

BLYTHBURGH PARISH NEWS



Issue 56

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January/February 2011

When crime comes to your own home

Two recent robberies in the parish bring home the reality of the crime statistics, which show a 13 per cent rise in burglaries from Suffolk homes between October 2009 and September 2010. Jewellery was stolen when thieves broke into a house in Main Street, Darsham, on the morning of January 14, and up to 800 litres of heating oil was stolen from a cottage in Blythburgh, between noon on January 14 and noon January 20.

Almost 10,000 litres of oil have been stolen in Suffolk in recent months as the price of domestic fuel has risen.

David Tytler, who discovered the theft when he and his wife returned from holiday, said: "It was a nasty shock. We put on the central heating and it failed to start. I knew we hadn't run out of oil as the tank was filled in mid November. How wrong was that: the tank had been drained dry. It is particularly worrying because the tank cannot be seen from the road or the driveway.

"The thieves must have known where it is. It's also likely they knew we were away. Clearly they

had done their homework. I can only urge others in the parish to do all they can to make their tanks as secure as possible. We certainly will. (When I reported the theft to the police, they asked: 'Do you have CCTV?') That might be a step too far, but don't make the mistake we did and think it couldn't happen to you.

"After ringing round, we found an oil company able to deliver the next day, otherwise it would have been ice cold in Blythburgh."

Both crimes have been reported to the police. Blythburgh Neighbourhood Watch was unable to provide more information on the jewellery theft and no further action is to be taken over the oil theft. A police email sent to the Tytlers said: "There does not appear to be a realistic prospect that further enquiries will assist in identifying the offender. Your report has, therefore, not been allocated for continued investigation at this time. However, should further information be received this will be followed up."

New on-demand service for Blythburgh

Suffolk Links Blyth, the new name for Coast Link, provides on-demand transport seven days a week

from 7 am to 7 pm, charges normal bus fares and accepts passes. The bus will take you anywhere within the Blyth service area, which covers Blythburgh, Dunwich, Leiston, Minsmere, Saxmundham, Walberswick and Yoxford. To book, call 01728 833 526 from 8 am to 6 pm, Monday to Friday, up to a week before you wish to travel.

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Suffolk Links Blyth, operated by Coastal Accessible Transport Services (CATS), links the area between Suffolk Links Alde to the south, Suffolk Links Loes, which starts on February 7, to the west and Pathfinder to Halesworth. The link provides connections with bus services or a direct journey, where no other buses are available. Suffolk County Council has removed the subsidy for the buses, resulting in a reduced service on the 601 and 522 routes which run through Blythburgh. The changes take place on April 1.

Watch out for your neighbours

If you see anything suspicious contact Rob Benson, Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator, on 01502 478521

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In search of low-flying marsh angels

Blythburgh is a village of two halves, bisected by the A12 as it meanders between Ipswich and Lowestoft. As a result, it too often goes unnoticed by those heading for its neighbouring media-luvvie haunts, Southwold and Walberswick.

Unless, that is, you are driving by night, when the floodlit magnificence of Holy Trinity - "the cathedral of the marshes" - alerts you to the fact that you have arrived at a place of historic significance.

Its surroundings are jaw-droppingly beautiful. The tidal section of the River Blyth flows just to the north of the village on its way out to the sea at Southwold Harbour. Over the years, the sea-walls have been breached, creating a tidal lagoon, Blythburgh Water, where oystercatchers, godwits, egrets, curlews, and redshanks parade for the benefit of keen birdwatchers and idle dog-walkers alike.

There is a train service from Liverpool Street, London. Darsham is the easiest station for access. From the nearby market town of Halesworth, the 520 bus meets the train, Monday to Saturday.

The path alongside the estuary, with its secluded

hide, is a must. Birdwatchers should time their stroll to coincide with low tide, when waders strut their stuff. For keen walkers, the path continues, through the woods and on to Walberswick, where two excellent pubs, the Anchor and the Bell, will sustain you for the return journey.

