful male Hen Harriers on 6 January.

The highlight locally was a Lesser Yellow-legs near the Water Tower on 14 January, this wader being a vagrant from North American.

The Waxwings mentioned last time have continued to arrive in numbers, with a flock of 350 frequenting the beautiful Monsal Dale Valley in Derbyshire, and two further flocks of over 250 elsewhere. There have still been no reports from our parish, the nearest ones to us have been on the Rowan trees on the road through from the Southwold Road to the doctor’s surgery in Reydon, while birds have also been seen along the A12 at Wrentham.

Surprisingly – in spite of the cold Northerly and Easterly winds – there has been a dearth of many of the more regular winter visitors, with very few wild Geese, Divers and Grebes. Even species which normally occur in good numbers such as Fieldfare, Redwing and Brambling have been mainly absent.

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COUNCIL TAX GOING UP

News from our County Councillor

While we all want to read good news at the start of a new year, I can't really provide it from the County Council. It's Budget time, and the situation is really tough. For this current year which ends in March, we seemed to have weathered the inflationary storms well, and were able to increase the County's share of Council Tax by just 3.99% when inflation was running around the 10% mark. But its effects have caught up with us. We are likely to be heading for an overspend on our £694 million budget spend by around £20 million. So, in coming up with the budget for 2024/25 we have had to be very hard-headed and have had to make some very difficult decisions about future spending commitments so that we can propose a balanced budget, which we are required to do by law.

It is likely we will need to increase Council Tax by 4.99%, which is the maximum allowed by the Government. In my 14 years as a County Councillor I have never voted for such a large rise, and I was much happier with what happened in the mid 2010s when, for four consecutive years, we did not increase our share of the Council Tax at all. Alas, times are very different and far more difficult now. We have mainly overspent on our social care responsibilities, safeguarding ever larger numbers of children and caring for disabled and elderly adults.

The cost of getting children who have special needs or disabilities to and from school has also grown hugely, as many of them need to be taken to and from home each day by taxi, and often have to be accompanied by an adult. Being a large rural county, with our Special Schools scattered widely, this has meant that the budget for this service has shot up. We know that implementing the Chancellor's latest increases in the minimum wage will cost us an extra £5.4 million in the forthcoming financial year. Such pay rises must be welcomed, but it results in higher costs.

All kinds of reductions in budgets have been considered, and many will have to be taken. But I am pleased to say that I fought to prevent the closure of the Leiston Household Waste Site as I know how much this facility is appreciated by local people, and I have been able to stave off further dramatic cuts to the Community Transport service. The savings which could have been provided from these areas have been found elsewhere. However, it is likely that you could notice some reductions in our services elsewhere, although we will maintain (and slightly increase) the money we spend on our Highways services, which are so necessary in the winter months.

It is not pleasant to face taking so many hard decisions, full details of which can be found on the County Council website, but it has had to be done and I hope, if you take the time to study the details, you will agree it has been done in a way which is responsible, balanced and fair. As ever, please feel free to contact me about any matters for which the County Council is responsible.

Richard Smith

richard.smith@suffolk.gov.uk

01728 602714

(This is an edited version of an article which first appeared in the January edition of *Saxmundham News*)

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SOLICITORS & NOTARIES

The Blythburgh Latitude Trust is making grants

The Blythburgh Latitude Trust makes grants to individual parishioners, families and organisations to meet specific needs.

For your grant, contact the honorary administrator, **Jim Boggis, Marsh End, Church Road, (478 687)**

All applications will be treated in complete confidence.

Apply now

The trustees are **Jenny Allen, chair, Sarah Wickham, Michael Nicholls, Val Carse, Malcolm Doney, Roderick Orr-Ewing, Paul Lacey and Harry Waller.**

Your Parish Councillors

Chair: Roderick Orr-Ewing

Planning Advisory Committee:
Paul Lacey

Finance Advisory Committee:
Roderick Orr-Ewing,
Al Besly

Councillors: Matthew Saunders, Ashleigh Sendin, Jude Blois, Claire Orr-Ewing, Harriet Strachan

Clerk: Al Besly

Blythburgh Associations

Blythburgh Latitude Trust
Jim Boggis 01502 478687

Film Club
Olive Forsythe 01502 478521

Village Hall Mgement Committee
bookings@blythburghvillagehall.org.uk

Horticultural Society
Val Carse 07973 389898

Blythburgh Matters
Ro Williams 01502 478484

Blyth Belles
Sarah Wickham blythbelles@gmail.com

www.blythburgh.onesuffolk.net

WILDWATCH

“The fox went out on a chilly night, he prayed to the Moon to give him light...” Just like that fox, including those whose barks are often heard on Blythburgh nights, we humans benefit from the Moon’s light. In an unlit village, a full moon shining on the Blyth Estuary is a useful asset and an inspiring sight.

