

# BLYTHBURGH

## FOCUS

SERVING BLYTHBURGH,  
BULCAMP AND HINTON



Issue No.23

<http://blythburgh.onesuffolk.net>

September/October 2015

## Council smartens up the village

The Parish Council took a number of steps at its September meeting to smarten up the appearance of the village. Following a number of complaints about the brick bus shelter on the A12 being used as a public convenience, the council has discussed ways of replacing it with Suffolk County Council (SCC).

A spokesman for the highways department said that this problem is becoming more frequent across the County. SCC has recently worked with Beccles and Worlingham to help replace brick shelters in their parishes with metal/glass shelters similar to the one on the other side of the A12 and would be happy to do the same in Blythburgh, subject to the availability of funding. The cost to cover the demolition of the current brick shelter, purchase of a new bus shelter, site preparations and finally installation of the new shelter would be around £8,000.

A further option discussed with SCC was the modification of the brick shelter by removing the front wall leaving a three sided shelter. This approach has been carried out by a number of Parish Councils in Suffolk but SCC would not help with this. The Parish Council decided to modify the brick bus shelter as a first step to see if this would solve the problem.

The Parish Council has been contacted by a parishioner about some gas cylinders that had been dumped beside the glass recycling bin. The Parishioner pointed out that there was a delivery note in the bag of gas cylinders. The Parish Council contacted Suffolk Coastal Norse to ask what could be done and were directed to their enforcement team. The Suffolk Coastal Norse enforcement team asked for photographs

of the gas cylinders and the delivery note. The enforcement team will use this information to contact the person named on the delivery note.

The council also responded to a complaint from a Walberswick resident that the Angel Lane bottleneck was made much worse by overgrown hedges. The council replied that it was aware of the problem and appropriate contacts were maintained with the highways authority and property owners. The point was also made that if drivers respected the Blythburgh Village Only signs the problems at the A12 junction would disappear.

The council urged all residents to cut back hedges along their boundaries where they encroach upon the highway. Not only can vehicles be obstructed but at night pedestrians can be caught by brambles and twigs they cannot see.

**Planning:** the council agreed to object to an application to demolish Creek Cabin, a modest single-storey cottage at Wolsey Bridge, replacing it with a two-storey 3/4 bedroom house. The council commended the design as innovative and exciting. However, the location was thought to be quite inappropriate. The site was on a dangerous bend on an A road and in a sensitive highly protected landscape.

The new house would have more than twice the bulk of the existing building with no reflection of its vernacular character. Rising above the riverbank it would be visible across the creek and the estuary. It would cause light pollution and a loss of variety in the local housing stock. The site is also extremely vulnerable to flooding.