Holy Trinity, built in 1412 on a Christian foundation that goes back to 630, is spectacular. A flight of wooden angels cast their watching eyes over the congregation below from their beamed heaven. And be sure to check out the devilish claw marks on the inside of the north door. These could have been made by the legendary Black Shuck, said to be the prototype for the Hound of the Baskervilles - or they could be scorch marks from the great storm of 1577.

For refreshment, the White Hart, Blythburgh, on the A12, has good food, Adnams' beer, a friendly clientele, and a high-quality B&B. The views over the estuary from the gardens will nourish your soul as you quench your thirst. Or try Mains restaurant, in Yoxford, a few miles south; small, unpretentious, scrumptious.

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Jottings in a village notebook

Suffolk County Council is carrying out detailed work to install a sluice to alleviate flooding in Blythburgh on the A12, which was closed for two days in November 2007. The plan was given the go-ahead at a meeting between county officials, Therese Coffey, the local MP, and the Environment Minister Richard Benyon.

Mr Benyon said that the sluice would also benefit the whole Blyth estuary, the redevelopment of Southwold Harbour and community plans to improve local flood defences. The work should have minimum impact on the environment. The Department of Transport is contributing £1.8 million towards the scheme, a much cheaper solution than other options. Work is expected to begin before the end of 2012.

Blythburgh Speedwatch was the first to be established in Suffolk and by February 2011 will have been in operation for two years. The continuation of the scheme would not be

possible without the time and effort freely given by Binny Lewis, co-ordinator, and the volunteers, Ro Williams, Alan Mackley, Brenda Motley, Debbie Telkman, Clare Lyth and Roderick Orr-Ewing. From November 6 to December 12, the team completed 9.5 hours of monitoring and six vehicles were reported for speeding, far fewer than in the same period last year.

Thanks to Paul Sayer, of the Little Plumbing Company, and Nick Haward, of The Priory, for coming to the aid of the village hall when cold weather led to a burst pipe and serious flooding. Emergency work put most things back in place. Full repairs will follow an insurance claim.

Blythburgh will mourn the passing of Margaret Marchant, who was 90 last year. Marking her birthday in the May 2010 *Parish News*, Mrs C. described her as having "a kind heart, a lust for life and a sense of humour". A memorial service will take place in Holy Trinity later this year.



Blythburgh Suffolk

THE INN ON THE RIVER BLYTH

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FISH NIGHT

25 March

Starters

Dressed salad of king prawns

Pan fried local halibut

Pan fried North Sea squid

Main courses

Roasted monkfish tail

Smoked haddock cassoulet

Whole grilled sea bass

MEAT FEAST

29 April

Starters

Grilled black pudding

Devilled kidneys

Hearty Scotch broth

Main courses

Roast loin of Chantry lamb

Pan fried lamb's liver

Homemade steak suet pudding

QUIZ NIGHT

First Sunday in the month

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William Morris (1834-1896)

On 17 July 1895 William Morris, the many-faceted socialist, writer, designer and campaigner, caught the 8.05 am train from Liverpool Street and headed for East Anglia. He changed at Halesworth for the Southwold Railway and arrived in Blythburgh at 11.20.

With his companion, the secretary of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, Morris wanted to see for himself what the local restoration committee was doing to the church. They met the vicar, the Rev. Thomas Henry Royal Oakes. He had no enthusiasm for SPAB involvement and had tried unsuccessfully to limit the time spent at the church by suggesting arrival by a later train and a visit to Walberswick and lunch before driving slowly to Blythburgh.

The SPAB, founded in 1877 by Morris and others, argued for the sensitive repair of old buildings. It was against restoration, which sometimes amounted to rebuilding. It adamantly opposed the loss of any original fabric. Morris had already had a public confrontation with the architect G.E. Street, engaged by Blythburgh in 1881.

