

***Athelington, Horham & Redlingfield* NEWS**



**WINTER 2017-18
ISSUE No. 40**

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There's been a lot going on in our corner of Suffolk since our last issue and sadly not all of it has been good. I'm sure you'll all join me in wishing Peter Havers well after the break-in at Athelington Hall and wishing the young woman who went missing in Horham for a short time all the best. On a happier note fundraising efforts by Paul Hambling in Horham and Tony

Freitas from Redlingfield made the local press and radio (see inside this issue for more on them). Both villages have also featured on TV. The Red Feather Club had a whole hour-long programme on the History channel (again more on that inside) while the interesting plans to develop Redlingfield Old School into a small house with a courtyard featured on Anglia News.

We started producing the village magazine in Spring 2008 and now we've hit a mini landmark with our 40th issue. Blame Evelyn Adey she persuaded me that a village mag was needed and I was the man for the editor's job. Obviously it has developed in that time and we're trying a bit of new layout with this issue - which may or may not work. Anyway I'd like to thank everyone who has helped keep the mag going from advertisers and writers to those who deliver it to your letterboxes and the proof readers who try to correct my mistakes. Many thanks to all who help now and those who have helped out in the past. A merry Christmas and a happy new year to you all.

Mike Ager



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The early bird has got two

Trevor Edwards' latest slice of Wash Farm Wildlife

IT IS OLD-FASHIONED I know, but I like the stripey lines from grass cutting and the garden never looks too bad if the lawns are cut and the edges trimmed. The geranium and roses are in flower and the dogs get so warm they take a swim in the pond to cool down. Yes, it must be November 1st.

With a sunny start to November after the driest October for 20 years, the autumn farming operations have been the easiest for many a day.

Whether we farmers have been early or late with the fieldwork, the crops in this part of North Suffolk look superb. To emphasise the need for action on the farm, my father used to say that an early bird has got two chances, a late bird has only ever got one.

That certainly has not been the case this favourable autumn, the late sowings are full of promise and so far

there is very little mud on the roads from the sugar beet harvest.

WALKING THE LOCAL footpaths before all the fields are ploughed gave me an excellent count of over forty skylarks on November 6th, which is good news for this much loved icon in this part of Suffolk.

The *Collins Bird Guide* says large flocks may congregate on stubble fields in winter, and this was certainly the case in Southolt that day. Over the years, they have given rise to human traits such as “to sing like a lark”, and early risers are described as being “up with the lark”. Some of the northern Europe population have been known to start their chorus at three in the morning.

Larks are nondescript and dull in plumage and this camouflage works in their favour as they feed on the ground,



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picking and scratching for seeds and insects. Also doing their roosting and breeding on the ground, skylarks are well-adapted to nest in growing arable crops, and to help them we have “skylark plots” dotted around the farm. These are 4m x 4m undrilled spaces of bare ground within the crop so that adults can land and walk to their nests without giving the game away.

Larks can walk and run, but not hop, which is unusual among our numerous small birds.

If the habitat suits them they can really do well with three broods a year, incubation can be as short as a fortnight and fledging as short as 10 days.

THE WARM SUMMER, WHICH included a three-day heatwave of 30

Swift boxes fixed at the ideal height of over five metres.



degrees, saw some good results for our local wild bird population and returning migrants too. Both spotted flycatchers and turtle doves returned to breed and swifts, though amber-listed in the UK, are highly visible in Suffolk.

The nearby villages of Eye, Debenham and Wangford have plenty of roofs with pantiles where swifts can nest, and here at home we have set ourselves a challenge to attract them to the farm.

Continued over



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Continued from previous page

Though swifts always favour urban areas to rural, we thought that we would try to give them a home on the farm, and why not?

With some scaffolding erected for the barn maintenance, it was the perfect opportunity to fix four swift nest boxes in place for the swifts' return next May. We have fingers crossed, but it will take a couple of years to get them noticed I am sure.

