



Striking Gold

The unique "Blythburgh" Quarter Stater. An "unrecorded" coin!



Blythburgh has its own gold coin, an Iron Age quarter stater (from the Greek word meaning "weight") of unique design, part of a hoard of 19 coins found "near Blythburgh" in 2019. One of the earliest coins produced in Britain, it dates from 35-15BC, in the reign of King Addedomarus of the Trinovanti, whose tribal area comprised south Suffolk and Essex. Such coins are rarely found in Suffolk, especially so far north, in the territory of the Iceni.

In a Halesworth Museum Zoom lecture, David Wollweber explained that it is difficult to interpret the iconography of Iron Age coins. For Roman coins, such as the 60 silver denarii found near Cookley in 2018, there is much documentary evidence about the emperors and deities they represented. For Iron Age coins there is scant documentary support. What do the swirling

patterns mean? What of the highly stylised faces, possibly spirit faces representing Celtic deities or supernatural forces? How should we view the depiction of animals, including the Blythburgh horse with its disconnected legs and feathery tail? These designs no doubt had an important cultural meaning to Iron Age people, unknown to us today and likely to remain a mystery.

The gold coins are very small, about 1cm in diameter. They were unlikely to have been used for general everyday trade in what was a barter economy. Instead, they would have had high status as "kings' money" used for tribute, diplomacy or paying soldiers.

How did they end up in Blythburgh? It was a time of tribal unrest, when Kent invaded Essex. Blythburgh may have been on a frontier with the land of the Iceni. But not knowing the exact location of the find, finding an explanation is like navigating a maze blindfolded. It is understandable that knowledge of the location of important finds is protected, to reduce the risk of sites being pillaged by maverick metal-detectorists, the 'nighthawks'. But were the coins found, for example, near a known trackway, settlement, or river crossing? Without such information it is difficult to place the coins in a wider historical context. Nevertheless, the find is an exciting addition to Blythburgh's archaeological record, with one of the coins, although not minted here, surviving uniquely in Blythburgh.

Alan Mackley

Help keep the hoard in Suffolk

Halesworth and District Museum have been working hard to raise the funding to keep this hoard. The hoard has now been offered to the Museum under the Treasure Act at a cost of £16,000.

The hope is to raise the majority of the sum through national grant-giving bodies, but at least part needs to be contributed locally to demonstrate local interest. At the time of writing, grants and donations received amount to three-quarters of the total needed, which leaves a shortfall of £3,600. Other grant applications are in the pipeline but there is still a need for more local donors.

If you'd like to contribute, go to the Halesworth Museum website <http://halesworthmuseum.org.uk/wpress/> and follow the links, or send a donation to Halesworth and District Museum, Station Road, Halesworth, IP19 8BZ.

To find out more about the coins, you can listen in to *Unlocking the Mystery of Coins: the Cookley and Blythburgh Hoards*, an online illustrated talk by David Wollweber, who has been researching the subject. You'll find it on the museum website.

THE SHOW MUST GO ON!

How Holy Trinity, Blythburgh came to the rescue when disaster overtook the Aldeburgh Festival.

Late on the opening night of the Aldeburgh Festival, 7 June 1969, and following the concert which featured Benjamin Britten and the Amadeus Quartet, an electrical fault caused a disastrous fire which destroyed the



Idomeneo at Blythburgh Church, Aldeburgh Festival 1969, with Britten conducting and Pears in the title role

Concert Hall. It left just the four walls standing.

Mozart's opera *Idomeneo* was scheduled to be performed at Snape just three days later, and it was decided, almost immediately, that Blythburgh Church would be the emergency venue for the three performances. But how could that be done?

Cue a miracle, which involved building a stage at the rear of the Church (and incorporating the large font), while the English Chamber Orchestra would be seated in the open area just inside the main door (numbers had to be reduced due to lack of space). Benjamin Britten conducted from a raised podium alongside one of the main pillars.

The capacity audience entered and left via two side-doors and were seated with their backs to the altar and their legs through the backs of the pews, with extra chairs brought in. Meanwhile, the churchyard itself was transformed into something of a tented village for production purposes.

These photographs by Brian Seed and Clive Strutt show a rehearsal in progress as well as an actual performance, with Peter Pears in declamatory pose as King Idomeneus of Crete.

