

BLYTHBURGH

FOCUS

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Issue No 51

<http://blythburgh.onesuffolk.net>

June/July 2020

Blythburgh stands together



The last edition of Blythburgh Focus came out just as we were about to be shut in. As we publish this online edition, in the first week of June, restrictions are easing, but we're still understandably on a tight rein.

Blythburgh is a very social village, and the lockdown has hit us hard. On the other hand, we have the great advantage of wide open spaces and spectacular landscape. In my experience, most of us – unlike some 'special' advisers we could name – have been pretty fastidious in the observance of guidance on distancing and travel.

This has meant some nimble choreography for people exercising or walking their dogs around the village. Trying to observe two metres distancing on the river paths, for instance, has sometimes meant an undignified stumble into the squelch of the marsh. There's been much gesturing, and, "After you, Claude". And, of course, dogs haven't read the NHS guidance at all.

Zoom with a view



But technology has come to our aid. Few of us had heard of Zoom before the virus struck, but now it's become second nature for many of us. Not to be stopped from our instincts to integrate, the village has seen in the last couple of months, Zoom quizzes, Zoom Friday night drinks, Zoom discos, Zoom church services (including that new British tradition, Zoom after-church coffee).

One of the bonuses of Zoom (for those of us who are nosy) is the chance to peer into other people's homes. (So that's where they keep the ironing board; look at the size of their drinks cabinet; wonder where they got that picture; mmmm, interesting wallpaper!)

But the underlying, and also overwhelming, feature of this lockdown, has been that we've all looked out for one another, and people's willingness to go the extra mile. For medical reasons, I'm shielding, which means I'm not meant to shop. And as you'll know (certainly at the beginning of lockdown), it was hard to get a supermarket delivery when you needed.

But we've been cheered that friends and neighbours are happy to add our odd requests to their weekly shopping, to pick things up when we can't – all without question or resentment. When you feel – to all intents and purposes – happy, healthy and spry, it makes you feel a bit of a parasite. But there's been no judgement, no questioning, just a cheerful willingness to help.

Volunteer army

This was visibly demonstrated when leaflets advertising the Village helpline were distributed to residents on 14 March. The most immediate response was not *for* help but *to* help. Immediately, 30 people volunteered to man the phone and answer people's needs. Val Carse – the amazing brain, muscle and heart behind the scheme – drew up a rota that went live on 18th March, five days before the lockdown. The guidance from the government regarding vulnerable individuals and self-isolation reduced the number of volunteers to 23.

We were able to liaise with the dispensary at the Sole Bay Health Centre, first to have delivered, and then to collect prescription medications for Blythburgh every week. This service has been well used: between six and ten prescriptions being distributed each week. A similar service was offered to the pharmacy at Cutler's Hill surgery, which was declined, and there have been four or five requests to pick up medicines from there.

A week after going live, it was decided not to pass the helpline telephone between volunteers to minimise the need for volunteers to meet and/or disinfect the handset. Val kept the handset and contacted volunteers as required according to the rota.

Over the eight weeks that the service has been available, there have been few calls to the helpline telephone number, most have come through to Val's personal number or email. There have been four calls from the District Council requesting help for individuals, the vast majority with shopping, and one request to make welfare calls to an elderly, vulnerable resident. There have been some 20 requests for shopping, many of which Val added to her personal deliveries.

Villagers of the year

You may have seen, in the last edition of Blythburgh Focus, that there were nomination forms for the annual award of Villager of the Year. This year, the most nominations went, collectively, to the volunteers who stepped forward to help their neighbours. This is a very welcome tribute, and fits the mood of warm-hearted generosity that, in my experience, is the mark of this remarkable village community. There are too many names to list here. But you know who you are. Congratulations.

Alongside these volunteers, I know of several other, unsung, individuals who – off their own backs – have rallied round to help out. Not to mention the band of makers who enthusiastically volunteered to make masks for the village, and crew making our verges grow beautiful, and the constantly changing menu at for tasty takeaway service offered by Marie and Lee at the White Hart.

