

BLYTHBURGH

FOCUS

SERVING BLYTHBURGH,
BULCAMP AND HINTON



Issue No 59

<http://blythburgh.onesuffolk.net>

Oct/Nov 2021

Church Animal Invasion



The church hosted a splendid **Blessing of the Animals** service in August, attended by 115 people plus a throng (or some other collective noun) of animals. As ever, there were a majority of dogs, but they were supplemented by three horses and Frank, the Shetland pony. This year – and a first – the church welcomed three rescued baby voles to add to the

congregation. The retiring collection raised over £300 for the People's Dispensary for Sick Animals.



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BLYTHBURGH HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

The Hort Soc Committee were disappointed not to be able to host the summer show this year due to the uncertainty around Covid restrictions.

We're delighted, however, to be holding a social evening in Blythburgh Village Hall in October, and places are just about taken up now. Members who'd still like to book please let me know as soon as possible.

We'll be circulating the programme for next year in January 2022 and look forward to welcoming members to the variety of events that we originally had planned for 2020.

If you have any questions about Hort Soc, or would like to join, please get in touch with me.

Val Carse

valc@btinternet.com

NEWS FROM BLYTHBURGH STATION

The Halesworth to Southwold Narrow Gauge Railway Society ran two trial

Open Days at Blythburgh Station over the summer. These free events invited the general public to view the progress of the work at the station, including the completed Goods Shed of 1879, and the recently excavated station building foundations.



Inside the shed was a display of some of the artefacts that have been uncovered during the excavation by digging, sieving soil, or with a metal detector. These included parts of the station platform

weighing machine, a very early Edwardian light switch, what may be the Stationmaster's inkpot and counter bell, and the base of the ticket machine. The best of these artefacts are on display in Halesworth Museum for the Heritage Open Days, and will then return for a permanent display at the Shed next year.



Both days were well-attended, with Parish Council representatives from villages along the Blyth valley (as well as Halesworth) visiting – we were particularly pleased to see Blythburgh villagers. **Another Open Day will be held on 10 October, between 11am and 3pm**, with a 7¹/₄"-gauge steam locomotive onsite, and our live steam model railway. If that also proves a success, the Society plans to open the site more regularly in 2022.

Recently, the Society's volunteers have been repairing the station foundations to ground level, using 1,000 Aldeburgh brickworks bricks as an exact match with the original Victorian ones, and traditional lime mortar. Landscaping is now in hand around the building, providing a level which can be seeded with appropriate wild grasses, as has been done around the Goods Shed. The borders of the car park have been cleared back to the hedge line, providing more parking spaces.

This winter will also see the platform area examined with a detector – early indications are that this will be a fruitful part of the site for finds. The platform sign will be permanently erected and – if any of the platform edge still exists – that will be restored. The Society would like to restore as many features of the original station (including more track) as is possible and practicable – if the village, its representatives, and the owner are in agreement.

James Hewett and Ken Penrose, Co-Chairmen

More information: www.halesworthtosouthwoldrailway.co.uk



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Church Warden Meryl Doney welcomes comedians David O'Doherty (left) and Joe Wilkinson who visited the church as part of an upcoming Channel 4 series

PUB QUIZ NIGHTS ARE BACK

The ever-popular quiz nights at the Blythburgh White Hart are re-starting on Thursday 14 October. Thereafter, they'll be held on the second Thursday of every month until March next year. The quizzes start at 7.30pm, maximum four people per team. Entry is £5 per person (of which £2 covers half-time nibbles, while remaining funds go to support Blythburgh Church).

Booking essential to avoid disappointment – please call 01502 478217

IT COULD BE YOU

A seat on the Parish Council

The Blythburgh Parish Council (technically, it's for Blythburgh with Bulcamp and Hinton) is made up of people like you who want to make sure this is a good place to live. That means it looks at issues like local planning, traffic, amenities etc, with a view to making them better for the people who live here. Being a parish councillor isn't about being a local politician, it's about being a concerned and helpful neighbour. If that's you, then maybe you could think about joining the parish council. There's a vacancy right now and it's straightforward to apply. To find out more, please contact Roderick Orr-Ewing (the current Council Chair) roderick@millend6.plus.com, or Al Besly (the Council Clerk) roderick@millend6.plus.com. It could be you.

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CHRISTMAS IS COMING

The Blythburgh Church **Christmas Market** has become an essential fixture in the Christmas diary. After an enforced year-long break, it makes a welcome return this year on **Saturday 27 November, from 11am until 3.30pm.**

Music with a local flavour

October sees the welcome return of the **Alwyn Music Festival**. The Festival celebrates the work of William Alwyn (1905-1985) who lived on Dunwich Road in Blythburgh with his wife, the composer Doreen Carwithen. There are concerts in **Blythburgh Church on Friday 8 October at 10.30am and Saturday 9 October (10.30 am and 4.00pm)**. More details and tickets are available at www.alwynmusicfestival.co.uk.