John Pignegy



NORMAL SERVICES RESUME

From April onwards, Blythburgh Church will be holding public services once again. It started on Palm Sunday, and there will be two services on Easter Day, a short one at 8am in the churchyard and a choral evensong at 6pm (please book the latter with Jenny Allen, jennyanddick@aol.com). From then on, the church hopes to resume the normal pattern. The services for the rest of April and May should be:

Sun 11 April 11.15 Holy Communion

Sun 18 April 9.30 Morning Prayer

Sun 25 April 9.30 Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)

Sunday 2 May 6pm Choral Evensong

Sun 9 May 11.15 Holy Communion

Sun 16 May 9.30 Morning Prayer

Sun 23 May 9.30 Holy Communion (BCP)

Sun 30 May Holy Trinity's Festival Day – Sole Bay team service featuring the Bishop of Dunwich, Mike Harrison

Holy Trinity's popular 8.30pm Zoom services of Compline will continue after lockdown – because it works. All are welcome, and if you'd like to join us, please email Jenny Allen at jennyanddick@aol.com.



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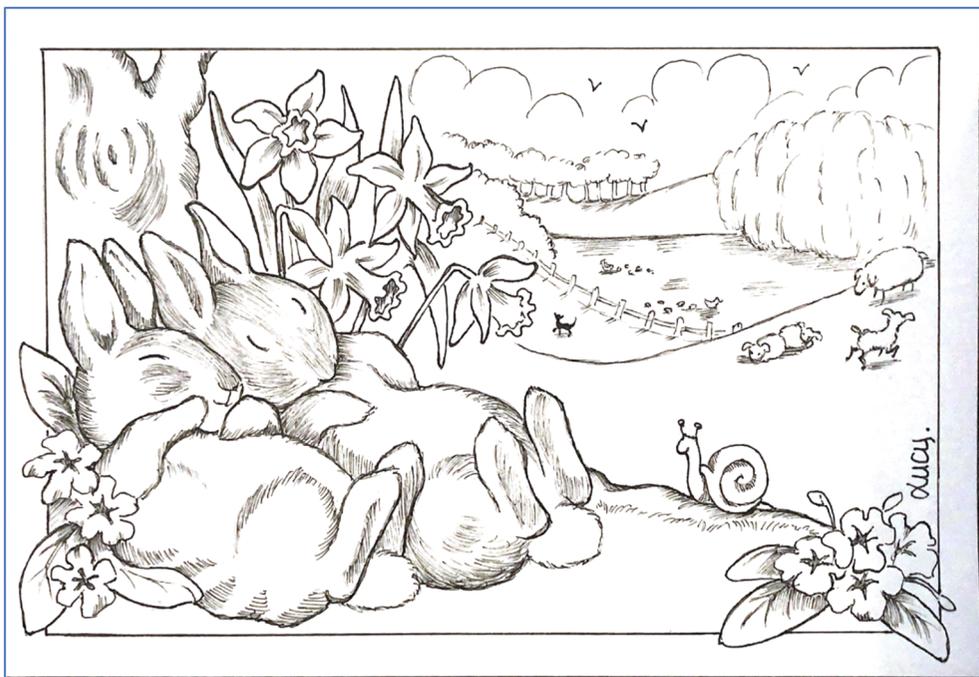
CORONAVIRUS HELP LINE

The helpline that was launched at the beginning of the pandemic a year ago was reactivated in January when we entered the third lockdown. The amazing volunteers who had made themselves available last year stepped up again, and manned a rota to respond to any requests for help from Blythburgh residents.

Medication pick-ups are still available every week, and any other requests for help have been happily fulfilled. This lockdown has proved somewhat easier than last year, and demands on the helpline have been very few, doubtless demonstrating the help already being given by family, neighbours and friends.

Restrictions are beginning to ease off now, and fingers crossed life will continue to get back to some form of normality as the vaccine roll out continues to provide us with some protection. The helpline is still active if anyone should require help with anything – the number is **07484 817911**.

