TOWN and AROUND

ISSUE 253 NOVEMBER 2026

PRICELESS!



Local News • Events • Great Outdoors • Features

First Word



Welcome to our November edition of Town & Around, and there's plenty to get stuck into this month.

We've been out and about again, meeting some brilliant local people and bringing you their stories. Among them is eight-year-old Sophia Sawyer, who cycled an incredible 80 miles with her dad Ben to raise money for East Winch Wildlife Centre. It's exactly the sort of uplifting local story we love telling.

With Christmas getting ever closer, we've also packed this issue with dates for your diary, including fireworks, festive events and Christmas light switch-ons across the area.

There's something new to have a go at too. Our first Town & Around Word Search is inside this month, so grab a cuppa and see how quickly you can find them all!

And our cover winner is Julie Smart and this stunning image of a pony on Roydon Common, send us your photo and it could be on the cover next month!

We hope you enjoy the issue. As always, thank you for reading, supporting our advertisers and continuing to share your stories with us.

Darren, Richard, Andrea, Lou and Dani

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EQUITY RELEASE MADE SIMPLE



James Batchelor, Principal of Evergreen Equity Release Solutions, based on the historic Tuesday Market Place in King's Lynn, on making Equity Release simple.

When my business partner, Nigel Barrett and I first formed Barrett Batchelor Mortgage Services LLP, the aim was to not only be professional and efficient, but also to ensure that the service offered was personal and friendly. We firmly believed that this was required to make our company successful and is also what the people of Norfolk required. We were, and remain, determined to treat our clients with the respect they deserve and to ensure that they don't feel as if they are just a number, as can be the case when dealing directly with the big banks.

When we made the decision to extend our range of services a number of years ago by forming Evergreen Equity Release Services, it soon became apparent to us that this personal approach was probably even more important when dealing with people who were considering Equity Release.

Important decisions have to be made when people are approaching retirement, and using your property to raise funds could well be the most important one of all. It's fair to say that Equity Release is not for everyone, and part of the process I guide people through is explaining other options that may be available to them. In addition to this, future plans and state benefits could be affected. It's not a decision that should be rushed into and it all depends on your individual needs and personal circumstances.

Having said that, more and more people are recognising the benefits of raising money this way, and that it can be a very efficient way of doing so.

Many of you will still be very active in retirement, and still have plenty of plans ahead of you. If you no longer have a wage coming in, and maybe your private pension has not performed as you had hoped for, the question that could be asked is how you can fund your future plans?

For many, it could be a case of having the majority of your wealth locked up in your home. Where some will look to downsize their property to release some money (not a cheap option in itself when you take into account the fees from estate agents, solicitors, potential stamp duty on the new purchase etc), more and more people are looking at the option of staying in their current property, and raising funds via Equity Release to enable them to do so.

One thing I am very keen to do is to explain to people how the Equity Release market has evolved over the last 25 years. You no longer have to sell your property to the bank, so you still retain ownership of the property. Another important point is the "No negative equity guarantee", which ensures that the amount you borrow will never exceed the debt on your property.

Examples of how I have assisted people with their Equity Release requirements are:

- raising funds to boost their income in retirement
- clearing an outstanding mortgage on their property
- property improvements
- assisting family members financially
- funding a new or existing hobby, such as caravanning

There are of course numerous other reasons you may be looking to raise money, and the importance of fully discussing such matters with a fully Qualified Equity Release Adviser cannot be stressed enough.

A big concern I have is that many people decide that Equity Release is not an option for them, without being in possession of the full facts. They could be missing out on a great opportunity due to this, and this is why I offer a completely free consultation, without any obligation. I'd even suggest that you bring a family member or a trusted friend with you to the meeting.

If you are fast approaching retirement (Equity Release is available to over 55's only), or indeed you have already reached this milestone in your life and would like to explore the options available to you, I'm here to offer a helping and guiding hand. To understand the features and risks, please ask for a personalised illustration.

If our service is of any interest to you, I'll be only too pleased to visit you in the comfort of your own home if you would prefer me to do so.



evergreen
Equity Release Solutions

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One Thousand Years in the Making

Dani Crawshaw

How a King's Lynn-born museum curator helped bring one of the world's most famous treasures back to British soil.

After nearly a thousand years, the Bayeux Tapestry is back in the UK, with King's Lynn born museum curator Michael having played an integral role.

The Bayeux Tapestry is on English soil largely thanks to Lynn born Michael Lewis

Without Michael, who's the curator of the Bayeux Tapestry Exhibition, it most likely wouldn't have made it to England.

The 53 year old, who went to Smithdon High in Hunstanton, has spent almost 20 years trying to get the 11th century artwork on British soil.

Finally, this July, it made it. "It was pretty special," he tells me, "It was amazing really, I was a little bit disappointed that I wasn't able to go on the train with the tapestry across the Channel.

"For me the arrival in England was the big thing, when I heard that, I was thinking gosh it's finally happened - because I have invested a lot of effort into this."

"The arrival at the British Museum, well, essentially all I saw was a lorry, then the crate containing the tapestry was taken off.

"The following week it was taken out of the crate, and then put on the display table, which was a mammoth operation really and was an amazing thing to see.

"That took about 18 hours, with about a hundred people, from Britain and France, working together to take it out.



Museum director Nicholas with Micheal (right)

"Once the technical operation finished, and it was put in its case, I said do you want me to talk through the tapestry story, so for all of the people who had been there helping all through the night, I talked them through it.

"And then I kind of realised that was the first time someone had done that in 950 years in this country."

Since its arrival, Michael, who volunteered at Lynn Museum in his 20's, has even shown the King one of the world's most famous pieces of medieval art.

"It was a bit surreal looking back. But when you're in the moment, and you're talking about the tapestry - you just kind of forget that.

"Because I'm from Norfolk, nearly every Christmas you'd go and see the Royal family at Sandringham - so it is kind of bizarre."

Getting the tapestry here is pretty remarkable considering Britain first asked for its loan in 1953, with repeated attempts over the decades.

After years (and years) of discussions and being a member of the Bayeux Tapestry Scientific Committee since 2013, Michael finally saw a real chance when its permanent home in France closed for major renovations.



Rob with one of Michael's books

And after many diplomatic talks, last year President Macron championed the loan.

The 68 metre long tapestry, which depicts events leading up to the Norman conquest of England and the Battle of Hastings in 1066

Michael, who's been obsessed by the tapestry for more than 30 years, first went to France to see it with his dad, Rob.

"He was studying at university at the time," Rob tells me, "And I wanted to take him because he was obsessed by the tapestry but he'd never actually seen it.

"So I said we'll go, and we went over to France for a few days. And he spent hours and hours looking at it, I mean I'd had enough after about ten minutes, but he was ever so obsessed by every little part."

Rob gets emotional when I ask about his son's achievements. "I'm just proud, very proud, to achieve all this - it's a big thing. He'd got those passions, in history and in art, it's just finding your niche in life really."

With the first lot of tickets quickly selling out, I ask if he's managed to see the tapestry. "No not yet, I'm going to apply like everyone else. But I definitely want to go."

"The first a hundred thousand tickets sold out in less than 24 hours, it was incredible, there's been nothing like that in terms of a museum type event. It's what you expect from pop concerts!"

We've got until next July to see the nearly 1,000-year-old embroidered masterpiece on English soil, and after chatting to Michael I'm even more excited about getting the chance.


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Lasting power of attorney

Laura Weston

A lasting power of attorney (LPA) is often set up on the assumption that a close family member or friend is the best person to act. While this works well for many people, there are circumstances where appointing someone close to you can create difficulties, risks or conflict.

For a property and financial affairs LPA, appointing a professional or independent attorney may sometimes be a better option.

A professional attorney is someone who accepts the appointment in a professional capacity and charges for their work. In practice, this will often be a solicitor.

When family may not be suitable

Difficulties can arise where several family members are appointed and relationships are strained or there is a history of disagreement. Even where there is no initial conflict, making financial decisions for a loved one who has lost capacity can be difficult, particularly where decisions are unpopular with other family members.

Practical capability is equally important. Acting as an attorney requires time, organisation and financial confidence. Someone with significant work or personal commitments may struggle to give the role sufficient attention, particularly if the LPA operates for many years.

Complex financial circumstances

Extra care may be needed where financial affairs are complex, for example where there are substantial investments, business interests, international assets or a high-value estate. Managing these effectively may require specialist knowledge and experience.

The risks of an unsuitable appointment

Choosing an unsuitable attorney can have significant consequences. Poor decisions or delays may lead to financial loss, while concerns about the management of money can damage family relationships and potentially result in legal disputes.



The Office of the Public Guardian can investigate concerns about attorneys and intervene where appropriate. Problems do not necessarily arise through dishonesty or bad intentions: or understanding of the role can also cause difficulties.

When professional support may help

A professional attorney can provide independence, experience and objectivity, particularly where finances are complex, there is potential for family conflict, or there are no family members available to take on the role.

Alternatively, a family member who is already acting as an attorney can instruct a solicitor to assist with managing financial affairs. This can be particularly useful where arrangements are complex or the attorney would benefit from professional guidance.

How we can help

For advice on LPAs or estate planning, please contact our private client team on 01328 863231.

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Free dictionaries for King's Lynn pupils

Trinity Rotary Club of King's Lynn



Hundreds of Year 4 children across the King's Lynn area have received their own illustrated dictionaries thanks to the town's three Rotary clubs.

A total of 950 copies of Dictionary 4 Life are being given free to pupils at local primary schools as part of an initiative Rotary has been running for more than a decade.

The dictionaries belong to the children, with each pupil able to put their name inside and keep the book as a resource throughout their education.

Dorothy Pulsford-Harris, President of Trinity Rotary, said feedback from schools had remained consistently positive.

"We have been doing this each year for over ten years and feedback from schools is always positive. The teachers are delighted with them as it helps to improve literacy, satisfies the national curriculum and helps them with their teaching."

At Clenchwarton Primary School, Year 4 pupils have already been putting their new dictionaries to work.

Class teacher Michelle Ryan said children had used them to find meanings and spellings in English as well as vocabulary encountered elsewhere in the curriculum, including Vikings, navigation and endoskeleton.

The books have also helped pupils investigate prefixes and use the illustrations to create more vivid descriptions in stories and poems.

Ben Paull, Principal Teacher at Parkway Academy, said pupils loved having their own personalised dictionaries.

He said they were regularly used during reading comprehension to explore unfamiliar vocabulary and during writing lessons to independently check spelling and meaning, helping children build confidence, accuracy and a richer vocabulary.

At Gaywood Primary School, Year 4 teacher and writing lead Chloe Sneath described the dictionaries as "a huge asset" to pupils and their learning.

She said: "They are particularly useful during writing and spelling lessons, and are an excellent resource when children are editing and improving their work independently.

"Having their own dictionary encourages children to become more confident, independent learners and to take greater ownership of their writing."

Rotary purchases the dictionaries in bulk for schools across the country at considerably less than the normal retail price. Schools contribute £1 towards each book, with Rotary meeting the remainder of the cost, meaning they are provided free to the children.

Anyone interested in getting involved with Trinity Rotary can contact Malcolm Wood on 07710 762588 or visit the club's website.

Image: St Matthew's with Malcolm Wood and Ernie Foremam

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Keeping Maritime History Alive

Popular heritage tours and maritime events set to return in 2027

Another successful season is drawing to a close for Rescue Wooden Boats, following a busy summer of heritage tours, events and visitors discovering North Norfolk's maritime history.



Lucy Lavers Heritage Tours in Wells Harbour have proved particularly popular, with an increase in whole-boat bookings for special occasions. Skipper Isaac takes passengers through the remarkable history of Lucy Lavers, local lifeboats, traditional wooden fishing boats and Wells Harbour.

The former lifeboat has an extraordinary history, including service during the Dunkirk evacuation, and continues to introduce new generations to the maritime heritage of the Norfolk coast.

Tours continue until 31 October, with the 2027 season beginning on Easter Saturday, 27 March. Gift cards are available and next year's full programme will be published shortly.

The charity's Maritime Heritage Centre at Stiffkey has also enjoyed a busy season, welcoming regular visitors and organised groups. The centre tells the stories of North Norfolk's wooden fishing boats and the communities that built and worked them, with displays, films, artefacts and activities covering fishing, lifeboats and traditional boatbuilding.

This year has also marked 50 years as a boatbuilder for David Hewitt, whose work forms an important part of the story told at the centre.

Hundreds of people also attended the annual Maritime Heritage Festival and Flotilla, when surviving historic working boats were reunited with some of the families who built and worked them. The weekend included shanty bands, displays, stalls and activities, with the Shannon class lifeboat Duke of Edinburgh helping to launch the flotilla.

The festival returns on 17 and 18 July 2027, while the popular Sea Shanty Summer BBQ at Stiffkey will return on Thursday 19 August.

Rescue Wooden Boats relies on volunteers and donations to continue its work and would welcome anyone interested in helping at the heritage centre, events or with the maintenance of Lucy Lavers.

For more information, volunteering or talks, contact Wendy Pritchard on 07796 951414 or wwp@wendypritchard.co.uk, or visit www.rescuewoodenboats.com.





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News from The Barking Bugle

Rosettes, Snoring & Christmas Jumpers!



Well, that's it… agility season is over for another year. And what a season it's been! I've had some lovely competitions, picked up a couple of rosettes recently and generally had a very wooftastic time.

Although I have to say, sleeping in the camper van before competitions hasn't always been quite as peaceful as you might expect. On one occasion, Dad's snoring was so loud that Mum, Zsa Zsa and I decided he was no longer welcome in the camper van and sent him off to sleep in the tent. Apparently, I need my beauty sleep when I'm competing.

Anyway, that's all behind us now and Miss Zsa Zsa thinks this means we can finally have a quiet life. Unfortunately for her, she seems to have forgotten about Christmas, The Hunstanton Christmas Dog Walk & Jumper Competition and our annual collection on behalf of PACT Animal Sanctuary outside Tesco in Hunstanton, a cause very close to our canine hearts!

We're going along for the Christmas Dog Walk & Jumper Competition on Sunday 29th November at 3pm, meeting by the Bandstand on The Green. There'll be a lovely dog walk down to the Ski Café and back. It's free and it's all in aid of the local charity, Quackhouse Rescue.

But the really important bit is the Christmas Jumper Competition. And guess what? I'm going to be one of the judges! Yes, me. Apparently my experience of winning rosettes and looking fabulous qualifies me for this very imPAWtant position. I'll be looking for style, originality and, most crucially, a dog who can wear a Christmas jumper without looking completely embarrassed. Miss Zsa Zsa says I have absolutely no qualifications for judging Christmas jumpers. I reminded her that I've won rosettes. She still wasn't impressed.

There'll be prizes for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place, kindly donated by Le Strange Arms, so we'd like to see as many of our local four-legged friends as possible. And because this event is taking place on the same day as the Hunstanton Christmas Light Switch-On, you can stay in town afterwards and enjoy all the Christmas festivities too. Mum has already mentioned that I might have to wear a Christmas jumper myself. I'm saying nothing until I've spoken to my agent.

As we're heading into autumn, there's also a little reminder to keep an eye on what we pick up on walks. Apparently, "I found it on the floor" isn't an acceptable reason for eating something we're not supposed to. Humans can be soooooo unreasonable.

It's also worth being aware of Seasonal Canine Illness, which is uncommon but can occur around this time of year, particularly following woodland walks. If you become unwell with vomiting, diarrhoea or unusual tiredness after a woodland walk, it's sensible to contact your vet, especially if you've been around the Sandringham Estate.

So, that's all from us this month but please do put a note in your diary that we will be collecting on behalf of PACT Animal Sanctuary outside Tesco in Hunstanton on Wednesday, 9th December.

Agility might be over, but it looks like I'm still going to be kept busy.

See you on The Green!

Woofs

Ziggy Bear & Miss Zsa Zsa

Canine Repawters – thebarkingbugle.co.uk



Making TAX Digital What you need to Know



Mapus-Smith & Lemon LLP

Making Tax Digital expands from April 2027, Who does it affect?

From 6 April 2027, Making Tax Digital for Income Tax (MTD for Income Tax) will become mandatory for individuals whose qualifying income is more than £30,000 for the relevant tax year. Sole traders and landlords with qualifying income of more than £30,000 will need to prepare for a significant change to the way they keep records and report their income to HMRC.

Anyone who may fall within the £30k threshold should start preparing well before April 2027.

1. Check your qualifying income

The first step is to establish whether your qualifying income is above £30,000. Remember that the test is based on gross income from self-employment and property, rather than simply the profit shown on your tax return.

2. Review your bookkeeping

If records are currently kept on paper, in spreadsheets or through a mixture of systems, now is a good time to review whether they will work under MTD.

3. Choose compatible software

Taxpayers should identify suitable MTD-compatible software and consider whether it will integrate with their bank, invoicing system and existing bookkeeping arrangements.

Businesses and landlords that currently rely on spreadsheets do not necessarily need to abandon them completely. HMRC recognises software solutions, including bridging software, which can allow certain spreadsheet-based record-keeping arrangements to meet the requirements where the necessary digital links and functionality are in place.*(Other MTD compatible software is available, such as Quickbooks, Sage, Xero and property-based packages such as Hammock.)*

4. Start using the system before it becomes compulsory

Moving to digital bookkeeping shortly before the first quarterly deadline could create unnecessary pressure. Starting earlier gives taxpayers and their accountants time to identify errors, establish procedures and become familiar with the software, Planning is key.

5. Speak to your accountant.

For taxpayers using an accountant or tax adviser, it is worth discussing MTD well in advance. Taxpayers need to establish who will maintain the digital records, who will submit the quarterly updates and who will complete the year-end tax return. This is essential given that there is a penalty regime which will come into force from 6 April 2027 for any late submissions.

For those affected from April 2027, the key message is simple: MTD should be treated as a bookkeeping change as much as a tax-return change.

With the first quarterly deadline for the 2027/28 tax year falling on 7 August 2027, businesses and landlords have time to prepare — but those who need new software or changes to their bookkeeping processes should not leave it until the last minute.

One of the most significant changes for taxpayers is the move away from providing information to HMRC just once a year. Instead, HMRC will receive regular updates throughout the year.

The system can also provide taxpayers with an estimate of their tax bill after quarterly information has been submitted. HMRC cautions that the estimate may not represent the final liability because other income, reliefs, allowances and year-end adjustments may affect the final calculation, this system could help taxpayers understand their developing tax position and avoid liability at the end of the tax year.

To discuss this matter further, please contact Nicola Slegg FCA at MapusSmith & Lemmon LLP, on 01485 534800 or nslegg@mapus.co.uk

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Caution: The information listed above is for general guidance only. You should neither act, nor refrain from action, on the basis of any such information. You should take appropriate professional advice on your particular circumstances because the application of laws and regulations will vary depending on particular circumstances and because laws and regulations undergo frequent change. Whilst we endeavour to ensure that the information contained herein is correct, neither we nor our firm shall be liable in damages (including, without limitation, damages for loss of business or loss of profits) arising in contract, tort or otherwise from any information contained in it, or from any action or decision taken as a result of using any such information.

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For an appointment please contact Ms N S Tarry FCA

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ABC at St Nicholas church

Elaine Bird

A firm fixture in the autumn calendar for over three decades, the flower festival at the stunning 14th century church of St Nicholas Dersingham drew gasps of delight from the hundreds of people who came to see (and smell) the beautiful displays depicting the 2026 theme ABC, a journey along the alphabet all lovingly created by members of the church and the local community.



'ABC' was the lead track on the Jackson 5's 1970 album. Michael Jackson might have sung that it's "as easy as 123," but the 36 intricate displays around the church prove it's anything but simple!

Town and Around caught up with the Rector, Rev Mark Capron who said: 'We've had hundreds and hundreds of people flocking in which



has been amazing; to see the creativity through all the flowers and arrangements, and it's for all ages from the little young ones who've enjoyed story times and songs, and for the older children the treasure hunt looking for teddy bears that are hidden around the church."

This year the flower festival kicked off with a comedy night which was a great success when Paul Kerensa, best known as a writer for Top Gear, Miranda and Not Going Out entertained a lively audience.

Watch the video at townandaround.net



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Hoppy days! Docking Hare Fair

Dani Crawshaw

A village tradition, hundreds of years of history and a celebration of local artists, makers and one very famous hare.

The event continues to delight, celebrating the legacy of the Hare family and showcasing talented local artists, craftspeople and makers. It has become a much-loved fixture in the village calendar, bringing together residents and visitors for a celebration of creativity, countryside traditions and the wildlife that inspires so many of the exhibits.

Outside St Mary's I meet husband and wife Dennis and Kathy from Essex, who're here on holiday. They've just bought a wooden hare by chainsaw carver Billy Bickell.

"She's hare mad," Dennis tells me. And Kathy doesn't deny it, "I just think they're magical, I've just adored them all my life. There's something about them. He'll go inside, so I can look at him all the time." (I presume she's talking about the hare…!)

It's clearly not just the artwork that attracts people here. There's a lovely atmosphere around the church, with visitors stopping to chat, admire the displays and compare their purchases. And, judging by the number of hare-themed creations on show, Kathy certainly isn't alone in her enthusiasm.

On the way into the church, we're greeted by Reverend Peter Cook, "The Hare family were residents in the village for over 400 years.

"We've been putting on the event since 2012, the year Major Hare died, we named it in memory of him."

I asked if anything's caught his eye, "There're some beautiful paintings in there."

Inside is full of wonderful creations - artwork, crafts, jewellery, clothes, books, homemade jam - the list goes on.

There's something particularly special about seeing so much locally produced work gathered together under one roof. Every table offers something different, from carefully crafted gifts to paintings inspired by the Norfolk countryside.





Gillian Sands from Holt is busy sketching, "I've always had dogs, and I walk the fields, and I see hares all the time, and they absolutely fascinate me and I just draw them."

Amy Todd from the village, who's selling her pottery creations, also has a fondness for the mammal, "Where do you start?! They're amazing creatures aren't they - absolutely beautiful."

It's easy to see why hares have captured the imagination of so many artists. Here, each artist seems to have found a different way of celebrating them.

After a wander around and a few purchases, we stop for tea and homemade chocolate cake (delicious). Then it's off home to find places for the new additions!

The fair has raised thousands towards church funds over the decades (raffles, food and drinks), and I'm sure this year will be no exception.

Well done to all the organisers and volunteers for another wonderful event.

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We do ears as well as eyes!