# NEAL'S PRIVATE HIRE

Airports. Local & Long Distance  
Friendly Reliable Service



4 -8 Seaters  
Available

**01502 575 888**

**Mob: 07899 011383**

## Paul Cook

### Gardening Services

Fully Insured

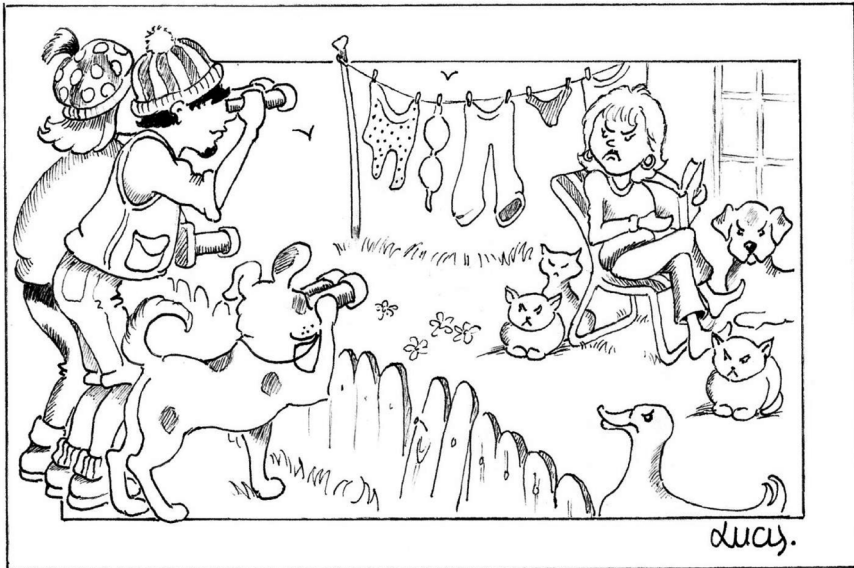


Gardening \* Grass Cutting  
Strimming\* Hedge Cutting  
Fencing repaired or replaced

*Free Quotations on Request*

Mobile: 07879 285971

## Home thoughts from a broad...



**Autumn Twitters on the Marshes**



## Film nights in Blythburgh

Blythburgh Film Club's new season got off to a flying start with the free showing of three films on the first weekend of September, *The Second Best Marigold Hotel* and *Some Like It Hot* for adults on the Friday and Saturday evenings with free wine and nibbles, and *Night at the Museum 3* for younger film-goers on Saturday afternoon with free popcorn, a drink and ice cream for the young audience.

The next films will be shown on October 2 at 7pm for 7.30pm and on Saturday 4 at 3 pm for 3.15pm. Parishioners, who are members of Blythburgh M@tters or have signed up to the film club's mailing list, will be notified automatically of the films to be shown. If you are not already on the email list but would like to be, please email [olive@dytler.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:olive@dytler.freeserve.co.uk). For all other inquiries please call Pat or Terry Goss on 01502 478356 or David Tytler on 01502 478521. Details will also appear on the Parish Council notice boards.

There is no charge for the films but voluntary donations of £3 for adults and £1 for children towards the upkeep of the village hall and its services would be appreciated.

The White Hart will provide fish and chips from 6pm to 7pm on Friday **strictly for cinema goers only** at £6.99 a head. Booking is essential, mentioning that you are a film goer and letting bar staff know when you have arrived.



**The Farmer & Fisherman menu at the White Hart, Blythburgh**

**01502 478217**

Specialising in steak and seafood

Four self-contained en suite letting rooms B&B

Estuary views \* Large beer garden \* Adnams' Ales

\*Booking advisable

**BAR**

Monday to Friday 11 – 3 /6-11pm

Saturday 11 – 11pm

Sunday 12-10.30pm

**FOOD**

Monday to Thursday 12- 2pm/6-9pm

Friday 12- 2pm/6-9.30pm

Saturday and Sunday 12-3pm/5-9pm

*Starting Tuesday October 13 at 7.30pm and then the second Tuesday in every month, a quiz with nibbles, £2.50 a head for teams of four. The total ticket money will be divided in two, half to the winner and half to Holy Trinity Blythburgh.*

**See our Smokehouse Board**

**offering fish, prawns etc from our own on-site smokehouse**



# The Blythburgh Latitude Trust has given grants totalling £30,000 plus

The Blythburgh Latitude Trust offers grants for one-off expenditure to benefit full-time residents – individuals or families - who have a need which cannot be met from other sources. Grants will also be made to local organisations where a majority of members are full-time residents of the village and for initiatives to support a community spirit in Blythburgh. Most recently the Trust has given £5,000 towards the cost of the proposed village gateways.

Funds come from the sale of tickets to the Latitude Festival and other donors. Normally grants will not exceed £200. Exceptional circumstances could result in higher awards. Parents or carers must endorse applications for grants for children under 16.

Normally, only one payment in any 12 month period will be made to any applicant but, successful or not, all will be able to re-apply the following year.

For example, grants could be made for: school uniform/equipment; musical instruments; sports equipment; out-of-school activities; motability; increased security; respite care; start-up money for new village societies ; development money for existing groups; supporting community spirit.