Val Carse



LATITUDE TICKETS

The Latitude Festival has announced (at the time of going to press) that it will be going ahead from 22-25 July this year. Full time residents of the parish are eligible to take part in a draw for discounted festival tickets for their own use. Any tickets unallocated after this draw will be put into a second one for part time residents and full-time residents who want to pass on tickets to family and friends. Because some adjustments have been made in the ticket distribution arrangements, the Blythburgh Latitude Trust will be delivering ticket application forms by hand to addresses in the parish. The mailing will include an explanation of the terms and conditions, together with details of how and when to apply. If you have not received the mailing by Monday 19th April, please let the Trust know – blythburgh.2021tickets@gmail.com.

VILLAGER OF THE YEAR

Each year, Blythburgh names its Villager of the Year for her or his contribution to village life. These individuals are nominated by residents. Please let the Parish Council know who gets your vote. A candidate can be anyone who lives in the village, unless they are a serving member of the Parish council.

Please nominate the person you think deserves this accolade and deliver it in a sealed envelope, marked 'Villager of the Year' to, Roderick Orr-Ewing Chair of the Parish Council at Mill End Dunwich Road, Blythburgh, or else you can send an email nominating your candidate, together with your reasons, to Al Besley, Clerk of the Parish Council, at blythburgh.pc@gmail.com by Friday April 30th.

The presentation will be made as soon as health guidelines permit. The winner receives £50 with his or her name on the honours board in the Village Hall.

VILLAGER OF THE YEAR	
Name:	Proposer/s:.....
Reasons for nomination:	
.....	

THREATENED CLOSURE: WALBERSWICK/SOUTHWOLD BRIDGE

The footbridge connecting Southwold and Walberswick is in need of repair. But there is widespread local concern that the work will take place during the summer holiday period, when it is most used.

The Bailey bridge over the river Blyth was temporarily closed on safety grounds in 2018 after a report found "severe corrosion" in the structure's support beams. The bridge has since reopened, but the highways team at Suffolk County Council has said that repair works are due to start some time this year. The planned refurbishment will see the bridge close for several weeks.

A petition has been launched calling for the repairs to be carried out "before or after the critical holiday period". At the time of writing, 2,300 had signed the petition.

To sign the petition go to change.org and search for 'Southwold Bailey Bridge'

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SCHOOL DINNERS

What links a footballer, Henham Hall, Blue Peter and Wangford-with-Henham village school?

To answer that question, we need to go back more than 100 years to 1918 when, believe it or not, the first organised canteen for elementary schools in East Anglia (and indeed England) was started in the village school of our neighbouring parish.

In 1918, Wangford-with-Henham village school had an average attendance of around 160 – not an unusual number for rural schools at the time. Some children



lived nearby, but many more needed to travel a considerable distance and couldn't go home for lunch. These children brought packed lunches to eat at their desks but, with serious food supply issues due to World War I, the amount and quality of the food they were bringing to school had noticeably deteriorated.

With the headmaster away on Army duties, his wife, Mrs Easto, gave a series of demonstrations entitled: "A Satisfying Meal for a family of five for one shilling". Her demonstrations attracted large audiences and came to the attention of Mr Watkins, secretary of the East Suffolk Education Committee. A forward thinker and committed vegetarian, Mr Watkins asked if it was possible to provide a "hot & satisfying" two course mid-day meal for one shilling per head per week and cover all costs.

The large school garden provided vegetables. Lady Stradbroke loaned boilers, pans and kettles from nearby Henham Hall. The pupils brought their own cutlery and plates. Getting through the red tape took a while but, by October, Mrs Easto – supported by her husband who had returned from the Army – set to work with gusto. The experiment was underway.



Mrs Easto and her team served more than 100 meals a day and, after several weeks, were able to show that the dinner money covered both the cost of meals and, with careful management, the cost of employing a cook.

This canteen was the first, and others followed. By 1944 nearly 3 million meals were being provided daily in schools, and the school meal's service was one of the largest catering organisations in the world.



Much has changed since 1918 but, during lockdown, footballer Marcus Rashford campaigned tirelessly about the importance of youngsters not going hungry. He was awarded, (alongside his MBE), a gold Blue Peter badge for his work in making a difference to young people's lives. What a shame Blue Peter wasn't around in 1918, because surely Mrs Easto deserved a badge, at the very least.