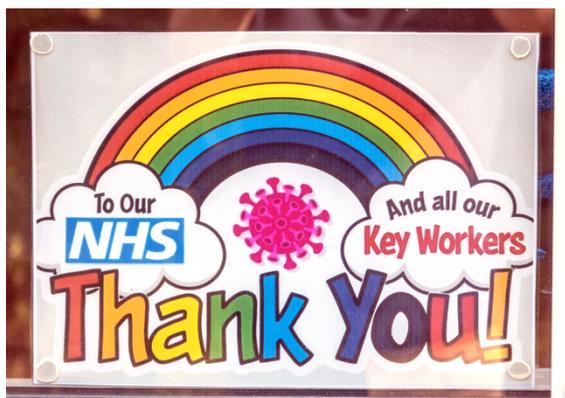
Every Thursday, there has been a cheerful Blythburgh racket, people in various pockets of the village stand outside to celebrate frontline workers for NHS and other essential services. To that I would like to add tribute to our postmen and women, the milkman, the newspaper deliverers, the delivery drivers, and all those unnamed people who help make life flourish.

Meryl and I arrived in Blythburgh ten-and-a -bit years ago. We think we're lucky to be here. Proud too. Thank you.

Malcom Doney, Co-editor, Blythburgh Focus



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The Blythburgh Latitude Trust is making grants

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

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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

Wild Watch - Completely cuckoo

No bird sums up the arrival of summer like the cuckoo. A popular subject for the traditional 'Letter to The Times' and the medieval round "Sumer is icumen in", the familiar two-syllable call is recognised – and much imitated – just about everywhere in Europe.

Cuckoos are famed for their breeding habits as well as their call, and it is sometimes thought that this is a unique trait amongst birds or even the animal kingdom in general. In fact, several families of birds, as well as fish and insects, share this habit. The cuckoo is the best known of what are called brood parasites.

A parasite is an organism that exploits its host without contributing anything to that host's well-being. In the cuckoo's case, this involves laying an egg in another species' nest and leaving the host to raise it to adulthood. Being usually larger than its hosts, the young cuckoo needs more food to fuel its growth and the newly hatched cuckoo chick ensures this by evicting the host's own eggs or young.



Most cuckoos specialise in parasitizing a single species of host, and Blythburgh cuckoos probably choose reed warblers (pictured). They are a well-known host species, along with dunnocks and meadow pipits but more than 100 species of bird are known to be foster parents. One reason is, that a female cuckoo cannot match a host bird's egg pattern randomly and it is believed that cuckoos mimic the egg of the species that reared them.

Other birds also demonstrate similar behaviour without being a true parasite. Many species of duck will lay eggs in another duck's nest before beginning a clutch of their own. This increases the chances of some of that bird's ducklings surviving should her own clutch be destroyed: definitely a case of 'not putting all your eggs in one basket'. Only the black-headed duck of South America copies the cuckoo and lays eggs in nests of other species, including those of gulls and coots, as well as ducks. The similarity ends there, though, as the ducklings once hatched leave the nest and can fend for themselves.

Male cuckoos are polygamous and mate with many females, not all of which parasitize the same species of host, and each female may lay up to 50 eggs in a season. That great naturalist William Shakespeare wrote: "it's a wise child who knows his own father". He must have been thinking of the cuckoo.

Paul Lacey

Verge progress

It is wonderful having this beautiful weather, but all our gardens and the verges desperately need rain! Volunteers are struggling to water. Plants are struggling to survive, but buds are forming. There is a terrible weed situation at the A12/Angel Lane triangle, but progress is being made. It is only the first summer and early summer at that, so don't expect spectacular results yet! However, our first roses are in bloom - Tiger Eye on the A12, glass bus shelter side.

The Village Hall roses, which were planted 18 months ago are growing well and flowering. We now have a magnolia to the right of the Village Hall, planted in memory of our former Parish Council Chair, David Tytler.

Janine Norris and Mel Holloway have joined the merry band of volunteers, and have taken over the maintenance of the outside of the Village Hall –they're doing a fantastic job. Rachel and Charles Morris joined the A12/Priory Verge earlier this year and have been equally welcome and helpful, with some creative gardening.

