

NOTES FROM DAISY BANK LXXXIII

Before we came to Blythburgh, we would often go for a drink in the Swan Hotel in Southwold. In my opinion in its revamped state, it has lost its old-world charm and succumbed to the Notting Hill Crowd coming up for a short break to, "Our little place in Southwold, darling".

Every Christmas, we would go into the main bar and sit in front of the fire, at the same time admiring and looking forward to a Victorian Christmas

picture that was brought out every year, just for the festive season. It was a sort of three-dimensional relief with appliqué work - accentuated with sparkle and what was possibly, the addition of semi-precious gemstones.



So we came up with the idea of doing our own and, have displayed it every Christmas. It's about three-foot square and fits nicely into the alcove next to the inglenook fireplace. Again, for many years I have painted my own Christmas card and fully intended to do the same this year. However, since I stopped painting three years ago, I've sort of lost the will or inclination to do another one. As a sort of stopgap between now, and when or if the muse returns, I've made this picture my card

for Christmas 2019. If you're not on my Christmas card list, then at least you get the idea.

Currently, we're having some internal building work done. For years I've thought that the house – which originally consisted of two cottages – had been extended at least twice over the years. About three years ago, we had separate shower installed in the bathroom upstairs. On the inner wall, the builders found overlapped wooden exterior cladding, over which somebody had fixed some colourful wallpaper.

In the last few days, the builders have again found the same thing on an inner wall further into the house. This confirms to me that this was the outside wall before they extended further to put a set of stairs in – a lot of

the original properties in this part of the world accessed the upper floor by ladder. Before the ivy covered the walls, and us, I found the date of 1811 carved into one of the bricks, adjacent to where the extension was made. And I suspect the lean-to single-storey kitchen was added in the early 1900s. And, when the inglenook fireplace was exposed some years ago, the builder found medieval bricks on the hearth. Who knows?

Paul Bennett

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Dec/Jan 2019-20



Fond farewell to the Prof

John Elliston Allen (1921 –2019)

John Allen, 'The Prof', died in October at the age of 98. He came to Blythburgh in 1979, and he and his wife Peggy were the first residents in new houses built in Angel Lane. John's connections with the area went back to the 1930s when "rich uncle George" owned a house at Southwold, later the retirement home of John's parents.

John was an Essex boy, born in Leytonstone, and he went to the local grammar school. He developed a very early interest in aeroplanes and model railways. He studied aeronautical engineering, and in 1941 got a first-class degree of London University. It was wartime and he was directed to the Royal Aircraft Establishment at Farnborough. In 1943 he switched to seaplanes with the Marine Aircraft Experimental Establishment, founded at Felixstowe, and evacuated in wartime to Helensburgh in Scotland. In this period, John learned to fly. In his experimental work he had over 500 flights without a scratch, but some very near misses.

In 1950, John was back at Farnborough, invited by an old boss to join the 'Blue Danube' project, developing Britain's first atomic bomb. John worked on the aerodynamics, dropping trial bombs over the Suffolk coast he already knew well. In 1954, he transferred to private industry, working for AVRO on 'Blue Steel', the air-launched guided nuclear bomb. From AVRO he went in 1963 to Hawker Siddeley at Kingston, working on the Harrier and Hawk, becoming Chief Future Projects Engineer in 1969. He retired from British Aerospace in 1983.

John's professional standing led to his membership of many industry bodies. He was a member of the British Interplanetary Society. He worked on everything from man-made islands to space travel. After retirement, he had many consultancies, working especially with Lotus and Volvo on cars of the future. His own Lotus Elite was well-known in this area. Academia beckoned with visiting professorships at Cranfield and Kingston; he had turned down a chair at Glasgow in 1977 to stay in industry. He published many books and articles, translated into numerous languages, including works for children. He helped with BBC TV, ITV and radio programmes (and we presented over 50 community radio programmes together). Although John embraced word-processing and was a skilled user of Powerpoint, he generally stayed away from emails and the web. He expressed concern about work being interrupted by a deluge of messages, and having his work plagiarized, but thereby he denied himself the advantages of on-line communication and research.