DESPITE THE WELL-PUBLISHED setbacks of the airline industry this summer, Ryanair still dominates the European skies although it is our migratory swans that lay best claim to the accolade of frequent fliers.

The Bewick swans breed in Arctic Russia and are so faithful in their return to winter in Welney and Slimbridge that the volunteer staff can recognise and name individuals by the distinctive marks of their bills. But they have to carry a lot of body weight over a journey of 2,500km, so resting

and refuelling takes place along a chain of continental wetlands covering up to eleven countries.

However, they can get a move on if they have to and achieve 1,000km in a day. Accomplished night fliers, one of the favourites, Maisie, arrived at midnight having been tracked by an army of supporters across the polders of the Netherlands. She may have been helped by the magnificent full moon, the Hunters' Moon on November 3rd so-called because leaf fall has revealed more prey to the hunter for stocking up for the winter.

And it's time to debunk the story that a blow from a swan's wing can break a man's arm, it is just a myth. Though it is always a good idea to keep swans at arm's length in the breeding season.

BOTH THE PIGEON AND THE collared dove have the ability to keep nesting late into the year and this is because the adult converts solids into a milky sap and is never short of food for the squab.

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Anyway, these fledgling pigeons regularly fall out of their nests before learning to fly and are easy pickings in the autumn. Walking Kip into the village, I just managed to prevent him scoffing one on the roadside, which he can do with a couple of gulps. I was then surprised to see the adult still feeding it next morning when a more likely fate would have been dinner for Mr Fox.



THE MUCH-LOVED BARN OWL is quite high up the food chain and is more than capable of throwing its weight about. Reg Woodard from Debenham who has climbed trees to ring both sparrow-hawk and buzzard nests for years, reports that the barn owl has a real nasty side. A kestrel box with four chicks that he was

monitoring was in a barn owl territory, and to reclaim the box, the owl killed the four young of the kestrels who were bold enough to try the sit-in.

WHERE WERE YOU AT 8.40AM on October 3rd 2017 for Suffolk's sonic boom? I thought a plane had crashed; we had just put the bird-scarers out and I have never seen so many terrified pigeons.

Trevor Edwards

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Total Madness in Horham

MADNESS FRONTMAN Suggs was at the Red Feather Club earlier this year filming an episode for HistoryTV's WW2 Treasure Hunter series.

The show pairs amateur WW2 archaeologist Stephen Taylor with WW2 enthusiast Suggs, as they work together to unearth relics from historically important former military sites before they rust away or disappear under concrete.

The episode about Horham, the fifth in an eight-show series, aired in early November and featured footage shot at the reunion earlier in the year when 95th Bomb Group veteran B-17 pilot

Ray Hobbs was interviewed by Stephen Taylor as well as finds unearthed in David Mitchell's wood and from the old bomb dump area after the reunion.

Everything unearthed, except live rounds and illegal bullets, was handed over to the museum at the Red Feather Club. The live ammunition and illegal bullets were handed in to the police for safe disposal.

The finds included first aid tins, a Quartermaster Corps ring and tubes of prophylactic ointment.

The documentary series has also seen a German Junkers 88 Bomber unearthed in Merseyside and WW2 tank unearthed in a vineyard.

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Main picture by Darren Smith shows Suggs surrounded by film crew, detectorists and Red Feather Club volunteers. Below Stephen Taylor and Suggs at the Red Feather Club.



A talk and film show by Clive Stevens at the RFC on the Friendly Invasion in October was very well attended. October also saw the final open day of the year with stalls and military vehicles adding to the attractions at the museum. Volunteers say it was the best open day that any of them can remember with an amazing number of visitors.

The final open day of the year was followed by the 95th Bomb Group Heritage Association AGM with a record number of members in attendance. The committee was re-elected with Alan Roper acting chairman.

Mike Ager



■ RED FEATHER CLUB EVENTS 2018

Saturday March 20th: 40s Swing Night - The Sugar Ray Combo & guest DJ from the Skylark Club.

