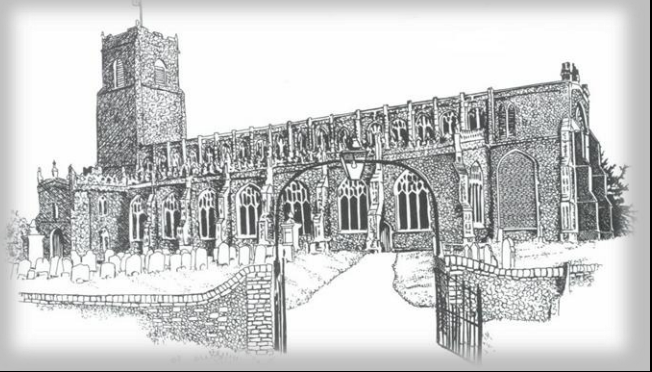


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Issue No. 1

January/February 2012

A new name for a New Year...

The *Blythburgh Parish News* enters 2012 with a new name. The year promises a great deal with the Queen's 60th Jubilee, more of that in the next issue, and the 2012 Olympics, more of that next time too. The name change has been brought about because of the long-standing natural confusion with Holy Trinity's own publication.

The privately financed *Blythburgh Focus* will maintain its independence. If you have ideas on how your magazine can be further improved, email david@dytler.freeserve.co.uk

The editors, contributors and advertisers of *Blythburgh Focus* wish all our readers a very happy and prosperous 2012.

and best of all: a new shop

The Blythburgh village shop is finally to re-open on Saturday February 11. It is to be run by Blythburgh residents Alan De-Thabrew and Katie Timson.

Their aim is to make it the typical convenience store offering everything you would expect from a village shop together with newspapers, quality fresh sandwiches, cakes and pastries, dry cleaning and laundry, seasonal goods, local crafts and foods. They will also offer home-delivery to those shopper who need it and will resume the prescription collection service for patients at the York Road surgery every Friday.

Alan said: "It is hoped that the shop will be well supported by the village, passing traffic on the A12, as well as tourists and walkers during the summer." The opening hours will be 7am to 6pm Monday to Friday, 8am until 5pm on Saturdays and 9am until noon on Sundays.

Alan has lived in Blythburgh for six years and is a parish councillor. Katie moved to the area in 2011 with her two children and Alan and Katie plan to marry in August 2012. Katie has recently given up her job in Ipswich to take on the shop business and is both excited and committed to making it a thriving endeavour, with the shop once again becoming a focal point in the village.

She says: "You will receive a warm welcome and we look forward to seeing you there, helping to make it a success."

David Tytler, chair of the Parish Council, said: "The council is delighted at the news and wish Alan and Katie every success. If their enthusiasm is anything to go by the shop will be a success. But, and it is a big but, they cannot do it on their own. They need, the village, for the people living here to use it. We would not want to see it shut again."

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Council objects to cottage extension

Blythburgh Parish council has objected to proposals for changes to be made to White Cottage in The Street, Blythburgh. The council was mindful of the need to modernise this property and would not object in principle to an extension if sympathetically carried out. However, the council agreed to object to the current proposal because:

- The case made for the proposed work is flawed
- The removal of the central chimney would compromise the listed status of the building.
- The rear extension is unsympathetic in shape and choice of materials.

The council considered the Heritage and Impact Statement to be lacking in substance and at variance with the structural survey in important respects.

The statement fails to mention a crucial event in Blythburgh history: the devastating fire of 1676. The statement expresses a belief that White Cottage dates back to at least 1501, when it was the Crown Inn. Although there is documentary evidence that a Crown Inn existed in the early sixteenth century it is most unlikely that the building survived the fire. Local tradition links White Cottage to the inn, repeated in the listing statement, but the council is not aware of any evidence for this.

It is probable that White Cottage was built after 1676, in brick, and, subject to any detailed survey evidence that may emerge, may never have been timber framed. The claimed presence of Tudor brick may represent no more than the re-use of materials, a very common practice.

White Cottage is a development of a common historical type, the lobby-entrance farmhouse. The 'central' chimney is a defining feature of such buildings. The proposed removal of the stack is therefore unacceptable.