Sonia Boggis

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WILD WATCH

Arches are an extraordinary architectural invention – invented we think by the Mesopotamians. Unlike beams, they transfer load outwards to their supporting columns. They consist of several individual pieces locked by gravity with a keystone. The keystone holds the rest of the stones in position. Nature mirrors this structural balance in its ecosystems, and science has identified that many of these rely on a keystone species.



It was a US ecologist, Robert Paine, who conceived the concept of the keystone species. He described them as “a species that has a disproportionately large effect on its environment relative to its abundance”. A common example used is a predator that maintains grazing animal numbers at a level that natural plant regeneration can manage. The vegetation also supports invertebrates which, in turn, feed smaller mammals and birds.

Remove the predator and the land becomes overgrazed: this then alters the balance elsewhere within the system so that invertebrate numbers also fall, causing small mammal and bird populations to crash. Before long, the ecosystem has collapsed completely.

This is precisely what happened in the USA when grey wolves were removed from the Yellowstone Wilderness Area. Herbivore numbers increased, they invaded areas that had previously supported beavers and forced them out. Beavers are regarded as ecosystem engineers. Their building activities alter river and stream systems to produce a variety of beneficial wetland habitats that support hundreds of different species.

With the beavers driven out, their dams collapsed, speeding up water flow through the wilderness area and causing flooding that damaged other habitats downstream, even beyond the boundaries of Yellowstone itself. When the wolves were reinstated, the beavers returned, and the ecosystem recovered remarkably quickly. The delicate balance had been restored.

It's a scenario that, you could argue, has been played out in Britain. Having eliminated both wolves and beavers, we are now embarking on beaver reintroduction in the hope that they will repair damaged river catchments and reduce the risk of flash flooding.

Who knows? If there's room for beavers, maybe there's a case for reintroducing wolves to control our increasingly unsustainable deer numbers. That could be a key piece of natural engineering!

Paul Lacey



STARRY, STARRY NIGHT

The moon is our nearest astrological neighbour, but is still worth a look. In celestial terms it is almost within touching distance. The moon's orbit around us is not a perfect circle but slightly elliptical. April and May's full moons will be near to perigee, which is the closest point in its orbit to the Earth. This is also known as a Super Moon. It will be around 222,000 miles from us which is about 17,000 miles closer than usual.



Photo taken February 2021 from Blythburgh

With the naked eye you may be able to see the darker plains which our ancestors thought were seas, hence their naming. Binoculars will reveal mountain ranges and craters. A distinctive crater in the southern half with bright streaks radiating from it is Tycho. This was named after the 16th century Danish astronomer Tycho Brahe, although previously it had been known by various names including Umbilicus Lunaris ('the navel of the moon') – I think you can see why. The streaks are the material that was ejected when it was formed by the impact of an asteroid. With a diameter of 53 miles you could fit the whole of Norfolk into it.

If we have some clear skies, then take a look each night as new features are revealed along the night/day boundary (terminator) as it moves across the moon.

Twelve men have walked on the moon – four are still alive. NASA is working on the Artemis Project which is planned to put the first woman and the next man on the moon by 2024 – applications have closed!

Colin Huggins

The moon always appears larger when it is close to the horizon. This is an optical illusion but make the most of it and take a look when the moon rises on 26 April (19:23) and 26 May (21:23).

In many ways, full moon is the worst possible time to view as there are no shadows to show up the features. A much better time is at half moon (more accurately known as first quarter). This occurs on 20 April and 19 May, but a few days either side is also good.

OSPREYS IN BLYTHBURGH?

How Blythburgh could help bring ospreys back to Suffolk

Wildlife charity Suffolk Wildlife Trust is working on proposals to bring ospreys, a fish-eating bird of prey, back to Suffolk. At the time of writing, we are undertaking a public consultation in order to proceed with a licence application to Natural England. Should the licence application be successful, this will be the start of a five-year translocation programme to bring young ospreys to the Blyth estuary in order to establish a breeding population.

Why ospreys and why here?

You may already be familiar with seeing ospreys hunting for fish on the Blyth estuary in the spring and autumn, as they stop-off to refuel while on their migration from their nesting sites.

The osprey currently breeds in some parts of the UK, thanks to careful conservation and successful translocation projects. It's a bird that should be widespread across the UK and Europe, but was brought to the brink of extinction due to historical persecution and pesticide use. There is currently no breeding population of the birds in Suffolk or East Anglia.