Long before we became a settled, industrialised species, early humans were primarily hunter-gatherers. We followed the herds and the seasons, setting up camps, like the one discovered at Boxgrove in West Sussex in the 1980s, and then moving on. At night, in a world with no gas or electricity, we relied on flaming torches or moonlight to guide us after our prey.

In the latter, we shared our hunting strategy with the other alpha predators of the times, lynx, bears and wolves. Hunting in packs, like the wolves, we developed an admiration for their cunning, and have both feared and revered them ever since. Across the globe, wolves have – and, in many cultures, still do – featured in legends and creation myths.

In Britain, we drove wolves to extinction by the late 17th century, but we kept at least one belief about them alive: the myth of the Werewolf. On nights of a full moon, it was said, those affected by lycanthropy shape-shifted and became wolves. This belief was closely linked to that of witchcraft, and punishment followed similar lines.



‘Lunacy’ the old name for a mental condition, was once thought to have been caused by the influence of the moon. Likewise, fertility and the female menstrual cycle – coinciding with the Luna month of around 29 days – are now known to have no proof scientifically.

In June of 2007, senior police officers in Brighton announced that they were putting more officers on the beat during the summer due to increased trouble believed linked to the lunar cycle. Apparently, research by Sussex Police concluded there was a rise in violent crime when the Moon was full.

There is also speculation that even the stock market is affected by when, in the Luna cycle, transactions take place.

We evolved, like all other species on Earth, with the moon as a partner. Urbanisation and industrialism don’t seem to have driven away long-held beliefs and superstitions about our nearest cosmic companion.

And on the night of a full moon, I’m rather glad that it hasn’t. “HOWL!”

Paul Lacey



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STARRY, STARRY NIGHT

The most prominent winter constellation in our skies is Orion (The Hunter). Look for the three bright stars in a diagonal line, representing the hunter's belt. These are framed by four further bright stars on each corner of the constellation. At 6pm in early February it's already high in the sky to the south-east and by 8.30pm it's due south and at its highest.

I wrote about the stars of Orion previously (*Focus* Feb-Mar 22), but this time, look below the three stars forming the hunter's belt. You will see a faint line of stars with a fuzzy patch halfway down this line. The line represents his sword, and can be seen with the naked eye so long as you avoid nights with a bright moon. This should not be a problem in the first couple of weeks of February.

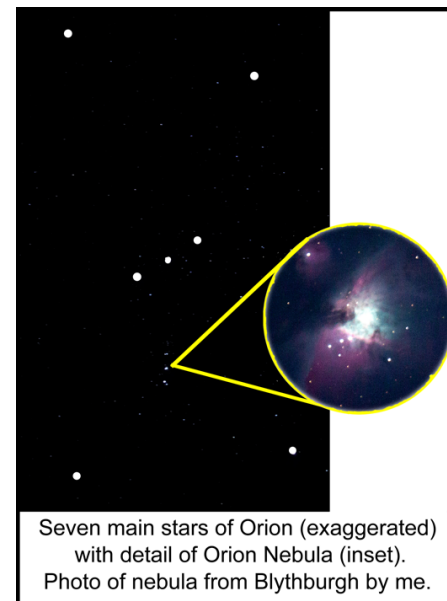
The fuzzy patch is the Orion Nebula. Binoculars of any kind should be enough for you to be able to pick out the nebula and, through a telescope, it will look like a glowing cloud.

It is actually a mass of hydrogen known as a stellar nursery – as this is where young stars are formed.

Despite it now being a relatively easy object to observe, the Orion Nebula was not mentioned by a number of prominent astronomers of the past, including Galileo, as recently as the early 1600s. This has led to speculation that it is brighter now than it was then. In 1865 the English amateur astronomer William Huggins (sadly, no relation as far as I know) used his visual spectroscopy equipment and was the first to distinguish between nebulae and galaxies.

The Orion Nebula is the closest region of massive star formation to Earth, being a mere 1,344 light years from us! That means the light we see now started its journey to us in around the year 680, not long after King Anna was defeated by the pagan King Penda at the battle of Bulcamp just across the River Blyth. I like to think what the Earth might be like when the light, which is leaving the Orion nebula now, reaches us in the year 3368.

Colin Huggins



Seven main stars of Orion (exaggerated)
with detail of Orion Nebula (inset).
Photo of nebula from Blythburgh by me.