The proposal states that "the principal elevation to The Street remains largely unaltered". With the removal of two chimneys this is not accurate.

The proposal claims that "materials [shall match] existing materials where possible". It would be possible to build an extension in sympathy with the existing building, using brick with a tiled pitched roof, aligned to the existing roof. However, the proposed rear extension is timber clad with a low-pitched slate roof. This is wholly unsympathetic to the existing building and the new roof line jars visually.

The application stresses that the extension is on an existing footprint, but the slab-sided, multi-storey aspect of the new structure is ignored. It is represented as "an improvement". That the extension cannot be seen from the road does not matter. The building must be considered as a whole. It is relevant that the backs of old buildings are as interesting as the fronts and should be treated with equal respect.

The Heritage and Impact Statement is at odds with the structural survey. The latter was a "brief internal and external structural inspection". The statement converts this, without justification, to a "detailed structural survey". The surveyor found that "no major structural works are required" and, as far as the main chimney was concerned, "there may be the need for some precautionary stiffening and strengthening to the joints above the arch opening".

The application states that the chimney must be removed 'due to structural condition.' The council considers this statement to be unjustified on the evidence provided and is special pleading for the removal of the chimney because the internal alterations depend upon it. It is also argued that the chimney can be removed because it is not 'original.' In a much-altered building that is not, in itself, justification for removal, and the building was listed in its present altered condition, not as an imagined original.

The parish council proposes that if any work is done on this property a detailed historical survey of the structure should first be carried out and access allowed for inspection during alterations.

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BLYTHBURGH CHARACTERS

Alfred Inigo Suckling (1796-1856)

Including Thomas Gardner's contribution in 1754, Blythburgh has so far been favoured with three published histories, at intervals of around one hundred years. The Rev. Alfred Suckling's work, published in 1847 (some accounts say 1848 but the volume itself is dated 1847), provides a nineteenth-century view of the village's past. It was part of an intended history of the whole of Suffolk and covers the Blything Hundred and part of Lothingland.

An only son, Alfred was born a Fox, and adopted the surname and arms of his mother's family when a cousin Maurice Suckling died in 1820 without children and whose estates he inherited. One at Woodton-cum-Langhall had been in the family since the fourteenth century and another at Barsham since 1627.

Ancestors included the architect Inigo Jones, the poet Sir John Suckling and an uncle of Nelson. As Alfred Fox he matriculated at Pembroke College, Cambridge, in 1814 and two years later married Lucia Clementina, of Bergh Apton, Norfolk. They were to have ten children. He was ordained in Norwich in 1820 and graduated LL.B in 1824. He did not have a benefice until he took the family living of Barsham in 1839, which he held until his death.

Alfred Suckling's antiquarian career included publishing works on his famous poet forebear and particular interests were the topographies of Essex and Suffolk. He drew most of the illustrations for his books and those of Blythburgh church are valuable representations of the structure before restoration.

He worked with London publisher John Weale, who published *Suckling's Memorials of ... Essex* in 1845. The first volume in the projected *History and Antiquities of Suffolk* series was published in 1846 covering Wangford, and Lothingland and Mutford. In the course of producing this work, Suckling fell out with Weale and so published the second volume, the one including Blythburgh, himself, for sale by A. Stebbings of Lowestoft. It was to be the last and the great enterprise was never completed.

Suckling's *Blythborough* provides a detailed historical account from Anglo-Saxon times, with genealogical coverage of the Lords of the Manor and other prominent families, and a description of the church and its monuments. Suckling concludes that "the isolated fragment of its monastery, and its splendid church, mouldering into ruin, tell a mournful tale of its fallen fortunes, its depopulation and decay". He refers to a visit he made in 1822 when he described the armorial shields decorating the roof of the church.

Twenty-five years later he recorded that "many have since fallen, or become indistinct through damp and decay". A sad situation indeed, given that Blythburgh's population was then at its highest. But, of course, the people were very poor and most were non-conformists. It was to be nearly another 40 years before a start was made on dealing with the consequences of decades of neglect of the church.

Suckling died in Jersey and is buried there.