Having breeding ospreys in Suffolk will, after some years, mean the species will be able to expand its range across the wider East Anglia region. The osprey is part of a healthy ecosystem and its return will be one step closer to stemming the biodiversity loss we are all facing.

Suffolk Wildlife Trust is working in partnership with Roy Dennis Wildlife Foundation, a local landowner, and Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust. The Roy Dennis Wildlife Foundation has pioneered successful osprey translocation projects over the last few decades.



The project is needed, as ospreys are slow to spread to new areas. The Suffolk coast and the Blyth estuary has the perfect habitat for ospreys to thrive, with safe access to rivers and the estuary and plentiful fish in shallow waters, such as grey mullet.

You can find out about how translocation projects work, and how Suffolk Wildlife Trust proposes to look after the young birds here: suffolkwildlifetrust.org/ospreys.

If the licence application is successful, there will be an opportunity to help with fundraising efforts and work can begin to restore the osprey back to Suffolk.

Sarah Groves

Communications Manger Suffolk Wildlife Trust



GET GROWING!

The church has been booked for this year's Horticultural Society Flower and Produce show on Saturday 17 July! Let's all hope that it can go ahead. Entry is open to members and Blythburgh residents and entry forms will be sent out to members in the near future. There'll be categories for vegetables and soft fruit, flowers and plants, flower arrangements and cookery. So, it's time to get sowing, growing and making!

Blythburgh Horticultural Society (universally known as "the Hort Soc") goes back many years and continues to be a hugely popular activity within the village. We promote gardening in Blythburgh by staging the annual summer show, and also by putting on a series of events, including talks and visits to places of gardening interest. And there's always plenty of eating, drinking and conviviality involved.

Understandably, most of last year's programme had to be cancelled, so members' subscriptions have been carried over from 2019/20. And we're hoping some of these events can be revived. One popular gathering each year is the annual Garden Party and we're hoping that can take place. Dates and details to follow.

If you'd like to join the Hort Soc, or have any questions about the programmes, please get in touch at valc@btinternet.com

Val Carse



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

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DAISY BANK

Yes it was me guv. In the end I purloined the gin and beer on Ray's grave (see the last Daisy Bank) at the end of February, and what's more, I drank his very good health to such happy memories. His brass plaque seems to have disappeared, so I've ordered another one. That will have to be my penance.

The roses are pruned, and after a bit of mulching and feeding, they will be ready for the summer and, unlike last summer, with the world and his wife vaccinated, it will finally be a real and happier summer. I refuse to acknowledge that anything can go wrong now! We've had two friends and a friend's brother who caught the virus and happily survived, but unfortunately, a family member who did not. Like the two world wars, I suspect that when all this is over, there won't be many people who haven't suffered in that way.

One evening in an air raid to the latter part of the last war, my mother and father were at home, and suddenly there was a large thump which momentarily shook the floor. Was it a bomb or was it something else? The house stood half a mile away from the Lee Enfield factory whose main occupation then was producing Bren Guns. Curious as to what had happened, my father opened the front door and stood on the edge of the pavement peering in the darkness to see if he could see any untoward sign. Somebody on the other side the road did the same. Having by now accustomed his eyes to the dark, he looked down, and there, was a very large hole with the fins of an unexploded bomb looking up at him.

The whole street was quickly evacuated, and eventually the bomb was exploded on some playing fields nearby. Had it exploded, most of the houses in the street would probably have been levelled, and ours would have been dust. Your correspondent would not be writing this article now if the worse had happened. I was raised a Roman Catholic (I'm half Irish), and when I was a child went to mass in a Catholic school hall which was converted into a church on Sundays. For a long time, I assumed that all Catholic churches were school halls. It was only when I was luckily enough as an altar boy to serve mass at Westminster Cathedral, that I realised that there were actual Catholic churches. Evidently, our church had taken a direct hit from a land mine which was a huge bomb suspended by a parachute. It happened at night, so nobody was killed, thank God.

Shoots of daffodils in the garden anticipate spring, and yesterday I heard a song thrush singing for the first time. I look forward to happy bands of rambles walking along the lane, chattering away. And I look forward to standing at our back gate watching people walking along the river wall next to the marshes. I am just revelling in the very act of looking forward.

Paul Bennett