John aged 8 with his Bassett-Lowke 0 gauge model of the LNWR George the V class 4-4-0



Before his retirement, John's wife Peggy was the better known in the village. They had met when Peggy nursed him in 1948 after his appendix was removed. She died in 1987. In recent years, John was understandably less active in village affairs but for 30 years he was a creative force in the community; he was instrumental in forming the Blythburgh Society in 1989 for example.

During his career John worked on 102 different aircraft at the design stage or in production. He was in the Home Guard – not quite a Private Pike! His papers and model aeroplanes are now in the Science Museum collection, and his reminiscences in the sound archive of the Imperial War Museum. He was never short of ideas. Too many in a way, because his memoirs were

always being added to and revised, but regrettably were never ready for publication. A stimulating villager and excellent neighbour, John Allen was a one-off. His sons David and Peter survive him. **Alan Mackley**

What's on			
Date	Event	Venue	Time
1 st December	Advent Carols with the Blythburgh Singers	Church	6pm
19 th December	Carol Singing	Wolsey House Chapel Lane	5.45pm
22 nd December	Service of Lessons and Carols with the Blythburgh Singers	Church	4pm
8 th February	Owen Williams Memorial Quiz <i>Teams of 4, £10pp, supper included Contact Ro 07886465552</i>	Village Hall	7.30pm
Regular Events			
Every Monday	Choir group with Ashleigh	Village Hall	7.00
Every Tuesday	Line Dancing	Village Hall	7.30pm
Every Thursday	Tours of the Village Church	Holy Trinity Church	11.00am
First Friday of the month	Film Club	Village Hall	7.30pm
1 st Thurs of the month	Blyth Belles	Check with blythbelles@gmail.com	7.30pm
2 nd Wed of the month, bimonthly	Parish Council Meetings	Village Hall	7.15pm

If you'd like to receive news by email of upcoming events and social occasions in the village, the best thing to do is to sign up for blythburghmatters@gmail.com, our local info hub.

To put your name on the email list, email Debbie Telkman at blythburghmatters@gmail.com.

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SOLICITORS & NOTARIES



Blythburgh's Christmas Market 30th November 2019

Wild Watch

Blythburgh's most valuable natural habitat is invisible twice a day. As the tide ebbs and the waters retreat back to the North Sea, they reveal a cold buffet that extends three and a half kilometres downstream from the village.

Mud doesn't appeal to most humans, especially estuary mud which is fairly



odoriferous. It is, however, full of worms, crustaceans and molluscs of many different sizes and species: a vital food source to wading birds, especially those which visit us as they criss-cross the globe between their breeding and wintering grounds.

Waders come in a range of sizes, from the Eurasian curlew to the smaller varieties known collectively as stints. While they all have disproportionately long legs, one characteristic that distinguishes the species is the length and shape of the bill. The curlew's is long and down-curved, the avocet's is upcurved, and the bills of redshanks and most of the smaller waders are straight.

The length and shape of the bill is a good indication of feeding habits. Curlews probe deep after small crabs and worms, avocets skim from side-to-side for prey suspended in liquid mud,

and the smaller waders pick tiny organisms nearer the surface.

A typical stint, such as a sandling or dunlin, is about the size of a starling and of similar weight – around 40 or 50 grams. Their breeding grounds range from northern Britain and Scandinavia to above the Arctic Circle as far as Greenland or Russia. Summers are spent on the West African coast, or even further south.

All this travelling requires a lot of muscle-power and that comes from high-energy food, particularly that found in marine organisms. It is important that birds' refuelling stops are reliable and well provisioned. For waders, these are the intertidal muddy shores of rivers, estuaries and beaches. In preparing for these seasonal migrations, a wader may double its weight, putting on useable fat reserves to fuel its flight muscles. They can also shrink their internal organs to make room for extra fat.

World-wide, many wader feeding grounds have disappeared under land reclamation and port development or

dredged out to widen navigation channels for shipping. Areas of regular intertidal mud, such as along the River Blyth Estuary, play a vital role in enabling these long-distance travellers to reach their destinations. It may be nasty, smelly mud to us, but for waders it's a veritable smörgåsbord.