Coffee break

Friday 29 October, sees the popular monthly **Café and Mini-market: 10.30 til noon.**



BLYTHBURGH FIELD NOTES

August to late September

July 14 saw the first of the northern waders return to the Blyth, with Whimbrel, Greenshank and Turnstone, while four Spoonbills also appeared. By the end of the month, two Spotted Redshanks were seen, and Dunlin and Black-tailed Godwit started to appear in numbers, being joined on the 30th by two Curlew Sandpiper, and next day by a Common Sandpiper.

August started quietly, but on the 4th a Peregrine was watched taking a wader on the Blyth, while a Spoonbill and Green Sandpiper were also seen.

The recent loss of Turtle Dove as a breeding species in the parish follows the sad decline of other bird species over recent decades. Most notably short are turf-loving species such as Red-backed Shrike, Whinchat and Wheatear – these losses created mainly as a knock-on effect produced by the devastating decline in rabbits due to myxomatosis. This reduction of grazing has caused a 30-year loss of short turf heath grassland, as bracken and birch and pine scrub trees developed. This is probably not – as many experts claim – due to the effects of global warming, although it's often a combination of factors affecting some losses.

Further breeding bird victims were created by the effects of the 1987 storm on woodland species, particularly Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Nuthatch and Long-eared Owl, as after a previous storm in the eighties, several owls were blown out of the woodlands and found dead. Other rare species such as Hawfinch were also affected, as they rely on nut husks from Hornbeam found in the leaf litter. The loss of trees enabling a lot more light to reach the ground, allowing Bramble and other scrub takes over.

As is often the case, some species benefited from the storm. Clear felling – particularly the clearance of coniferous woodland – provided additional open bare ground areas, giving a major boost to the Woodlark population, while within a couple of years or so the replanting created more suitable habitat for Nightjar

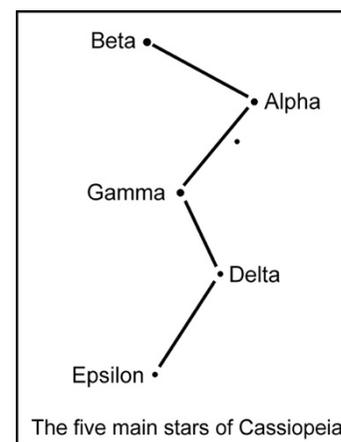
The northeast winds at the end of August brought an influx of northern waders to the east side of the Blyth, with over 20 species recorded, including Curlew Sandpiper, Little Stint, Sanderling, Ruff and Green Sandpiper, while Bittern and Water Rail were also seen.

Early September saw a fall off in wader species, but the 4th produced the first Redstart and three Yellow Wagtails, sadly both no longer a breeding species in the parish, just occasional migrants. An Osprey has been frequenting the Estuary since the 15th.

I. Nonowt

STARRY, STARRY NIGHT

One of the very easiest constellations to find is Cassiopeia which is named after a vain queen in Greek mythology who boasted of her unrivalled beauty.



The constellation consists of more than 50 stars, but it is the five brightest that form the shape of the letter “W” that most people are referring to when they talk about Cassiopeia. This is a circumpolar constellation, meaning that from our latitude it never sets below the horizon, but as winter approaches Cassiopeia is particularly well placed to be viewed. It is easily visible to the naked eye and by 8pm each evening throughout October and November will be high in the sky, slightly to the north-east. Be prepared that its orientation at this time will have the “W” standing on end, as shown in the diagram,

So what are we looking at? Surely a star is a star. Well, that is far from the truth.

Firstly, although these stars all appear to be of similar brightness in our night sky, this is largely due to the variation in their distance from Earth. Epsilon is nearest at a mere 55 light years from us ranging to Gamma which is the most distant at 550 light years from us. So, the light that you see from Gamma started its journey to us in the 1470s, about the time that the final touches were being put to Blythburgh's new-build that we now know as Holy Trinity Church.

Each of these stars is at different stages of their development, with ages ranging from 8 million to 1.2 billion years, and are all much larger than our own Sun.

Alpha is physically the largest, with a diameter of 45 times that of the Sun. But the real ‘star’ of the show is Gamma. Although only 10 times the size of the Sun, it emits an incredible 34,000 times more light, so you would need some serious sunglasses if you were anywhere near it. To make things even more interesting, Gamma is thought to be a binary star, meaning that the main star has a smaller companion star that orbits it. This smaller star is about the size of our Sun and orbits the main star every 203 days. Imagine how confusing it would be to have a sky containing, not one, but two suns.