Alan Mackley

YOUR PARISH COUNCILLORS

Chair: David Tytler, 478521

Vice Chair/Chair planning advisory group: Alan Mackley

Chair financial advisory group: Roderick Orr-Ewing

Councillors: John Blakesley, Lucy Clapham, Cliff Waller, Alan De-Thabrew

Clerk: Jim Boggis. 478687

BLYTHBURGH ASSOCIATIONS

Carpet Bowls: Beryl Stringer

Horticultural Society

Jenny Allen 478314

Neighbourhood Watch

Rob Benson 478047

Speed Watch: Binny Lewis 478624

Village Hall: Olive Forsythe 478521

MRS CLAPHAM INVESTIGATES

A computer is not just for Christmas

I am writing this on a typewriter - may ring a bell with a few of you - as my laptop is feeling its age. The cantankerous old thing lets out audible groans every time I open it – similar to the noise I make these days when I bend down for something – followed by an assortment of huffing, puffing complaining sounds when I attempt to read my emails.

I realise that most of us in Blythburgh can only expect to pick up the internet on every third Wednesday of a month without an R in it, but my old dead laptop refuses even to do that.

Personally, I think a laptop should last for more than seven years, but this one has had a hard life. Imagine my delight that with Christmas seven years ago arrived a bright, shiny and new laptop, tied with a bow with love from Mr C.

Naturally, he had to set it up for me and check everything was working properly, so, when I finally got my hands on it a few days later, everything ran smoothly.

And, thanks to my husband, I could always amuse myself with endless pictures of motorbikes, trucks, boats and photos of complete strangers on Facebook, having some kind of wild fun time people only seem to have on Facebook – or Facebitch as a friend of mine so aptly calls it.

I was never short of friendly emails from Screwfix or Land Rover, offering me wonderful deals.

With Mr C around, my laptop was never neglected – along with the telly and his mobile phone. Who says men can't multi-task?

Now, older, wiser, battered and frayed around the edges, stained with cigarette burns and sticky with spilt drinks – the laptop that is – glares at me reproachfully: "You're just NO fun," it seems to say.

Maybe, there's life in the old girl yet.

I HAVE never been much of a fan of New Year's resolutions. But, having picked my beautiful marmalade cat off the A12 on December 30, I have had second thoughts.

Orland, just nine months old, sweet natured, minder to all his little brothers and sisters, great friend and comforter and the clown of our household had his young life wiped out

by some speeding idiot.

My resolution is to make the most of everything I love. Because blink – and it is gone.

Sickly sentimental? You make think so. But perhaps, a little more important than resolving to lose half a stone in order to look better in a swimsuit.



Christmas Tree Festival

The Blythburgh Horticultural Society organised a Christmas Tree Festival again this year. Individuals each decorated a tree in whatever way their creativity led them, and the result was a fantastic display of more than two dozen trees, which continued throughout the Christmas season. More than £200 was raised for the East Anglian Children's Hospice. Thank you to everyone who took part, and in particular those who were active behind the scenes in the setting up and taking down of the trees.

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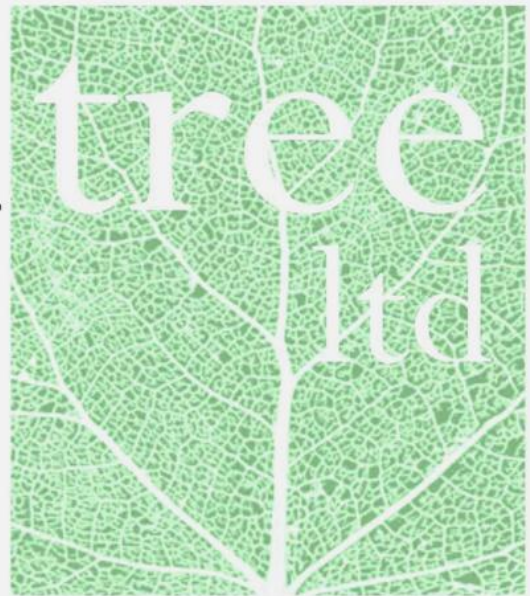
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AN AFRICAN TRILOGY : PART ONE

Facing the conundrums of Africa

Nairobi was our gateway to wonders unimagined but first, we had to face the reality of Kenya's capital city.