Annette - Hunstanton Eye Care / Dipple & Conway

It has only been in recent years that Audiology has become part of Optical practices, but it is a very good idea. Sight and Hearing are surely our most important senses, and both need looking after. We are very fortunate to have Sylvia Kewish working with us, a highly experienced audiologist, it seems there is nothing about ears and hearing she can't answer.

I can speak from personal experience as I wear hearing aids. My journey started about 15 years ago when my husband came home from working abroad and complained that he had to repeat everything he said to me. Of course I told him he shouldn't mumble, does this sound familiar?!! Anyway, the upshot was that it was my ears. When I collected my hearing aids we went for a walkabout around town and I remarked on the busker who was strumming his guitar, "What guitar?" asks Mr B! When we got home, I did wonder what the whooshing sound was, turned out to be the kettle, and I didn't realise that old clock made such a tick-tock racket. My hearing aids are definitely an essential of my life now.

Hearing loss is something that is usually a very gradual process, and sometimes not recognised by the person themselves as that is what sound has always been like. I can hear the radio is on in the morning, but it is only with my hearing aids in that I could tell you what they are chatting about. With modern technology today, I have an App on my phone, if I want to enhance a speaker giving us a talk then I can do so. If the phone rings, the sound goes straight into my ears, I can answer a call in any surroundings, say in a shop or busy restaurant, rather than trying to hear the phone in the noisy hubbub. I'm a church organist, and here was a challenge, to hear the vicar when he is talking to the congregation and I'm tucked away on the organ. I have a remote



microphone, it's only about one inch square, it sits on the lectern, and his voice goes straight into my ears, so I don't miss hymn number whatever, clever stuff!

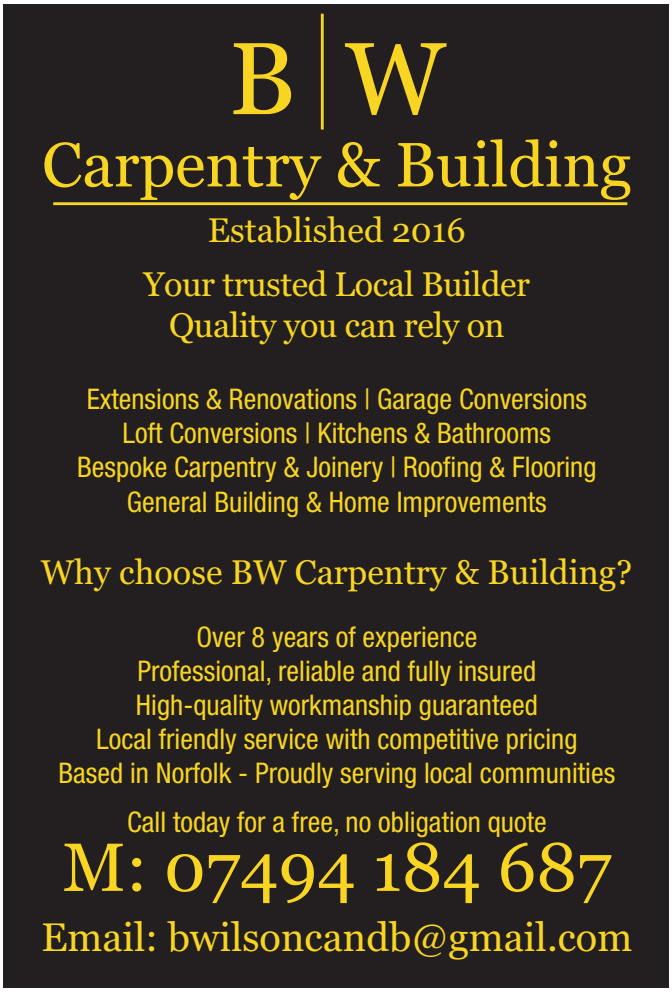
I believe the waiting time for an audiology hospital appointment is now over one year. At Hunstanton Eyecare / Dipple & Conway, Sylvia is in attendance most of the week, an appointment can be available within days. We offer a FREE quick hearing screening if you are just curious about your hearing, it will only take five minutes but gives an indication of whether there is a hearing loss or not. If you progress to a full hearing test with Sylvia, which is also FREE, we allow one hour to discuss all options. We offer a range of Hearing Aid packages, the package being important as it is not just the cost of the hearing aids but all the professional attention and on-going care for five years.

The world of hearing aids advances all the time, devices are small and discreet, and the technology packed into them is quite phenomenal.

So don't put up with "Eh, What, and Pardon", come and see us!

Annette





Want to be in next month's edition?

Have a local story, event, community update or something you'd like to share?

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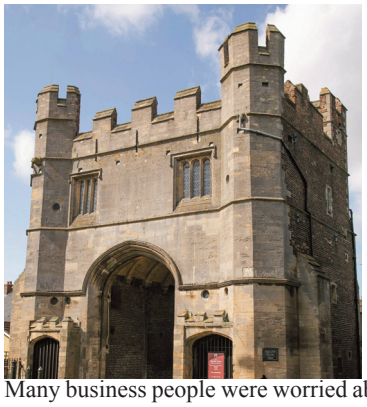
The Siege of Kings Lynn

Russel Lyon

Armed sieges against castles and fortified places were commonplace in medieval conflict and warfare. Its not a scenario you would associate with Kings Lynn but it did happen and it wasn't medieval. The English Civil War began in 1642 between Royalists who supported Kings Charles 1 who believed he had the divine right to rule to rule the country without interference from any one and Parliament who wanted to limit Royal power and reform the Church. It was a conflict that not only divided the country but also families and led to brothers fighting brothers and fathers against sons.

Here in the East of England most people had Nonconformised views and had almost completely come out for Parliament against the King but in Kings Lynn there was a notable exception. Sir Hamon L'Estrange was for the King. His family was local gentry based in their manor at Hunstanton, He was knighted by the King in 1604, was MP for Castle Rising, High Sheriff of Norfolk and made himself Governor of Kings Lynn. He was probably not the unanimous choice of the population of the town which was chief port at the time of East England. He declared for the King against the support of the local Parliamentary MP's who had a clear record against the King.

Why was Lynn so important to the Parliamentary cause? Lynn was needed as it was necessary for the importation of munitions and supplies for the army of East Anglia which Parliament controlled. Cromwell could not allow it to be in Royalist hands. Before the town



came out for the king for the King, Cromwell rushed over from Lowestoft and secured Lynn for Parliament, disarming any that might fight for the King and seizing a shipment of arms from Dunkirk. Not all the town people were opposed to the King especially the Mayor Thomas Gurlin as there was a feeling among some merchants that Parliament would impose higher taxes and obligations than the Royalists. Many business people were worried about these potential higher costs and L'Estrange had a big influence on them with practical influence and money.

The Parliament was aware of these influences and ordered the arrest of L' Estrange and other Royalist figures but it didn't happen as the town government was too weak to carry out the order. Next, Mayor Gurling ordered the house arrest of all the Parliamentary councillors and L'Estrange was declared Governor for the King.

The port was too important to lose and at the end of August Parliamentary forces moved to isolate the town, cut communications and made ready guns in West Lynn to bombard the town from across



the river. The royalists had not been passive in the town. They knew what was coming and built up the town walls, trained citizens to fight and stored supplies to withstand the siege. But there was little hope that the town despite all their preparations could hold out for long.

Despite frequent skirmishes outside the walls, the bombardment from the guns in West Lynn took its toll, sparing no one and many were killed. St Margaret's Church west window was shattered by exploding shells called "grenadoes."

By September the defenders were ready to negotiate and a truce was called. The Earl of Manchester was in charge of formal discussions and set out stern conditions for capitulation. The town was to be surrendered with all its arms and munitions. Prisoners were released. Some royalist soldiers and gentlemen could go free but the town had to pay substantial damages to satisfy the besieging army and avert plunder. Leading Royalists in the town such as Sir Hamon L'Estrange were to be kept as hostages until all the term were met. Colonel Valentine Walton who was Cromwell's brother in law entered the town and took charge.

The cost to Kings Lynn was high. The town had to raise £3200 (just under £10 million today) as the large sum required for the Parliamentary army to prevent looting. Damaged buildings had to be repaired and all parts of the town fabric needed attention. Lynn lived by its status as a trading port but this was badly hurt as confidence in the town as a place of business had been badly damaged.

After the siege Lynn suffered for a considerable time as there was conflicts between occupying soldiers who were left to garrison the town and were seldom payed properly and the town folk. However the worst of the damage was to buildings and the disruption to trade and taxation.

Royalist families lost most of all. The L'Estrange Estate paid a heavy price with very substantial losses in livestock, grain and money which was part of the enforced payment to Parliament. Hamon L'Estrange was affected most of all and was fined £1000 in compensation (about £2million in todays money) and his estate was forfeited until it was restored when Charles 11 regained his crown.

Images - Church from norfolkchurches.co.uk / South Gate courtesy of Kristina McArthur

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30 years of volunteering for the RNLI

Dani Crawshaw

Lee Torrice has dedicated three decades to Hunstanton RNLI, helping to save lives and inspire the next generation of volunteers.



"It's gone so quick, it's become a way of life."

Lee Torrice

I meet Lee at Hunstanton lifeboat station, where he's been volunteering for decades. Lee Torrice is retiring from his role as an inshore lifeboat helmsman, but says the RNLI is 'a way of life'.

"I joined back in 1996," he tells me. "My wife and I had recently moved to the area. I was chatting to a few crew members in the pub and they said come and have a go, give it a try, and that was it - I've been hooked ever since.

"I didn't realise I'd be doing it for this long. It's gone so quick, so, so quick. I've spent a lot of time at sea, it's become a way of life."

As well as being a lifeboat helmsman, Lee's a senior commander on the hovercraft.



"Why did I decide to join? My go to answer is always when I was a little boy in the 70's my favourite programme was The Thunderbirds.

"You can actually hear me humming the theme tune as we get called out sometimes.

I ask to hear it. He laughs, "I'm not doing that right now!"

Over the years Lee's been involved in numerous rescues. Some, he says, with outcomes that are 'heartbreaking'.

"There was one time when I got down here, and there was a kite surfer in trouble just off the cliffs, so we launched the boat.

"We were helping with CPR, and it was only whilst I was doing that that I realised I knew this guy, his daughter and my daughter used to go to school together. Unfortunately he passed away, that one will always haunt me."

When a rescue is successful though, Lee says there's nothing comparable.

"There's no better feeling in the world than bringing someone home safe from sea, you get a buzz, just going, there's your loved one again."



Lee with his son, Nathan

"It takes a lot of your time, training, commitment - you're running out on family barbecues, birthdays, weddings - the pager goes, you go. You have to have a very understanding family.

"My wife's grandparents were lifeboat crew, so she's been brought up with it.

"All my family's been involved as well, both my son and my daughter have been on the crew - very proud moment when they both joined and followed in my footsteps."

Hunstanton RNLI presented Lee with a Certificate of Thanks, recognising his commitment, professionalism and kindness throughout his 30 years.

The 55 year old will remain involved with the hovercraft and help train new volunteers.

"I'm retiring from being the helm of the lifeboat, it's a big responsibility. There are younger people that deserve that role better than me now. I've got some good memories out there - so it's time to pass it on."



30 years of answering the call at Hunstanton RNLI

"To volunteer the most precious thing you have, which is time, is just the most remarkable thing.

"Once you're out there, you're not friends, you're a crew, you have to trust each other, watch each other's backs - the training kicks in. The bond on whatever craft you're on is really, really strong. You're just one crew."

Any advice for people thinking of volunteering?

"Just don't brush it off and think I'd wish I'd done that, give it a go, and if it's not for you, fair enough, you gave it a try - but you just might enjoy it, it can change your life, change your stars - it did mine.

"The RNLI is the best hobby in the world. I get to play with millions of pounds worth of equipment, meet some amazing people, do some amazing training, and try and do some good at the end of the day."

Images: Dani Crawshaw // Christopher Bishop

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Oxford beckons for Merry

Kings Lynn



A former Springwood High School student is settling into life at one of the country's top academic institutions after securing a coveted place at Oxford.

Merry Enters has started reading Philosophy, Politics, and Economics (PPE) at the world-renowned university with a view to a possible career in Economics.

"I think Oxford is the best university in the world," he said. "For what I want to go into, I think it's a really strong foundation for that – maybe going into Economics, consulting, an analyst role maybe, or going into academics and being a writer or something"

The 18-year-old was awarded an A* in Physics, an A in Maths, and a B in Music Technology in his A-Levels.

He continued: "When I started A-Levels I was interested in pursuing Music, but I pretty quickly realised that actually debating and thinking about broader ideas has always been something that I'm really interested in.

He added: "Overall there were many individual teachers that really stood out and really supported me in my journey and believed in me when I wanted to apply for Oxford. I applied very late so I was kind of, 'Is there any point?' There were two teachers in particular that were 'Yeah, just go for it.'

"What helped me was the exposure to lots of different kinds of people at Springwood, and the ability to have conversions with people all the time about different things, in lessons and outside lessons.

"I made some great friends, and exposure to those kinds of people really helped me decide actually it was more of a speaking role I might want to go into in the future."chers were a great support – obviously I couldn't have gotten those grades without them.

"I learnt how to deal with a little bit of failure – nothing major, but when small things didn't go my way, whether academic or otherwise, I was very very sensitive, and I think I changed quite a lot emotionally through high school and sixth form.

"It was a really great environment to do my A-Levels in, as all my friends were here and I just had a great time."

Photo - Ian Burt

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A	P	P	L	E	A	V	E	S	R	U	N	L	M	F
Z	H	L	X	D	W	K	G	P	P	P	G	J	Q	M
B	P	V	M	D	R	R	Z	Y	K	V	E	U	V	B
X	K	R	C	Q	C	R	W	K	Q	H	T	U	V	X
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Terry Jermy MP

Having lived in South West Norfolk my entire life and through my years-long experience as a town, district and county councillor, I was clear about the challenges facing our farmers and growers when I became MP.

This is why, when building my constituency team, I sought to have a farming and environment specialist caseworker to provide in-depth, targeted support to our local farming community.

Supporting South West Norfolk farmers, growers and the environment is crucial to me and was a key motivation in me becoming the Co-Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Farming and joining the EFRA Select Committee, which scrutinises the work of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

Since becoming MP, I have met with more than 100 South West Norfolk farmers and have banded together with the local farming community to successfully campaign against the proposed changes to Agricultural Property Relief, stop the Methwold Megafarm proposal, secure millions in drought relief and heating oil support, and pushed for rural policy ideas to be embedded within each Government department.



Rurality is both a factor and a cause, and isolating rural policy to DEFRA, risks limiting the vital joined-up working necessary between Departments and limits the transparency of the needs that policies are crucial in addressing.

I feedback every policy idea or suggestion that South West Norfolk farmers and growers share with me to help inform future Government policy, such as calling for the Department of Health and Social Care to better support farming mental health, to looking at ways that agricultural technical skills can be embedded through the Department for Education curriculum.

It's also key to note the economic value that local farmers, growers and producers bring to our high streets, and how important it is for us to support their hard work whenever possible.

Buying locally supports our farmers, growers, producers, shopkeepers, local business owners, and high streets – all of which are a crucial part of our rural villages and towns – and also ensures that most of the money spent stays in our communities.

In October I will be holding (or depending on when this column is published, I may have already held it!) The Future of Farming: Bringing Together Farmers, Policymakers and Rural Support Organisations - a farming and support information event for farmers and agricultural businesses in South West Norfolk.

Farming remains at the heart of our local economy and rural communities, yet many farmers continue to face significant challenges, including financial pressures, climate and environmental issues, workforce shortages, and concerns around mental health and wellbeing.

Joining the conference will be representatives from Government agencies, farming charities, mental health and wellbeing services, rural support networks, environmental and conservation organisations, agricultural business advisers and skills, training and apprenticeship providers.

By bringing together a wide range of expertise under one roof, I hope to create a valuable one-stop event where farmers can access practical advice, discover available support, and make connections that will benefit their businesses and wellbeing.

Terry Jermy MP

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Tis the Season To be Jolly



Darren Shortt

Firework Displays, Bonfire Nights, Light Trails and Christmas light switch ons across our region

With the nights drawing in and Christmas creeping ever closer, November brings the first real burst of festive colour to West and North Norfolk.

Here are some of the dates to put in the diary.

FAWKES IN THE WALKS

Friday 6 November | The Walks, King's Lynn

King's Lynn's annual Fawkes in The Walks returns for another huge Bonfire Night celebration.

The free event starts at 6pm, with a funfair, stalls and live entertainment. Fireworks are scheduled for 8pm, with thousands traditionally gathering for one of West Norfolk's biggest community events.

HUNSTANTON CLIFF TOP FIREWORKS

Saturday 7 November | Hunstanton Cliff Top

Hunstanton's popular cliff-top fireworks return on Saturday 7 November, bringing another spectacular night to the coast

The event traditionally combines a bonfire and fireworks with entertainment and refreshments. Full official timings were still awaited at the time of going to press, so check locally before travelling.

CHRISTMAS AT BLICKLING

From Saturday 14 November | Blickling Estate

Christmas arrives at Blickling with the Hall dressed for the season and a Shaun the Sheep Find the Flock trail around the garden.

The previous Garden of Lights will not return in 2026. Instead, special late openings on 28 and 29 November will see the drive and Hall illuminated, with the estate open until 7pm.

THE NORFOLK LIGHTS EXPRESS

14 November to 3 January | North Norfolk Railway

The North Norfolk Railway lights up after dark as its spectacular illuminated train returns between Sheringham and Holt.

For 2026, a new Around the World theme combines the brightly lit train with colourful displays along the route for a memorable journey through North Norfolk.

LUMINATE SANDRINGHAM

21 November to 24 December | Sandringham Estate

Sandringham's Royal Parkland is transformed after dark with a mile-long trail featuring thousands of lights, music and interactive installations.

Firepits for marshmallow toasting and a vintage funfair add to the atmosphere. Entry is by timed slot from 4.30pm, with advance booking required.

KING'S LYNN CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

Sunday 22 November | King's Lynn

Christmas gets underway in King's Lynn with the town's annual Christmas lights celebrations.

Festivities include live music and a lantern procession before the switch-on, with two 32-foot Christmas trees forming part of the town centre display.

HUNSTANTON CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

Sunday 29 November| Hunstanton

Hunstanton will welcome the festive season with its annual Christmas lights switch-on, bringing seasonal colour to the seaside town.

The event is a popular fixture in the town's Christmas calendar, with residents and visitors gathering to enjoy the festive atmosphere. Check locally for confirmed arrangements.

SHERINGHAM CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

Friday 27 November | Sheringham

Sheringham gets into the Christmas spirit with festive shopping, entertainment, Father Christmas and carols with the Salvation Army.

The countdown to the switch-on takes place at 5pm, when the town's Christmas lights illuminate the streets.

HOLKHAM BY CANDLELIGHT

From Sunday 29 November | Holkham Hall

Holkham Hall begins its popular Candlelight experience at the end of November.

The magnificent state rooms are transformed with Christmas decorations, installations and twinkling lights, accompanied by live music in the Marble Hall.



National Coastwatch Brancaster

We are coming to the end of a very busy summer which, with its spells of hot weather, has brought many visitors to the beach and coastal waters. The need for continual vigilance has kept the volunteer Watchkeepers at the Brancaster station very busy.

One major incident has been reported since last month, when a suspicious substance was washed up along the coast from the station. This was removed by National Trust officers following notification by Watchkeepers and proved to be discarded building materials



The Brancaster Staithe Sea Shanty Festival goes from strength to strength, attracting thousands of visitors. The festival organisers have again been very generous in donating £2500 towards the work of the Brancaster Coastwatch station, as well as donating to the RNLI Hunstanton. Watchkeepers from the Brancaster station were busy during the festival days, providing cakes and beverages, as well as talking to visitors about the station's role. The photograph shows this year's Shanty Festival in full swing.

Watches will continue throughout the winter months through all weathers, so that beach and coast users are kept safe.

If you would like more information on National Coastwatch Brancaster please contact Richard Burrows, Deputy Station Manager, on 07535 612777.

You can visit our website on our website, nci.org.uk/Brancaster or on socials #nationalcoastwatchbrancaster, for our webcam and up-to-date information on weather and tides.

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Sedgeford Craft Fayre news

Jaquie Sindle

Sunday 9 August came, it was a lovely day and at Sedgeford Summer Craft Fayre we too had a lovely day. We were lucky to have some new and exiting traders join us as well as members of Brancaster Coast Watch for whom we were raising money from the raffle. And what a great raffle it was.

The first prize was an amazing voucher for £120 very kindly donated by The White Horse at Brancaster. The winners were very pleased and may have already visited the establishment. Thank you to The White Horse for your kind generosity. Thank you too to everyone else who gave raffle prizes. These included not only all the stall holders but Sedgeford Village Hall, Goldilocks Hair Salon in Hunstanton, Tesco in Heacham and Tesco in Hunstanton.

Coast Watch Brancaster had a very good day informing people of their role in water safety and also as they are trained watchkeepers they act as the eyes and ears along the shore, monitor marine radio channels which is invaluable especially during poor visibiliy and they will also alert HM Coastguard when vessels, swimmers and even walkers face danger so help direct rescue teams such as the RNLI to exact locations.

They are totally reliant on donations and the 60 stations in England and Wales are staffed by over 2,800 volunteers who keep daylight watch 365 days a year at most stations. So a very worthy charity to assist and we are very pleased to say that the raffle raised £236.54.

The refresments are always a hit with our visitors. Sedgeford Church and the Village Hall Charity will benefit from funds raised. Thank you all who purchased the beautiful cakes and savouries.

As we approach November I am very pleased to inform you of the last Sedgeford Craft Fayre of 2026. As you may all well know, at every Fayre we run a raffle in aid of a different charity and for November we have chosen Heacham Fire and Rescue service. We all know what an extraordinary time all fire and rescure crews have had over this summer but I had chosen this charity at the end of last year and what a worthy charity it is. As we know all the guys and gals have "proper jobs" and it is up to the generosity of their employers that the crews are able to do such a fantastic job for us all.

The Fayre will be held on Sunday 22 November at Sedgeford Village Hall, Jarvie Close, Sedgeford PE36 5NG. The Fayre is on between 10.00 a.m. and 3 p.m. Entry is free, there is a huge amount of free parking on the playing field and as always there will be an lovely selection of foods and light refreshments all made by members of the Village Hall Committee and members of the Church.

The raffle will have some amazing prizes and I am sure the first prize winner of our August Fayre was delighted with their prize. Our stall holders this time include regular favourites such as exquisite jewellery, beautiful stained glass, incredible pyrography, hand made cards for every occasion.