All applications will be treated in absolute confidence. By agreement, payments to groups may be published. All enquiries to the honorary administrator, Jim Boggis, Marsh End, Church Road, (01502 478687) who will be happy to help applicants seeking a grant.

**The trustees are Jenny Allen, chair,  
Alan De Thabrew, Michael Nichols,  
David Tytler and Harry Waller.**

## **YOUR PARISH COUNCILLORS**

**Chair: David Tytler  
01502 478521**

**Vice Chair/Chair planning  
advisory group: Alan Mackley**

**Chair finance advisory group  
Roderick Orr-Ewing**

**Councillors**

**Alan De Thabrew, Jeff Sutton,  
Cliff Waller**

**One vacancy**

**Clerk: Jim Boggis 01502 478687**

## **BLYTHBURGH ASSOCIATIONS**

**Horticultural Society  
Jenny Allen 01502 478314**

**Blythburgh Matters  
Ro Williams  
01502 478484**

**Film Club**

**Olive Forsythe 01502 478521  
Blythburgh Trust administrator  
Jim Boggis 01502 478687**

**Village Hall**

**Olive Forsythe 01502 478521**

## BLYTHBURGH REFLECTIONS

# Cliff really does walk on the wild side

I have mentioned before that Blythburgh punches above its weight when it comes to global recognition but, I have recently discovered, the same is true for many of its residents... On a recent trip to the hurricane prone outpost of Hatteras one of our early morning pleasures was to watch pelicans, skimmer birds and osprey from the top deck of our stilted house.

The stilts allow the Atlantic to wash through without doing damage and the house is built of wood which allows it to move and shift with the winds... on occasion's lamps would swing quite violently and even water in the toilet bowls would rise and fall.

With Hatteras vulnerable to the Atlantic weather systems most dwellings have well stocked book shelves and ours was no exception. Thrillers nestle beside romances which sit alongside more factual texts as varied as *Improvers Cross Stitch, DIY for Beginners*.

The one that took my eye, *Birders Tales of a Tribe*, written by Mark Cocker, is an entertaining collection of stories about birds, the characters who watch birds and the adventures they have. For me, it was a dip in to book perhaps to learn a bit about the birds we were seeing so imagine my surprise to find *Waller, Cliff* hidden amongst the Wagtail and Warbler entries in the index.

Cliff is well known in Blythburgh for his knowledge and love of wildlife. Many know he was warden of Walberswick Nature Reserve for many years and before that had spent time as warden and assistant on Lundy and Fair Isle respectively. Even those who haven't spent time ringing birds will appreciate the challenge posed by accessing the nests of cliff-nesting seabirds on these rocky outposts – you could say that an

ability to rock climb is a pre-requisite for the role.

As I read the *Waller, Cliff* entry in *Birders* what I hadn't realised, and I wonder if Cliff himself realised at the time, was just how useful his rock climbing ability would prove to be as his story unfolded.

Cliff was part of an expedition to Afghanistan to study bird migration. The expedition base camp was near a village at around 2,500 metres above sea level. This particular morning, it seems that

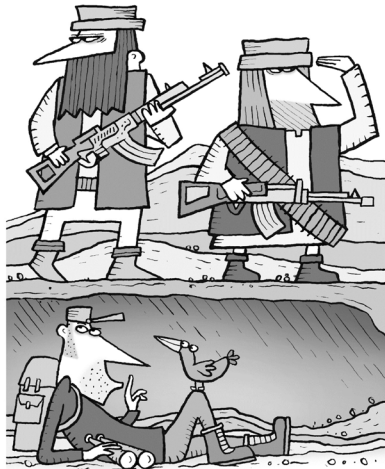
the best bird watching was on an inhospitable desert plateau at around 3000 metres accessed by climbing a steep canyon. Cliff had set out with a friend but, as often happens, they soon went their separate ways.

It wasn't until he was returning to camp that Cliff sensed he wasn't alone and, more worrying, he was being followed. His pursuers carried rifles and were on horseback so it made sense to Cliff that heading for a steep upward scramble that the horses

couldn't manage would give him an advantage.