The journey in from the airport was an education. It was about 7:30 in the morning and the place was buzzing. People walked to work along the dusty road, others jammed into open trucks and the luckier ones filled the buses to overflowing. Men sat outside factory gates and boys sold newspapers – *The Nation* – at every junction.

Many of the houses were a metal frame with a corrugated roof and we saw one man collecting water from a broken pipe; we hoped it was for his garden but suspected otherwise. Instead of seagulls, huge Marabou storks scavenged for scraps.

The road itself was dusty and in need of repair and we were warned not to stop for anything because, at that time, there had been a spate of robberies. Even the filling stations (we saw two) had guards posted outside to protect motorists from the gangs of street boys.

But just half a mile from the airport, we had seen our first giraffe walking serenely through open grassland that stretched as far as the eye could see away to our left and, ahead, the skyline of Nairobi had shimmered invitingly as the day started to warm up.

Nairobi itself was full of contrasts: from opulent dwellings, hidden away behind high walls and guarded gates, to whole families living under a plastic sheet on the pavement; four people on a single bike, to bullet proof 4x4's; the bright

colours of traditional dress alongside the muted tones of high end fashion; the snake farm harvesting venom for antidotes, to the exotically coloured beads and bangles made using traditional techniques.

At every turn, we were faced with these conundrums but after a couple of days, we leave the hustle and bustle of Nairobi to fly north.

Nine of us cram into an eight-seat plane and draw lots to see who rides the shotgun seat beside the pilot. The pilot accelerates down the grass airstrip, pulls back on the stick and we are airborne but Nairobi has one last surprise for us as we pass over the Kibera slum – block upon block of tin boxes so closely packed that you could only see the a thin ribbon of red earth between them.

Despite being almost on the equator, Mount Kenya is snow capped and rises from the low cloud base like a black colossus. As we fly past, the clouds clear, red earth stretches below us, the views are just amazing: this is the Africa we know from picture books.

All too soon, we land and bounce to a halt on a grass runway which is distinguishable only because of the small white painted stones and unmanned white shack. Emerging carefully from the plane, because of a tendency to overbalance (the plane not me), the first thing that hit us was the heat; it was so hot and so dry and I could smell the burnt earth of Africa.

Home for the next few days would be a tent in Samburu National Park.

SONIA BOGGIS

An open invitation to you all

Please come to the next meeting of Blythburgh with Bulcamp and Hinton Parish Councillor on Monday May 14 at 7.30pm. See the council at work and have your say at the Open Forum at 7.15. Everybody is welcome.

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NEWS ROUND UP



Your chance to save a life here

The Blyth Valley Group First Responders - covering Blythburgh, Walberswick and Wenhaston - had three

call-outs in November and December, one for a cardiac arrest. Community First Responders are people who volunteer to respond to emergency calls on behalf of the Ambulance Service, in the village where you live. They get comprehensive training covering basic life support, the use of oxygen and a defibrillator to be used when a cardiac arrest occurs.

First Responders only come out after a 999 call for an ambulance. However, the Blyth Valley Group is aware of vulnerable neighbours and would not refuse a visit in an emergency. With just two volunteers in Blythburgh, 24 hour coverage is impossible. The Group has tried to

It's behind you...

On Saturday in January a merry band of 47 villagers enjoyed an afternoon of Pantomime at Norwich Theatre Royal. The very young to the young at heart, were to be heard booing, hissing, oohing, aahing and getting in the spirit of things joining in with all those old panto favourites.

There was even a happy ending with the Prince and Sleeping Beauty marrying in a lavish ceremony which gave a nod to recent royal nuptials. Congratulations to Blythburgh Latitude Trust which funded the trip and, particular thanks to Jenny Allen, Chair of the Blythburgh Latitude Trust, for championing and organising this event enjoyed by so many.

Beware fake Microsoft engineers

Suffolk Trading Standards has warned residents to be wary of phone calls from people claiming to be Microsoft security engineers. The callers tell residents they risk a computer security threat and offer free security checks. If the resident agrees, this gives the fraudsters remote access to the computer, including personal information, and bank log-in and account details, which can be used to commit fraud.

