

# BLYTHBURGH

## FOCUS

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September/ October 2016



## Council aims to save Methodist Chapel

The Parish Council objected at its September meeting to the application to demolish the chapel in Dunwich Road and replace it with a pair of semi-detached houses and reiterated its view that the chapel should be preserved. The registration of the chapel as a non-designated heritage asset has been sought.

The Suffolk Preservation Society has also objected to the demolition of the chapel and argued for the building to be recognised as a designated heritage asset.

The chapel was built in 1837 and later enlarged. The simple red-brick building is of architectural interest as a rare survivor of a type characteristic of the relatively poor Primitive Methodist movement. The movement was especially attractive to farm labourers and there were large congregations in Blythburgh. The chapel was of great social significance locally for over 100 years. Attendance was significantly greater than at the parish church (e.g. in 1851, 167 in the afternoon compared with 60 in the church).

While the chapel thrived, Holy Trinity, as one visitor put it, 'mouldered into ruin'. The church was closed as unsafe in 1881, to reopen in 1884. It is ironic that the church is now Grade I listed and revered as 'the cathedral of the marshes' while the once dominant chapel is threatened with demolition.

The chapel is a landmark in Dunwich Road by virtue of its design, age, and position and is close to the grade 2 listed Hawthorn farmhouse.



The council recognized that the survival of the chapel depends upon a new use being found for it. This could be conversion for residential use, with the retention of the appearance of the elevations facing Dunwich Road.

The council also objected to the proposed houses. The site was very cramped and the houses very close to the highway. Vehicles would inevitably stop outside them in a very dangerous location. The designs would be better reversed with entrances to Amberley Close. It was agreed to write to the owner of the chapel to see if a way could

be found to preserve the building.

The council also considered an application to convert a Hawthorn farm barn into a residence and build a new four-bedroomed house behind Hawthorn farmhouse. The council had no objection in principle to the barn conversion but objected to the new house and the proposed extension of the barn eastwards. Although within the village envelope, the proposal constituted a serious breach of the established rear building line of Angel Lane and Dunwich Road. The intrusion by highly visible buildings into the Area Of Natural Beauty and river valley of high scenic importance was unacceptable.

The transfer southwards of the entrance to the site was an improvement although it would then be exactly opposite the proposed chapel development and its traffic implications.

**Sonia Boggis** was voted on to the council as a co-opted member.

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## Home thoughts from a broad...



### **TRAFFIC WATCH**

**A12 Northbound:** July 4 to August 8. (This includes the Latitude weekend, details of which were published in the July *Focus*.) Of the total 193,357 vehicles, 98,080 were travelling between 25mph and 30mph with a further 44,119 between 30mph and 35mph. Including the 32,129 vehicles travelling at less than 25mph then 142,199 were at or only slightly above the legal speed. This represents 90% of the total, two points better than the last time.

Of the remaining 19,000 vehicles, 12,002 (6%) were travelling between 35mph to 40 mph; 4,197 (2%) 40mph-45mph; 1,625 (less than 1%) 45mph-50mph; 755, 50mph-55mph; 296, 55mph-60mph; 105, 60mph-65mph. A small number of vehicles travelled at higher speeds but nobody exceeded 75mph. These figures are broadly similar to previous monitoring periods but show a slight improvement in observing the speed limit.

**Dunwich Road Northbound:** August 9 to September 10. Of the total 51,489 vehicles, 24,633 were travelling between 25mph and 30mph with a further 12,850 between 30mph and 35mph. Including the 10,426 vehicles travelling at less than 25mph then 47,909 were at or only slightly above the legal speed, 93% of the total which is a significant improvement on last time the Dunwich Road was monitored (87%). Of the other 3,580 vehicles (7%) 2,939 (6%) were travelling between 35mph and 40 mph; 520 (1%) 40mph- 45mph; 92 (less than 1%) 45mph-50mph; 22, 50mph-55mph; 2 at 55mph-60 mph; and 1 60-65mph.