There will also be cakes and bakes, textiles of varying styles, pottery and so much more yet to be confirmed at the time of writing. This is an artisan craft fayre and all our crafters hand make their work. In fact something for everyone for that very special Christmas present not available on the high street.

Unfortunately, dogs are not allowed in the Village Hall. We all look forward to seeing you on 22 November 2026.

In the meantime, stay safe and well.

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Young Explorers Discover nature

Darren Shortt

Classrooms were swapped for gardens, woodland trails and a little outdoor adventure when 54 children from two Heacham schools enjoyed a day exploring the natural world at Holkham.



Year 2 pupils from Heacham Infant School joined Year 3 children from Heacham Junior School for a visit designed to bring their science lessons to life, with everything from planting seeds to hunting for bugs on the day's programme.



The younger children headed into the woodland armed with brushes, magnifying pots and plenty of curiosity. Turning over logs, searching through leaves and investigating the soil, they discovered a variety of creatures, including snails, spiders and some impressively colourful ground beetles.

Using identification sheets, the children worked out what they had found before creating clay models of their discoveries and carefully returning the creatures to their natural habitats.

Meanwhile, the Year 3 pupils explored Holkham's Walled Garden, learning about the flowers, herbs, fruits and vegetables growing there.

There was plenty of excitement when they were given trowels and the opportunity to dig in the garden's planters, particularly when worms began appearing in the soil.

The children also created their own 'magic potions' using fragrant herbs and flowers before planting wildflower, pumpkin and pea seeds in trays to take home.



After lunch, the two groups swapped activities, ensuring everyone had the opportunity to experience both the gardens and woodland.

Year 3 teacher Harriet Munson said the visit complemented the children's classroom learning about habitats, plants and life cycles.

She explained that the hands-on workshops gave pupils the chance to explore nature beyond the classroom while taking home their creations and a greater understanding of how plants grow and where insects live.

Both schools are part of the West Norfolk Academies Trust and regularly visit Holkham, although this was the first time pupils from the infant and junior schools had enjoyed the experience together.

For the young explorers, it was a day of muddy hands, fascinating discoveries and memories to take home.

Images - Ian Burt

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News from Brancaster Village Hall

Geoff Wingrove

A new group has started on Wednesday mornings – "Brancaster Community Chat" – which aims to bring village members together with chat and refreshments. The other regular groups continue, with Yoga, Functional Fitness, Baby and Toddler and Mobile Library Van.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS – DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Saturday 31st October: Halloween Party. 4.00pm onwards, Lots of fun for children, with disco, games and fancy dress

Saturday 21st November: South East Iraq: The UK as an Occupying Power. 6.30pm: A talk by Brigadier (Ret) David Wakefield OBE.

Saturday 28th November: Brancaster Winter Fair: Details to follow

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It is pleasing to report the strength of support from the community to ensure the long-term future of this vital village resource.

For further information about these and all our activities, please contact us at bvhsetup@gmail.com

FROM THE BRANCASTER PARISH ARCHIVE: THE LEGEND OF BLACK SHUCK

Large, ghostly and fierce dogs, particularly dark coated, have always proved a fascination to storytellers and authors throughout the ages: the effect of stories becomes more dramatic when it occurs in isolated areas such as moors, marshes or deserted churchyards. This fascination continues into modern times, with the sinister dogs in films such as "The Omen" and "Ghostbusters": J.K. Rowling also has a large fierce dog in her Harry Potter series of books. However, perhaps the most famous tale of a great, evil dog can be found in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's "The Hound of the Baskervilles", the subject of films and TV drama.



Norfolk and East Anglia have their own enduring stories about an enormous black dog that roams isolated rural areas, marshes and churchyards – Black Shuck. Tales of Black Shuck have been circulating for hundreds of years, with various sightings across East Anglia. In 1577 Abraham Fleming wrote an account of "A strange and terrible wonder at Bungay, Suffolk", a story about a dreadful beast. Fleming wrote about a ghostly black dog called Black Shuck which appeared in Bungay like a clap of thunder, causing the church steeple to collapse and leaving scorch marks in the church floor. This may have been an embellishment of an electrical storm that occurred in the area.

"Shuck" comes from an Old English word "scucca", meaning devil or fiend, perhaps from the root "skuh", to terrify. The first real description of Black Shuck comes from the Reverend E.S. Taylor, who described Shuck as a dog fiend – black, shaggy, with fiery eyes and immense size, that visits churchyards at midnight. A little earlier than this, the legend of a large ghostly dog at Blickling Hall was circulating. This animal was eventually imprisoned in a tower at the Hall, which was not reopened until the 1860s, when the dog reappeared to be seen again in World War II and 2003.

The legend of Black Shuck may also have come from when the Danes ruled East Anglia under Dane Law: the principal god of the Danes was Odin, who kept two huge hunting dogs named Geri and Freki. It could also have come from the legend of the Southery Shuck. Southery is a small village between Ely and Downham Market; in the Middle Ages it was the subject of friction between pagan fen people and Christian monks. As a result of the conflict, a large black dog of ghostly appearance haunted the village and the church that was eventually built on the site.



In 1877 Walter Rye mentioned Black Shuck in "A most curious local manifestation". In 1901 W.A. Duff, in his article "Highways and Byways" described Black Shuck as a huge black dog that prowls dark lanes and isolated footpaths, howling in a bloodcurdling manner. The creature has no discernible footfall noise and one fierce eye in the centre of its forehead, like a cyclops. Meeting Black Shuck is said to result in the death of a person within a year: these predictions of doom and bad luck are certainly borne out in the tales of Blickling Hall and Southery.

In looking at the longevity of the legend, Dr. Simon Sherwood quotes from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle of 1127, which associates large black hunting dogs with jet black eyes like saucers and a terrible appearance with dark-clad huntsmen riding hideous black horses. Stories of terrifying black dogs have been recounted from all parts of the British Isles and also on the continent. The British tales may draw from German or Celtic elements in their history: many of these stories describe spectral dogs linked to macabre happenings in the community or the death of owners or particular people.

Besides the films and books about ghostly black dogs, popular culture has also modern pop groups singing songs about Black Shuck. The rock band Darkness, for example, has a Black Shuck song on their first album and animated dramas, video games and graphic novels feature Black Shuck.

Returning to Norfolk in modern times, the Black Shuck Distillery is a family-owned business based in Fakenham, established in 2012. The distillery produces an extensive range of spirits and liqueurs that can be purchased widely across Norfolk, including in the Farm Shop in Thornham.

The pictures show different representations of Black Shuck.

Geoff Wingrove

Historic Landmarks Secure Funding

Richard Dix

Three of King's Lynn's historic treasures to benefit from heritage funding, King's Lynn Minster, St Nicholas' Chapel and the Sommerfeld & Thomas Warehouse have all been named among the successful projects in a national government heritage funding announcement.



The Minster is one of 51 places of worship across the country selected for the new Places of Worship Renewal Fund. The money will help pay for urgent repairs to the church, whose origins date back to Norman times and which has stood beside Saturday Market Place for centuries.

St Nicholas' Chapel in St Ann's Street has also been selected. With its impressive roof and centuries of history, it remains an important part of the town's heritage and a popular place for visitors.

The third project, the Sommerfeld & Thomas Warehouse, has been awarded support through a separate scheme, the Heritage at Risk Capital Fund. It focuses on historic buildings considered to be at risk, helping to secure their future and encourage new uses. The town's warehouses are a reminder of the days when King's Lynn was one of England's significant ports.

Across the country, more than £41 million is being invested in 74 heritage projects, delivered by Historic England and aimed at places where the need for repairs is greatest and raising money locally is difficult.

Heritage Minister Baroness Twycross said: "Nothing tells the stories of our nation quite like the historic buildings at the heart of our communities. But too often they are a far cry from their former glory with leaking roofs and crumbling stonework.

"Thanks to this funding, the much-loved buildings that fill our hometowns with character will be keeping the doors open to communities for years to come."

The individual amounts awarded to the three King's Lynn projects have not yet been detailed.

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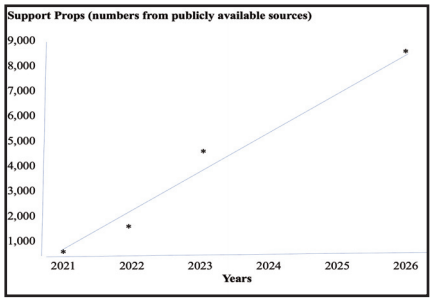
SPEAK OUT NOW… BEFORE YOU END UP IN HOSPITAL!

Cllr Michael de Whalley - Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Biodiversity KLWNBC

So the storm clouds continue to gather over the Queen Elizabeth Hospital project, when will it ever get built, what services will it and won't it offer? As the finish date has now been pushed on until 2033, one may be tempted to wonder if this is to allow more time to design out some of the services that reasonable residents could normally expect to be provided locally like A&E, maternity etc. As we all pay the same taxes that provide for hospital services nationally why should citizens living in the catchment of the QEH get any less for their money than others in more favoured areas?

Have you seen the statement issued by the Hospital trust regarding the rumours about cutting services from the new QEH? It says nothing other than that no firm decisions have been taken and that when they are it will all be in your best interests. For myself, reading between the lines it actually says "curses" how did we get found out?

For the moment let's just consider the rebuild. The QE buildings themselves now come with the benefit of 8,598 steel and timber props supporting this crumbling hospital. It has become a monument to the short life design and cheap, rapid build approaches which were in their time trumpeted as "value for money" projects! If you like drawing graphs try this exercise, plot QEH support prop numbers against years… Tell you what, I shall make it simple for you, here is one I made earlier.



Now, you do not have to be a mathematician, statistician or structural engineer to see that this does not look good, in fact it looks potentially disastrous. If this was a coal mine, a railway bridge or the House of Commons, alarm bells would be ringing, money would be found and action taken, but in the case of our QEH the rebuild is simply being further delayed until 2033! Heaven forbid that the inexorable increase in supports proves unable at some point to prevent the structural failure of this "best value hospital", what then? You can almost feel those political outpourings of collective grief, the "this must never happen again" statements and the calls for another in the trail of endless public disaster enquiries and all at the taxpayer's expense.

Now dear reader, if you did your own graph but extended the scale out to 2033 in years and up to 20,000 in support props, using the line from my graph you would see a predicted 19,000 supports in place by 2033! Do you think the last patient to use the old hospital in 2033 will actually be able to get in through the front door for the army of support props!

As for what the new hospital will be able to do for you in your hour of need, I have covered some of the problems in the last edition of Town and Around. Do not fear because you have a chance to influence events through consultation (which you along with many others may not have heard of). Healthwatch Norfolk's web site (tinyurl.com/saveourqeh), by e-mail (enquiries@healthwatchnorfolk.co.uk), or by phone on 01953 858029, will allow you to give your views on West Norfolk hospital care for the future, but you have only until Nov. 6th to do this!

While you are at it, please, please, please tell everyone you know and lots you don't, to fill in the consultation themselves. It will be too late to voice your views in 2033 when you are seeking care from a shiny new non-existent department in a shiny new, possibly existing hospital.

SO FILL IT IN NOW, please.

CLLR Michaelde Whalley.

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Plant Of The Month Sweet Peas

Wendy Warner

Getting your garden spring ready, but why Sweet Peas

Why are we talking about Sweet Peas in November? Hardy annuals, like sweet peas, will grow, flower and die in one year.

By sowing them in the autumn rather than the spring, they have an extra few months of growth, so by next summer they will produce larger, earlier flowers on stronger stems.

Given some light frost protection over the winter, young sweet pea plants can establish strong root systems before the cold weather arrives putting them in an excellent position to burst into growth as the temperatures increase and there are longer hours of daylight.

Most sweet peas will grow to 180cm (6ft) tall and there are a range of single colours or mixes available as seeds and most are highly fragrant.

Sweet peas should be sown in pots or root trainers, they require a good depth of compost, Soaking the seeds in water overnight so they plump up or placing the seeds on damp kitchen paper until a tiny root tip appears can speed up germination.

Use a good quality, seed compost and sow the seeds around 1.5cm deep. Water lightly and place in a bright position. They don't need particularly high temperatures to germinate, and once they have emerged, give them plenty of light and avoid excessive warmth, ideally a cool greenhouse, cold frame or sheltered spot outside.

This should result in short, sturdy plants rather than tall, soft stems.

As temperatures decrease, the plants will appear to do very little growing. If it is very cold, outside plants should be brought into an unheated greenhouse or protected with fleece.

Although the plants are hardy, the roots can be vulnerable if pots become frozen, Once autumn-sown seedlings produce several pairs of leaves, pinch out the growing tip.

This will encourage the plants to produce side shoots, creating bushier, stronger plants with several flowering stems rather than one long, spindly shoot.

With the current hot summers we are getting they will establish themselves quicker, For a long display, successional sowing from autumn to spring, you can have flowers from May through to August.

As winter fades, plants can be acclimatised to outdoor conditions and once the risk of frosts has passed, and soil is warmer, the young plants can be planted into their final positions. Choose a sunny spot where they will get plenty of light and enrich the soil with organic matter or additional compost.

They will require something decent to climb such as pea sticks, Tie in young shoots until they startattaching themselves.

Once flowering, regular picking is essential, They make excellent cut flowers and the more you pick the more flowers they are likely to produce.

When there's not as much to do in the garden, sowing your sweet peas now will give you something to look forward to in the spring and vases full of flowers in the summer.

Wendy Warner

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The little theatre you never knew you had…

Liz Brewer

Tucked away in the West Norfolk countryside, down a winding lane and beyond the trees, there's a little theatre with rather big ideas. And the funny thing is, plenty of people who live nearby have never even heard of it.

Tucked away in the village of West Acre, just a few miles outside King's Lynn and Swaffham, sits Westacre Theatre: a rather special little place that has been creating extraordinary theatre in an unexpected corner of Norfolk for more than 35 years.



It began with a simple idea. Back in the late 1980s, a group of theatre enthusiasts decided to stage Shakespeare in a garden overlooking the ruins of Castle Acre Abbey. Audiences came, the summers rolled by, and before long an abandoned chapel became their rehearsal room. Eventually, it became home.

Today, behind those unassuming doors, you'll find an intimate 83-seat Studio Theatre, a beautiful outdoor performance space beside a lake, and a community of actors, artists, volunteers and creative souls who believe that brilliant theatre shouldn't be reserved for people who live in cities.

There's a summer tent for performances under the Norfolk sky, picnics on the lawn and evenings that make you wonder why you ever go anywhere else. But Westacre isn't just a summer secret.

As the nights draw in, the leaves turn golden and the nation settles down for Strictly and Traitors, something rather wonderful is happening here. The wood-burning stove is being lit in the beautiful foyer. The café is ready with warming drinks and cake. And behind the theatre doors, stories are unfolding that are best experienced together, in real life, rather than through a television screen.

Westacre makes around eight of its own productions each year, alongside visiting theatre companies, music, cinema, book events and much more. It also welcomes around 150 children and young people through its doors each week, offering opportunities to perform, create, learn and grow in confidence.

Westacre is a registered charity, and every ticket bought helps keep this little corner of the arts alive. Audiences make the work possible. They help bring brilliant performers to rural Norfolk, give local young people somewhere to discover their talents, and ensure that the next generation can experience the thrill of live performance.

This Christmas, Westacre presents a very special adaptation of Cinderella by Philip Wilson. But forget everything you think you know about the story. Expect a wish-giving tree, three magical dresses and help for Cinderella from a very unexpected source. It's a fresh, imaginative take on a familiar favourite, with plenty of enchantment for the whole family.

Perhaps that's the real secret of Westacre Theatre. It's not just a place to watch a play. It's a place where stories bring people together, where young imaginations take flight, and where a tiny theatre in the Norfolk countryside can make a surprisingly big difference.

So, dear reader, consider this your invitation. Come for the Cinderella magic, stay for the cake, warm yourself by the stove and discover a little local treasure you can help keep alive.

After all, every good story needs an audience. And this one is still being written.

What's on this Autumn: www.westacretheatre.com
Booking Office: 01760 755 007
Email: admin@westacrethreatre.com
Socials: @westacretheatre





Downham Market and District Horticultural Society

Affiliated to: The Royal Horticultural Society

A group of us made a very enjoyable visit to Peckover House garden near Wisbech back in September. As you will probably recall, the weather was unseasonably mild although, typically, we didn't actually see any sun until towards the end of our visit. We even had a bit of drizzle, although luckily it didn't come to much.

Louise Gardner (a case of nominative determinism if ever there was one) is Head Gardener. She gave a fascinating talk at our March meeting and we were keen to see the garden for ourselves. We heard how Louise and her team, mainly made up of very enthusiastic and knowledgeable volunteers, had worked hard to return the garden to its Georgian heyday, but with modern touches such as including more drought-resistant plants. Louise was an excellent guide, taking the time and trouble to answer all our questions patiently and informatively.



The attractive Reed Barn served as a convenient meeting point for our group, and we enjoyed refreshments both before and after our walk. Many of us purchased a plant or two – well, you can't not, can you? I bought an interesting-looking plant with a Latin name I didn't recognise. I did a Google search when I got home, and the plant turned out to be a Toadflax, or Toad Lily. It is a perennial and loves shade, and seems quite happy in my little shade garden.

Peckover House and Garden belongs to the National Trust. It is free to visit the beautiful garden and costs £10 for non-members to visit the house, and free to NT members. For more information, their website is below:

https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/cambridgeshire/peckover-house-and-garden

The photograph shows the beautiful Georgian orangery, the frontage planted up with a stunning mix of sun-loving and draught-tolerant gaillardia and coreopsis.

DIARY DATE: Next year's Summer Show is on Saturday 3 July, in Downham Market Town Hall again.

Further details

If you'd like further details about our Society or our Summer Show, please contact our membership secretary, Judith, on 01366 501466 or email: jt.mazur@tiscali.co.uk. At only £10 per year to join, it is a real bargain!

Carolyn Hayes



What's on in November

16th Oct - 16th Nov

George and the Drag Queen

SHOULDHAM VILLAGE HALL

7:30pm

Thu 29th - Tue 3rd

Dalegate Market Pop Up Shops

DALEGATE MARKET MAIN ROAD

Sun 1st

Wereham Indoor Car Boot Sale

WEREHAM VILLAGE HALL

Wereham Indoor Car Boot and Cafe

8:00am

Mon 2nd

Anmer Social Coffee Morning

ANMER SOCIAL CLUB, ANMER

Coffee; tea; cakes & biscuits available to purchase,

10:00am

Bingo Night

ANMER SOCIAL CLUB

7:00pm

Tues 3rd

NORFOLK and WAVENEY MIND GROUP MEETING

ANMER SOCIAL CLUB

11:00

Thurs 5th

Stanhoe and Barwick WI monthly meeting.

STANHOE READING ROOM,

A talk about the Royal Family.

2pm

Fri 6th - Sun 8th

Dalegate Market Christmas

DALEGATE MARKET MAIN ROAD

10:00am

Fri 6th

Fawkes in The Walks

THE WALKS TENNYSON ROAD

6:00pm

Sat 7th

Barn Dance

DERSINGHAM VILLAGE CENTRE

Hunstanton Cliff Top Fireworks Display

CLIFF TOP CAR PARK

Get ready for an unforgettable night of spectacular fireworks

4:30pm

Live Music - Will Pound & Jenn Butterworth

DEEPDALE CAMPING & ROOMS

A first visit to Deepdale for both these musicians, joining us for an intimate sitting room session.

7:30pm

"ROOTED IN SONG" MUSIC NIGHT

ANMER SOCIAL CLUB

7:00pm

Sun 8th

RAF Bircham Newton Open Day

RAF BIRCHAM NEWTON HERITAGE CENTRE

Royal Air Force Bircham Newton Heritage Centre Open Day

10:00am

Trust Talks: The Work of the Commonwealth War Graves

MARRIOTT'S WAREHOUSE

To mark Remembrance Day our November talk covers the creation of the CWGC during WW1.

2:30pm

Mon 9th - Thu 12th

Dalegate Market Christmas Pop Up Shops

DALEGATE MARKET MAIN ROAD

Mon 9th

Drumming with Les Chappell

HUNSTANTON COMMUNITY CEN

Join skilled musician and workshop leader Les for a fun, hands-on percussion experience.

1:00pm

Tues 10th

NORFOLK and WAVENEY MIND GROUP MEETING

ANMER SOCIAL CLUB

11:00am

Fri 13th - Sun 15th

Dalegate Market Christmas Pop Up Shops

DALEGATE MARKET MAIN ROAD

Fri 13th

FILM NIGHT FRIDAY

THE CHRISTOPHERS 15

7:00pm

Sandringham Christmas Craft, Food & Gift Fair

SANDRINGHAM ESTATE PE35 6EN

Over 250 stalls offering hand-crafted items and gifts from crafters, artists.

10:00am

Stand Up in Dereham

MEMORIAL HALL

Stand Up in Dereham – A Night of Top-Class Comedy

8:30pm

The Guildhall Singers

'Rhythms of Life'

ST JAMES CHURCH, HIGH

The Guildhall Singers presents 'Rhythms of Life'.

7.30pm

Sat 14th

Craft Fair

HOLME VILLAGE HALL,

10:00am

The Guildhall Singers 'Rhythms of Life'

ALL SAINTS CHURCH, HILLINGTON SQUARE, KING'S LYNN. PE30 5HS

The Guildhall Singers presents 'Rhythms of Life'. .

7.00pm

Sun 15th

Charity Literary Lunch with Midge Gillies

MARRIOTTS WAREHOUSE

Literary Lunch with Midge Gillies

12.30pm

Lego Sale

PRINCE OF WALES STAND AT FAKENHAM RACECOURSE

Previously built Lego kits for sale from our private collection

10.00am

VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

FLITCHAM COMMUNITY CENTRE

SEASONAL REFRESHMENTS,SERVED BY LADIES IN VICTORIAN COSTUMES. Bar open from 12pm

10:00am

Mon 16th

Anmer Coffee Morning

ANMER SOCIAL CLUB

Coffee; tea; cakes & biscuits available to purchase. For information please email: farmboy24@sky.com

10:00am

Mon 16th - Thu 19th

Dalegate Market Christmas Pop Up Shops

DALEGATE MARKET MAIN ROAD

North Norfolk Coast Christmas shop-producers & artisans.

10:00am

Tues 17th

Curry & Quiz Night

GOLDEN LION HOTEL THE GREEN

The Golden Lion's legendary monthly Curry & Quiz Night!