Colin Huggins

DAISY BANK CI

By the time you read this, the trees outside our cottage should have been halved. It was last done about 20 years ago, and the time came to do it again. It meant disruption for Daisy Bank but all my neighbours were notified and so far no complaints. They are ghastly leylandii which were planted by the previous owner probably 40 years ago (I've been here for 34). They do give us some protection from the main road traffic noise, so rather than get rid of them altogether I went for the half option.

I've come to the conclusion that it hasn't been a good year for roses, but the dahlias have thrived. Altogether, it's been a strange year with little or no summer and long periods of torrential rain.

Perhaps the world finally realises that there is something nasty afoot and, I don't mean covid.

We've had a couple of visitors from the past turn up this month. One was my cousin's husband and his new partner; my cousin died several years ago at far too young an age. The other one was the daughter of an old friend, which is one of those very strange coincidences that happen in life.

She lives in Chelmsford, and travelled up here to stay overnight in the White Hart in order to attend the Latitude festival. Getting on the shuttle bus to go from the White Hart to Henham she asked the bus driver if he knew anything about a chap called Paul who was an artist and lived in Wangford (I used to live there). The driver, who coincidentally turned out to be Paul who formerly lived down the lane and now lives in Priory Road, replied that he didn't know anybody like that in Wangford but there was an artist called Paul who lived in Blythburgh. The result was tea in the garden, and lots of chat about old friends.

When she very young I stayed for a short period with her mother while I was between flats in North London. I'd started at teachers training college with her best friend. I remember walking with her mother, almost hand in hand, down the lane at Trent Park in Cockfosters, both tremulous and a little apprehensive about the four years that were to follow. Both mature students, we wondered how we would get on with a load of, 'just-left-school-18-year-olds'. We needn't have worried. We very soon adapted and turned into 18-year-olds ourselves.

So, dear reader, I'm much younger than you think I am!

Paul Bennett

PLATINUM JUBILEE EMBLEM IDEAS?

In case you hadn't heard, in 2022, the Queen will become the first British Monarch to celebrate a Platinum Jubilee, 70 years of service.

There's going to be an extended bank holiday, from Thursday 2 to Sunday 5 June, and there's talk of Blythburgh hosting some kind of event to mark the jubilee. Watch this space.

In addition, County Councillor Richard Smith has offered our parish £500 for the creation of some kind of physical object or item to commemorate Queen Elizabeth's historic achievement. What we choose is up to us. However, it must be something physical, such as a plaque, sculpture, trophy or plant (simply holding a party doesn't meet the conditions).

Your Parish Council is keen to hear any suggestions as to what could be done. So, if you have any ideas of how we might permanently commemorate this remarkable moment, please let Parish Clerk, Al Besly, know and he will pass these on to the Parish Council:
blythburgh.pc@gmail.com.

HERE TO HELP YOU

The Blythburgh Latitude Trust uses the money it receives from the sale of tickets to the Latitude Festival to support local individuals, families and organisations when they need it. Anyone who lives in the parish of Blythburgh with Bulcamp and Hinton can apply for a grant. As a general rule, grants are capped at £300 – but, on occasion, the Trust is happy to give more if the need demands it.

Over recent years, the Blythburgh Latitude Trust has helped to fund such things as: school uniforms, essential equipment, school trips, and social initiatives. All applications are treated in confidence. The current trustees are Jenny Allen (Chair), Val Carse, Malcolm Doney, Michael Nicholls, Harry Waller and Sarah Wickham.

It's easy to apply for a grant – simply contact the Trust's honorary administrator, Jim Boggis, Marsh End, Church Road, call 478 687, or email blythburgh.trust@gmail.com.

In past years, the Latitude Trust has organised a village trip to the pantomime at Norwich Theatre Royal, travelling by coach. We're not proposing to do so this year, but if anyone would like to go under their own steam, the Trust will refund the cost of tickets, and parking fees. The pantomime this year is *Dick Whittington* and it will run from 11 December to 9 January – see www.norwichtheatre.org. Please apply to Jenny Allen, Wolsey House, Chapel Road, jennyanddick@aol.com.

WILD WATCH

As winter approaches, many plants begin to shut down their life-support systems. Deciduous trees start shedding their leaves, withdrawing what's worth saving in sugars and starches, and discarding what isn't. Some trees, however, still show some green even when all their leaves have fallen.

Mistletoe is an evergreen which is classified as a hemiparasite. Whilst it has green leaves and can photosynthesise, it draws water and nutrients from its host. Mistletoe's seeds are popular with birds, and the sticky undigested part finds its way to a new host when the bird voids it. The germinating seedling penetrates its host's bark until it reaches the sapwood. The family is widespread globally and several grow as free-standing trees. They use their roots to encircle and tap into those of another plant to steal their water supply.