**Roderick Orr-Ewing**



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# Oh yes we will go to the panto again! Oh yes we will ...



*Ben Langley and Richard Gauntlett in Jack and the Beanstalk*

Thanks to the Blythburgh Latitude Trust tickets have been booked for a performance of *Jack and the Beanstalk*, this year's pantomime at the Theatre Royal Norwich, on Saturday 7 January at 2.30pm.

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 so please book early. Deadline for applications is Friday 2 December.

Please apply to Jenny Allen by e-mail [jennyanddick@aol.com](mailto:jennyanddick@aol.com) or in writing to Wolsey House, Chapel Road, 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.

## **YOUR PARISH COUNCILLORS**

**Chair: David Tytler**  
01502 478521

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

**Planning advisory group: Cliff Waller and Sonia Boggis**  
**Chair finance advisory group**

**Roderick Orr-Ewing**  
**Finance advisory group**  
**Jeff Sutton and Jim Boggis**  
**Councillor**  
**Jo Waller**

**Clerk: Jim Boggis 01502 478687**

## **BLYTHBURGH ASSOCIATIONS**

**Blythburgh Latitude Trust**  
**Jim Boggis 01502 478687**

**Village Hall**  
**Olive Forsythe 01502 478521**

**Horticultural Society**  
**Jenny Allen 01502 478314**

**Blythburgh Matters**  
**Ro Williams 01502 478484**

**Blyth Belles**  
**Sarah Wickham 070810632987**

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## BLYTHBURGH REFLECTIONS

# Of music and a monkey puzzle tree...

The garden and stunning views of the Blyth estuary clinched the deal; Rona and Eric moved in, along with their fledgling monkey puzzle tree, in 1985.

Rona Thompson (nee Jacques) was born in Lowestoft in 1929. Her father was a professional musician; he wrote music, played the violin and conducted the score of many silent films including *Ramona* and *The Prisoner of Zenda* for which Rona and her sister, Zena, were named.

In 1940 Rona was evacuated to Derbyshire. Just one local teacher accompanied them and initially the older children spent their time teaching the really tiny ones to read. Eventually they were transferred to a local school but it didn't really work from an educational point of view although Rona remembers the teacher brought them stamps and writing pads so they could write home.

After returning home to Lowestoft, Rona had no further education until some schools reopened but even then the older ones spent more time washing and cleaning the cookery room than learning to cook – a reason Rona cites for her inability to cook!

At 13 years old, Rona was going to school and working part time on a cash desk. Her days were long: school between 8:30am and 11am, lunch at home with her mum and back to school until 1:30pm. Rona then cycled to work in a butchers shop between 3pm and 5pm.

Rona went on to work as a wages clerk and

supervisor at T.V. Manufacturing (later re-named Pye) with responsibility for the wages of more than 2,000 employees, all paid in cash in little brown envelopes.

Rona loved dancing (she has a full set of ballroom dancing medals) and met her wonderful husband, Eric, at the Floral Hall (now the Ocean Rooms) in Gorleston. Eric had just come out of the merchant navy and, despite his two left feet, asked her to dance.

Rona had a boyfriend at the time but he was playing in the band and Eric saw this as his

opportunity to “take her away”... he succeeded and they celebrated their Golden Wedding in 2015. Rona has always been keen on keep fit and, in her 30s, was invited to join a dance skipping group in Norwich – the Norfolk Skipping Team.

The group of 14 trained and performed together for many years travelling all over the country and they still meet twice a year to remember old times. One highlight was winning a national competition for the best class using apparatus and being

invited to perform at the Royal Albert Hall for America Day; Rona still has the red, white and blue leotard she wore for this thrilling experience. Rona was 75 years young when she made her final public performance in St Ives.

As I walked out of Rona and Eric's driveway I glanced over at the monkey puzzle tree; it is still going strong and I marvel that it started its life as a seed they gathered and planted.