This is all great news, especially as some Volunteers are self-isolating or have become too busy to help, so we are somewhat down on numbers. Any newcomers would be extremely welcome – contact me at claire@millend6.plus.com.

We will be applying for another Latitude Trust grant, towards further planting and some water butts on two of the bus shelters to make watering easier. Onwards!

Claire Lyth

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SOLICITORS & NOTARIES

The Lockdown Quiz.

We're all missing the touchy, feely stuff unless we're stuck with - sorry, lucky enough to be grounded with - our loved ones. Even then there's only so much hugging a person can take. So, here's a little something to help pass the time, first, of course, ensuring you've made enough sourdough, done the booze order, learnt enough Madagascan, practised the sitar and knitted enough PPE to be going on with.

Now let's give those droopy brain cells a work-out - well, take them for a little stroll anyway.

Lockdown Lucy Robinson

1. Let's start with Boris Johnson (now, now). His new baby is called Wilfred Lawrie Nicholas – named after four people. What are their connections to the family?



2. Which soap decided to cheer us all up during lockdown with old 'classic' episodes covering drowning, Foot & Mouth, eviction, infidelity and child abuse?

3. What kind of animals, enjoying the lack of humans, took over a Welsh village?



4. And which, different creatures, a village in Hampshire?

5. Which outrageous singer/songwriter died from cancer in May? He abandoned singing in old age and rededicated his life to evangelism.

6. Name the multi-millionaire who asked for public money to pay to furlough her fashion-house staff – then thought better of it?

7. And a very unfunny man who has actually furloughed the gardener and housekeeper of his £4 million mansion?

8. Having tried the old 'inject yourself with bleach to hold off the virus' line, something he didn't try at home himself, Trump has been taking a drug which made U.S. doctors scream "this will kill you!". It is now being trialled here by 10,000 NHS staff, as it may actually be a preventative to Covid-19. What is this drug normally used for?



9. What is Captain Tom's new title – including his surname?

10. Wearing fishnets, stilettos and a skimpy black bra, what was supermodel Heidi Klum pictured having done while a man behind her social-distanced with an open umbrella strapped to him?



11. Which sport – the country's most popular – are we now allowed to go out for?

12. Which two famous people took part in a *Blackadder* special in April, to kick off the BBC's *Big Night In*?

13. Just before lockdown, a distraught nurse made a video shaming the behaviour of thousands of people. What was she pleading with everyone to stop doing?

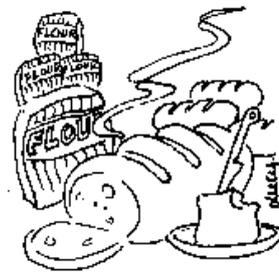
14. Which band has released the song 'Living in a Ghost Town' during lockdown?

15. And who released the spookily similar living in a 'Ghost Town' in 1981?



!6. Which 'Betty' has made three televised broadcasts in the past six months?

Answers page 15





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Virtual church



The Sole Bay team of churches, which includes Blythburgh, are holding live Zoom services every Sunday. You can join in a Book of Common Prayer Eucharist service at 8am, or a Common Worship (contemporary language) communion service at 9.30am.

Blythburgh's local volunteer priest Malcolm Doney will be preaching at the services on 7 June, which happens to be Trinity Sunday, which is our special day, since we Are Holy Trinity, Blythburgh. If you'd like to join in any of these services, you can get Zoom login details from Jenny Allen: jennyanddick@aol.com

We're sending weekly notes about services, links to enable participation, and other news to the extended Blythburgh church community. If you'd like to receive these, please contact Jenny at the email address above.