The scammers claim to represent legitimate companies and refer to their victims by name. Victims may be asked to pay for the 'fixes' the fraudster has made to their computers. Trading Standards says consumers should be suspicious of unsolicited calls related to a security problem. Microsoft advises those who think they may have been a victim of such a scam to:

- Change their password

recruit new volunteers but without success. Even face-to-face recruitment at village functions has had little result.

Responders must be between 18 and 70 and our two volunteers are close to the age limit. If Blyth Valley Group cannot get new recruits it may have to rely on neighbouring villages, resulting in a delay in treatment, a serious problem if the call-out were for a cardiac arrest.

Responders help save lives because they can help patients before ambulances arrive. Responders can also help worried and stressed relatives and carers.

If you have done any first aid and would like an update, or if you would like a demonstration before deciding to volunteer, please call Ursula Mackley on 01502 478438.

- Use the Microsoft Safety Scanner to find out if they have 'malware' on their computer;
- Contact their bank and credit card companies;
- Never provide personal information, such as credit card or bank details, to an unsolicited caller;
- Do not follow any instruction from someone who calls out of the blue;
- Take down the caller's information and pass it to the authorities;
- Use up-to-date versions of your operating and application software;
- Make sure security updates are installed, the firewall is on and antivirus software is up to date;
- Use a strong password and change it regularly.

Notes from Daisy Bank XLIX

Apologies to Ray for miss spelling his name in the last Daisy Bank, which should have been Ray St Clair Brown and not Clare as in the poet. My spelling is so bad that sometimes even the thing that corrects your spelling on the computer gets confused as to what I really mean.

The poet Phillip Larkin wrote a letter to his friend the novelist Kingsley Amis with the comment “*And now Christmas is coming as if we haven’t got enough to worry about*”. And to a greater extent this is how I have felt about Christmas over the last couple of decades; something not to look forward to and to be glad and relieved when it’s finally over.

I grew up in a North London extended family with Irish Catholic roots. I remember one particular Christmas where all my mothers’ sisters – there were four of them - came with their families and my maternal Grandmother to stay for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. It was probably my happiest memory of Christmas.

I remember my father had entwined tons of greenery through the stair banisters and there were decorations that I still have to this day adorning the rest of the house. A crib, which I still display every Christmas, was there and of course, to a little boy, a gigantic Christmas tree. My mother and her sisters were as always volatile and yes, there was a mixture of rows and arguments and laughter. But all of it was fascinating and intriguing, especially to Veronica, and me.

One of my cousins was the same age as me and we sort of grew up together, my brother arriving much later. Walking back on Christmas Eve from Midnight Mass with all that excitement to anticipate was just a magical experience. Finally to be sent to bed and therefore banned from listening to that entire hullabaloo, was too dreadful for words. But waking up in the morning with a pillow at the end of our bed just

about made up for it. Christmases like that would never be the same again.

Over the subsequent years I spent Christmases in New Zealand, Australia, Jamaica, the Arabian Gulf, several in the Far East and God knows where else. And my parents dying in their early sixties, and not having children of my own, to me Christmases since then have been at the best indifferent and at the worst non-existent.

However, attending the candlelit Carol Concert at Blythburgh church with all those wonderful Christmas trees went in some way to remind me of happier times. And when the carol *The Apple Tree* was sung beautifully by the choir, B and I looked at each other.

Several years ago just before Christmas, she was in New Zealand with a friend clearing out her friend’s mother’s house after she had died. Suddenly that same carol came on the radio and looking at each other, they realised that both of them had a tear in her eye. It was a reminder of home and more importantly Christmas at home. So even though Christmas is to me still “as if we haven’t got enough to worry about” I thank God that It’s spent here in Blythburgh and at home.

Oscar the pheasant and a friend called Henry have come back for their winter-feeding and with a female that we call Annabelle. They seemed to have survived the winter shooting on the other side of the bank and we promise not to eat pheasant while they are here.

The marshes are flooded again, only not quite so bad as in 2007. The A12 just missed another flood by a small margin and the wall that we built at the bottom of the garden seems to have worked. Sadly, the gardens at the bottom of the lane are full again. But it’s still good to see those waterlogged winter sunsets again.

Paul Bennett

Reminder: Please come to the next meeting of the Parish Council on May 14 at 7.30pm. Open Forum at 7.15. Everybody welcome.