Despite his pursuers loosing off a few shots, he was right and, by the time they caught up with him, Cliff had reached the plateau raced across open ground, thrown himself down a sheer drop and hidden under an overhang.

Cliff was exhausted – fear, altitude and exertion all taking their toll. Eventually his pursuers gave up. Cliff slowly and painfully climbed down the sheer cliff and made his way to the safety of base camp.



**Words: Sonia Boggis**

**Illustration: Spike Gerrell**

**BLYTHBURGH**  
**VILLAGE SHOP**  
**OPENING SOON**

**Lee and Marie Knight, of the White Hart, look forward to welcoming you to the refurbished and restocked village shop catering for your essential needs.**

**Opening hours will be posted in the shop window.**

## NEWS FROM HOLY TRINITY

## Free Harvest lunch – bring your own fork!

At Holy Trinity, Blythburgh, we'll be holding our Harvest Festival service and lunch on Sunday 20 September at 11am. All are very welcome to the service, and to our hearty harvest lunch after. If you would like to join us for lunch, please put your name on the sign-up sheet which is in the church. This year we will be supporting with our Harvest gifts Tools With a Mission (TWAM), a charity which sends refurbished tools and equipment to poor communities to help them become more self-sufficient. Mike Griffin from TWAM will speak about the work at the Harvest Festival service.

Alongside the normal collection we're asking parishioners to donate tools and equipment they're no longer using. TWAM is looking for hand-tools of all kinds, as well as sewing machines and computer equipment. For a full list of items that can be accepted, as well as details of TWAM's work, see [www.twam.co.uk](http://www.twam.co.uk). Please bring any items to Holy Trinity from now until Monday 21 September and leave them around the font. For collection, ring Jenny Allen on 01502 478314, [jennyanddick@aol.com](mailto:jennyanddick@aol.com).

### New pattern for church services

From 1 November 2015, the monthly cycle of services at Blythburgh church will change slightly.

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday: 11am joint service of Holy Communion (Common Worship) at St Andrew's, Walberswick.

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday: 6pm Choral Evensong with the Blythburgh Singers at Blythburgh.

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday: 11am service of Holy Communion (Common Worship) at Blythburgh (with Walberswick).

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday: 9.30am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer) at Blythburgh.

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday: 9.30am Morning Prayer at Blythburgh (this used to be BCP Holy Communion).

5<sup>th</sup> Sunday: Team service, see church notice-board or [www.solebayteamministry.co.uk](http://www.solebayteamministry.co.uk) for venue.

Every Wednesday: 5pm service of Evening Prayer or Compline (Night Prayer) at Blythburgh.

**On Friday morning 25 September**, Holy Trinity hosts the Blythburgh café and mini-market, and on Sunday 27 September at 6.30 pm, the versatile East Anglian orchestra, the Kingfisher Sinfonietta, returns to Blythburgh Church. Tickets are available at the door, details [www.kingfishersinfonietta.co.uk](http://www.kingfishersinfonietta.co.uk).

**Local Composer celebrated:** William Alwyn (1905-1985) the celebrated composer of concert and film music lived in a house on Dunwich Road in Blythburgh for the last 25 years of his life. Every October, his work is celebrated in the William Alwyn Festival. The fifth of these takes place 7-10 October. There are concerts in Blythburgh, Southwold, Aldeburgh and Orford, Blythburgh church hosts performances on Wednesday 7 Oct, Thursday 8 Oct and Saturday 10 Oct. For more details see [www.williamalwyn.co.uk/festival](http://www.williamalwyn.co.uk/festival). Tickets from Aldeburgh Music Box Office: [www.aldeburgh.co.uk](http://www.aldeburgh.co.uk).

**The Village Quire** sings thrilling, unaccompanied West Gallery music, folk harmony, shape note and catches in the style found in rural parishes in the 18th century. In those days it was the same singers in the pub on Saturday night, in the church gallery on Sunday morning and out on the land all the other hours God sent.