8:00pm

Drumming with Les Chappell

LONDON ROAD METHODIST

Join skilled musician and workshop leader Les for a fun, hands-on percussion experience.

1:00pm

Knit & Natter

OLD HUNSTANTON VILLAGE HALL

Monthly local 'Knit & Natter' group

10:00am

NORFOLK and WAVENEY MIND GROUP MEETING

ANMER SOCIAL CLUB

11:00am

Fri 20th

Acoustic Night

ANMER SOCIAL CLUB

Acoustic Night Friday 20th November - Club opens 7:00p.m.

Music from 7:30 p.m. Admission free

Fully Licensed bar

7:00pm

ACOUSTIC NIGHT FRIDAY 20th NOVEMBER

ANMER SOCIAL CLUB

7:00pm

Fri 20th - Sun 22nd

Dalegate Market Christmas Pop Up Shops

DALEGATE MARKET MAIN ROAD

North Norfolk Coast Christmas shopping that's not on the high street from local producers & artisans.

10:00am

Fri 20th

Race Night

OLD HUNSTANTON VILLAGE HALL

6:00pm

Snettisham Coffee Morning

SNETTISHAM MEMORIAL HALL

Coffee Morning at Snettisham Memorial Hall.

10:00am

Sat 21st

Hunstanton Craft Fair

HUNSTANTON TOWN HALL

Handmade crafts made by talented Norfolk craftspersons on the last Saturday of every month.

10:00am

North Wootton Village Market

NORTH WOOTTON VILLAGE HALL

Discover fresh local produce, unique hand-crafted goods,.

9:00am

Reconnect & Empower Day Retreat

LITTLE MASSINGHAM MANOR

Nourish & Bloom, one transformative day that will shift everything

10:00am

Snettisham Flea Market

SNETTISHAM MEMORIAL HALL-

Fabulous selection of eclectic vintage, antique and collectable items.

9:00am

Sun 22nd

Dersingham Craft & Gift Fair

DERSINGHAM VILLAGE CENTRE

Craft & Gift Fair at Dersingham Village Centre.

10:00am

King's Lynn Christmas Lights Switch-On

TUESDAY MARKET PLACE

Live music, a lantern procession, and the lighting of two 32-foot Christmas trees.

2:00pm

Tue 24th

NORFOLK and WAVENEY MIND GROUP MEETING

ANMER SOCIAL CLUB

11:00am

Snettisham Bingo Night

SNETTISHAM MEMORIAL HALL

Monthly family-friendly Bingo night at Snettisham Memorial Hall.

6:30pm

Wed 25th

National Theatre Live:

The Misanthrope

HUNSTANTON TOWN HALL

Award-winner Sandra Oh (Killing Eve) plays the title role in this razor-sharp reimagining of Molière's classic dark comedy.

1:00pm

Fri 27th - Sun 29th

Dalegate Market Christmas Pop Up Shops

DALEGATE MARKET MAIN ROAD .

10:00am

Fri 27th

QUIZ NIGHT -

FRIDAY 27th NOVEMBER

ANMER SOCIAL CLUB

7:00pm

Sat 28th

Christmas Fete

MANOR ROAD, HUNSTANTON,

Christmas fete with lots of fun

14:00

Craft Fair

WEREHAM VILLAGE HALL

Craft Fair at Wereham Village Hall

10:00am

Sisterhood Drumming Circle.

HEACHAM SCOUT HUT

2:00pm

Sat 28th

Kings Lynn Flower Club joint coffee morning

WEST NEWTON VILLAGE HALL,

10am

Sun 29th

Christmas Dog Walk & Jumper Competition

THE GREEN HUNSTANTON

Returning after a successful debut, this festive event runs alongside Hunstanton Town Council's Christmas lights switch-on.

00:00

Hunstanton Christmas Lights Switch-On

HUNSTANTON TOWN CENTRE

Join us for a magical start to the Festive Season in Hunstanton.

1:00pm

Mon 30th

Anmer Social Club Coffee Morning

ANMER SOCIAL CLUB

Telephone, text or WhatsApp 07899 872351

10:00am

Mon 30th - Thur 3rd

Dalegate Market Christmas Pop Up Shops

DALEGATE MARKET MAIN ROAD BURNHAM DEEPDALE NORFOLK PE31 8FB

North Norfolk Coast Christmas shopping that's not on the high street from local producers & artisans.

10:00am

Sandringham

Luminate Sandringham

Christmas light trails

21st Nov - 24th Dec 2026

Step into Sandringham after dark and discover a Christmas adventure unlike any other. Journey through the Frozen Kingdom. Watch the world around you come alive. Then slow down, soak up the atmosphere, warm up around the firepits and make a night of it together. Because Christmas is more fun when you're part of the magic. Set in the magnificent royal estate, Luminate Sandringham is where Christmas traditions begin and new memories are made. This is Christmas, reimagined. Come and discover where Christmas begins.

Healthy feet with Lauren

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£30 per appointment.

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Parkruns

Hunstanton Promenade parkrun

Where: Hunstanton Sailing Club, North Promenade, Hunstanton, PE36 6GB
When: Every Saturday, 9am
Distance: 5km
Format: Run, jog or walk
Facilities: Toilets nearby at the Salad Bowl Café
Dogs & pushchairs: Permitted
A flat, accessible weekly 5km event along Hunstanton's promenade. Participants are advised to arrive a *few minutes before the 9am start*.

Sandringham parkrun

Where: Sandringham Royal Park, PE35 6AB
When: Every Saturday, 9am
Distance: 5km
Format: Run, jog or walk
Start/finish: The Vista, near the children's play area.
Parking: Free for parkrun participants until 11am
A free, timed 5km event through Sandringham's Royal Parkland, open to all ages and abilities.

King's Lynn parkrun

Where: The Walks, King's Lynn, PE30 5NG
When: Every Saturday, 9am
Distance: 5km
Format: Run, jog or walk
Organisation: Run entirely by volunteers
One of the area's busiest parkruns, regularly attracting more than 300 participants. Recent events have topped 400 runners, walkers and joggers, with visitors joining local participants each week

King's Lynn Junior parkrun

When: Every Sunday, 9am
Where: The Walks Café, King's Lynn
Who: Ages 4–14
Cost: Free — registration required

Renegade Runners

When: Every Tuesday, 6pm
Where: Gannock Gate, The Walks
Cost: Free

Jimmy's Joggers

When: Every Thursday, 6pm
Where: Gannock Gate, The Walks
Cost: Free

Weekly Markets

King's Lynn Market

When: Every Tuesday
Where: Tuesday Market Place,

Downham Market

When: Every Friday and Saturday
Where: Town Hall car park, Downham Market

Hunstanton Indoor Market

When: Every Tuesday, 10am–2pm from October
Where: Hunstanton Town Hall, The Green

Useful Numbers

EMERGENCY

Emergency Services: 999
Police non-emergency: 101
NHS urgent medical help: 111
Power cut: 105
Gas / smell of gas: 0800 111 999
Crimestoppers: 0800 555 111
Samaritans: 116 123

HOSPITALS / DOCTORS

Queen Elizabeth Hospital, King's Lynn: 01553 613613
Hunstanton Medical Practice: 01485 532859

PHARMACIES

Hunstanton Pharmacy: 01485 532829
Boots Pharmacy, Hunstanton: 01485 532228
Fairbrother Pharmacy, Dersingham: 01485 540792

COUNCIL

Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk: 01553 616200
Council out-of-hours emergencies: 01553 616601
Hunstanton Town Council: 01485 532402
Hunstanton Resort Services: 01485 535150
Household bin enquiries: 0330 109 9220

TOURISM

Hunstanton Tourist Information: 01553 774297
King's Lynn Tourist Information: 01553 774297
Deepdale Visitor Information: 01485 210256

LOCAL TAXIS

Coastal Cars, Hunstanton: 01485 534222
Ben Cars, Hunstanton: 01485 533290
Award Cars, Snettisham: 01485 542415
Ladybird Car Services, Heacham: 01485 571947
JD's Taxis, Hunstanton: 07399 042043

VETS

Vets Now, King's Lynn: 01553 340462
Anchorage Barn Veterinary Clinic, Snettisham: 01485 528221

ROADSIDE HELP

MT Tyres, 24hr mobile tyres, roadside assistance & recovery: 07535 417120
DSL Tyres, 24hr mobile tyres: 07989 085763
Wills Mobile Tyres 24/7: 07444 741247
HS Mobile Tyres Norfolk: 07392 838460
Tears Recovery, King's Lynn: 01553 660922
Mobile Mechanic King's Lynn: 07912 315337

LOCAL ATTRACTIONS

SEA LIFE Hunstanton: 01485 533576
Norfolk Lavender, Heacham: 01485 570384
Holkham Visitor Reception: 01328 713111
Princess Theatre: 01485 532252
North Norfolk Railway: 01263 820800

Bircham Windmill Repairs



Dani Crawshaw

After almost 50 years, the cap of the windmill comes off to be repaired, and people turn up from all over to watch

In September the sails came off - and this month, after 47 years, the cap has been lifted. It was Roger Wagg, who bought the windmill in 1975, that, after years of restoration, put this one on.

But it's in need of repair, and it's Roger's grandson, Alec Chalmers, who's taking it on.



Alec Chalmers

Alec takes me to the top of the mill to show me why.

"If you look above your head, this is a shear, and this has shown bad signs of water damage each end.

"There's a temporary cap that's gong to go up here, to keep it watertight - and then we will do the work and put it back up again."

Alec makes it sound easy, but this has taken a lot of planning and preparation - and one very large crane (the cap weighs about 8 and a half tonnes).



Getting the cap ready

As we watch the team prepare, quite a crowd gathers.

Eve, Malcolm and Claire are here on holiday from Kent, "We've loved Bircham Mill for years," Claire says, "And we know this is a once in a lifetime experience, who sees a top taken off a windmill?! It's history in the making, absolutely fantastic."

All the generations of the Wagg family are watching, including Roger and his wife Gina - I ask how wonderful it is that their grandson has wanted to be so involved.

"It's a dream come true," Gina tells me, "It's absolutely fantastic, he's so capable, and so keen - just lovely.

"It's quite an emotional day really, I saw one go on 47 years ago, which was another big moment, it's like seeing my life flash before me really!"

It takes a few hours for the straps to be put around the cap and weather beam, but finally, very slowly, it is lifted - the weather for the occasion couldn't be better, blue skies and sunshine.

It's carefully manoeuvred to the ground, where over the winter Alec will be working hard to restore it.

"I've got a few good contacts that will help me along the way, my cousin Charlie, my dad - it's a family affair really.

"The windmill means a lot to me, it's been in the family for years, and hopefully it can be maintained for the community as well."

Roger's daughter Ellie and her husband Stevie (Alec's parents) now run the mill, which is, of course, the only working mill in North Norfolk open to the public.



The cap lowered to the ground

Now closed for the season, it's hoped by March next year, the cap and sales will be up and working again - and this iconic landmark will delight generations to come.

We can't wait to see it!

Watch the video at townandaround.net

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by the book

November & December Event

Christmas Wreath Making Workshops with Hillier Flowers

Wednesday 25th November 6.30 pm - 8.45 pm or

Sunday 6th December – 2.30pm – 4.45 pm.

Come join Fiona to create your beautiful wreath to take home.
Limited places – booking essential.

All Materials provided. £40 p p.

Contact: Adrian at the bookshop - 9 High Street Hunstanton, Tel : 01485 522349 email adrian@buyanotherbook.com

Wootton Park Crowned Best!

South Wootton celebrates double success at Anglia in Bloom awards

Wootton Park has been officially named the Best Park in East Anglia for 2026, following another outstanding performance in the prestigious Anglia in Bloom competition.

The popular South Wootton green space fought off competition from 17 other parks to take the top honour, securing both a Gold Award and the overall title of Best Park.

The achievement builds on last year's success, when Wootton Park also received a Gold Award, and represents a proud moment for the Wootton villages and the volunteers who work tirelessly to keep the area looking its best.

Receiving the award at the award ceremony in St Ives, Cambridgshire left to right - Nolan and Stella Mills with Will and Wendy Border



Anglia in Bloom is an annual competition celebrating horticultural excellence and community pride across Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Essex. Categories range from best-kept villages to outstanding parks and areas promoting biodiversity.

South Wootton in Bloom regularly enters different areas of the village into the competition, with Wootton Park becoming a particularly successful contender in recent years.

However, behind the awards lies a dedicated team of local volunteers whose efforts often go unnoticed.

From litter pickers and football club volunteers to those spreading gravel, clearing ditches and cleaning benches, countless hours of unpaid work help maintain the park and surrounding villages for everyone to enjoy.

Will Border, who shared the good news, said the achievement was something the whole community should be proud of.

He paid tribute to the many unsung heroes who contribute to keeping the area looking its best, as well as South Wootton in Bloom for its continued support.

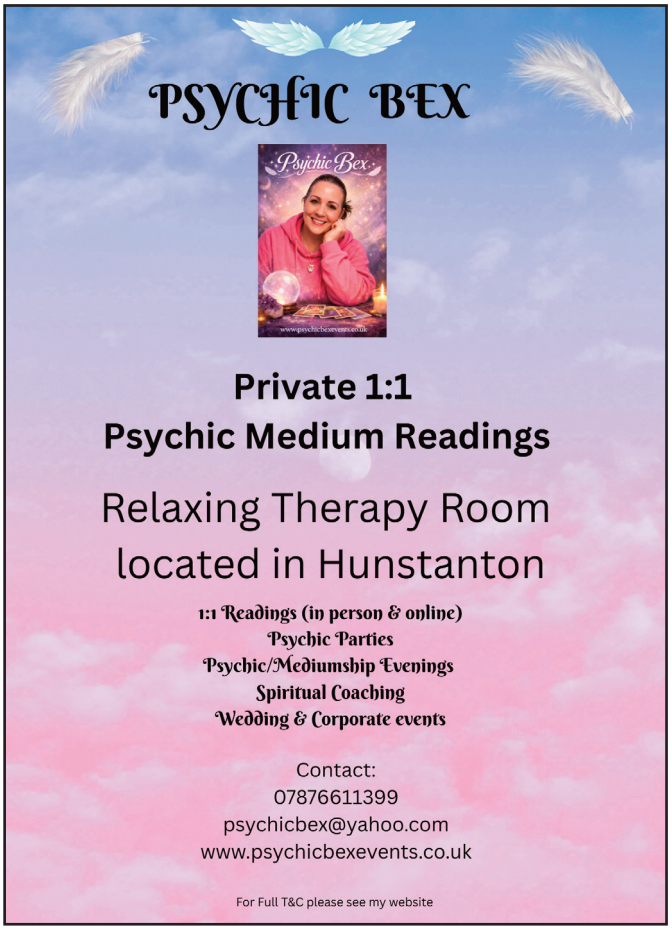
Special thanks were also extended to Stella and Nolan Mills, who submitted the successful competition application on behalf of the community.

The award is not just recognition of a beautifully maintained park, but also a celebration of the community spirit that makes South Wootton such a special place to live.

And with another prestigious title now secured, the team hopes the success will encourage even more residents to get involved.

Anyone interested in volunteering is warmly invited to join the team. Whether you can spare a little time or help regularly, every contribution makes a difference.

To find out more or offer your support, contact Will Border on 07701 381555.





Snettisham Gardening Club

RHS Affiliated club

Our November Meeting on Wednesday 25th will be our last of 2026 when van Pelt will provide an excellent Hog Roast (vegetarian option available) and we take our own drinks.

There may still be tickets available when you read this and guests are also welcome.

As our food order has to be made prior to the event all payments must be received by Friday 20th November at the latest.

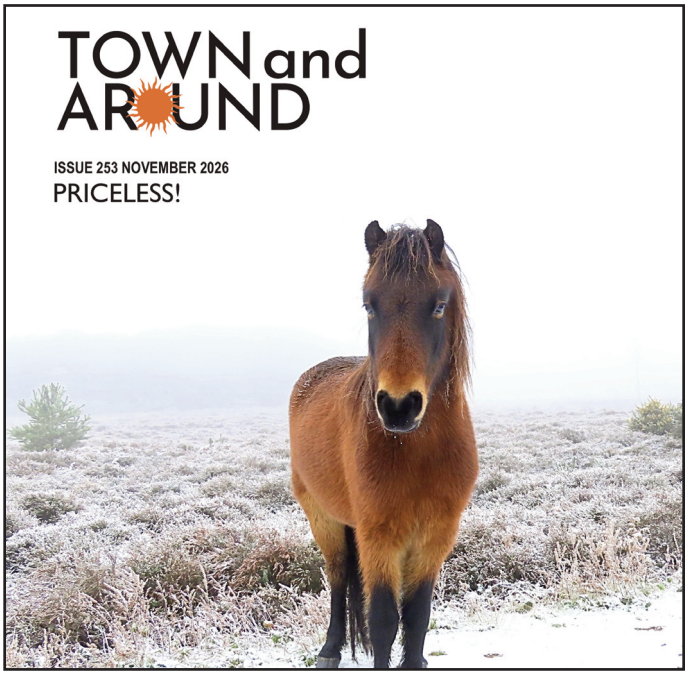
As with all our monthly meetings in the Memorial Hall, Old Church Road, the evening will begin at 7.30 pm.

For further information please call Gail on 07899933840 or Heather on 07772501445

Cover Photo Winner

Julie Smart

Congratulations to Julie Smart and this stunning image of a pony on Roydon Common, we all agreed this was a great cover photo for November, we would love to see your entries - email them to: editor@townandaround.net and it could be yourphoto on the cover next month, it can be anything you have snapped, people, places, pets and more!!



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Sandringham parkrun Celebrates

Three weekends of milestones, birthdays and fundraising at parkrun



September proved a month to remember at Sandringham parkrun, with three consecutive weekends bringing a milestone event, a fifth birthday celebration and a successful fundraiser for Macmillan Cancer Support.

The celebrations culminated on 26 September with another popular 'TuTu and Cake' Saturday, when runners, walkers and volunteers helped raise £287 for Macmillan through a special coffee morning.

The event also welcomed the monthly Move Charity 5K Your Way group, which supports people affected by cancer, together with their families, friends and healthcare professionals, in living active and fulfilling lives.

An impressive 381 people crossed the finish line, including 122 making their first visit to Sandringham and 12 completing their first ever parkrun. Callum Stanforth was first home in 17:50, while Nicola Jones was the first female finisher in 23:25.

Just one week earlier, there was another reason to bring out the cake as Sandringham parkrun celebrated its fifth birthday.

The event first took place on 18 September 2021 with 126 finishers and 19 volunteers. Five years later, weekly attendance regularly exceeds 300, while a record 571 people took part on Easter Saturday this year.

The growth has been matched by a dedicated volunteer team, with more than 30 people now regularly helping events run smoothly each week.

Birthday celebrations attracted 337 finishers, with regular Sandringham parkrunner Ben Keeley first home in 18:38. Olivia Ord was the first female finisher in 21:30.

The month of celebrations had begun on 12 September when Sandringham staged its 250th parkrun.

A total of 349 people took part in the landmark event, including 87 first-time visitors to Sandringham, while 43 participants recorded personal bests.

Sam Garforth of Headington RRC was first home in 18:59, while Poppy St Lawrence was the first female finisher, recording a new personal best of 22:04.

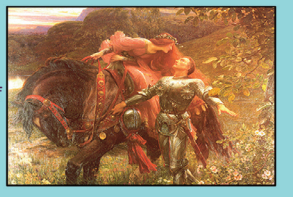
There was even an appropriately neat result further down the field, with Sara Clynch crossing the line in exactly 250th place at Sandringham's 250th event.

From its beginnings with just over 100 participants five years ago, Sandringham parkrun has grown into a thriving weekly community of runners, walkers and volunteers, giving September's three weekends plenty of reasons to celebrate.

Have you always wanted to learn more about the arts?
Then start now with our next illustrated talk at
Sedgeford Village Hall at 2:00pm on
Monday 9th November, 2026

Paintings Inspired by Poems
Lecturer: Ray Warburton

Our lecturer will be joined by local readers of poems to demonstrate the strong link between art and literature, with poems and paintings from across the centuries.



Benefits of membership:
* A varied programme of art talks
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Borough Council News

Cllr Terry parish, Heacham Ward which includes Sedgeford and Fring

As I write, rain is diminishing though there is a possibility of it increasing once again (it didn't). I note this as it is a phenomenon far more important than the activities of sundry public agents.

Local matters first: Anglian Water responded well to my complaint about their tardy cleaning up after roadworks and a gutter cleaning vehicle, accompanied by a man with a broom, removed the sand from Broadway.

Gutter clearance apparently rests with the Borough and they have responded positively to complaints made about named roads. So, if the gutters you pass appear hindered in their capacity to take water to nearby drains, please report it to the Borough via their website or me. If me, just send me a straight email giving location and problem; don't embellish it as I will forward your message to the appropriate office.

Recent complaints have been about blocked roadside drains; some packed with soil. Those are the responsibility of the County so report them via their website: www.norfolk.gov.uk/article/39652/report-a-highways-problem (or try the app previously mentioned). Or, contact your County Cllr. Councils exercising prudence would have cleaned out gutters and drains by now. Give them a nudge.

The case for a unitary council seems underlined by this divided attention to roadside gutters and drains.

Old McDonald had a farm but McDonalds wants a piece of Heacham. Opening lines for a pantomime? Objectors are still around 3 times the number of supporters. Objections from both statutory and non-statutory consultees have appeared on the planning portal: Norfolk Coast Partnership objects; Norfolk Wildlife Trust objects; Parish Council objects; Public Health has a holding objection referring to possible impacts on air quality as predicted traffic movements (1492-3450/day) exceeds criteria for concern; ecology officer objects; Natural England, always hedging its bets, advises the Borough to consider advice from local organisations involved in ecology e.g. wildlife trust; waste management has not added to its initial comment which refers to 'increased fly tipping due to people discarding rubbish on highways'.

Hot off the press, as it appeared as I am writing, the Conservation Officer strongly objects signing off with, 'I therefore object to the proposal and suggest that there is not a way in which it could be made suitable for this location'.

A response from NCC Highways is still awaited but a whisper told me they were/are hanging on for the highways report commissioned by a Heacham resident. That has been on the portal since the 1st October. Its conclusion, on page 22, 'It is recommended that this application is not consented in its current form and that additional evidence is provided to suitably assess the scheme from a transport perspective', emerges from a list of 7 shortfalls identified in the applicant's transport assessment.