**Words: Sonia Boggis**  
**Illustration: Spike Gerrell**



**Football School:** Where Football Explains the World launched on 16th September with an extensive review in *The Guardian*. With illustrations by Spike Gerrell, this is an educational book with a difference. In Geography we learn why Brazil are Top Footballing Nation; In Psychology how to take the perfect penalty.

## **New £10,000 kitchen now open for use**



**The new village hall kitchen is now complete and ready for use. An integrated refrigerator is on order. The full £10,000 cost was met by grants from the Big Lottery, Suffolk County Council, the Adnams' Charity and Suffolk Coastal District Council. The work was carried out by Chipentree Ltd, Wenhaston. To book the hall, please ring Olive Forsythe on 01502 478521.**

# Remembering 500 years ago

Standing in the footsteps of a congregation whose hymns fell silent almost half a century ago, church-goers attend an open-air service in the ruins of Blythburgh's 12th-century priory. This magical scene, in the glades of the Suffolk countryside, marked the start of the annual *Celebrating Blythburgh*.

A celebration - which began in 2011 thanks to previous owners of the Augustinian priory, Nick and Susan Haward - it is seen as a unifying event for a community divided by the A12 road.

It is also an opportunity to promote the abundance of history and nature normally hidden from public view in the garden of a privately-owned house in Blythburgh.

It is an event set to continue according to the priory's new owners Matthew and Chiara Saunders, who are keen to learn more of the medieval site's past.

Mr Saunders, 50, originally from Lowestoft, explained: "We want to continue everything that is here today. We want to make sure the priory remains open to both



villagers and non-villagers to meet and learn more about the history and nature of the area.

"It's just a bit special in the story of the village and we really want to delve further into the history of the priory as there are many parts which are yet to be surveyed, particularly the medieval chapel, which we are keen to look into with the help of English Heritage."

The Saunders' five-bedroom property was constructed 200 years after the Augustine monastery, located in the



# go as Blythburgh celebrates



property's gardens, closed in 1537 during Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries. In 2008, an investigation by Channel 4's Time Team unravelled some of the mysteries of the ancient site. Through the discovery of human remains, council surveys confirmed the existence of a mid-7th century church on the grounds.

The main house was reworked by the artist John Seymour Lucas in the 19th century and has a self-contained annex known as the Little Priory – once a chapel with

14th century foundations, adding to the jigsaw puzzle of historical layers making up the property. In 2005, the Grade II listed building was purchased and restored by Nick and Susan Haward, who received two English Heritage grants and discovered a skeleton two years later in the foundation trench of a planned kitchen extension.

Chiara Saunders, 52, added: "We moved into the property just after Easter this year. The last few months have been lovely if a bit chaotic when we first moved in but the villagers have been very welcoming and warm. It has been lovely to carry on the tradition and the house certainly lends itself to an event like this."

Following the service led by the Rev Malcolm Doney there was live music, refreshments and a barbecue in the priory garden. There were also guided tours of the ruins by local historian Alan Mackley and free river boat trips run by Natural England.

**Picture by Colin Huggins**

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The trustees are Jenny Allen, chair, Mick Nichols, Jeff Sutton, David Tytler and Harry Waller.

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## NEWS FROM HOLY TRINITY

## A new guide now available in the church

A new, updated and redesigned, Blythburgh Church Guidebook has now been produced. It has been revised and edited by Meryl and Malcolm Doney, with additional expertise from Jenny Allen, Alan Mackley, Mary Montague and Sue Powell. A bargain at £4.00 from the bookstall in the church.

**New vicar:** The newly appointed Team Vicar for the Sole Bay Team, the Rev. Alan Perry (a former headteacher from Romford), will be inducted by the Bishop of Dunwich at 7.30pm on Friday 14 October at St Peter & St Paul, Wangford.

**William Alwyn Festival:** Local composer the late William Alwyn (he used to live in Dunwich Road, Blythburgh) is celebrated in his own festival which runs from 5-9 October. Performances take place in a variety of nearby venues, including Holy Trinity, Blythburgh. Details of concerts and tickets are available from [www.williamalwyn.co.uk/festival](http://www.williamalwyn.co.uk/festival). Leaflets also available in the church.