Morris believed that Street “would restore every building in England if he could ... with the necessary effect of ruining them”. From the very start at Blythburgh, the SPAB sought to have the work done in accordance with its principles.

The society largely failed in its attempts to influence the 1880s project and so redoubled its efforts on learning more work was proposed.

Morris’s conclusions from the Blythburgh visit were accepted by the SPAB. It opposed the repaving of the chancel with glazed tiles. It wanted “offensive” supports for the altar rail removed. Wall panelling should be painted

white. And, in strict conformity with its purist principles that original features should never be replaced with modern imitations, the society declared that nothing would be gained by opening out any of the blocked up windows because “the church is so light already”.

The SPAB always preferred to prop up decaying medieval masonry than have it replaced. “Do not care about the unsightliness of the aid; better a crutch than a lost limb.” That view did not appeal to the restoration committee which thought the church had for long enough been “disfigured by unsightly makeshifts”. However, given that even the repainting of the roof had been considered, the SPAB’s fears that the church could suffer the fate of the many already over-restored churches were well founded.

Morris died the following year. He is often credited with saving Blythburgh church. The truth is more complicated. The SPAB continued to campaign against the Blythburgh Restoration Committee until 1906 when the society, in spite of having the support of the patron, reluctantly concluded that it had to disassociate itself from the work being done. However, in walking away, the SPAB took many potential contributors to the restoration fund with it. Blythburgh church was actually saved by the lack of money, with the SPAB’s withdrawal being influential.

By the 1930s attitudes had changed. William Weir, the very architect proposed for Blythburgh by the SPAB 25 years earlier, was now working for the Advisory Committee of the Diocese of St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich. The excesses of the nineteenth century, against which the SPAB had campaigned, were now unlikely to be repeated.

Alan Mackley

Dates for your diary

Blythburghm@tters continues to provide a full programme of activities. The diary for village hall events, which start at 7.30, is: **Quiz**, January 28; **Blythburgh Remembered**, February 25; **Film Night** with *Casablanca*, March 25; **Quiz**, September 30; **Trick or Treat**, October 28; **Film Night**; November 25; and the **Christmas tea** on December 15. The group is planning a **royal wedding party** on April 29; a **coach trip** to Somerleyton Hall on May 12; and a **history and wine** evening on May 27.

The Blyth Valley First Responders, active since October 2010, has been called out five times. The group needs more volunteers. The Ambulance Service will give a demonstration in Wenhasston Village Hall on February 1 at 7.30 pm. Please join us. For further information ring Ursula on 478438.



**Remembering Blythburgh
Growing up in the village**

*A fascinating mix of pictures and
live and recorded reminiscences*

**BLYTHBURGH VILLAGE HALL
7.30 PM Friday 25 February**

The darling buds of January

**No warmth, no cheerfulness, no healthful ease,
No shade, no shine, no butterflies, no bees**

(extract from Thomas Hood's November)

But why pick on November? After all, there is a certain cosiness about that time of year: the first log fires, crackling autumn leaves, the nostalgic scent of bonfires, a sparkle in the air with fireworks and promises of jollity and feasting ahead at Christmas.

Mr Hood must have been out of the country every time January crept in: sad, damp and lifeless. Grey has never been my favourite colour, nor trailing with the dog through freezing sludge a popular pastime of mine. And could somebody please explain why this particular month lasts twice as long as any other, when it has the same number of days?

And why does the media relish January as a time to *really* add to our low spirits. Plays and documentaries about child prostitution, manic depression and the Gestapo were just a few of the treats on offer recently on TV and radio. Why save all the sequins and razz-a-ma-tazz for Christmas when we're already over-whelmed with bon-hommie?

The newspapers are no better.

I can't remember a January when we haven't been told how fat and unfit we all are, so here's a wonderful six-page diet and free gym membership. This is followed, a day or two later, with articles on *today is the most depressing of the year*, brought on, apparently, by the fact that most of us will have given up our New Year resolutions by January 17.