They will be presenting their *programme Back to the Garden* in Holy Trinity at 7.30pm on Thursday 29 October 'Back to the Garden' is a musical of life and hope in the trenches of war-torn France during the Great War. It is based on the letters of Corporal William Bevan to his employer, Sir John Stanhope Arkwright.

Bevan had been head gardener at Sir John's house at Kinsham Court near Presteigne in north Herefordshire and his letters are a wonderful blend of horticulture and heroism. Tickets are £8, available from Southwold Tourist Information Centre or on the door. Interval drinks will be on sale. This should be a very special evening, so do join us!

**Malcolm Doney**





# THE STAR INN



Set in the beautiful rolling Suffolk countryside, The Star has open fires in the winter and a good selection of traditional bar games, the large garden has a boules pitch to enjoy in the summer.

The range of real ales and home cooking using local ingredients make The Star a popular choice with locals and visitors alike.

Come and visit us and see the doom at St. Peter's church or take a walk on one of the five commons of Wenhaston.

For those wishing to stay in the area, camping at The Star is available by prior arrangement.

We are open every day from 12 noon-3pm & 6-11pm  
Open all day on Sunday from noon – 11pm.

Food is served daily from 12.30-2.30 & 6.30-9.00pm

**The Star Inn  
Wenhaston  
Halesworth  
Suffolk  
IP19 9HF  
01502 478240  
[www.WENHASTONSTAR.CO.UK](http://www.WENHASTONSTAR.CO.UK)**

**TRAFFIC WATCH**

# Most vehicles stick to the 30mph limit

**Dunwich Road from 3pm July to 6pm August 10, apart from Latitude weekend, which has already been reported.**

Total vehicles 50,838 with just under 24,000 travelling between 25 and 30mph and a further 13,000 between 30 and 35mph. Including the 10,400 vehicles travelling at less than 25mph then 47,400 were at or only slightly above the legal speed, representing 93% of the total.

Of the remaining 3,700 vehicles, 2,892 were travelling 35 to 40 mph; 629 at 40 to 45; 123 at 45 to 50; 33 at 50 to 55; seven at 55 to 60; and two at 60 to 65.

Roughly 1,500 vehicles use the road every day of the week. There were two anomalies. In the first weekend in July, 1,805 vehicles passed through on the Saturday with 2,021 on the Sunday. In the first week of August when the road was closed, there were 703 vehicles on Tuesday 4; 381 on Thursday and 621 on Friday.

## **A12 from 6pm August 10 to 7pm September 6.**

Total vehicles 145,746 with just under 72,000 travelling between 25 and 30mph and a further 33,000 between 30 and 35mph. If you include the 24,500 vehicles travelling at less than 25mph then 129,500 were at or only slightly above the legal speed representing 89% of the total.

Of the remaining 16,000 vehicles, 9,873 vehicles were travelling at 35 to 40 mph; 3,770 at 40 to 45; 1,409 at 45 to 50; 781 at 50 to 55; 312 at 55 to 60; 114 at 60 to 65; 38 at 65 to 70; seven at 70 to 75; and one at between 80 and 85.

The daily volumes are roughly: Mondays to Thursdays 5,000 to 6,000; Fridays and Saturdays 6,000 to 7,000; and Sundays 4,500 to 5,000

**Roderick Orr-Ewing using statistics from the Parish Council's speed warning sign**

---

## Dance the night away with the RNLI



**The Southwold and Dunwich Fund Raisers' Branch is holding a dinner dance in St Felix School, Reydon, on October 31 from 7.00pm to midnight.**

**Four course meal with wine, live music, licenced bar and auction. Tickets £30 each from David Tytler, 01502 478521.**

# YOUR LOCAL LEGAL EXPERTS

Offering a full range of legal services.