Neither this private transport assessment nor the applicant's, comment on the adverse impacts which would be experienced along the unclassified U22202 Ringstead Road that is to the rear of the proposed development. I hope that NCC Highways do not forget this detail as they did refer to it in a pre-application comment.

Perhaps, next month, I can just report that the application has been refused.

Last month I waxed about the first Call for Sites consultation, now ended. This was about the 900 or so sites offered for potential development within the future Local Plan. There are around two dozen within Heacham, or adjacent to it, and more in Sedgeford.

There were 16000 views on line and 1500 comments. Though these numbers out class other consultations the Borough has organised, they do represent the whole of West Norfolk.

In addition, Officers have completed many 'surveys'. The officer assessment of sites will be made between Sept and Dec 2026 and there will be more public consultation. A significant part of that assessment is consideration of infrastructure close to the proposed sites, e.g. transport, shops, schools and doctors. Each is RAG rated. This is a traffic light system, red, amber green, to signify if the service is bad, worrying, or good.

I was surprised to be told that Heacham Doctors is one of the very few practices green rated as it has a capacity for 131 more patients. Its sister practice at Snettisham has a capacity for 54 additional patients and is amber rated. I questioned these figures and pointed out that, even if true, the Cheney Hill development of 134 houses which, one day, will be built, will likely add 300-400 new patients. Other developments in Snettisham and Sedgeford will also add to the pot. I was assured that the figures are updated every 6 months and that developments coming forward would be taken into consideration. We will see.

Meetings are going on between planners and Anglian Water about water supply and sewage capacity. An update on the latter is anticipated. My understanding/ belief is that there will be no increases in either for at least another 10 years.

I attended the autumn meeting of the Wash East Coast Management Strategy Stakeholders Forum and found more in the room (above Hunstanton library) or on line than usual. The big agenda item concerned Hunstanton sea defences. As widely reported in the press these are due for major works costing well in excess of £20million. It will take 2 or 3 years to organise plan and do. In the meantime, interim measures placed in front of part of the sea wall are needed.



This is in the form of 10,000 tons of granite which will be off loaded from a port yet to be decided. It will then be carried by lorry into Hunstanton. It is hoped this can be done in the off season.

The next agenda item was about the coast between Hunstanton and Wolverton Creek. Significant investigations and computer modelling of this stretch of the coast has taken place and there was a stakeholder consultation, held in Hunstanton, in June. Many options on what to do about future sea water encroachment, flooding, remain in the air after unviable options had been discarded. Spring 2028 will reveal possible remaining options and there will be fresh public consultation. I have asked for Heacham to be included as a location so residents can just walk to the public hall or other local venue.

Annual beach recycling will continue until 2031 (sand etc which is washed down towards Snettisham is brought back to Heacham). Cost next year is around £127K, over half of which comes from the Community Interest Company which derives funds from caravan owners etc. Heacham beach hut owners also contribute £15/pa. The remainder of the cost is provided by the Environment Agency, 50K, and the Borough £5K.

Talks about the beach hut land and the piece of land off the High St, Heacham, continue.

There is a lot of activity regarding the possible closures of facilities at the QE, A&E amongst them. The Borough is actively involved in challenging such nonsense whilst the Norfolk and Waveney University Hospitals Group (NWUHG) continues with its survey entitled, 'Shaping the Future of Healthcare in Norfolk and Waveney' which closes on Nov 6th.

The findings go to the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) on 19th Nov. If the decision about the QE is not what any sane person wants, then, no doubt, Government will say it's down to the NWUHG and they will say it's what the public intimated. Let's hope my cynicism about public bodies is unworthy, this time.

Cllr Terry Parish Heacham Ward which includes Sedgeford and Fring

Lost BBC ghost tapes found!

Kings Lynn

In late 1971 and early 1972 attention focussed on the old RAF Bicham Newton base (now the CITB) as a result of several ghostly observations of strange figures and odd sounds, especially at the squash courts on site. The BBC attention culminated in a trip by the Nationwide team with a team of people including a medium. Although a lot of this has been reported elsewhere (YouTube for instance), the actual recording has been missing for over 50 years, presumed wiped.

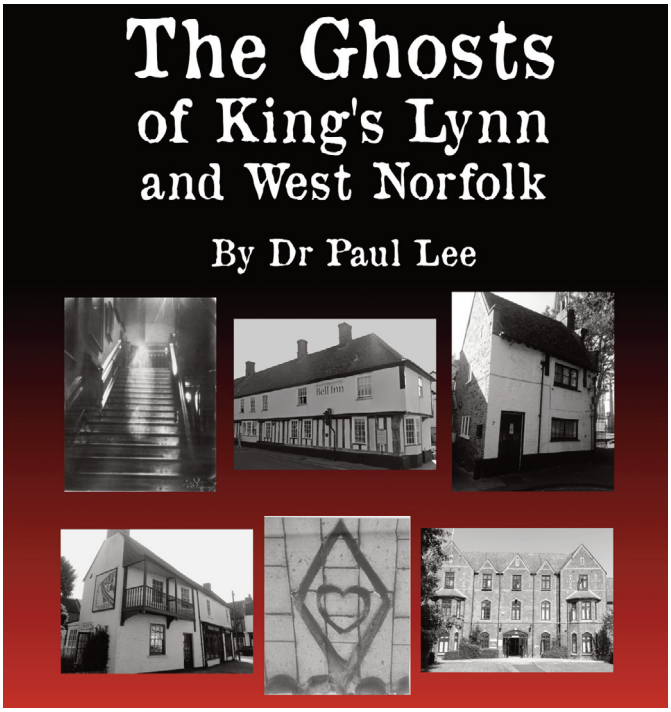


King's Lynn researcher Dr Paul Lee managed to find an obsolete tape at the British Film Institute that had this 6 minute fragment intact, after multiple

expensive trips to London. This was after the BBC tried to convince him that there was no documentation to support this TV show being broadcast and suggested that it had been on ITV!

Perplexingly, just about every detail unearthed by the mediums turned out to be wrong. But even so, this doesn't explain odd sounds recorded in sealed buildings and bizarre ghostly figures seen over the decades... and even to this day, there are fleeting reports of bizarre phenomena, such as a contruction student answering a knock on his hotel door to be confronted by a figure in a World War 2 RAF uniform.

There are more details about the ghosts of Bircham Newton (but not this recent data obviously!) in Paul's book, "The Ghosts of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk."





EAAA - News

East Anglia Air Ambulance - Trevor Dane

On 8 August, we attended the third annual Music n Motors event at The Old Garage Magdalen, near King's Lynn. We were pleased to support this wonderful event and would like to thank Caz and Neil and their team for their hard work and many hours of their time to put this event on in aid of East Anglian Air Ambulance again this year. We very much appreciate their kindness and support. The total raised this year was a fantastic £2,050 including £169.95 raised by KLFG. Thank you to everyone who supported Caz and Neil and East Anglian Air Ambulance.

On 12 September we attended an event at Magdalen Village Hall, raising £94.60, thank you to everyone involved!



For our last fundraising and awareness outdoor event of the year on 27 Sept we supported The Morris Minor Owners Club, West Norfolk Branch with their annual fundraising car display on The Green in Hunstanton, which raised £311.86 and £117.50 raised by KLFG. Thank you to everyone that supported the event again this year. We very much appreciate West Norfolk Morris Minors Club for all their fundraising efforts over many years.



Also, in Hunstanton, we were pleased to attend a cheque presentation for fundraiser Stella Westbury who has completed a Half Marathon Walk in aid of East Anglian Air Ambulance. Stella raised a brilliant £3,122. Thank you to Stella and everyone that supported her along the way.

On 3 October, we returned to Magdalen Village Hall for another fundraising event which raised £85.60. Thank you again to everyone who supported this.

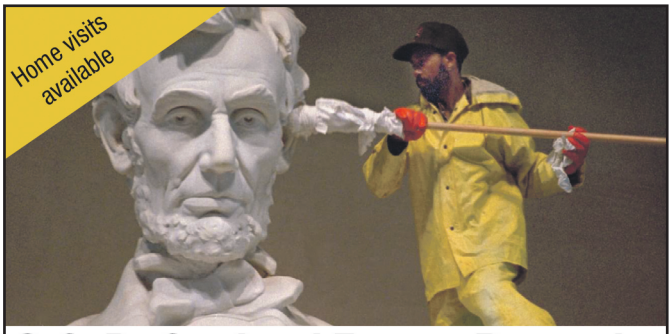
With you by their side, East Anglian Air Ambulance crews were able to provide lifesaving care for 157 people in September.

Total taskings: 207
Helicopter taskings: 133
Critical Care Car taskings: 74
94 people connected with our Aftercare team

We are only able to do what we do because of your support, thank you!

KLFG can be contacted by emailing myself or terri below:
trevordane104@gmail.com or tfaye.100@gmail.com
East Anglian Air Ambulance enquiries 03450 669 999







Enriching Lives Through Art

Lesley Nadel

Wherever human beings have gathered, they have felt the urge to create something that can be seen, heard or performed. Through art, we give form to ideas, emotions and concepts, crossing boundaries of race, culture, politics and religion. It should never belong only to the wealthy, the educated or the privileged few.

Painting, music, literature, dance, design and other creative pursuits accompany us through life, affecting us emotionally, psychologically and financially while influencing both personal and collective behaviour. Scientists are taking the relationship between art and brainpower increasingly seriously, exploring how engagement with art may exercise the mind while enriching life and wellbeing.

The story begins with an inner need to create: a desire to express something of the soul and to exercise a talent that cannot remain silent. The UK offers some of the world's finest museums, galleries, theatres, cinemas and cultural venues. When their doors closed during the 2020 pandemic—the longest interruption since the Second World War—the connection between art and its audiences took a different route. Through Zoom, YouTube and virtual tours, that connection survived and often reached people in new ways.

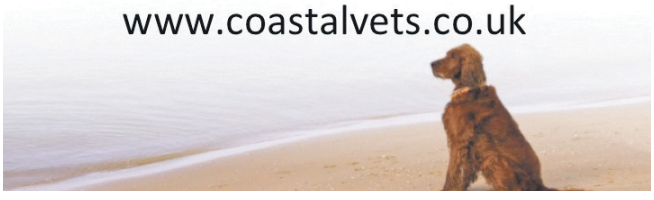
When classrooms closed and familiar routines fell away, many young people lost more than lessons; they also lost opportunities to encounter the creative arts. Yet school is often where a lifelong relationship with art first takes root. A child looks, questions and reflects, learning to imagine, communicate and see the world from more than one perspective. As educationalist Elliot W. Eisner observed, 'The arts teach children that problems can have more than one solution and that questions can have more than one answer.' In the 1940s, artists, including Picasso, Henry Moore and Henri Matisse, created prints for schools so that children could meet high-quality art first-hand. Many leading artists have since recalled that their own love of art began in the classroom, and with greater funding and flexibility in the timetable many more children could continue that journey.

The story of access to the arts is also a story of social mobility, US data dating back to 1850 suggested that family wealth played a major part in whether someone became an artist, musician, author or actor. Yet artists' average income remains below the national average, and minority groups are still less well represented in the visual arts and literature than in many other occupations. In 2022, the Government stated its intention to 'tackle cultural disparities and ensure that everyone, wherever they live, can enjoy the incredible benefits of culture in their lives'. For that ambition to become reality, working-class communities need support to produce the makers, musicians, creators, curators and directors of the future. Money in the art market remains unevenly distributed: most artists struggle while a popular few command enormous sums. Banksy and Basquiat both struggled before their work sold for huge sums. If art is to enrich every life, the opportunity to create it must not depend so heavily on where a person's story begins.

Have you always wanted to learn more about art? Then start now with the Arts Society North West Norfolk who are hosting a talk by Ray Warburton, an accredited Arts Society lecturer, entitled 'Paintings inspired by Poems', at 2:00 pm at Sedgeford Village Hall.

Full details www.theartssocietynwnorfolk.org.uk.

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King's Lynn named among England's best places to retire

By Richard Dix

History on the doorstep, walks beside the river, plenty of shops and services and house prices below the national average.

History on the doorstep, walks beside the river, plenty of shops and services and house prices below the national average have helped King's Lynn earn a place on a list of England's best places to retire.

Those of us who live in West Norfolk probably don't need telling that King's Lynn has rather a lot going for it, but it is always nice when somebody from outside the area notices too.

The town has been selected by online geography publication WorldAtlas as one of seven places it believes are among the best retirement locations in England.

And while Lynn's history inevitably gets a mention, some rather more everyday advantages helped it onto the list too.

WorldAtlas highlighted the town's range of shops and services, its market and the fact that it is large enough to offer many of the facilities people need without losing what the publication described as a "traditional town atmosphere".

Housing costs were another factor, The publication quoted an average property price of £263,298 across King's Lynn and West Norfolk in June, compared with the England figure it used of £293,000.

That difference of around £30,000 was seen as one of the practical attractions for anyone considering where to spend their retirement.

A town where history is difficult to miss

Of course, you don't have to walk very far through King's Lynn before its past starts making itself known.

WorldAtlas picked out the town's links with the Hanseatic League and some of the buildings which help tell that story.

The Custom House and Hanse House were highlighted, alongside St George's Guildhall and Trinity Guildhall.

For anyone with the time to explore, there are the lanes and quays around the historic centre, guided walks and the riverside alongside the Great Ouse.

And that relatively flat riverside walk might become particularly appealing when leisurely afternoons start taking priority over the morning commute.

The publication said affordability alone wasn't enough to make somewhere a good place to retire.

It also considered the surroundings, access to culture and nature and, importantly, whether there was actually something enjoyable to do once you got there.

King's Lynn was one of seven English towns chosen.

It appears alongside Alnwick in Northumberland, Barnard Castle in County Durham, Beverley and Bridlington in East Yorkshire, Newark-on-Trent in Nottinghamshire and our Lincolnshire neighbour, Boston.

In summing up its choices, WorldAtlas particularly highlighted King's Lynn and Beverley as places offering a greater range of amenities while still retaining the feel of a traditional town.

For King's Lynn, it is another reminder that some of the things we can easily take for granted locally, from centuries-old buildings to the river running through the heart of town, are precisely the things that make somewhere attractive to people looking for a new place to call home.

And, apparently, somewhere to put your feet up and enjoy retirement isn't such a bad description of West Norfolk after all.



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Hunstanton Promenade Parkrun

Lifestyle Desk

We have had another lovely summer season at Hunstanton Promenade parkrun, with lots of people running and walking every Saturday morning on the clifftops. As we all know it was a very hot summer and on one particular Saturday the Salad Bowl Cafe came to our rescue providing much needed water to many of our finishers. Thank you!



Positively, parkrunners and walkers came from near and far and swelled our numbers during the school summer holiday period.

This summer our busiest week was on Saturday 22nd August when 247 people took part and 21 people volunteered to make this possible.

Recently we had one park runner who shared that some parkruns in America have to warn people that they need to cautious given the risk of alligators! Thankfully there is no need for such warnings here in Hunstanton, just the moderate breeze to overcome!

Now that we are into autumn, our weekly numbers have as expected reduced and some participants have shared that they particularly like our parkrun because it is a small and friendly event.

On a less positive note, we had our celebration bell stolen during the summer. However, our friends at Hunstanton Men's Shed have very kindly made our new bell detachable from its wooden stand so that we can keep it safe between parkruns. It's lovely to have it back and we encourage people to ring it whether it be for a personal best or another personal reason, such as a birthday or a first run at Hunstanton.

Going forward we had initially planned to return to our winter course on the prom in early November but this has now been delayed due to the prom repairs which are now taking place.

Having taken advice from the Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk we expect to return to the prom on Saturday 21st November.

A couple of weeks later (5th December) will be our 300th parkrun celebration and we are pleased to announce that Hunstanton Sailing Club will be putting on a coffee and cake event after our parkrun with the proceeds that are raised being donated to our parkrun.

Finally, as always the core team of Run Directors remain indebted to our team of volunteers who give their time to make our parkrun a friendly and inclusive weekly event.

If you are interested in either running, walking and, or volunteering at our parkrun please do feel free to get in touch via our Facebook page or via email:
hunstantonpromenade@parkrun.com,
or just turn up one Saturday morning at 8:50am in time for our pre event briefing.
We look forward to seeing you!



Norfolk's Garden Birds Need YOU



Darren Shortt & RSPB

Nearly 14,000 Norfolk residents joined last year's Big Garden Birdwatch. Now it's time to count again!

Blue Tits, House Sparrows and Woodpigeons were the three most frequently recorded birds in Norfolk during last year's Big Garden Birdwatch, and residents are being encouraged to help discover how our feathered friends are faring when the annual survey returns from 29 to 31 January 2027.



Nearly 14,000 people across Norfolk took part in the 2026 event, spending an hour watching and counting the birds visiting their gardens, balconies and local green spaces.

Across the UK, more than 650,000 people participated, recording over nine million birds and helping the RSPB build a picture of how some of Britain's best-loved species are doing.

Interestingly, Norfolk's results differed from the national picture. While Blue Tits topped the county's list, House Sparrows remained the UK's most frequently recorded garden bird for the 23rd consecutive year, followed by Blue Tits and Starlings.

But behind those familiar sightings lies a worrying trend. Average House Sparrow numbers have fallen by 64% since the survey began in 1979, while Starling numbers have declined by 85%.

The Big Garden Birdwatch has become the UK's largest garden wildlife survey, with participants recording more than 212 million birds over its history.

Beccy Speight, the RSPB's Chief Executive, said: "Many of our beloved garden birds are under threat. By taking part in the Birdwatch, you and hundreds of thousands of other nature lovers across the UK help build a picture of how our garden birds are faring. Every spot counts, even if you see nothing at all."

Taking part couldn't be easier. Simply choose one hour between 29 and 31 January 2027 and count the birds that land in your garden, on your balcony, at your allotment or in a local park.

Record the highest number of each species seen at any one time, rather than adding up every sighting throughout the hour. Birds flying overhead shouldn't be included.

Supported by Postcode Lottery players, the 2027 event aims to encourage even more people to enjoy an hour surrounded by nature while contributing to important conservation research.

Registration opens on 9 December 2026, with free bird identification guides and advice on attracting wildlife available to everyone taking part.

To receive your free Big Garden Birdwatch guide, text BIRD to 82727 or visit rspb.org.uk/birdwatch

Whether you spot a garden full of birds or just one curious robin, every sighting counts.

Images - RSPB and Ben Andrew

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8 Year old cycles 80 Miles For Charity



Dani Crawshaw

Sophia and her dad Ben cycle from King's Lynn to Cromer to raise money for East Winch Wildlife Centre

We're tired, but extremely proud for making it, Ben Sawyer tells me. Him and his 8 year old daughter have completed an 80 mile charity bike ride.

"It was really motivating checking the JustGiving page along our journey, reading the comments and seeing our total climb up!"

The cycle, from King's Lynn to Cromer, is to raise money for East Winch Wildlife Centre.

They want to give back to the centre, as it's where Sophia took a fallen nest of baby jackdaws to be looked after.



"I rescue baby jackdaws," she tells me, "And they just made me think I'd like to help the animals that are still there and trying to recover."

Ben adds, "We often take birds and animals we have found, that need a little bit of help, up to the RSPCA in East Winch - and it's nice to give them something back."

I meet the pair in Old Hunstanton, just before they set off for their second day cycling to Wells. They've already done 28 miles.

They tell me it was a tiring first day, but they've slept well - I ask how many miles they'll be doing in total.

Ben says, "We say 70, but it's definitely more than 70, especially when someone goes the wrong way, me!" Sophia points to her dad to emphasise the point - giggling.

They laugh about their journey so far, both of them clearly enjoying the experience and the time together.

Sophia says it's a fun thing to do with her dad, adding, "I get to see stuff that you don't normally see, when you're in a car. We saw some deer and went by a river."

She goes on to tell me snacks have been key, and Ben smiles and says they have a secret weapon.

"Harry Styles, when she's starting to feel tired, I pop him on - and it gives her motivation."

Before I wave the pair off, I ask Ben what he thinks of Sophia taking on this challenge.

"I'm so proud of her, she's a real strong little character, and anything like this we'll do everything we can to support her.

"She's a very determined little girl - she's got tonnes of grit."

And she really does, because in just 3 days she cycles 80 miles and raises hundreds of pounds for charity.

The whole family, and Sophia's best friend Harriet, are waiting for them in Cromer to celebrate their arrival.

The 8 year old says she enjoyed the whole route, but that, 'her favourite part was finishing it'. And she's already planning a fundraising swim, and another bike ride with her younger sister Florence.

Ben and Sophia in Cromer, with sister Florence in the background

When Ben asks what advice Sophia has for her sister, she turns to her and says, 'Just remember Florence, never give up!'

What an incredible 8 year old, with a wonderfully supportive family.

Well done Sophia and Ben!

Watch the video at townandaround.net

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Sedgeford, Norfolk

Firewalk Raises funds For eight charities



King's Lynn Priory Satellite Rotary Club

Firewalkers braved the glowing coals at Alive Lynnsport, raising money for eight local Norfolk charities.

Brave fundraisers stepped barefoot across glowing coals at Alive Lynnsport as King's Lynn Priory Satellite Rotary Club brought the community together in support of eight Norfolk causes.

Six teams and five individual firewalkers took part in Firewalk to Fundraise! 2026, cheered on by friends, family and supporters.

Each participant took on the challenge for a charity close to their heart, meaning one evening of fundraising will benefit eight different local organisations.

The firewalk was led by Mark and Tanya Daniels from Charity Firewalk, who prepared the participants before they made their barefoot journey across the glowing coals. Their team also staged a fire performance and tended the fire throughout the evening.

King's Lynn Priory Satellite Rotary Club said the event had been a fantastic night.



"For many, firewalking is much more than simply walking across hot coals. It is a very personal challenge and we hope everyone who took part came away feeling incredibly proud of what they achieved, while also raising valuable funds for eight different local Norfolk charities."

Chris Osler from KL1 Radio provided music and entertainment on the night, with Alive Lynnsport once again hosting the event.

The club also thanked local sponsors GPFM, Stephenson Smart, The Extraordinary Hat Company, Piggin' Out Catering, West Norfolk Glass and Roythorne & Son, alongside the volunteers and supporters who helped make the evening possible.

The final fundraising total is still being calculated, with several teams organising their fundraising independently and donations continuing to come in.

The Rotary Club said: "Ultimately, the reason we do this is to support our local community. This year's firewalkers have been raising money for eight different Norfolk charities, so one evening and one challenge will make a difference to eight local causes."