They can't catch me with that one. I'm not daft enough to give up anything that brings me comfort in the bleak, mid-winter. So I don't desire, while carrying some sensible excess winter weight, to see glossy page after page of bronzed stick insects leaping about on tropical beaches.

And are fantastic offers on winter cruises really

what your average Joe wants to read about? It may be as little as an incredible £995 per person, but when you've just had your winter heating bill, it's inclined to set your teeth on edge.

It's a bit like those extraordinary people who have a couple of grand left in their back pockets to spend at the Boxing Day sales. Surely nobody is that organised. Please tell me they're not.

I was having a jolly good moan to my neighbour today on the subject of January blues (or rather, greys). He nodded sagely. "Hmm, of course, it does mean spring is just around the corner."

And, of course - it is. Yes, you have to look hard, but once you've dragged your winter-heavy heart out of your muddy boots you can spot the signs all around. The grim silence of the first dark days of the year is broken - a couple of weeks later - by the unmistakable sounds of birds flirting with prospective mates.

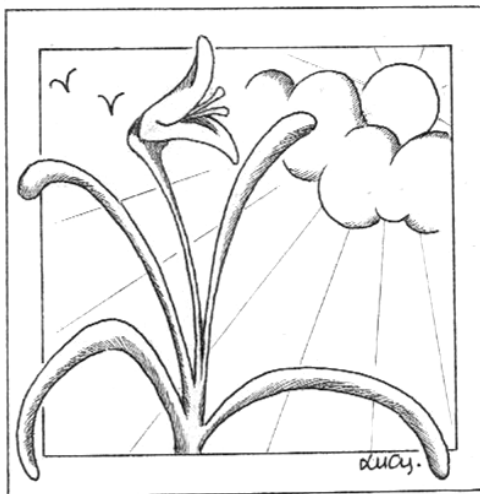
The first snowdrops and daffodil shoots are nosing through the earth and it is possible to find a corner out of the wind and feel a gentle

warmth from the sun.

And our little cat, Delilah, is examining every corner of the house, apparently looking for a suitable nesting sight. Mind you, as I've mentioned before, she is - as my Lowestoft Auntie politely puts it - a bit of a Norfolk dumpling, so we're all a tad sceptical about the patter of tiny paws.

Let's hope all those little creatures busy planning comfy homes for their future offspring don't get hit by another Arctic blast, and that the spring continues its slow but steady progress.

Oh, and please - telly planners - could we have a few laughs? Morecambe and Wise are not just for Christmas, you know.





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VISIONS

How Concorde first took flight

In May 1947, six aeronautical scientists at the Royal Aircraft Establishment (RAE) at Farnborough gathered round a table in Building 140. They were Brown, Doetsch, Hufton, Küchemann and Morgan. The topic for discussion was : “We now believe that we have enough knowledge to design and build a supersonic transport aircraft.” The contention was based on experience with supersonic missiles and some experimental and fighter aircraft - a long way to go in fact. Merely a vision at this stage.

Eventually, Dr Dietrich Kuchemann, formerly from Göttingen University in Germany, concluded: “I believe the aircraft would be the shape of a narrow delta: but I have one proviso: I am not sure it would fly in a stable manner when approaching land at a high angle of incidence to the airflow. “

This led to the creation of the Handley Page 115 experimental narrow delta aircraft which, when flown, proved that Dr Küchemann’s doubts were groundless. And so started Concorde. Much research, many experiments and project designs and some arguments and political hiccups on the way led to the world’s first supersonic airliner. It had the narrow delta wing as predicted by Dr Küchemann - but not before 1976 - a wait of 29 years. The aircraft remained in service for 30 years.