**For you**

- Buying and selling your home
- Re-mortgages and transfers of equity
- Wills and powers of attorney
- Court of Protection
- Family and children matters
- Criminal matter
- Civil and personal injury claims
- Trusts and deceased estates
- Notarial services
- Care home fees
- Equity releases and lifetime mortgages
- NHS continuing healthcare

**For your business**

- Commercial property
- Employment matters
- Licensing
- Company formations
- Planning and regulatory



**Quality Solicitors  
Norton Peskett**

Direct lawyer contact

Same-day response

Clear Price Guarantee

Free First Advice

Saturday openings

Changing the way you see lawyers.

01502 533019  
Lowestoft  
01502 533 000

enquire@nortonpeskett.co.uk  
Beccles  
01502 718 700

www.qualitysolicitors.com/nortonpeskett  
Gorleston  
01493 652 204

Great Yarmouth  
01493 849 200

Halesworth  
01986 872 513



***\*Domestic and commercial***

***\* Rewires \*Extra sockets/lights***

***\* P.A.T. Testing***

***\*Inspection and testing***

**CALL FOR FREE ESTIMATE**

**24 HOUR CALL OUT**

**TEL/FAX: 01502 478473 MOBILE: 07884 477110 / 07717 176655**

**Email: MRWCFElectrical@hotmail.co.uk**



**NAPIT National Association of  
Professional Inspectors and Testers  
\*CITY AND GUILDS QUALIFIED**

# Writing really does take time

Back in 1992 a New York professor, editing the letters of William Morris, wrote to the Rev. Harry Edwards, vicar of Blythburgh, seeking information about a visit Morris made to Blythburgh in 1895. I provided some background on Thomas Oakes, then vicar of Blythburgh.

That was my first involvement with *The Battle for Blythburgh Church*, a 25-year long dispute between the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, founded by Morris, and a

the repair of an extremely dilapidated church, closed by the bishop as unsafe. Propping up a ruin was not on the agenda.

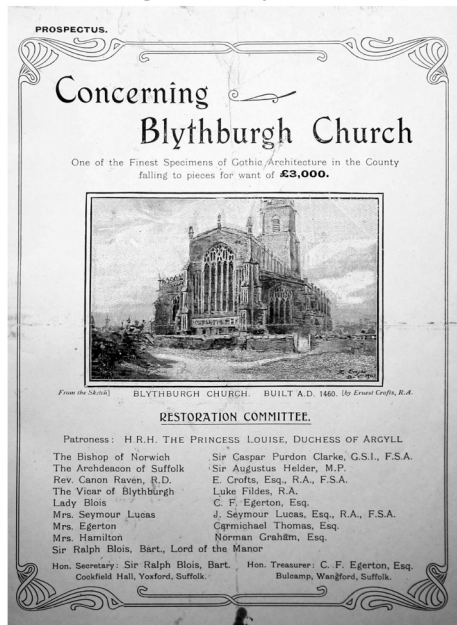
The SPAB has a very rich collection of Blythburgh documents. This is matched by material in the Ipswich record office: hundreds of letters, and numerous architects' reports, minute books, and accounts. The story is not just about architecture or institutions at war. People mattered and a view of the social relationships of the time emerges. "The vicar is hopeless. He is only a commercial traveller. The bishop appointed him by mistake," said the patron of one vicar.

A disingenuous comment, because the patron had failed to exercise his right to nominate a candidate for the living and the bishop made the appointment by default. That vicar attacked the patron in the local press: if the church had depended on him 'it must have become a heap of ruins!' There is much more. Of one architect chosen by the Blythburgh restoration committee to work on the church, a SPAB supporter (and member of the said committee) wrote 'It is a grievous pity that it ever got into the hands of such a man'.

I have just completed the draft for a book to be published by the Suffolk Records Society, covering the key years 1881-1906. The aim of the work is to make the documents accessible to a wider audience, especially historians for further study. So essentially all the surviving documents have been transcribed and explained with lots of footnotes. The book part is an introduction of over 20,000 words that puts the 'restoration' into the context of the history of Blythburgh and the church. All targeted for publication in 2017.