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Hunstanton Bowls Club

And so the season finishes



The 2026 outdoor bowling season is now well & truly over and, although it brought with it surprising challenges with the long dry spell, thankfully, due to the hard work & commitment of members the watering system was kept in action and the green survived….just!

During the past few weeks the annual green servicing work has been completed. We are very grateful to all those who commit to keeping our playing surface, arguably, one of the best in the county….long may it continue!



The season finished with the (now) traditional President's Colourful Shirt Day when the Men challenge the Ladies. This was great fun with some fifty bowlers participating in an action packed afternoon followed by a hearty buffet. Honours on the green this year went to Men…but watch out for 2027!

Just a week later we came together once again but this time to celebrate President Mick Hallifax's 90th birthday. This was a memorable afternoon when countless friends, family & bowlers from across the county gathered together in the clubhouse for a surprise party. A wonderful testament to a very highly regarded man and bowler. Thanks must go to all those involved in helping to arrange this and in keeping the secret from Mick!

Moving into the autumn our Friday social evenings will continue with the addition of numerous functions…to which all are invited. The first up is a Quiz Night on Friday 13th November: Tickets £5.00 per person which includes a buffet.

For more details contact John (07895 947747) or Debra (07521 871689)

This season has seen the club thrive and grow. We have welcomed several new members who have quickly become valued & competent bowlers. We have bowlers who have been newly recognised as County champions and we have hosted visiting teams from across the region for Friendlies at weekends, making new friends along the way.

Finally, congratulations must go to Mo Stokes for being awarded her County badge and Debra Wright on reaching the last eight in the National Senior Singles at Leamington Spa….a great achievement!



West Norfolk Sports Roundup

Richard Dix

From the football pitches of King's Lynn and our villages to the speedway track, hockey fields and pool tables, West Norfolk's sporting community has enjoyed a busy September and early October.

While bigger clubs attract the headlines, smaller teams continue to demonstrate the importance of grassroots sport. Much of that success happens thanks to volunteers working behind the scenes, from preparing pitches and organising fixtures to supporting young players taking their first steps into competitive sport.

King's Lynn Town enjoyed positive results during September, including a 2–0 victory against Chorley and a 5–0 win away at AFC Telford United. The Linnets continued their form into October with a 1–0 success against Buxton. The results gave supporters plenty to cheer about as the club looked to build momentum heading into the autumn fixtures.

Downham Town progressed in the FA Vase with a 1–0 victory over Woodbridge Town, while Heacham secured a 1–0 win against Cornard United.

Dersingham Rovers defeated Caister 7–1. Hunstanton Town enjoyed Norfolk Junior Cup success with a 6–3 victory over AC Mill Lane, while Heacham Reserves recorded a 7–1 win against FC Viking.

At the Adrian Flux Arena, King's Lynn Stars recorded a 52–38 home victory over Leicester in September, followed by a narrow 47–43 defeat away to Northampton on 6 October.

King's Lynn Young Stars drew 45–45 with Leicester and defeated Middlesbrough 56–34, highlighting the young talent coming through the sport.

Pelicans Hockey Club made a positive start to the season. The men's first team recorded a 4–0 victory over St Albans II, while the fourth team beat Ely City III 4–2.

The women's third team also impressed, defeating Ely City III 6–1. With teams competing at different levels, the club continues to offer opportunities for players of varying ages and abilities.

There has been plenty of competitive action in the Northwold and District Pool League.

Watlington Sports and Social Club's A team won their opening four league matches against Wellington Warriors, Narborough Sports and Social Club, Northwold Wizards and Weeting A.

Elsewhere, The Ship defeated Any Pocket Will Do 12–3, while Wellington Chargers beat Northwold Wizards 10–5.

King's Lynn Golf Club recorded a 4–0 away victory over Mundesley in the Norfolk Handicap League during September. The clubs met again in early October, sharing the honours in a 2–2 draw.

Rugby, squash, darts, cricket, tennis and athletics remain important parts of local sport, supported by dedicated players, coaches and volunteers.

From village football cup victories to promising young speedway riders, there's plenty to celebrate across West Norfolk. As the autumn season continues, there will undoubtedly be more memorable performances, unexpected results and local sporting achievements worth celebrating.

Have you got a sporting success to share? Town & Around would love to hear from local clubs, teams and individuals. Send your news, results and photographs to editor@townandaround.net, and help us celebrate the people keeping West Norfolk active.

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Strictly's Original Bad Boys Are Back!

Darren Shortt



Brendan Cole and James Jordan are joining forces for a brand-new theatre tour, bringing their trademark honesty, showbiz gossip and spectacular dancing to Hunstanton next April. The original bad boys of ballroom are back, and this time nothing is off the table!

Former Strictly Come Dancing favourites Brendan Cole and James Jordan are joining forces for their first-ever double-act theatre tour, promising an evening of laughter, revelations and plenty of dancing.

The pair, who became household names through their appearances on the hugely popular BBC show, will embark on a 52-date nationwide tour in spring 2027, visiting intimate theatres across England, Scotland and Wales.

Titled Dance Rebels – Strictly Unleashed, the show promises to lift the lid on life behind the scenes of one of Britain's best-loved television programmes, with the two outspoken stars sharing their experiences, opinions and stories from their years in the ballroom.

Audiences can expect plenty of showbiz gossip, backstage revelations and the sort of straight-talking honesty that has made both men such memorable personalities.

Of course, it wouldn't be a Strictly-inspired evening without some dancing, and the pair will also be demonstrating the signature moves and routines that helped make them famous.

Brendan made Strictly history in 2004 when he became the programme's very first professional champion, lifting the glitterball trophy alongside celebrity partner Natasha Kaplinsky.

James joined the programme in 2006 and went on to enjoy an eight-year run, reaching the final twice and establishing himself as one of the show's most recognisable professional dancers.

Both became known for their strong personalities and willingness to speak their minds, sometimes finding themselves at the centre of controversy along the way.

Since leaving Strictly, neither has been particularly shy about expressing an opinion, and their new show promises to give audiences an entertaining insight into their experiences both on and off the dancefloor.

Brendan said: "James and I are the original bad boys of ballroom and we cannot wait to get out on tour, share our unfiltered views on Strictly, sequins, spray-tans and behind-the-scenes scandal. You can also look forward to us sharing our signature moves; it'll be a night you won't want to miss.

James added: "Anyone who knows me knows that I have strong opinions and am not afraid to share them! Brendan and I are going to have so much fun on the road together, prepare for pranks, laughter and lots of showbiz gossip, plus a few of our favourite dance routines mixed in."

The tour will also be accompanied by a new book, Dance Rebels, which brings together the pair's stories and experiences in their own words.

Published as a collector's hardback edition, complete with a signed bookplate, the book promises more of the outrageous anecdotes and behind-the-scenes revelations that fans have come to expect from the duo,

With the book arriving in November and the tour beginning next spring, it could also make an ideal Christmas present for Strictly fans who fancy discovering a little more about what really goes on behind the sequins and spray tans.

For those who have followed Brendan and James throughout their television careers, the opportunity to see them together on stage promises something rather different from the polished performances normally associated with Saturday night ballroom dancing.

And the good news for local Strictly fans is that they won't have to travel far to enjoy the show.

Brendan Cole and James Jordan will bring Dance Rebels – Strictly Unleashed to the Princess Theatre in Hunstanton on Sunday 18 April 2027, with the performance starting at 7.30pm.

Tickets are on sale now, with further information and booking details available through A Way With Media's official tour website.

awaywithmedia.com

Battle to Save King's Lynn's A&E

Alexandra Kemp

There is a serious battle looming here in West Norfolk. A life and death fight - literally- for our most critical public services. Affecting every one of us. The new "Clinical Strategy" from "Norfolk and Waveney University Hospitals Group" (the new centralised hospital management for all 3 Norfolk Hospitals regrettably set up last year) - is highly likely to include an option to close, yes close - Accident and Emergency, Critical Care, and Maternity at Lynn's Queen Elizabeth Hospital (and close A and E in Yarmouth). Devas
tating to West Norfolk. Clinically unsafe.

West Norfolk Residents would face over a 50 -mile trip to A and E in Norwich.

What about residents with no cars, who cannot afford taxis to get to Norwich? What about the already overstretched Ambulance Service?

NHS bureaucrats see King's Lynn as a dot on the map.

They do not understand Norfolk has no motorway, no dual carriageway, no direct train, the bus takes 2 hrs to Norwich. NHS bureaucrats do not understand West Norfolk is the second largest District in England, 550 square miles, sparsely populated with 104 rural villages and hamlets, connected by poor roads, worse public transport. Reaching the QEH in time for life-saving treatment for suspected strokes by ambulance from rural areas is already a challenge. Sending everyone to Norwich hospital for And E would be reckless negligence.

People with heart attacks and strokes could die on the way to hospital. Sweeping away A and E from our local hospital would be creating a new determinant of poor health.

It would discriminate against the life expectancy of residents, particularly residents living with disabilities and deprivation. It would be against the Equality Act and the Human Rights Act Article 2 Right to Life.

The absence of a maternity department at the QEH , would discourage young families from bringing their skills into West Norfolk. Government has doubled West Norfolk's house-building target. Twice as many new homes, but take away the Maternity Ward? This is anti-intelligent Group Think.

Residents are saying the bureaucrats floating such decisions, live in a different world. Drive around in fast cars, with plenty of money for taxis to hospital, unlike residents I represent.

South Lynn is in the Core 20 most deprived communities in England and has a significantly worse than England numbers of emergency admissions to hospital for all causes, particularly for heart attacks, coronary heart disease and COPD.(Source: Public Health).

If Norfolk and Waveney Hospitals Group close A and E at the QEH, the mortality rate in South Lynn will increase. The death rate from all causes under the age of 75 in South Lynn is already significantly worse than England. I am meeting with Public Health and Primary Care to draw up a proper plan to reduce Health Inequalities, including putting GP's in the new South Lynn Health Hub. I am shocked and astounded the local NHS is eying up money-saving cuts that will drag health outcomes down, instead of raising them.

We all fought for the long-overdue rebuild of the QEH, with its RAAC roof held up by 6,500 props, but now the new Hospital risks having core services ripped out and being just a Cottage Hospital. We must all say No. Just as we said No to the Incinerator.

Our NHS is the most precious part of the state.

West Norfolk cannot stand by and let misguided faceless bureaucrats dismantle Norfolk's NHS and create a two-tier system of who lives and who dies.

The NHS 10 year strategy is to " bring care closer to home" . But at neighbourhood level, they have shut doctors surgeries in poorer neighbourhoods (Fairstead), relocated surgeries from deprived areas to affluent areas (St James) and when they build promised new surgeries in deprived areas like South Lynn, they won't put doctors in. It's a scandal.



I have written to the Labour Government asking it to intervene before it is too late.

This sleepwalk to Armageddon can only be stopped by direct instruction from the top.

Write to the University Hospitals Group nw-uhg.org.uk Norfolk and Norwich Hospital, Colney Lane, Norwich NR4 7UY and to Secretary of State for Health Yvette Cooper:

Coopery@parliament.gov.uk House of Commons London SW1A 0AA Tell them West Norfolk needs its A and E, Critical Care and Maternity. Permanently.

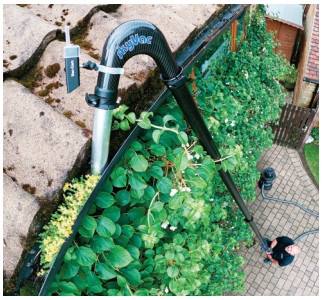
Please copy in enquiries@healthwatchnorfolk.co.uk

Alexandra

County Councillor Alexandra Kemp
County Division: Clenchwarton and King's Lynn South, Norfolk County Council, including South Lynn, West Lynn, Clenchwarton, West Winch, Setchey
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Exploring the Masters of Modern Painting

News Desk

The fascinating lives and work of two of the world's most influential artists will be explored when The Arts Society King's Lynn welcomes art historian Joshua White on Thursday 12 November.

Art lovers are in for an interesting afternoon as The Arts Society King's Lynn continues its 2026–27 season with a talk exploring the lives, work and lasting influence of Paul Cézanne and Paul Gauguin.

Although both artists were associated with the Impressionist movement, their artistic journeys took them in very different directions. Yet each would play an important role in shaping the future of modern painting.



Following the final Impressionist exhibition in 1886, Cézanne returned to his native Provence in southern France, where he concentrated on painting the landscapes, people and everyday objects around him. Working largely in seclusion, he developed a distinctive approach to colour, form and perspective that would go on to influence generations of artists.

Gauguin, meanwhile, took a rather different path. Restless and constantly searching for inspiration, he travelled from Brittany to the south of France, where he briefly worked alongside Vincent van Gogh, before eventually making his way to French Polynesia. His colourful and often symbolic paintings reflected his search for a different way of life, although his experiences and attitudes have also attracted considerable criticism in more recent years.

The afternoon's speaker, Joshua White, is an experienced art historian with a particular interest in European and American art from the 19th and 20th centuries.

He spent 20 years teaching at Christie's auction house and previously worked as a BBC journalist. He is also a founder and presenter of The Art Channel, an online project exploring exhibitions and artworks in museums and galleries.

His television and radio appearances include Channel 5's Great Paintings of the World with Andrew Marr, BBC Radio 4's Behind the Scenes and BBC Radio 3's Turning Picasso.

Through his illustrated talk, Joshua will explore the contrasting personalities and artistic approaches of Cézanne and Gauguin, explaining how two very different men helped lay the foundations for modern art.

Please note that this month's lecture has a change of venue. Due to roof repairs at West Winch Village Hall, the talk will take place at Gaywood Church Rooms, Gaywood Road, King's Lynn, PE30 4DZ.

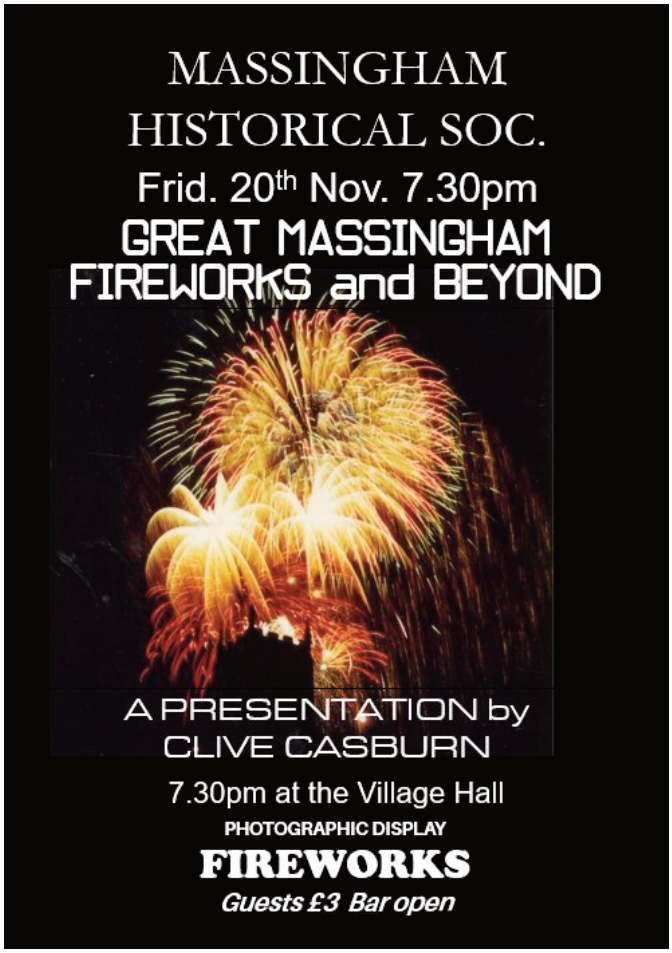
The lecture begins at 2.30pm on Thursday 12 November. A small car park is available at the venue, with additional free parking at Gaywood Library and Tesco.

The Arts Society King's Lynn meets on the second Thursday of each month from September through to May, offering an enjoyable opportunity to discover more about art, history and culture.

New members are always welcome, with annual membership costing £60. Alternatively, visitors can attend individual talks for £10, making it an accessible way to enjoy an afternoon discovering something new.

For more information, visit the Society's website or contact the membership secretary on 01760 724823 or by emailing info@theartssocietykingslynn.org.uk.





Rural Norfolks Mobile Signal: Are we hearing you?

News Desk

From dropped calls to painfully slow broadband, poor connectivity remains a daily frustration for people across rural Norfolk. North Norfolk MP Steff Aquarone is calling on residents to help expose the areas where modern technology is still failing local communities.

Anyone who has spent time wandering around the house trying to find a mobile signal, or stood in the garden holding their phone in the air hoping for an extra bar of reception, will know just how frustrating poor connectivity can be.



For many people living in rural Norfolk, it's an all-too-familiar experience. And while mobile phones and broadband have become essential parts of everyday life, some communities are still struggling to access services that much of the country takes for granted.

North Norfolk MP Steff Aquarone has been calling on residents and businesses to share their experiences of unreliable mobile reception and broadband, raising concerns about the lack of investment in rural connectivity.

A parliamentary question revealed that not a single project to improve mobile reception in North Norfolk received Government funding or part-funding between 2022 and 2026.

That might come as a surprise to anyone who regularly struggles to make a phone call from their own home.

According to Government figures, 91% of North Norfolk's landmass has predicted 4G coverage from all four major mobile networks. However, those figures don't necessarily reflect what people experience in practice, particularly inside buildings or in more remote villages.

Dropped calls, unreliable mobile data and complete signal blackspots remain a problem for residents, while the Government has confirmed that no further publicly funded mobile improvements are currently forecast for the constituency through its Shared Rural Network programme.

And it isn't just mobile reception causing concern.

Changes to the Government's Project Gigabit broadband programme have also raised questions about the future of high-speed internet access across Norfolk.

In May, the publicly funded broadband contract for Norfolk was reduced from approximately 62,200 properties to 33,000.

The Government says the reduction reflects an expansion of commercial broadband services, with private companies expected to connect more properties without public funding.

However, questions remain about homes and businesses that are not included in those commercial plans, particularly in rural areas where installing new infrastructure can be more difficult and expensive.

Steff is concerned that some communities could find themselves left behind, with no clear timetable for receiving the reliable broadband connections they need.

For rural businesses, farmers, people working from home and families relying on online services, poor connectivity can be much more than an everyday irritation.

It can mean interrupted business calls, difficulty accessing essential services, problems with online learning and lost opportunities for local companies trying to compete in an increasingly digital world.

Steff said: "Poor mobile reception is much more than an inconvenience. It can affect your ability to run a business, contact your family or get help when you need it.

"And without reliable broadband, we're making it harder for businesses to grow, employ people and attract those who want to live and work in North Norfolk."

He has also joined other Norfolk MPs in a cross-party letter challenging the changes to Project Gigabit and seeking answers about how rural communities will be supported.

Residents are being encouraged to explain where their mobile signal regularly disappears, which network they use and whether reception is particularly poor indoors.

Those struggling with slow or unreliable broadband are also being asked to share their experiences, especially where it affects their work, business or access to everyday services.

Steff hopes the information will help build a clearer picture of the areas most badly affected and strengthen the case for further investment.

"We cannot expect our rural economy to thrive while communities are struggling with the basics of modern connectivity," he said.

"The Government has given us little comfort that it understands just how serious the problems are here. I want to show officials exactly where people are being let down and demand a proper plan to put things right."

North Norfolk District Council has also been investigating mobile coverage problems, including through independent mapping work and a public survey launched in August.

The MP arranged discussions with Building Digital UK and Government representatives for 14 October to press for answers about mobile blackspots, broadband investment and the future of properties affected by the Project Gigabit changes.

For those living in villages where making a mobile call still involves standing by a particular window, walking to the end of the garden or heading outside in the rain, improvements cannot come soon enough.

And with so much of modern life now dependent on being connected, the question is whether rural communities will finally receive the same level of service that people elsewhere have come to expect.

Have your say:

Residents and businesses experiencing poor mobile reception or unreliable broadband can contact Steff Aquarone MP at steff.aquarone.mp@parliament.uk.

Include your village or approximate location, your mobile network if relevant, a description of the problem and how it affects your daily life.

The information will help highlight the areas where better connectivity is most urgently needed.



Michelin-starred restaurant could become homes

Dani Crawshaw

Owners of The Neptune in Old Hunstanton struggle to find buyer for the fine dining restaurant, Kevin and Jaki Mangeolles converted the Neptune pub into a restaurant and guest rooms 19 years ago. Since 2009, it's been featured in the Michelin guide. The couple are retiring, and despite the business being advertised for more than a year, there's been no interest.

So, they've now applied to convert the property into two homes.

The application statement says profits have been squeezed, guest rooms have struggled to compete with other hotels and Airbnb's, and there are issues with limited parking.

The statement continues, "As marketing for a commercial use has not been successful options are limited. The owners having reached retirement age are not wanting to carrying on with the business in the long term.

"The building is not large and there are no other specific options in terms of use. It is too far from the village centre and the sea to attract customers to an alternative facility."

The building, which is thought to date back to the 1780s, currently has five guest bedrooms, with the Michelin-starred restaurant open from Wednesday to Saturday.

King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council is due to make a decision later this year.



Quiz night raises £400 for charity

Downham Market Rotary

Downham Market Rotary held their Autumn quiz at the Conservative Club on Friday 9th October. Over 80 keen quizzers in teams of four took part in a lively and good-humoured evening of general knowledge questions. The organiser, Rotarian Kay Ford, said "we filled every inch of the space in the function room at the Conservative Club which we hire for the occasion. An additional bit of fun for the evening was our grand draw raffle and a very happy Michael Giles won the £100 first prize".

In all, the quiz evening raised over £400 which goes into Downham Market Rotary's charity fund. The fund helps Rotary support deserving local good causes such as the Swan Project, Dementia Café, Tapping House, the Food Bank, Scouts and Guides activities and many others.

Rotarian Kay announced that the Spring Quiz will be in April and advised those wanting to take part to watch social media and also the Rotary club website (downhammartketrotary.co.uk) for the date which will be



The Rotary Club of King's Lynn to support Brave Futures

Kngs Lynn Rotary



Abbie Mulcairn from the charity Brave Futures recently spoke at a meeting of the Club and asked for help with the refurbishment of a therapy room at the Mr Bees Children's Centre in King's Lynn.

The charity which operates across Norfolk and Suffolk supports children and young people who have experienced sexual abuse.

The statistics quoted made a big impression on her audience.

About one in six children in Norfolk may have experienced sexual abuse, which equates to some 16500.

Abby pointed out that referrals in King's Lynn (one of seven centres where the charity operates in Norfolk) had more than doubled in the last six months.