Paul Lacey



Dunlin and ringed plover



Christmas church cheer

The festive season in Blythburgh begins with a **Service of Advent Carols with the Blythburgh Singers on Sunday 1 December at 6pm.**

In a change of schedule, there will be a **Book of Common Prayer Communion at 9.30am on Sunday 15 December.** This would normally be lay-led, but we have made the change because there is no morning communion the following week (see below).

On **Thursday 19 December from 6pm** we will be **carol singing** around the houses of the village. Please join us at Wolsey House, Chapel Lane at 5.45pm before we head out. Bring a torch!

There's no service on the morning of **Sunday 22 December** at Holy Trinity to make room for our ever-popular, candle-lit **Service of Lessons and Carols with the Blythburgh Singers at 4pm** that evening.

On **Christmas Eve** there will be a family-friendly **Crib Service at 5pm** and then **Midnight Communion at 11.30 pm.**

On **Christmas Day at 10am**, there will be a (non-communion) service to celebrate the day.

This year's road load

As we approach the end of 2019, here's a snapshot of the volume of traffic passing through Blythburgh across the year. Unsurprisingly, the busiest month is August and the quietest month is December.

We're able to monitor the traffic on the northbound A12 (direction Lowestoft), the southbound A12, and the Dunwich Road northbound (direction A12).

The daily, average, total number of vehicles for all three routes in August is **14,109** and **9,421** in December.

To break this down, daytime traffic (7.00-19.00) across the whole year looks roughly like this:

Northbound Dunwich Road – **1,167**

Northbound A12 – **4,741**

Southbound A12 – **6,074**

Total annual volume of vehicle movements are quite something:

Dunwich Rd Northbound – **426,133**

A12 Northbound – **1.73 million**

A12 Southbound – **2.52 million**

That's a grand total of almost **4.4 million.**

Hold your breath . . .

If the average CO² emissions from each vehicle are 140gms/km (a conservative estimate), then roughly **600 tonnes** of CO² has been emitted within the village each year.

Roderick Orr-Ewing



Trials, Tribulations & Community Spirit

By the time Martha Burrows (Born and raised in Blythburgh) left for Romania in July 2019 she had already been through a rigorous selection process and raised £1500 towards the cost of spending two weeks volunteering and running a summer school in Godinestii. Imagine though how the group of ten



like-minded Girl Guides felt when they started the check-in process for their out bound flight and discovered they were booked to Bucharest rather than Bacău. Momentary panic ensued, and more than a few questions along the lines of “How Can This Have Happened?” But guides don’t panic for long, and after a few (fairly frantic) phone calls our intrepid group boarded the flight and, when they reached Bucharest, simply squeezed onto an already crowded public coach to begin the eight-hour ride to Bacău.

They were greeted on arrival in Bacău and enjoyed a short R&R break before Martha’s group travelled on to Godinestii, a small farming community about 90 minutes’ drive away. The few houses were small but charming with

white walls and red roofs. There were two shops, very few cars, paved tracks instead of roads and a van that sold watermelons. That said, Martha was struck by the really strong sense of community and how everyone looked out for everyone else.

The Guides lodged at the kindergarten where the summer school took place. While they were setting things up, the Guides shared their Macarena skills and in turn were taught traditional Romanian dancing: a lot of fun and it certainly broke the ice.

The summer school officially catered for ages five to 15 but this was stretched at both ends by enthusiastic siblings. Imagine the challenge Martha faced in devising an English & Personal Development programme that worked for everyone. Her ingenious solution involved making aspiration bunting – names, ages, what they wanted to do – and using it to decorate the main stage where everyone would come together on the final day. The little ones drew pictures, the older ones used words and given the language barriers quickly discovered the joy of communicating without many shared words.

We leave Martha and her group “squished” in the back of a horse and cart as they are taken to explore the village environs: a field of sunflowers, lush green meadows and quite steep hills. . . in fact, so steep that the horse refused the final slope until the girls got out of the cart and walked!

Sonia Boggis

We will conclude the story of Martha’s trip to Romania in the next edition of Blythburgh Focus.