That will have taken 25 years! That's nothing. In 1808 a visitor to the church noted that the canopy of John Hopton's tomb was held up by crude brick pillars. "Whatever Hopton had been in his lifetime," wrote the visitor, "he is now a firm supporter of the church!" The brick supports were finally removed in the 1930s. In comparison my rate of progress has been supersonic!

**Alan Mackley**



succession of Blythburgh incumbents and restoration committees. It was Conservation versus Restoration.

To us 'restoration' suggests the sensitive repair of an old building. To the Victorians it meant something more radical: the return of a building to its original or assumed original state. This could sometimes mean, effectively, rebuilding. The SPAB was concerned that Blythburgh would be 'restored' with the irreparable loss of medieval fabric, the character of the building, and any hope that its history could be read by its study. In Blythburgh the need was obvious:

# The Little Plumbing Company

Domestic plumbing and heating

Gas and oil installations

Specialist in under floor heating

Central heating design and installation

Certificated in unvented mains

pressure hot water systems

Boiler servicing

Free estimates - Fully insured



Free consultation

Paul Sayer

[sayerpaul@btinternet.com](mailto:sayerpaul@btinternet.com)

07963 958772



## MANTINS SOLICITORS & NOTARIES

Providing you with the very highest quality client care and legal advice in the following areas:

Residential and Commercial Conveyancing

General Property Matters

Wills

Probate

Notarial Services

82 High Street, Southwold, Suffolk IP18 6DP

Tel: 01502 724750 Fax: 01502 797930

[enquiries@mantins.com](mailto:enquiries@mantins.com)

[www.mantins.co.uk](http://www.mantins.co.uk)



## The homecare service where peace of mind comes as standard.

Due to continuous success of Prestige Nursing + Care Norwich, we now have a branch in Halesworth, Thoroughfare. Please call in to meet our friendly branch team who would be happy to discuss a package tailored to your needs.

We offer a wide range of services to help support your care needs:

- Personal Care
- Nursing Care
- Home from Hospital
- Palliative Care
- Respite Care
- Specialist Care
- Support with daily living
- Companionship

For more information on any of our services please contact:

**01986 899075**

email [halesworth@prestige-nursing.co.uk](mailto:halesworth@prestige-nursing.co.uk)

**Prestige**  
**Nursing+Care**

[www.prestige-nursing.co.uk](http://www.prestige-nursing.co.uk)

**BLYTHBURGH RANT**

# Want a fine, then fly tip your rubbish

Get rid of that broken microwave. Or maybe there are some old blankets and broken children's toys to go. Why bother to put appropriate items in your own bin or take them to the nearest re-cycling point when you can enjoy the excitement of risking being caught and make Blythburgh's bottle and newspaper bank area look a complete mess.

If you dump the right sort of stuff, then rats running round the area could be part of your reward.

At the same time you can give someone else the job of clearing up your mess rather than making a small effort yourself. What fun.

In recent weeks the bottle bank area has had potentially dangerous small gas cartridges

dumped there – and not just one or two but several hundred. Plastic bags, cardboard boxes, old books, even tins, all the usual detritus any household generates have been dumped. And there was a microwave fairly recently. We'll probably get a refrigerator next.

Much of this can go in one of the three bins provided to each house by the council. But why act sensibly and responsibly – there's no excitement in that. Instead the bottle bank area is left in a state reminiscent of the scenes we saw during the winter of discontent. How lovely.

Please, don't fly tip. It's not in your own interests or anybody else's.

**Olive Forsythe**

**NEWS IN BRIEF**

## Defibrillator installed and ready for use

The East of England Co-op donated a defibrillator and housing to the Parish Council which is now installed and commissioned on the side of the Village Shop close to the information board. It was installed by the local company MRWCF at no cost to the village and the Parish Council would like to take this opportunity to thank Matt and William for this.