**Coffee time:** The mornings of Saturday 30 September and 28 October see Blythburgh's monthly café and minimarket in the church from 10.30-12.00.

**Early for Christmas:** Yes, summer is barely departed and autumn is hardly upon us, but here's a reminder that on Saturday 26 November, Holy Trinity will be hosting the hugely popular Blythburgh Christmas market. Get your shopping boots on!

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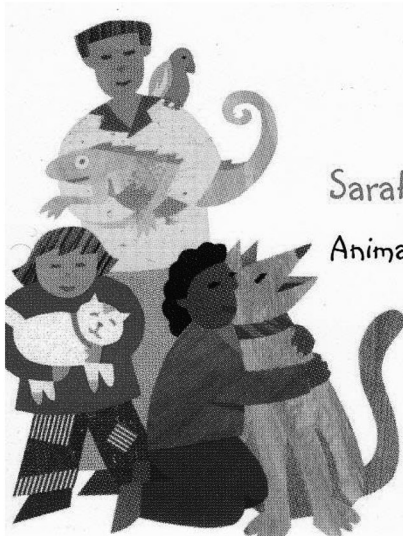
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# Notes from Daisy Bank LXXV

Since I became a gardener and stopped being a painter, the only thing that I miss is music. Perhaps if there was a full orchestra playing at the bottom of the garden or a group called '1975', which I have just stumbled on, then that would be the best of both worlds. If I win the lottery big time, I could even have both of them playing on alternate days. But then, maybe my neighbours wouldn't see it in quite the same way as I do. Perhaps when the ghastly winter arrives I will revert to painting if for nothing more than to listen to music.

I went to a rose lecture the other day courtesy of Sue next door and it was a revelation. My idea when I started on the 'rose trail' was, with the addition of several flowering shrubs, eventually to make the garden maintenance free. After the lecture and with the added and valued advice of Andre, the Romanian gardener and the great Monty Don, I've had to have a rethink on all that. Roses have to be mulched, sprayed, fed, watered, dead headed, weeded and generally more than a little loved. Multiply that by the 114 varieties in this garden and then one realises that maintenance free is a bit of a misnomer!

I have inherited a small spade from my mother, the consummate gardener. Both Andre and Paul C have been impressed by its strength and suitability for small digging jobs. Made by Wilkinson of sword and razor fame, it must be 60 years old and, besides its sentimental value to me, is irreplaceable. Andre has tried on line and everywhere to get something similar but has now given up. It was made when things were made to last; I can't tell you how many spades I have broken in the last 30 years. Like my recently purchased Hornby O gauge clockwork engine, it is a thing of beauty.



The train set was an ebay whim and beside the engine I have several rails and points and rolling stock. Perhaps when the gallery runs out of pictures, I can set it up in a more permanent way and completely revert to childhood. I'll be dribbling by that time so it will be wholly appropriate to my new life style of decadence and decay.

I remember undoing the pillow case at the end of my bed on Christmas Morning all those years ago and realising that the brand new train set was probably the best present I had ever been given or was ever likely to be given. Over the years it disappeared and with a younger brother some 11 years my junior, it may well have finally ended up with him and then the ubiquitous dustbin.

Even then things were not valued as much as they should have been. When I look at the engine now, I can see the amount of workmanship that has gone into its making and like the spade, with care, it was meant to last and, in this case and not in my jurisdiction, it did.

Anyway, now that my party is in political disarray courtesy of leaving the EU and Donald Trump is heading for the White House, the world appears to be disappearing down the toilet. A world where long lasting spades and toy engines will have no place. And come to that, nor will I!

**Paul Bennett**

**The Parish Council is seeking someone to clean the bus shelters weekly. Do you have an hour a week to spare? Do you care about the village? If so then here is your opportunity to earn £10 per week and improve the look of the village.**

**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 15 at 7.30pm with the public forum at 7.15. Everybody is welcome to have their say.