Saturday June 16th & Sunday June 17th : 75th anniversary of the 95th's arrival at Station 119 (details to be announced).

Saturday June 23rd & Sunday June 24th: Americana Weekend.
Saturday: The Devils Cut Combo - back by popular demand with guest DJ Slimboy. Sunday: Americana Day.

Saturday September 29th: Dance - DJ jamboree.

Public open days: The last Sunday of the month from April to October. 10am-4pm.
April 29th, May 27th, June 24th, July 29th, Aug 26th, Sept 30th & Oct 28th.



Paul's church tower climb

AS MOST OF YOU KNOW MY climb up the steps of the 75-foot tower of Horham church took place on August 26th, a beautiful summer's day.

Roger went a few steps in front and David with his head torch was a couple of steps behind. His light shining on the steps enabled me to see where my prosthetic leg was on the step. In my head I heard my physiotherapist 'up with the good, down with the bad'.

It was quite difficult at first finding a rhythm but I soon got into my stride. Nearing the top it got very narrow and the distances between the treads were all different. Then came the ledge from the last step onto the roof of the tower and I needed an arm from Roger to steady me as I dragged my false leg over. I must say it felt so good I had done it.

Now I had to get down. I thought of coming down on my bum but thought I'd try walking. This time David went down backwards, his light on the steps (remember down with the bad).

I can only tell my foot is on solid ground when the pressure is felt in my hip from the prosthetic limb. I felt it took longer for me to come down but I knew I had to take my time to keep safe. At the last few steps the distance between them was greater so I had to use my stick to steady myself.

I think there are 70 steps and although I was on my feet all day I had no problems at all. At times my good leg protests when I've done too much but this time I was fine. I will have a

rest now, no more challenges just yet.

I must at this point thank Claire and Kerina for running the BBQ, Karen for working her magic on the raffle and the bar manned by Bernard and Pip. A great afternoon was had by all. We raised a total of £2,500 to be split 50:50 between Cancer research UK and the Old School refurbishment fund. A huge thank you to you all. On the actual climb I must thank David and Roger who helped and made me feel safe.

This day was another challenge for me and most of you will be unaware of my fight back to Horham. It all started with an off the cuff remark to my doctor that now and again I had trouble swallowing. The very next week I was diagnosed with oesophageal cancer and then treatment started.

The first chemo was a doddle, no side effects at all. Unfortunately the second dose was too much and my body went into shut down. My right foot went cold with no feeling so Tom took me to A&E at Ipswich. I was then 'blue lighted' to Colchester where two days later I lost my right leg above the knee. I was in critical care for almost five weeks during which time I was on dialysis as my kidneys had stopped working.

Tom and my family were taken into the family room no less than three times and were told to prepare for the worst. During this time I never gave up and my nearest and dearest never let on what they had just been told. One day Tom brought in a laptop and

Paul Hambling during his climb to the top of St Mary's tower.

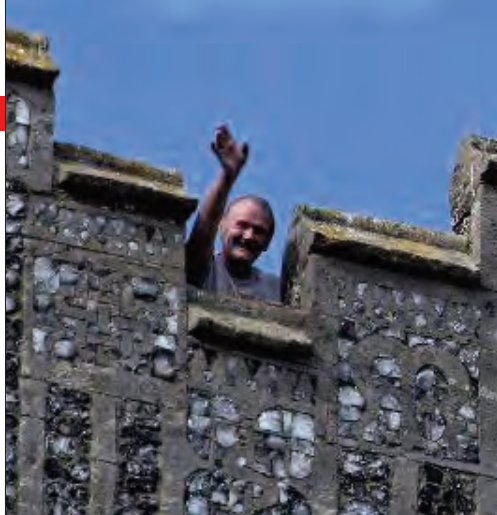
played all the messages of dear friends in the village. I remember telling Tom to let everyone know that I will see them soon at the centre; it must have been difficult for him knowing what the doctors had said. I was told by one of the consultants that things were not good and that I could go from Colchester hospital to a hospice nearer home. I was having none of that, I wanted to be at home and in any case I was going to walk again.