Coffee after church

Many of Holy Trinity's regular attendees have been taking advantage of these services, but we realised that there was a vital ingredient missing: we were no longer able to mingle informally and chat over coffee and tea. So, we've now set up an after-church coffee session on Zoom at 10.30 every Sunday. For about 40 mins we share news and enjoy each other's company. It's not the real thing, but it helps. If you fancy a virtual cup of coffee, email Blythburgh's Church Warden Meryl Doney: meryldoney@me.com

Zoom good night

Holy Trinity is also hosting its own Zoom service once a week: the short (20 minutes or so) service of night prayer, Compline. It's held every Thursday at 8.30pm, which gives you enough time to eat a meal and also clap for the NHS. Joining details are available from Jenny Allen (see above)

Take a virtual journey

Although we weren't able to put on the exhibition of Mark Cazalet's remarkable set of paintings, *Stations on a Journey*, they are now online, complete with commentary so you can make your own virtual pilgrimage with these 15 powerful pictures, which follow Jesus' journey to the cross – but the events are located in intriguing London settings. Go to: <https://www.holytrinityblythburgh.org.uk/stations-on-a-journey/>

Music to your ears

If you've been missing choral evensong, one of the features of Blythburgh church, you can find recordings of a number of earlier services on our website. Go to: <https://www.holytrinityblythburgh.org.uk/services/#evensong>

Hort Soc notes

This time last year we had already enjoyed one event in the beautiful Blythburgh Church where we gathered for a gardener's question time, and a very pleasant social event enjoyed by all. Sadly, the programme for this year is now very much on hold with definite cancellation of the Garden Party and the summer flower and produce show. Any possibility of rescheduling these events or replacing with alternatives will be decided according to how everything turns out with the pandemic.

In the meantime – we are planning a photographic competition to be held this summer – full details will be circulated in the next week or so.

The fantastic recent weather has just about made up for the extremely wet start to the year, and I hope everyone's garden is flourishing with wonderful colour as well as tons of lovely fruit and vegetables. The need for us all to 'Stay at Home' has some similarities with the 'Dig for Victory' campaign, and most of us have had some extra time to spend in the garden.

Four top tips

If you haven't yet finished sowing and planting here's a few tips for the coming days:

1. If you're planning on growing sweetcorn this year but have yet to sow, get your skates on! The early varieties like Lark, Swift, Sundance or Earlibird should make sure of a crop before the season ends.
2. I recently came across an interesting tip for dealing with perennial weeds like dock, dandelions and bindweed to stop them coming back from the dead in your compost heap. The answer is to drown them. Just put them in a bucket or barrel of water for six weeks. Then add the mush to your compost heap and use the liquid as a weak liquid feed.
3. Don't neglect to thin out your seedling parsnips and carrots. I always think it almost seems wrong to start killing some off after they finally pop up, but the remainder need enough space or we end up with a tiny crop. Be ruthless!
4. Finally, a tip on seed storage – seal up any opened packs and then put them in an airtight tin or Tupperware container. Keep the container in a dry, cool place and they'll be perfectly good for next year.

Happy growing . . .

Val Carse

Blythburgh covers up

Back at the beginning of April, my daughter Ellie invited me to sit in on a Zoom meeting of University College London's Institute of Making. Their materials scientists were discussing the possibility that people would eventually have to wear masks in public places. It was so interesting to listen in as they discussed the designs, patterns and fabrics to use.

This inspired me to look into what we could make here in Blythburgh. I floated the idea with a couple of key people in the village, and was met with an enthusiastic response. I then sent a round-robin email via Blythburgh m@tters and asked for volunteer makers. As a result, we were able to bring together a small group of doughty sewers.



was so interesting to listen in on a Zoom meeting of University College London's Institute of Making. Their materials scientists were discussing the possibility that people would eventually have to wear masks in public places. It was so interesting to listen in as they discussed the designs, patterns and fabrics to use.

We sourced the simplest pattern possible from the Goodlife Centre in London. All the volunteers contributed fabric, filter material and elastic (incidentally, there's now a world shortage of elastic – most of which is made in China!).

The finished articles were delivered to my house, where they were washed at 60°, pressed and put in bags for delivery. We then sent a second email circular asking if people would like to receive a mask, and had an encouraging response. The first 20 have now been delivered, thanks to Val Carse and Sue Gerrard.

They arrive with these notes on how to use your mask:

- Wash your hands or use hand sanitiser before putting it on and after taking it off.
- Hold the elastic to put the mask on and off. Pinch the wire at the top to ensure a good fit over your nose. Pull the bottom of the fabric down under your chin.
- After use, drop into a bag or a bowl of water until you can wash them.
- Wash as soon as possible at 60°.
- Dry, press and wear again.