She was particularly concerned that the criminal justice system did not offer adequate support: the conviction rate was very low; and cases could take years to come to court.

The President promised that the Club would be offering support for this very good cause.

West Norfolk's Future Takes Shape

Richard Dix

More than 800 potential development sites have been identified across West Norfolk as the borough council begins work on a new Local Plan that will help shape our towns and villages for the next 15 years.

Before anyone spots a nearby field on a map and starts worrying about the arrival of a housing estate, however, there is an important distinction.

The 800-plus locations are sites put forward for consideration, not sites that have been approved or formally proposed for development.

Each will now undergo a screening and assessment process as the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk begins the lengthy task of drawing up its next Local Plan.

And judging by the response to the first consultation, local people certainly want to be involved.

More than 300 responses were submitted through an online survey, council officers spoke face-to-face with almost 300 people, more than 450 emails were received and residents left over 1,500 comments on an interactive map.

Councillor Jim Moriarty, Cabinet Member for Planning and Licensing, described the response as "phenomenal".

"This is a phenomenal response and I would like to thank every person who took the time to engage with us, as well as the officer team who went to great lengths to give people the opportunity to take part," he said.

"We were keen to hear from people about their priorities for development, and ideas for where development should be located.

"We have learned a great deal from people's feedback and with such a significant response as this, we feel really confident that a good range of local views have been heard."

So what happens to those 800 sites?

The consultation marks the first step towards creating a new Local Plan for West Norfolk.

Once adopted, the plan is expected to guide development across the borough for around 15 years, meaning decisions made now could have a lasting impact on how our communities grow.

As part of the initial consultation, residents were invited to comment on sites that landowners had previously suggested might be suitable for development.

Landowners were also given another opportunity to put forward additional locations.

Combined with earlier submissions, this has produced a list of more than 800 possible sites.

That does not mean 800 developments are heading our way.

The council must now assess each location against planning evidence, taking into account the views expressed by residents. Some sites may prove unsuitable as the process progresses.

What happens next?

The first exercise was described as a scoping consultation, designed to gather ideas and understand local priorities rather than present a finished development plan.

The next major milestone is expected in 2027, when the council plans to publish its draft Local Plan.

That will give residents an opportunity to see which sites are actually being proposed for inclusion and have their say on them.

Following further consultation and possible revisions, the plan will undergo an independent examination by planning inspectors before eventually returning to councillors for adoption.

Councillor Moriarty said the feedback already received would play an important role in shaping the next stage.

"We can now use these views as part of the evidence base for drafting our plan," he said.

There is, then, still a long road between somebody suggesting a piece of land and a digger arriving on it.

One of the biggest challenges will be balancing the need for new homes with protecting the character of West Norfolk's towns, villages and countryside. Questions about roads, schools, healthcare and other local services are also likely to feature prominently as residents consider what future development could mean for their communities.

But with the new Local Plan potentially shaping West Norfolk for the next 15 years, the response to this first consultation suggests plenty of local people intend to keep a close eye on where that road leads.



Importantly, the Local Plan will not just determine where new homes might be built, but also help shape future employment opportunities, infrastructure and community facilities. With growing pressure on roads, schools, healthcare and other essential services, residents will want reassurance that any new development is supported by the facilities needed to make it sustainable. Getting that balance right will be crucial to protecting the character of West Norfolk while allowing its communities to grow and prosper.

Photo: Sandra Homcenko and Henry Anthony Photograph supplied.

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The Mikado

Philip Thomas - The Hunstanton Society

Our previous article on the Lounge Theatre mentioned some of the theatres that were in opposition for the tourist entertainment trade. One such venue was the Mikado theatre.



This was situated next to the railway station, in the space that is now a car park between the Waterside Bar and the Green.

The Mikado Site was the equivalent of a modern entertainment mall with theatre, shops, refreshments, and other tourist attractions. Behind the whole thing was the remarkable William McLean, Hunstanton's earliest photographer.



The name dates from after 1885 and references the extremely popular operetta by Gilbert and Sullivan which premiered at the Savoy Theatre in London that year. Appropriately, the bazaar came to specialise in Japanese paper goods - this must have contributed to the fire that destroyed it in 1923. At this point the theatre had become the town's cinema.

The fire, eventually put out by the combined efforts of the local fire brigade and a nearby military aerodrome brigade, destroyed the whole group of buildings, including the nearby Hinton's Hotel – this was rebuilt as the Railway refreshment rooms (now the Waterside Bar). The following picture shows the scene after the fire.



There are a few pictures of the Mikado site in the archives of the Heritage centre. Using these alongside aerial pictures of the town, I thought it would be interesting to use an AI generator tool and ask it to combine, colourise, and produce an image of what it might have looked like in its heyday.

After many tweaks and much frustration I finally settled on this:



It's not quite right but gives a feel. On the extreme left is the Sandringham hotel. In front of the tea rooms is the theatre, behind are the shops/ photography studio. On the right corner of the tearoom is the Camera Obscura. You can just see Seagate on the right (the house that later became the Kit Kat club). Of course, it really looked more like this picture from a 1920 postcard:



Philip Thomas, Hunstanton Society

We are very grateful to Philip Thomas for his continued contributions to our Newsletter. He always comes up trumps when I send out a last minute plea for material for publishing and he always seems to find something he prepared earlier or rustles up in very short time. We do get notes of appreciation from our members and friends who clearly enjoy what he produces. Thank you, Phil.

You In Mind Counselling & Hypnotherapy With Sandie Payne

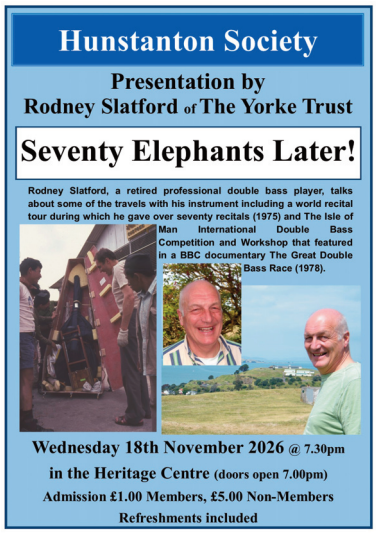
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www.sandiepayne.co.uk

Hunstanton Society - News and Events



On the 18th November we have what should turn out to be a very amusing talk entitled "70 Elephants Later" being given by the Founding Chairman of the Yorke Trust, Rodney Slatford. We have created a poster for this shown on the next page. It would appear that Rodney has experienced a lifetime of musical madness over his long career and the stories he has to tell particularly surrounding his many years at the helm of the Norfolk based charity, the Yorke Trust.

HERITAGE CENTRE

The Centre will close on 8th November for Winter with the last normal opening day on Remembrance Sunday on which day when we will be open for longer hours (from 1200 to 1600) following the Remembrance Service at the War Memorial.



A couple of weeks ago we were delighted to see our former landlady from 15 The Green, Solveig Ward, arrive at the Heritage Centre with her niece, Johanna Norlander-Spansk. One of our volunteers, Susan Brown,who was on duty, took this lovely photo of the pair of them standing in front of the plaque commemorating Solveig and Derek. We don't think Solveig has aged an iota since we last saw her. That Swedish air clearly does her well.

EVENTS TEAM UPDATE – Save the Date for our Thank You Evening!

A huge thank you to everyone for your continued hard work at the Heritage Centre. To show our appreciation, we are hosting a Volunteer Thank You Evening on the evening of Thursday, 19th November. Join us for some wine, nibbles, and well-deserved socializing! Proper invitations and full details will follow soon, but please save the date for now.

Aside from our thank-you celebration, here is a quick reminder of our upcoming diary dates to keep you in the loop:

•Wednesday, 28th October: Coffee Morning 10:30 until 12:00, join us for a friendly chat and another fun quiz

•Sunday, 8th November: Remembrance Sunday when we have arranged for Hunstanton Society to lay a wreath at the Cenotaph (The Heritage Centre will be open from 12:00 PM for the last day of the season)

•Wednesday, 25th November: Coffee Morning 10:30 until 12:00, join us for a friendly chat, fun quiz and festive treats

•Christmas Lights Switch-on Sunday 29th November 2026: We will be opening to join in the celebrations for the Christmas Lights Switch-on arranged by the Town Council offering fun, puzzles and games to visitors. We would appreciate your support in donating prizes for the games that we offer on the day including a Tombola. Anything large or small will be gratefully received. We would also welcome your support in person to staff the event so if you have a couple of hours to spare and would like to help, please let Jane know so we can organise a rota (secretaryhunstantonsociety@gmail.com).

We look forward to seeing you at these events.

Please let us know if you think of anything we should be doing, if you can help with any event, or if you want to join the events team, at hunstantonsocietyevents@gmail.com. Enjoy the Autumn!

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS

The opening of Hunstanton Lighthouse and the Tours around the grounds of Hunstanton Hall all went very well. Sadly we had a few empty spaces for people to attend when some who had booked in sadly actually failed to turn up. However there were a few who took a chance and arrived on spec who we were able to invite to join a tour. In total we had 75 people attempt the Lighthouse steps on 11th September and 77 on 18th September. With the tour around Hunstanton Hall grounds, we had 25 on the first tour and 27 on the second tour, both on 17th September. We were blessed with some pretty good weather for all the tours thankfully.

INTERACTIVE BOARDS AROUND HUNSTANTON

As mentioned last month, we were able to get Paris Print to have one more of the Interactive boards reprinted as it had faded to the extent that it was totally unreadable. Thankfully they did this literally overnight and we were able to instal the new board into its slot on the prom outside the Oasis Swimming Pool. We were very grateful for this and we hope that when you take a leisurely walk along the prom you will stop to admire it. Perhaps you will be able to see what is going on with the sea front protection scheme which we understand is currently progressing

Punch and Judy on the Green

Following our article last month about the Punch and Judy Show in Hunstanton we were contacted by one of our members to remind us of the appearances of Uncle Dennis and Aunty Jean Collins many years



ago. We already had in our archives some material given to us some time ago including this promotional card and a photograph.



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3 Seals 3 Weeks 1 Lifeline at East Winch

RSPCA

Staff at the RSPCA's East Winch Wildlife Centre are fighting to save three seals rescued from Norfolk beaches.

Three seals, three heartbreaking injuries and one dedicated team working to give them a second chance.

Staff at the RSPCA's East Winch Wildlife Centre, near King's Lynn, have been caring for three grey seals rescued from Norfolk beaches, each suffering serious injuries caused by man-made objects caught around their necks.



One young female seal, named Monsoon, was discovered at Waxham with an orange plastic flying ring embedded in her neck. Volunteers from Friends of Horsey Seals had spent weeks trying to reach her before finally managing a successful rescue.

Another seal, named Marine Litter, was rescued from Eccles-on-Sea with a reusable plastic shopping bag wrapped tightly around her neck.



The third, Doughnut, was found at Horsey struggling with a 4kg mass of discarded fishing equipment tangled around her neck.

All three were taken to East Winch for specialist treatment.

For seals, these injuries can be devastating. As the animals grow, the plastic or fishing equipment becomes increasingly tight, cutting into their flesh and making swimming and hunting difficult.

Even after the material is removed, infection and complications can make recovery a lengthy process.

At East Winch, treatment includes veterinary supervision, antibiotics, anti-inflammatory medication and regular saltwater baths to help wounds heal. Once strong enough, the seals can move into outdoor pools before eventually returning to the wild.

Evangelos Achilleos, manager of the East Winch Wildlife Centre, said: "It is heartbreaking and just unbelievable that we have had three entangled seals rescued in as many weeks.

"We are just so grateful to the rescue teams who patiently wait until the right opportunity to save the seals and then bring them to us for rehabilitation."

The growing number of seals becoming trapped in plastic flying rings is particularly worrying. These seemingly harmless toys can slip over a young seal's head and become impossible to remove as the animal grows.

The RSPCA is supporting calls for a UK ban on flying rings, warning that many affected seals may never be found.

Sally Butler, chair of Friends of Horsey Seals, praised the rescuers' persistence and the staff at East Winch for their dedication.

Since 2008, the centre has treated 104 seals suffering from what staff call 'necklace injuries', caused by discarded fishing line, netting and plastic rings.



Of those, 95 have been successfully rehabilitated and released back into the wild, while nine sadly died or had to be put to sleep.

The problem continues to grow. Last year alone, East Winch cared for ten seals with entanglement injuries, five times the number recorded when monitoring began in 2008.

Caring for injured seals can take months and cost thousands of pounds, with the charity relying heavily on public donations.

For Monsoon, Marine Litter and Doughnut, their rescues offer hope and serve as a reminder of the damage discarded rubbish can cause to wildlife along our Norfolk coastline.

Anyone wishing to support the RSPCA's East Winch Wildlife Centre can find donation details through its Facebook page.

If you discover an injured or entangled seal, keep your distance and contact your local seal rescue organisation or the RSPCA on 0300 1234 999.

Beach rescue photographs: Friends of Horsey Seals & East Winch Wildlife centre

Schools Support Mental Health Day

Dani Crawshaw



Hundreds of pupils took part in the Hello Yellow campaign, dressing in sunny shades to raise money for mental health charity Young Minds. The charity's primary goal is to ensure that no young person feels alone with their mental health.

West Lynn Primary's Assistant Headteacher, Dan Ryan, says, “Events like this are extremely important for raising awareness. Supporting children and their mental health is at the forefront of what we do.”



Clenchwarton Primary also brought the sunshine to school.

"There was an assembly to mark the day," says Assistant Headteacher Billy Overton. "As well as some linked activities in class based around supporting our wellbeing and mental health.

"These included drawing posters, making kindness chains with positive messages, or class discussions around how we look after our mental wellbeing.”



Mr Overton continues,“This gives us an opportunity to share how we feel and to see that we all go through similar things or have worries at different times in our lives – we shouldn’t be ashamed of it.



“We should own our own situations and be positive – work with others, share how we feel, and know that we’re not alone.



“The more children see positivity like this, the more we share, and the better the support and advice we can offer.”



St Clement’s High School in Terrington St Clement and Walpole Cross Keys Primary also raised money and awareness.

Rachel Daws, Assistant Headteacher at Walpole, adds, "The school came in wearing yellow, we had a mental health assembly for the whole school, and we did mindfulness exercises throughout the day to teach children how to look after their mental health.”

There was a whole week of raising awareness at Smithdon High in Hunstanton, including a ‘Gifts of Gratitude’ day - where pupils wrote postcards expressing their thanks to friends or members of staff.



Assistant Head, Alysha Moat, says, "“It’s all about working together and making kids aware that every day will have ups and downs, and it’s all right to sometimes feel anxious.

“We try and do as much as we can with the resources we’ve got – and our best resources are the staff and the kids, and the relationship they have”



All Images - Ian Burt

A Cut Above The Rest!



Dani Crawshaw

Meet the Norfolk chainsaw carver bringing wildlife to life, one log at a time.

We chat to local chainsaw carver Billy, who tells us it's all about practice, a lot of patience, and choosing the right log!, "It has to be the right log," Billy tells me. I meet the chainsaw carver near to Dersingham, where he's currently working on a hare. Which is fitting really, as I've been curious about his work since seeing it at Docking Hare Fair.

"This is your Norfolk hare," he tells me, "The idea behind this one is she's going to have one leg up and one leg down, just to create a little bit of movement."

"She's blocked out," he continues, "So the initial shape has been made with a larger chainsaw, and now she's at the stage where I start to refine it, take the shape in, create cheeks, muscle lines - I'm probably a day into it and another day to go on this one."

Billy starts up the saw and continues to carve.

When he stops for a break, I ask how he's mastered a tool - that with one movement, could potentially ruin the whole thing.

"Practice," Billy says, "And a lot of patience and persistence! It's taken 4 years to be able to do this carving in two days."

"I got into this initially through forestry, and a friend of mine, Henry Hepworth-Smith - who's a chainsaw carver. Whilst I was working in forestry I had an accident, and broke the bottom half of my leg.

"Whilst recovering I couldn't sit still, so he got me to - with my cast on - tinker away with my chainsaw. Once I recovered, I did return to forestry for a bit, but the carving just took over pretty much immediately to be honest."

This year Billy took part in Sandringham's Game and Country Fair, creating 'Hare Henry', "To honour the man that originally steered me in my journey to becoming a chainsaw carver."



He says it's the people he loves most about the job.

"Getting to meet new people every day - especially when we're out roadside and at shows. I get to do a lot of charity work through the carving, which is massive for me."

"I spend a couple of evenings before I make anything maybe looking at pictures. Then you just go for it, you look at your log - you imagine the outline of what you're trying to create, just chip away slowly - slowly being the key part!

"I think the craziest thing about the carving is I can't just choose any log to make anything from, I have my wood stack at home, courtesy of Heacham's Moulam and Horn - and I'll go through it looking for a hare.



"It's one thing people just can't get their heads around, they'll say Billy just use that one - and I think nah, that's not a hare, that's a squirrel," he smiles.

He says it can be stressful, especially when faced with a challenging carve, but says it's worth it, "The stegosaurus took the longest this year, having so many plates on its back, it made it tricky."

Billy adds it's become 'a way of life', "It's a better way of life, it's a more quality way of life - it allows me to spend more time with my children."

"It's finishing a carving after having said yes to do it, but with no idea of how to go about it, that's one of the best parts about it to be honest.

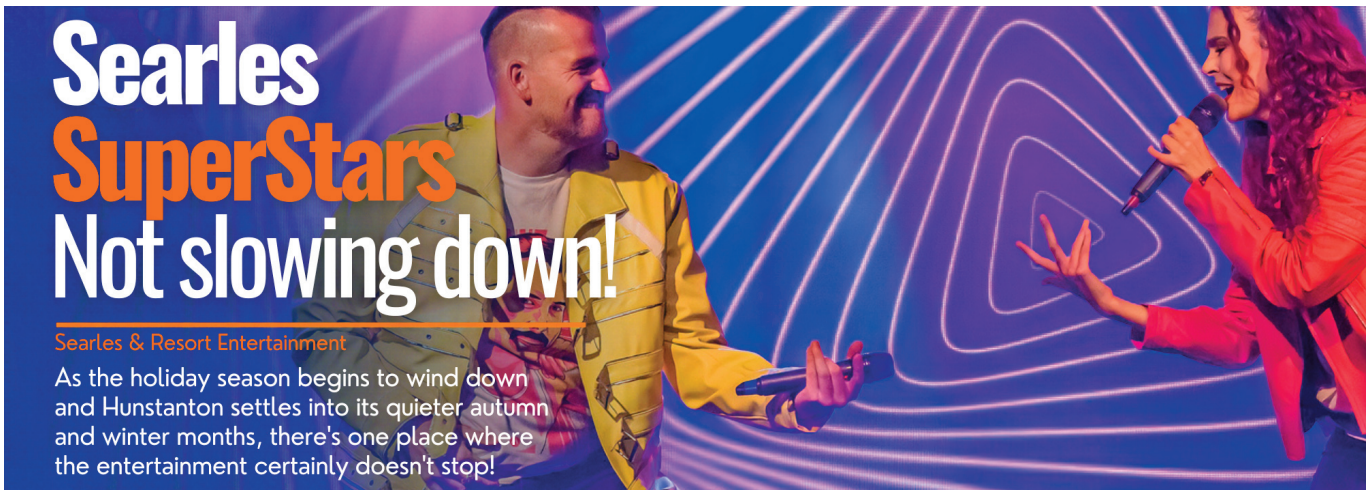
"When you knock on the door to drop it off and they love it, that for me is ultimate satisfaction. Even more so if it's a memorial piece or for a big birthday."

We think Billy's creations are as charming as he is!

Watch the video at townandaround.net



Searles SuperStars Not slowing down!



Searles & Resort Entertainment

As the holiday season begins to wind down and Hunstanton settles into its quieter autumn and winter months, there's one place where the entertainment certainly doesn't stop!

The entertainment never stops at Searles Leisure Resort!, As the traditional holiday season begins to wind down and Hunstanton settles into its quieter autumn and winter months, there's one place where the entertainment certainly doesn't stop!

Behind the impressive new entrance, past the famous seal fountain and into the heart of Searles Leisure Resort, there's still a real buzz in the air. While many holidaymakers have packed away their buckets and spades for another year, the team at Searles are busy preparing for some of the most enjoyable weekends of the season, alongside planning an exciting entertainment programme for the year ahead.

And when it comes to entertainment, Searles certainly knows how to put on a show!



The Stars Behind the Superstars Since 2009, Resort Entertainments, has been responsible for creating and delivering the entertainment experience at Searles. Headed now by Adam Brown (now in his 8th Year) alongside a talented team of singers, dancers, hosts and technicians, Adam ensures that there's always something happening, whether it's on stage, around the resort or behind the scenes.

Throughout the year, the team work tirelessly rehearsing their own in-house productions, developing new shows and putting together a packed programme of entertainment for guests of all ages.

Entertainment at Searles is a five-star affair, with spectacular productions from Adam Brown and his team complemented by an impressive variety of visiting performers. From personality vocalists and tribute acts to comedians, magicians and big bands, there's something to suit almost every musical taste and sense of humour!

Of course, putting together such a varied programme is no small task. Booking, scheduling and coordinating visiting acts throughout the year takes a great deal of planning, particularly when there's a whole resort full of guests to keep entertained!

Family Fun, High Fives and a Little Bit of Magic

For some visitors, a holiday at Searles is the perfect opportunity to relax and explore our beautiful Norfolk coastline. For others, it's a much-loved annual tradition, with families returning year after year to enjoy everything the resort has to offer.

And for younger guests, the holiday experience often begins with a very enthusiastic high five!

The Searles SuperSquad, featuring Sidney the Sea Lion, Cherry the Chipmunk and Leo the Lion, are always ready to bring smiles to little faces. These colourful characters take centre stage with stories, activities and even their very own show!

There's plenty of hands-on fun too, with a creative hub where children can build their own bear, make slime or discover a new craft. It's all part of creating those special holiday memories that families take home with them.



November brings a fantastic selection of themed breaks, kicking off with the popular Bonfire and Fireworks Weekend, which incorporates the annual Hunstanton & District Round Table Clifftop Fireworks event on Saturday 7th November.

The Searles Entertainments Team will once again be getting everyone into the party spirit, performing an extract from one of their in-house productions.



And if there's one thing this team knows how to do, it's get a party started! Whether they're performing outdoors on a chilly, windswept Norfolk clifftop or under the lights of the Sundowners Show Lounge, their energy and enthusiasm are infectious.