The Lady’s Well: History or Mystery?

The East Anglian Daily Times described it as “Weird Suffolk: A secret well where kings fought, blood was spilled, travellers took shelter and some believe spirits lurk.” ‘The paper’s photographer called it, “The most unsettling place I’ve been to”. It’s the “Lady’s Well”, or Tramp’s or Traveller’s Rest, an arched structure of brick and stone, supporting two seats, set in the bank at the side of the A145 Beccles road, near to the Halesworth turning. Can we separate history from mystery?



The lady could be Charlotte, first Countess of Stradbroke (she died in 1856), who had a fountain placed at the spot for weary travellers, not least the tramps heading for a night's rest at Bulcamp workhouse. An 1833 poem "Lady's Fountain" by Agnes Strickland may have been inspired by it.

Moving into murkier territory, the now dry spring is believed by some to have miraculously appeared at the site of the battle in 654 against the Mercian Penda that led to the deaths of King Anna and his son Firminus. There is a reference to the battle in an early history of Ely, but nothing has ever been found to locate the battle site. However, it is tempting to relate that fatal encounter to the 'Staffordshire Hoard' a remarkable collection including broken-up gold and silver militaria of just the right date, found in 2009 in Penda territory.

Some say a structure has been at the site since 1280, with the well held as sacred during Roman Catholic times. Certainly, Blythburgh was a place of pilgrimage to the relics of Anna and his son until the 12th century, but probably at the priory.

What can we make of tradition? There is a book called *The Invention of Tradition*, edited by the historian Eric Hobsbawm. I subscribe to his conclusions but that leaves open a search for the earliest documentary reference to the Lady's Well. Can anyone take it back beyond the 19th century?

Alan Mackley



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Blyth Belles
Sarah Wickham blythbelles@gmail.com

A message for all newcomers to Blythburgh: if you have come to the village in the last three years and not received a welcome pack please contact Roderick Orr-Ewing on roderick@millend6.plus.com

New Blythburgh choir on song

Our new choir started up in the Village Hall in November. It was pouring with rain and would have been so easy to stay in the warm and watch television, but I am so glad that I grabbed my umbrella and braved the elements. Once I got there all thoughts of the weather were banished.

Singing is so uplifting, and I'm told that everyone can sing, even if you think you can't! Ashleigh is an excellent teacher and there's no pressure. You don't need to be able to read music – I certainly can't! Just follow Ashleigh's lead and you'll be surprised what's possible. By the end of the night our small group were doing a passable job of a three-part harmony!

For the experts among you the singing is 'a cappella' – that's voice only, no music. It uses rhythm-based rock, indie, country rock and folk based gospel, jazz and musical theatre. You don't need to be familiar with any of the songs – I wasn't, and it certainly didn't stop me singing. Everything is taught by ear.

So come along and get those endorphins going. Singing is known for its feel-good factor. The evening was lots of fun and it's certainly not too late to join.

The choir will meet in Blythburgh Village Hall each Monday evening from 7pm to 9pm. It's open to adults aged 16+ living in Blythburgh and the surrounding area. The first session is free and after that it's £2.00 per session.

If you'd like more info contact Ashleigh at ashleighkillen64@gmail.com. Or just come along.

Colin Huggins

Oh yes we will Go to the panto again!

Thanks to the Blythburgh Latitude Trust, tickets have been booked for our annual trip to the pantomime at the Theatre Royal Norwich on **Saturday 4 January at 2.30pm**. This year's pantomime is *Cinderella*. As usual, the coach will pick everyone up at the bus stop on the northbound A12 at 11.30am, and we should be back in Blythburgh around 6.30pm. The start time should allow us to get to Norwich in time to have a bite to eat before the show and even hit the sales!

This trip is open to everyone who is resident in the parish of Blythburgh with Bulcamp and Hinton, but places are limited. At the time of going to press there are still tickets available. Deadline for applications is Friday 6 December.