Now it looks as though the use of masks is at least recommended, and may even be made mandatory, as the government considers measures to ease on restrictions without bringing on a new wave of Covid-19 infection. And we're ready.



If you, or your family and friends, would like two Blythburgh masks (one to wear and one in the wash), you only need to ask. You can choose to have them plain or patterned. You can reach me on 07976 574 703 or meryldoney@me.com

We have a good group of makers, but if you're handy with a sewing machine and are keen to help, do get in touch.

Meryl Doney

2020: In the Time of Covid-19 Lockdown Treasures

The telephone, Skype and Zoom have helped many keep in touch during the recent weeks of isolation but, sadly, I have not found them conducive to carrying out interviews for this article although random conversations across fences have provided some wonderful insights that I hope to follow up in due course.

Apologies dispensed with, I'm sure I'm not alone when I say that our garden has been a god send over the weeks of self-isolation and we have been especially fortunate to have added a new piece of land. It has been badly neglected for 15 plus years so we have spent many days digging out nettles, brambles and the dreaded creeping thistles. Progress is slow but unearthing bones, teeth, old metal tools and pottery have been highlights with our star find so far a clay pipe which dates to 1620-1640.

But the old saying "man is not an island" is so true and it's the chats over the fence, sharing meals on Skype and Zoom disco dancing to 70s music (masterminded by Colin and Ro) that has brightened our days.

Humour has played its part too and this lockdown story started with a phone call to report cows walking on the A12 over Blythburgh Bridge. It was early in lockdown so there wasn't much traffic but it was dark and clearly something needed to be done. Armed only with a torch, our Good Samaritan headed out. By now, the cows had turned in at the Village Hall. Keeping up quite a pace, they were next spotted heading up Church Lane. Having tried, but failed, to get help the situation was becoming serious – just how do you stop a determined herd of cows with only a torch? Fortunately the farmer arrived in the nick of time. Take a bow MN and apologies again for ignoring your determined hammering on our door.

Work on "the wilderness" hasn't stopped us relaxing and enjoying the rest of our garden and, with less traffic on the A12, the bird song has been loud and clear with a cuckoo taking the starring role. Talking of stars, in April we watched the SpaceX Starlink satellites streaming overhead and in late May we spotted Mercury alongside Venus (wow!). The bats have returned, the butterflies & bees are going about their business and baby birds are starting to fledge – it's nice to know that some things don't change.

Sonia Boggis



Traffic report

There has been no display on our speed for some time now. At the end of last year our charger failed, and the manufacturer, Westcotec, sent us a new one. It looked like the wrong sort, but they assured me that it was the right one, so I persevered. It didn't work. After a lot of correspondence, they finally acknowledged they'd sent us the wrong one. After a further very long delay, they sent us another replacement. This, it now turns out is



also the wrong sort! A somewhat heated correspondence continues.... However, I have been able to use the data logger, which has no display. At the beginning of May, we monitored the A12 Northbound (towards Lowestoft). Normally, we would expect about 4000 vehicles a day, but during this period we had about 1500.

However – probably because of the low density of traffic – the speeds have risen. Normally, between 85 and 92% of vehicles are travelling under 35mph. In this period it was only 69%! 30% were travelling between 35 and 55 mph and 1% (15 vehicles a day) over 55mph.

In the evening, only half the vehicles (100 per night) kept under 35mph, with 45% between 35 and 55mph, and 5% (9 vehicles per night) over 55mph.

Late at night (between 10pm and 5am) there were only 40 vehicles per night in total, of whom only 37% were under 35mph, 55% between 35 and 55 mph, and 8% (3 vehicles) over 55mph.

In conclusion, that means we had 38% of 'normal' traffic, but it was travelling significantly faster.