With the defibrillator now active the Parish Council needed a custodian for the unit and was delighted when Ursula Mackley, who has previously run the Blythburgh First Responders, agreed to take on the role and the council would like to take this opportunity to thank her for this.

Access to the defibrillator is controlled by the ambulance service. The instructions are shown on the front of the unit. Hopefully it will not be needed but if it is required then the village now has one available for use.

**The Coffee Morning** held at Rushes Point, Dunwich Road on 19 August raised £300 in aid of SUDEP (Sudden Death in Epilepsy) Action. Grateful thanks to Ros and John Blyth for providing the venue and to everyone else who donated, helped or came along and spent money. If you would like to find out about the work of SUDEP Action, please visit [www.sudep.org](http://www.sudep.org)

**POLICE REPORT.** There were 40 crimes connected with the Latitude Festival, mostly thefts and drug possession. There were no other recorded crimes in the parish during July. In August there was one malicious communication, one minor wound without intent and one common assault with no injury.

# Notes from Daisy Bank LXIX

If you don't like cats then perhaps you should read something else in the magazine.

When I was seven we had a Manx cat – the ones without a tail - whose life I made as miserable as possible. So even I didn't like cats then. When later my mother and father bought family grocers in Henley-on-Thames and we lived in accommodation over the top of the shop, we inherited a black and white cat called *Mickey*. I have an awful feeling that he got the same sort of treatment. In both cases the cats' stay with us was foreshortened, perhaps as a result of my indifference and near cruelty.

In my twenties I joined a cable repair ship having a refit in Hull and a tabby cat came on board while we were there. He or she spent the next couple of months travelling out with us to Fiji, via Greenwich, Plymouth, the Azores, Bermuda, Cocoa Beach in Florida, Bermuda again, Curacao, Panama and finally Tahiti. At each port the cat would get off the day we arrived and get back on just before we sailed. Amongst his or her favourite resting places on that voyage was my bunk. And when it came to the time that I had to say goodbye, I was a very unhappy cat lover and maybe the cat felt the same. All the crew left apart from me, being transferred to another ship which was returning to Hull. When they eventually got back evidently, the cat went down the gangplank and was never seen again. A trip to the other side of the world for free.

In the early seventies my mother died and in order to cheer my father up, I bought him a cat from a pet shop in Muswell Hill in North London. Until May of this year, I have not lived in a house without a cat in it. Having had ten Siamese between us over the years in between

many, many moggies, we decided that the only time we would get another Siamese was when the last of the moggies was no more. *Murphy*, our last Siamese died six years ago at the grand old age of 18. Two years ago *Alice* our black and white cat moved next door, blaming me for taking her to the vets and spending many hundreds of pounds on her treatment; she now walks by me in the garden and ignores me.

In early May our ginger cat *Molly* became unwell and after eleven years with us decided it was time to go to cat heaven. As with all the cats that we have lived with over the years, tears were shed and memories treasured.

Four weeks ago *Milo*, a Siamese Seal Point arrived from a rescue centre near Bury, aged nearly four, having been rejected from his owners in Peterborough because of a spraying problem: never have two male cats in the same house unless they are siblings.

We are both agreed that *Milo* must be the most loving and the most wonderful Siamese that we have ever had the honour to give a home to. I said to B that if he was zapped tomorrow it would have been worth it just for the pleasure of his company for that short period. However we hope that in the end he will outlive both of us and we then can die happy.

After my initial cruelty, I hope that all that cats that I have come across since that early black period in my life have been loved and cared for. If not, then I look forward to apologising to them and in particular *Mickey* and the Manx whose name escapes me. As it stands, I am not prepared to encompass heaven or hell without my cats being there with me. So there!

**Paul Bennett**

**A date for your diary:** The next meeting of Blythburgh with Bulcamp and Hinton Parish Council will be in the village hall on Tuesday November 17 at 7.30pm with the public forum starting at 7.15. Everybody is welcome. Please come.