Please apply in writing to Jenny Allen (Wolsey House, Chapel Road) or by e-mail (jennyanddick@aol.com) with your name and address; the number of places requested; and a contact telephone number. Please also state if any children are aged under 3 and would be sharing a seat with an adult. Please assume that you have got places if Jenny does not contact you.

Books for Christmas with local connections

Either the authors or their subjects are linked to our part of the world

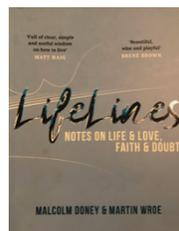
ADULT NON-FICTION

Simon Barnes – *On the Marsh: A year surrounded by wildness and wet*, Simon & Schuster

Barnes (who used to live in Sibton) tells the story of a year spent tending eight acres of wild land that back onto his new Norfolk Broads house, alongside his son Eddie who has Down's syndrome.

Malcolm Doney and Martin Wroe – *Lifelines: Notes on life & love, faith & doubt*, Unbound

Life is beautiful and baffling, so where do we find inspiration for living a good life? Drawing on lifelines thrown down by poets, thinkers and dreamers, the sceptical and the faithful, Blythburgh's own Malcolm Doney and his co-author suggest that how we live might be more important than what we believe.



Julia Blackburn - *Time Song: Searching for Doggerland*, Jonathan Cape

Julia Blackburn wants to understand about a country now called Doggerland, a huge, fertile area that once connected the entire east coast of England with mainland Europe. She mixes fragments from her own life with a series of 'songs' and stories about the places and the people she meets in her quest.

Juliet Blaxland – *The Easternmost House*, Sandstone Press

Juliet Blaxland lives at Eastern Bavants, next to Southwold, on the edge of a crumbling cliff. The book describes a year in the life at the easternmost edge of England. It is a meditation on nature, coastal erosion, and the changing seasons.

Richard Hawking – *At the Field's Edge: Adrian Bell and the English Countryside*, Robert Hale

Bell wrote about Suffolk farming and rural life from the 1920s until his death in 1980. Here, Hawking appraises Bell's observations about the ecology, economy and culture of the British countryside, and introduces his beautifully crafted prose to a new generation of readers.

ADULT FICTION

Robert MacFarlane & Stanley Donwood – *Ness*, Penguin

Somewhere on salt-and-shingle island, inside a ruined concrete structure known as The Green Chapel, a figure called the Armourer is leading a ritual with terrible intent . . .



Lucy Hughes-Hallett – *Fabulous, Fourth Estate*

A collection of stories is set in modern Britain. Their characters include a people-trafficking gang-master and a prostitute, a migrant worker and a cocksure estate agent, an elderly musician doubly befuddled by dementia and the death of his wife. All of their stories, though, are inspired by ones drawn from Graeco-Roman myth, from the Bible or from folk-lore.

CHILDREN'S



Francesca Armour-Chelou – *The Butterfly Circus*, Walker Books

Sisters Tansy and Belle are trapeze artists. One night, Tansy attempts a spectacular jump and falls. Now terrified of heights, all Tansy can do is watch from below while Belle shines above. But then Belle mysteriously vanishes . . .

Fiona Denny – *Alkazir's Quest*, CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform

Alkazir is in disgrace. He's been banished from Kazak until he can prove that he's worthy of the name 'wizard'. While in exile, he meets a pixie called Pippin and a cloud-eating dragon called Theo, and they travel beyond the Kazak mists into the unknown . . .

Sophie Green – *Potkin and Stubbs*, Piccadilly Press

Aspiring investigative journalist Lil Potkin meets a sad-looking boy (Stubbs) sitting by himself in the bus station. He doesn't want to admit to being a ghost, but explains that he needs Lil's help to find out what happened to him after he disappeared from his orphanage . . .



Catherine Pearson – *Sole Bay Railway*, CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform

Alex and Sam Green discover a railway adventure when an old steam engine magically transports them back in time to 1929, and to the seaside town of Sole Bay. Can Alex and Sam save the lighthouse and those in danger on the sea at Sole Bay?

We are grateful to Abbie and her staff at the Halesworth Bookshop, for their help in putting this feature together. All these titles are available from there. Contact: 01986 873 840 or halesworthbookshop@gmail.com.