Roderick Orr-Ewing



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DAISY BANK LXXXV

The lane has descended into a sort of calm oasis where time is standing very still. The roar of traffic has lessened and the happy, laughing holiday makers have disappeared. But Derek Kett still walks Linden along the railway path at the bottom of the garden. The milkman and the paper man still come, albeit unseen by a sleeping Fern Cottage. The birds still sing their magical songs and the squirrels still argue. And the muntjac deer and Oscar the pheasant pay us an occasional visit to eat outside the French windows. On sunny days, we sit in the garden and have our usual drink at 4.30 and really for us, very little has changed.

Of course the world outside reminds us on the news that all is not well, and we thank God that all that is happening on the other side of the television screen, and not on ours. But we still feel. And the pain and tears still come easily for those in peril and their suffering. Every Thursday evening, I continue to ring our ship's bell for the sacrifices and altruism of so many in the caring professions. We know we are lucky, and only serendipity and good luck has brought us here to this little bubble of safe haven.

When I was a boy, I have happy memories of sunny halcyon days cycling along the lanes in south Oxfordshire, where it was rare to meet a car or even a tractor. Bluebell woods and rabbits at this time of year. and of course, the innocence of silence. It is as though I have shed all those years and I am back there in some sort of time warp, where things were simple, uncomplicated and unsullied.

The garden meanwhile is starting to come alive. The Queens Anne lace is everywhere. The clematis Montana is covering the arbour and climbing up the holly tree, and there is the first inkling of buds on some of the roses. In the non-formal parts of the garden, only paths are mowed, so that the wild part remains to enjoy its own summer. We have even asked Andre, our wonderful gardener, to leave the two large patches of daisies on the back lawn untouched; one daisy is forgettable, but many daisies together are to be loved. I think Andre thinks we're mad, and he's probably right. Enjoy your spring and keep safe.

Paul Bennett

ANSWERS to Lockdown Quiz

1. Both his great-grandfathers and two 'Dr Nicks' who helped Boris when he was seriously ill.
2. Radio 4's *The Archers*.
3. Goats.
4. Donkeys.
5. Little Richard.
6. Victoria Beckham.
7. Steve Coogan.
8. An antimalarial drug, called – if you're that smarty-pants – hydroxychloroquine.
9. Sir Thomas Moore.
10. Having her hair high-lighted.
11. Angling.
12. Prince William and Stephen Fry.
13. Panic buying.
14. The Rolling Stones.
15. The Specials.
16. The Queen.

Closures, openings and apologies

Some things that won't be happening, we're sorry to say, but it's not all doom and gloom . . .

Blythburgh Day 9 August

This event is cancelled, but Chiara and Matthew Saunders, who host the event each year in the back garden of the priory say "As soon as it's safe and sensible to do so, we hope very much to hold a celebration event for the village to mark the fact that we can all join together. We'll let everyone as soon as we can."

The Blessing of the Animals 16 August

This too has had to be cancelled, which is a shame, but the Revd Malcolm Doney, who leads the service, is exploring ways to make a version of the service happen by Zoom. If this is possible, he will put the word out.

White Hart open for business

During lockdown, the Hart has been offering a takeaway service on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays. This is continuing, with a Father's Day special steak night billed for **Saturday 20 June**, together with a Father's Day hamper service.

And on **Saturday 4 July**, Lee and Marie will actually open the pub doors for the first time in months for a sit-down meal. They say: "We would like to show our appreciation to Blythburgh villagers and regular customers by offering priority bookings for this day. Tables will need to be booked as soon as possible, orders placed for everything and paid for at the time of booking. We will be strictly adhering to social distancing rules. We really look forward to seeing you all and welcoming you back following such dreadful times." The menu for the evening will be published in due course. To book, please text 07870 657 226 or email leeknight148@btconnect.com. The website is <http://www.blythburgh-whitehart.co.uk>.

Village Hall apology

In our last issue, in our article on the future of the Village Hall, we misrepresented Olive Forsythe, and also dropped the 'e' off her surname. We apologise for this. We said that Olive was "ready to take a step back." But she has pointed out that, while she had resigned as Chair of the Village Hall Trust, she is still willing to look after bookings, receive payment and keep an eye on the day to day running of the hall.



Malcolm with orphan lamb (Malky), born on Malcolm's birthday.