This vision was probably the most risky aeronautical decision taken in Europe. (The American Apollo manned flight to the moon must rank higher). How does a small group of scientists, engineers and pilots come to such a giant decision? But perhaps more importantly

how did they keep their vision on course? Morgan, eventually Sir Morien Morgan, has been called the father of Concorde. As director of RAE, he had a crucial position of influence but also needed all his persuasive powers and dynamic drive to combine the efforts of both France and the UK on the revolutionary aircraft - the only long-range passenger-carrying aircraft to fly successfully at twice the speed of sound.

Enormous difficulties were encountered: the sonic boom was so offensive that Concorde was prohibited from flying supersonic overland: the Americans tried to build their own SST but got cold feet: the Russians tried to copy Concorde but did not understand the aerodynamics of the wing and it was a total failure.

The one feature that Morgan would not compromise on was adequate preparations for the design and flight safety and so it cost ten times more than estimated. At an early stage, the UK government tried to pull out of the Anglo-French contract. In the end, only 17 were built compared to the thousand or so expected. Many have dubbed it a commercial failure initiated by over-enthusiastic scientists. However it did have an exceptional safety record over 30 years until the Air France crash in Paris.

More than anything else though it successfully forged those incredibly complex links between European aircraft companies, airlines, agencies and governments that subsequently led to the great AIRBUS organisation- the all-important wings for every AIRBUS are made in the UK.

JOHN ALLEN

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A TRAVELLER'S TALE CONTINUES

Of trains, gers and a Steppe eagle

Entry to Mongolia is a tense affair; failure to stand to attention for the immigration officer caused great offence but finally we were on our way and mercifully the train's toilet facilities were back in service.

I set my alarm for daybreak. After the border crossing, three hours sleep wasn't really enough but this was my last chance to see the Gobi Desert. The desert looks like hard packed sand and reaches to the distant horizon with barely a ripple. In the half light, I imagined I saw camels in the distance, fleeting images almost the same colour as the sand. I will never be sure as there are so few wild bactrian camels remaining but it felt just too good to be true.

By mid-morning the vast expanse of sky was a stunning blue with a few wisps of cloud. The landscape was gentler now, with undulations reaching to distant hills. I saw herds of cattle roaming wild, black tailed gazelles, sheep and, fleetingly, there are wild horses with foals close to the fencing that skirts the railway track on both sides. Testament to the harsh climate and recent very hard winter were the skeletons dotting the landscape; just bones, stripped of all flesh and bleached white by the sun and wind.

We stopped briefly at a small station; just a few dwellings and grubby, but smiling children selling purple and green semi-precious stones and one enterprising dumpling seller.

Time passed quickly, the ger (a traditional Mongolian tent similar to a Russian Yurt) camps became more frequent, as did the groups of animals. It also amazes me how many birds we saw from the train.

We were drawing close to Ulaan Baatar (UB) but you would never know it from the scenery until suddenly it appears, as if by magic, in a gap between two hills.

There is a white outline portrait of Ghengis Khan on one hillside and my immediate impression was of a small low rise town with maybe a hint of the wild west about it. UB is on a plateau at around 1350 metres and has the distinction of being the world's coldest capital

with winter temperatures of minus 40 degrees Celsius. I arrived at the start of summer and it was very different with temperatures in the mid to high 30's, an incredible temperature range.

Heading out of UB in a bus, I passed through the suburbs, a mix of single story housing and gers. Despite the poverty and lack of water and electricity, the faces all seemed to be smiling; indeed I found Mongolians to be open, friendly and delightful company. The roads, one lane each way if you are lucky, are universally bad. I eventually decided that this is a good thing as it keeps the speeds down a bit although wrecked cars and roadside memorials were a constant reminder (usually ignored) to take care.

My destination was a ger camp in Terelj National Park and although the scenery en route was stunning, I was mighty pleased to arrive safe and sound. The ger makes a very cosy resting place. For good luck I slept with my feet pointing towards the door in the traditional manner. Despite it being summer, the nights were cold and the extra blankets were needed. The night sky was clear, jet black and dotted with a million glittering stars; awe inspiring.