Mistletoe is not the only parasitic plant found in the UK. Other families behave in a similar way by drawing water and nutrients from neighbouring plants. Yellow rattle and common lousewort do this whilst still photosynthesising, but another family, the broomrapes, are different. They are holoparasites, drawing sustenance from their hosts. They have no chlorophyll and manufacture no food of their own.

Many are specific parasites of one plant species, the ivy broomrape for example. Common broomrape, however, is not so fussy and will prey on a wide range of other plants. The plant in the photograph was growing in a weedy patch near the 'bathing beach' in Blythburgh.

Another holoparasite, greater dodder, can be found in southern UK but is more common in Europe. Like broomrapes they have little if no chlorophyll and rely on their hosts for all their nutrients. The plants produce flowers and seed, but the germinating seedling must find a host plant before it has exhausted its food stocks or it will die.

The biggest plant parasites of all avoid these risks and spend their entire life within the body of their hosts. This is the famous Rafflesia family of south-east Asia, and only when ready to reproduce do they reveal themselves by producing the largest single flowers in the world. Yet all they attract are flies.

It's tempting to draw a human analogy. When plunder becomes a way of life it creates, in the course of time, a system that authorises it and a moral code that glorifies it.

It's called capitalism.

Paul Lacey



Orobanche Minor
Common Broomrape



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MEMORIES THROUGH THE LETTER BOX

Remembering Dick Clarke

Dick Clarke passed away very suddenly in September 2021: he will be missed by many. Dick had a long association with Blythburgh and this article was first published in 2017. Rest in Peace Dick Clarke 1945-2021



1945 marked the end of World War II and the birth of Dick Clarke whose Grandfather, Fred Clarke, lived on Church Lane in Blythburgh.

Fred lived in the middle cottage of three (now combined and known as Cavell Cottage) with Lesley Reynolds and Mrs

Burton residing either side. Uncle Alfie Cook and the Elmy family lived close by, and all the families shared just one well for all their water needs.

Dick remembers lots of children in the village at that time, and local farmer, Jack Stannard, allowing the youngsters to play on his tractors. Grandfather, Fred Clarke, died when Dick was just six years old and is buried in the churchyard.

For 10 years, between 1983 and 1993, Dick was village postman, a role which gave him a unique insight into the residents and characters of Blythburgh.

Coming up Priory Road, Dick could always rely on Mrs Bird (Travers Cottage) for a cuppa. At The Green, Audrey Malan was gracious and generous, opening her garden for fetes and other village events.

Crossing the A12, Dick always paused to admire the large garden at Lion House which was kept in immaculate order by Bob Aldred.

Everyone knew Bob Stringer, and his house on The Street was one of Dick's regular stops, with conversation often returning to the cricket matches against Ipswich Caribbean Club.

Heading up Dunwich Road, Marjorie & Mr Muttitt lived in a converted railway carriage. Marjorie delivered the papers for many years and Mr Muttitt used to see after the churchyard.

Tom Cooney – a character if ever there was one – lived in one of the old school rooms, and Mr Austin, the church warden, lived next door. The post was collected at 4.15pm, and the postmen needed to sort the long letters from the short. This was something Dick did sitting in his van. Almost without

fail, Mr Austin would appear at 4:14pm, letters in hand, to catch that day's post. Woe betide Dick if he tried to collect the post early!

Once, at Mill End, Lady Mallaby discovered a leak. "Please Mr Postman can you go up into my loft and turn the water off?" Not a easy task, but allegedly a bottle changed hands a few days later.

Postmen have to contend with all eventualities. These included avoiding the postman-chasing pheasant that lay in wait on Westward Lodge lane, and safeguarding the money safely secured in steel boxes in the back of the post van ready for delivery to the local post offices. The latter was made more problematic because the security keys were kept in the front of the van!

HOW TO KNOW WHAT'S ON AND WHEN

Did you know that there's a Blythburgh information service that can tell you what's happening in the parish? It's called *Blythburgh Matters*, and it's an occasional email circulation list which informs people of the main events and news taking place around Blythburgh and its environs. If you'd like to join this free mailing list, simply send your email details to:

blythburghmatters@gmail.com and you'll be kept informed.

| Your Parish Councillors | Blythburgh Associations |
|--|---|
| Chair: Roderick Orr-Ewing | Blythburgh Latitude Trust Jim Boggis 01502 478687 |
| Planning Advisory Committee: Val Carse, Paul Lacey | Film Club Olive Forsythe 01502 478521 |
| Finance Advisory Committee: Roderick Orr-Ewing, Chiara Saunders, Al Besly | Village Hall Management Committee bookings@blythburghvillagehall.org.uk 01502 507353 |
| Councillors: Malcolm Doney, | Horticultural Society Val Carse 07973 389898 |
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Several Blythburgh residents joined other protestors on 19 September to form a human wall in protest at the plans to build Sizewell C.



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