The entertainment continues throughout November with themed breaks, including the Sunny Hunny Soul Weekend lead by Jamie Trundle, before the resort prepares to embrace the festive season in spectacular style.

If you love Christmas, imagine enjoying all the best bits of the festive season rolled into one fabulous holiday! The Ultimate Norfolk Coast Festive Break – Turkey & Tinsel does exactly that, serving up a whistle-stop tour of Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day, complete with all the trimmings! Guests can look forward to delicious festive food, a VIP visit from Santa and a wonderful variety of seasonal entertainment, all delivered with the unmistakable Searles spirit. And, of course, no festive celebration

would be complete without the resort staff sporting a spectacular assortment of Christmas jumpers. The more outrageous, the better!

For local residents, there's another date worth popping in the diary. The Searles Annual Christmas Fayre takes place on Saturday 5th December, from 10am to 4pm.

It's the perfect opportunity to enjoy a little Christmas shopping, with festive stalls, live entertainment, seasonal treats and refreshments, plus plenty for the whole family to enjoy. Best of all, entry is completely FREE! So whether you're looking for a few Christmas presents or simply fancy soaking up some festive atmosphere, everyone is welcome.

A New Year, A New Generation of SuperStars! Once the New Year celebrations have drawn to a close, the current Entertainments Team finally get the chance to enjoy a well-earned break. Some performers will return for another season, while others will head off on exciting new adventures. But behind the scenes, the planning never really stops! The search is already underway for the next generation of Searles SuperStars, with applications now open for the 2027 season.

So, do you have what it takes? Or perhaps you know someone who would be perfect for the job? Running from late January through to December, the contracts offer an exciting opportunity for talented singers who can move and dance well, have an outgoing personality and are willing to learn the art of becoming the ultimate holiday host.

Of course, holiday entertainment has come a long way since the days of the original Butlin's Redcoats. You won't find much welly wangling contests or many knobbly knees competitions these days! Instead, today's resort entertainers are versatile performers, expected to sing, dance, present, engage with guests and occasionally think on their feet when things don't quite go to plan! It's a demanding role, but also one that's incredibly rewarding, full of laughter, friendship and opportunities to develop valuable performance skills.

For someone looking to build a career in entertainment, it can be the perfect place to start. And it's certainly a job that performers grow to love. Take Kirsty, for example, who has been part of the Searles team for four years and continues to bring her talents and personality to the resort.

Over the years, many former SuperStars have gone on to enjoy careers throughout the entertainment industry, performing across the UK, Cruise Ships, holiday resorts around the world.

One familiar face is Sam Littlewood, who began his Searles journey as a SuperStar in 2022. Since then, Sam has become a much-loved and eagerly anticipated member of the Princess Theatre pantomime cast, delighting audiences in roles including Jack, Muddles and Aladdin.

This Christmas, he's back once again, taking on the role of Buttons in Cinderella. Will this be his final panto season at the Princess? Who knows! But one thing's for certain, Sam's journey is a wonderful example of how a season entertaining holidaymakers can open doors to exciting opportunities on stage.

Searles has long played an important part in the life of Hunstanton and its community.

For generations, the resort has welcomed visitors to the Norfolk coast, and it's no secret that some people who first discovered the town as holidaymakers, or perhaps as owners of a holiday home, eventually fell so much in love with the area that they decided to make Hunstanton their permanent home.



That connection with the town continues throughout the year, particularly during the festive season.

Both Searles Leisure Resort and Heacham Manor host fantastic Christmas party nights throughout December, welcoming local businesses, groups of friends and colleagues for an evening of festive celebrations.

With delicious three-course menus, music and plenty of opportunities to dance the night away, they're a wonderful way to celebrate the end of another busy year.

So, while the Norfolk coast might be a little quieter during the winter months, don't be fooled into thinking everything has closed for the season.

From spectacular shows and family activities to festive breaks, Christmas celebrations and the search for tomorrow's entertainment stars, there's always something happening behind those resort doors.

At Searles Leisure Resort, the seasons may change, but the entertainment never stops!

Diary Dates:

Bonfire - 6th November, 2 Nights, Turkey & Tinsel - 3rd December, 4 Nights

New Year - 29th December, 4 Nights





Lest We Forget

Dani Crawshaw

With Remembrance Day this month, we visit King's Lynn charity Bridge for Heroes, which has been providing support for veterans since 2010

You can walk into some places and feel a bit nervous, but when I come here I'm not. The people are all friendly, everybody makes you feel welcome, Chris Wood has been coming to the charity's hub, along South Clough Lane, for more than a year.



And since his wife died, it's become even more important, "It's somewhere to come, people are all ex-forces, you mix together - it's great, you can't knock it really."

Chris tells me he enlisted in the army when he was 17, and served for 6 years as a Gunner. "I miss it even now, but my wife wouldn't marry me until I'd come out of the army, I wouldn't have stopped doing it otherwise. The comradeship, you can't beat that, that's the thing I miss the most. I even still remember my army number."

As I leave him chatting to friends, Steve Millard, who's been a volunteer for 13 years, introduces himself. "I get a lot of pleasure from helping others, which is why I'm in 4 days a week, it helps me hugely, and I hope what I'm doing helps many others.

"When I came out of the airforce I was in a bad way mentally and physically, and this helped and continues to, it's as fundamental as that."

Chris joined the RAF when he was 16, retiring in 2007 at the rank of Warrant Officer. He served in the Gulf War. "We were based at King Khalid airport in Riyadh, we were having scuds fired at us, potentially with nerve agents on board, or other chemical warfare agents, you didn't know.

"On the first occasion we had the air raid we put on the full nuclear chemical warfare kit - the whole caboodle - but the air raid shelter was in this new terminal building and had 40 foot high glass windows, so counter intuitive.

"We had a hospital below us, I remember looking into the eyes of a young nurse, and trying to be the brave airman, I don't know if I succeeded - but that had an effect on me."

He walks around the centre, talks about the therapy sessions on offer, the meals, the arts classes, the music classes - how vital this charity is for veterans and their families.



As I walk outside, there's a small memorial garden, being tended to by Will Hopkins (ex-RAF) and Derek Paton (ex-Royal Engineer). They're talking and laughing as I approach. Not only do the pair volunteer as gardeners, they've also joined a music group.

"I play guitar," Will tells me, "There's a music teacher here, Laura, she does a group on Monday and it's fantastic." Derek has taken up the Ukulele, "Yes, I've even taken up music now, I've never done that before, and we did a concert recently. I really enjoy it."

Derek describes the centre as 'brilliant', Will says it's a 'lifeline for some', adding, "People need to talk, because they can be lonely. I think places like this are vital."

You can read more about Bridge for Heroes and hear from more veterans in our online article @townandaround.uk

Armchair Sports Trivia

Win a delicious afternoon tea for two (worth £19.95 pp, total £39.90) courtesy of Berni Beans.

QUESTION: What is the name of Liverpool FC's home ground?

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Please note we do not accept entries by any social media channels or text.
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on

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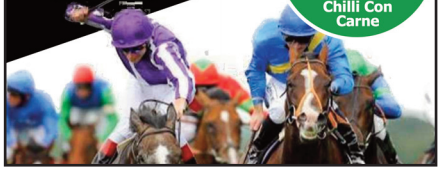
FRIDAY 20 NOVEMBER

Doors open 6pm
First race 6.45pm
Bar Open

CHARITY RAFFLE in aid of TAPPING HOUSE HOSPICE Charity number 1062800

Tickets from Nell 07918 911716

Tickets £20 Includes Chilli Con Carne



Dark Skies Of West Norfolk

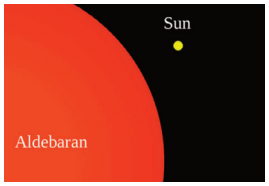


Terry Parish

Our monthly look at the skies over West Norfolk with a few dates for your diary!

Remember, remember the 5th of November, dark skies await and you don't have to stay up late, Having got that out, I refer you to October's issue for planet watching notes as not a lot has changed. Saturn remains the easiest planet to find. Start looking about 8pm when, on the 5th, the ringed planet will be in the SSE about half way up the sky. As time ticks by, the Earth's rotation will bring the planet closer to the south and it will be due south at 10pm. As the calendar marches on, Saturn will move further towards the south and beyond it.

Uranus is closest to the Earth (a mere 1,700 million miles) on the 26th and, on the 27th it is directly opposite the Sun so shining as brightly as it can with a magnitude of 5.6. It's high in the sky so atmospheric pollution is minimised and it is potentially visible all night long. Uranus is located in the region between the Pleiades and the star Aldebaran. The Pleiades are a close star cluster and appear as a fuzzy patch of white to the naked eye.

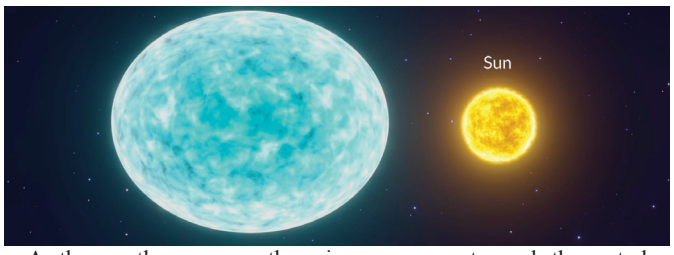


At 8pm on the 5th, look due east and the bright star fairly low in the sky is Aldebaran. A fist or so above that and a tad to the right are the Pleiades. In between, a little closer to the star cluster, is where to look for a faint blue dot, Uranus. Unless you are under 20 and standing in a dark sky area, you will need steady binoculars or a birding 'scope. The turning Earth will move Uranus further south and higher as the night progresses. The orbiting Earth will move objects in the sky further south as the month moves on.

On the 26th , at 8pm, look for Uranus in the ESE. Its position relative to Aldebaran and the Pleiades is similar but, from the 14th, Betelgeuse has been creeping up and occupies the position Aldebaran had at the beginning of the month. The orange / red giant Aldebaran, the eye of the bull, is higher in the sky and well to the right of red supergiant Betelgeuse.

Jupiter and Mars will greet you later. They are close together in the sky and the bright star Regulus accompanies them. Best to wait until 1am when, on the 5th, Jove and his son will be in the ENE, Mars above Jupiter. The gas giant will shine brightly with a magnitude of minus 2, ten times outshining Mars, magnitude 0.6.

The primary star of the Regulus system spins so fast it is egg shaped

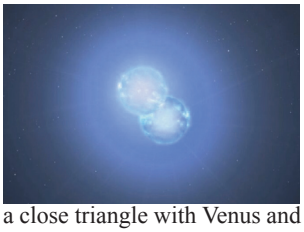


As the month progresses the pair appear more towards the east, due east on the 14th/16th when the two planets are in conjunction, as close together in the sky as they will come. By the 26th Mars has moved below Jupiter and appears very close to Regulus. This is an anticipated event as Mars will glow red adjacent to the blue white of this star. Jupiter will still be nearby and all three celestial objects will be observable, together, in binoculars.

. On the 30th, a waning Gibbous Moon joins the trio. If you are an early riser, the best time to see this and the events on the 14th/16th described above, is between 4am and 6am when they are all higher in the sky.

If you are about in these pre-dawn hours then you will catch Venus and Mercury, though the latter needs a very good ESE horizon.

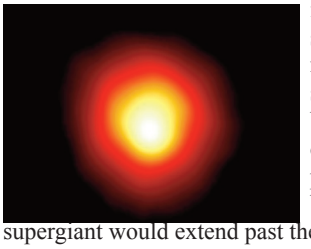
At 6am on the 5th, Venus pops up in the ESE attended by the star Spica. By the 12th the pair are, perhaps, high enough to observe and Mercury pops up to their east. Up to the 19th, Mercury climbs a little more but then it starts falling back towards the horizon, Venus is still moving up and appears in the SE, Spica is still in attendance. On the 27th, Mercury has gone. You won't miss Venus as it has a magnitude of minus 4.9, a searchlight in the sky, almost.



An artist's impression of the Spica System.

On the 7th, at 6am, the Moon forms a close triangle with Venus and Spica. This blue white star is a pair of stars which orbit each other every 4 days. They are so close they cannot be separated by observation and spectroscopic analysis is necessary. They are both egg shaped due to the intense gravitational attraction between them. There is a third star orbiting the pair, only detected this year. Spica is 250 light years distant

Further notes on the stars encountered above: Regulus is a quadruple star system arranged in two pairs. It is 79 light years from Earth. Aldebaran is just 67 light years distant and over 6 billion years old. It is another binary star system though its companion is much fainter. Betelgeuse, top eastern shoulder of Orion, is a young star, less than 10 million years old. However, it is due to explode as a supernova anytime in the next 100 000 years. It will then shine as bright as the half Moon for 3 months or so. That will give me something new to write about. It is between 400 and 600 light years distant – there have been difficulties pinning it down. Betelgeuse is truly big, if placed where our Sun is, the red supergiant would extend past the orbit of Mars.



The Leonid meteor shower, debris from Comet Temple Tuttle, is due to peak on the night of 17th/18th. The moon sets at 11.30 pm so take a look after that.

So, plenty of planets to see if you stay up late or get up early and their proximity to each other or bright stars is a bonus. Colours add a little celestial firework which may reach a climax with the Leonids. Enjoy the dark and hope for frosty clarity.

Terry Parish

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Britain in the Thirties New Book

Steven Brindle

A great new book full of photographs illustrating a different way of life.

The 1930s are almost beyond living memory, a world separated from us by the immense experience of the Second World War. A new illustrated book, Britain in the Thirties, brings this lost world to life, with a rich collection of photographs that show a country that is both familiar and strange. The writer J.B. Priestley, who toured the country to write his book English Journey (1934), identified three different countries: Old England, Nineteenth Century England and New England, living side by side and overlapping. These three varieties of England weathered the Depression that rocked the world in the 1930s in different ways, but for most people, times were hard.



The book covers the whole of Britain, and thus presents modern readers with a virtual version of Priestley's journey. So what does Thirties Norfolk look like in these pages ? Great Yarmouth had been a port since the Middle Ages, and was famous for supplying London and much of the south with fish, especially herrings.

Yarmouth and Lowestoft had ten thousand fishermen between them, and an image of Yarmouth harbour shows it filled with fishing-boats moored five deep, their funnels and masts making a forest. The boats were victims of their own success, kept in harbour for a glut of fish had forced prices down to ruinous levels. The town was still working, and in another image, fishery girls are seen waving to welcome the Prince of Wales (the future Edward VIII), in boots, aprons and headscarves.

The seaside was of an almost transcendental importance to British society in the Thirties as, for the first time in history, the majority of the population were able to take holidays. There had been four Bank Holidays a year since 1871 and since the Great War it had been easier for employees to get a week off, but there was no obligation on employers to pay for holiday time till the Holidays with Pay Act was passed in 1938. Holidays had to be saved up for, and only the rich could afford to go abroad. So the Thirties was a Golden Age for British seaside resorts.

Great Yarmouth was a resort town as well as a fishing town, and we see the beach filled with holidaymakers, with lines of tents and deck-chairs ready for hire. In the background are the Winter Gardens, and the Wellington pier with its handsome Arts and Crafts pavilion, dating from 1902. The Britannia Pier also had a concert hall, where the 'Merry Scamps' played nightly at 7pm.



Yarmouth beach is seen crowded with family groups, but almost everyone is fully dressed, the men in suits. Everyone, including the children, is wearing a hat: to be seen hatless in public was, in the 1930s, not the done thing. Maybe the weather was 'bracing', but they were determined to have a good time anyway.

Hunstanton and Cromer were also successful, aimed at a more upper middle-class clientèle. Hunstanton beach is shown lined with smart-looking square tents for hire. Hunstanton pier is here with its pavilion and a scattering of holidaymakers on the beach and the front, again all fully dressed and mostly wearing hats.





Seaside resorts and holidays for the masses were a recent phenomenon, and represented Priestley's idea of a 'New England'. Inland, though, rural Norfolk still represented 'Old England'. There are images of Horsted Mill on the River Bure, still grinding corn by water-power as it had for centuries, and the market place of Wymondham.



Market day in Norwich involved the same forest of open stalls that we see today, but the stall-canopies were not striped then, and the clothes are quite different. It is a sunny day, so there are no overcoats, but the men, stall-holders and customers all wear suits with waistcoats and hats: a Panama hat, a bowler, a trilby and a flat cap are visible. The ladies all wear hats, including two variations on the universal 'cloche' and a straw hat. The print dresses are loose and ankle-length; they may have been bought 'ready to wear' from a department store, but are equally likely, at that date, to have been home-made from paper patterns. They are Norfolk people from our grandparents or great-grandparents' world; it looks familiar and lovable, but in some ways it is also strange and distant.

Steven Brindle and Maureen Hill, Britain in the Thirties, Atlantic Publishing, 2026, £50.00.



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In The Limelight

Anna Hallard - Princess Theatre Hunstanton

We have two seasonal shows to shout about this month to get you into the spirit of things, before we reset and prepare the stage for the Pantomime season.

On **Wednesday 11th November, Step Into Christmas** brings a feel-good spectacular packed with Christmas classics, brilliant vocals and plenty of seasonal cheer. Then on **Sunday 15th November, Holly at Christmas** celebrates the timeless music of Buddy Holly with a festive twist, the perfect combination of rock 'n' roll nostalgia and Christmas spirit.



Two great shows to get you well and truly into the Christmas mood!

And looking a little further ahead, **Rick Wakeman – A Hint of Christmas** arrives on **Sunday 13th December**, bringing his unmistakable musicianship together with a touch of festive magic for a very special Christmas evening at the Princess please note show time is 8pm. Tickets selling fast.

Christmas Shopping at The Princess Theatre? If you have Gifting on your mind, remember *The Gift of choice – who doesn't love a voucher?* We like to make things easy for you *and* they come with a beautiful gift card if you buy at the box office, either by calling us or popping in. Vouchers can also be purchased online. Another great idea is tickets for a show. Look at *what's online* or look out for the new brochure for 2027 which is due to land later this month.

One of Hunstanton's biggest festive events of the year is on its way and it looks like Santa is swapping the North Pole for the Norfolk coast!



We have it on good authority that Father Christmas will once again be taking his annual winter break in Sunny Hunny before the big day. And this year, rumour has it he's treating himself to a little luxury and staying in a safari tent just down the road!

Meanwhile, a team of elves are already working quietly behind the scenes to make sure everything is ready for his visit, with thanks to QD Stores!

Santa will be making his way to the Princess Theatre on Sunday 29th November, where he'll be meeting families from 1.30pm–4.30pm, before heading out for the Hunstanton Christmas Lights Switch-On at 5pm. Mulled Wine and Mince Pies will be served at the Sunset Wine Bar and the festivities don't stop there, with DJ Zola on the Terrace afterwards to keep the celebrations going!

What Are Your Festive Traditions? We all have them! Those little traditions that tell us Christmas is on its way.

Perhaps it's putting up the tree on the same weekend every year, visiting the Christmas lights, meeting up with old friends, enjoying a festive meal together… or heading to the theatre for the annual panto. A recent conversation about festive trips and days out reminded me just how important these traditions can become.

Having grown up, trained and worked in entertainment and theatre all my life, it would be very easy to take a trip to the theatre for granted. But every Christmas I'm reminded that, for so many people, theatre offers something rather special: a few hours of escapism, laughter and shared experience. Pantomime has become one of Britain's great festive traditions.

Every winter, families and friends head to theatres across the country to enjoy something that is wonderfully difficult to explain to anyone who has never experienced it! You can shout out, sing along, laugh until your sides hurt, boo the baddie, cheer the hero or simply sit back and soak up the wonderfully bonkers nature of it all.

For some, it's a child's very first visit to a theatre. For others, it's something they have been doing for decades. We see grandparents bringing grandchildren, groups of friends making a night of it, local families returning year after year and visitors who make a trip to the Princess Theatre part of their festive break in Hunstanton.

There is something incredibly special about knowing that our little theatre has become part of so many people's Christmas traditions. We are enormously grateful to every family, group of friends, local resident and visitor who chooses to spend a little part of their festive season with us.

Have You Got a Special Panto Shout-Out? Celebrating a birthday, visiting with a group or wishing someone a Merry Christmas? Just let our Box Office team know, and we'll pass your message to the cast to read out at the end of the panto!

In December's newsletter, we'll be finding out what Christmas traditions Cinderella, the Fairy Godmother, Prince Charming and Buttons have of their own.

Does Cinderella insist on a glass slipper by the fireplace? Does the Fairy Godmother magic up Christmas dinner? And does Buttons spend Christmas still waiting for Cinderella to notice him? All will be revealed next month… Oh yes it will!

The Countdown to Cinderella is On!

Now that pumpkin season has ended, we've made sure our Fairy Godmother has kept one very special pumpkin aside for Cinders, she's going to need it for a rather important journey to the ball! The excitement is building at the Princess Theatre as this year's *Cinderella* cast will be arriving in Hunstanton and becoming fully immersed in rehearsals later this month, ready to bring plenty of magic, laughter and festive sparkle to the stage.

Tickets are selling fast, with some of the most popular performances and seats already being snapped up. *Cinderella* runs from Saturday 5th December to Sunday 3rd January.

Looking ahead the new year! We're delighted to welcome back **King's Lynn Operatic and Dramatic Society (KLODS)** next April with their production of *The Producers*, the hilarious, award-winning musical by Mel Brooks.

For something completely different, **Tap Factory** arrives on Sunday 28th February, bringing eight extraordinary performers together for an exhilarating mix of dance, acrobatics, music and comedy. With spectacular choreography, jaw-dropping stunts and plenty of high-energy entertainment, this reimagined production promises a thrilling night out!

There's plenty to look forward to at the Princess Theatre and we look forward to seeing you soon.

Anna H


CINDERELLA
MEET THE CAST
BUTTONS
SAM LITTLEWOOD
CINDERELLA
LUCY GALLOWAY
DANDINI
THOMAS FAGE
FAIRY GODMOTHER
JESS BROADBENT
PRINCE CHARMING
TYLER SARGENT
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JOSH REETIE & MICHAEL DIAMOND
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SUN 15 NOV

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FROM 5 DEC

CINDERELLA FAMILY PANTO Various Times

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SUN 13 DEC

RICK WAKEMAN A HINT OF CHRISTMAS 8.00pm

With special guests Oliver Wakeman and Mollie Marriott.

SUN 29 NOV
SANTA & ZOLA FROM THE PRINCESS THEATRE WILL BE JOINING THE FESTIVITIES AS HUNSTANTON LIGHTS UP FOR CHRISTMAS!

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