Walking in the national park you don't see a soul for hours on end. Being alone with the sound of the wind, the occasional bird and just feeling this ancient land was a true highlight.

Talking of highlights, I was fortunate to hold and fly a Steppe eagle and for a few moments I could have been living in the world of Ghengis Khan.

The history of Mongolia is fascinating. Visits to the Bogd Khan palaces, Chojjin Lama Temple, Zanabazar arts museum and evenings listening to throat singers, traditional music groups and ancient plays enhanced this feeling of an historic past and prompted me to find out more.

All too soon I was back on the Trans Mongolian Railway heading for the border with Russia; this was definitely the most luxurious train to date but the lack of air conditioning, in 40 degree Celsius heat, was proving somewhat challenging.

Sonia Boggis

Notes from Daisy Bank XLIII

Alfie's story: I arrived here from another place some time in June. The garden was large enough for hunting and occasionally there was left-over birdseed and bits of bread – any port in a storm when you're hungry I can tell you.

I'd heard on the grapevine that there had been some posh, big male cats living there the year before but now there were just two females neither on the large size. In other words, not a problem for somebody of my size.

On arrival I immediately established that of the two, the little black and white female, whose name evidently was Alice, would not be a problem and would in fact provide me with endless sport. The ginger one seemed afraid of her own shadow and, therefore, no fun.

On the other hand, the house owner seemed to have a definite problem with me and from time to time would run at me like a mad thing screaming and shouting. Strange, but then you know what humans are like. Never been able to work them out myself. Then in November, things changed and he stopped chasing me and seemed to want to make friends. Although he wouldn't let me in the house he did let me into his office, which was warm, had a cat door and a couple of cushioned seats to sleep on. And, most important, two square meals a day albeit the cheaper varieties of cat food.

A few weeks went by and then suddenly I'm in a cat basket and delivered to a new home over at a village called Westhall, a few miles from Blythburgh. Seemed ok: an elderly lady, warm house and again lots to eat.

However, on the morning after I arrived she fell over me getting out of bed and dislocated her shoulder. So, after a few days it was back to the office and Blythburgh again. All very strange but *c'est la vie*. About a week after that it was a couple of trips to the vets, the latter entailing

something being removed from my rear end. A bit painful, but plenty of sleep when I got back cured all that.

Then a couple of weeks ago evidently, I went too far. Chasing Alice I managed to get my teeth firmly in her leg and she ended up at the vets as well, which didn't seem to do my chances of staying any good at all. He still seemed ok about it but really I knew then that the writing was on the wall. I mean I'm a big cat and that's what I do. After all you have to protect the territory you've acquired whatever the circumstances.

Anyway the story has a happy ending, for me. I now live on Constitution Hill in Southwold. Big house, no other cats or the dreaded dogs and it seems when I'm let out, no other cats to beat up. I have to be honest, I'll miss that a bit, but life's always a compromise, don't you agree. And oh yes, the cat food is no longer own brand but a more up market make, which is a big relief. Home at last!

House owner's footnote: Including Alice and Molly, who came the same route as Alfie, this is the sixth cat we've had to worry about and eventually re-home. Is it the Cats Crossing signs or is it that B and I were cats in a previous life and they know that we're simpatico?

It's almost as though we have a sign in the back garden saying 'This way to the cat home – all welcome!' As most people know, we are Siamese lovers and hope to have more one day. But having two moggys already resident makes things in our tiny place pretty difficult. So please God we will now have a break from all the expense and worry for a few years.

PS: On two occasions we found a full box of cat food on our step outside, so whoever put them there, thanks.

Paul Bennett

Everybody welcome to have their say

The next meeting of Blythburgh Parish Council is in the village hall on Monday March 14 at 7.30pm. Parishioners are invited to raise their concerns and questions at the Open Forum from 7.15pm.