I was sent home with end-of-life care and looked after by good girls from the Daily Care Agency. They soon had their visits dropped from three to one then none. I was getting stronger by the day and, as my grass needed cutting was sat on the ride-on. Well, the grass was rather thick and I needed to raise the deck, unfortunately I was too weak to work the lever, lost balance and ended up sitting beside the mower. Tom was nowhere to be seen so I shouted to James next door for help. James was strong enough to pick me up and plonk me back on my seat. I then finished the lawn.

I got my new prosthetic leg in September 2016 and have got on with it quite well, there have been a few falls but the best thing is that I don't need plasters, just spray paint.

On the 24th of January I defied all the odds and was well enough to have the nine-hour operation to remove the cancer. All went well and I was home again in nine days. So now we enjoy every day and remember it's not the number of times you fall, it's the number of times you get up that count.

Love to you all and thank you for being with me on this journey. ***Paul Hambling***



Remembering all the lost

AS USUAL THIS TIME OF year has been a very busy time for Stradbroke District Branch of the British Legion with the AGM and Remembrance Sunday.

As in previous years many turned out in Stradbroke around the war memorial on Remembrance Sunday to pay their respects to all who lost their lives in the two world wars and other conflicts. A short service was conducted by Rev Susan Loxton who also read out the names of the fallen.

The Last Post and Reveille was sounded by branch secretary Chris Evans and branch chairman Michael Burton gave the Legion Tribute and the Kohima Epitaph. 15 wreaths were

laid by local organisations. Joyce Cooper carried the branch standard as she had done the day before at the annual Royal Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall in London.

This was followed by a Remembrance Service at Stradbroke Baptist Church conducted by Rev Dave Keeble from Felixstowe, a former member of the branch. Michael Burton read a poem and a collection was taken for the Poppy Appeal.

At the AGM the branch officers and committee were re-elected for another year with new officers, branch treasurer Mrs L Orams, from Laxfield, and membership secretary Mrs P

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RBL branch President Alan King, his daughter Joyce Cooper and ex-president, Ted Bootle. The D-Day veterans were in Holland in September to commemorate Operation Market Garden.

Stanford, from Worlingworth, and new committee member Major Rosemary Warne MBE DL. Guest speaker was Alf Bloomfield from Saxmundham, our area representative on the county committee.

Branch secretary Bernard Mills will be our delegate at next year's annual county conference in Needham Market in January. The branch's annual Christmas lunch and carols will be at midday at Laxfield Village Hall on Thursday December 14th.

Happy Christmas and a good new year to all our readers!

Michael Burton



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Have your say about council

THIS IS YOUR CHANCE TO have your say about how many Councillors Mid Suffolk District Council should have and which villages and parishes they should represent.

A few months ago Mid Suffolk District Council asked the Local Government Boundary Commission to review the boundaries used for electing Mid Suffolk District Councillors. The council had already decided they wanted to cut the number of Councillors from 40 to 34.

Babergh District Council, which runs all their services jointly with Mid Suffolk, is also undergoing a boundary review. They plan to cut the number of Councillors from 43 to 31. Both Councils say this would make them more efficient. Assuming this goes forward, it would mean both Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils

would have approximately the same number of electors for each Councillor, making any future amalgamation much easier, though no doubt, the opportunity to cut costs is also a factor.

The Commission has produced draft proposals it wants the public to comment on. The closing date for public comments is the December 11th – so if you do want to say something, you had better be quick.

The new proposals cover the whole district and include changes such as Occold becoming part of the Eye Electoral Ward. However, looking at how this affects us: currently the parishes of Athelington, Horham and Redlingfield are in Hoxne Ward, with Syleham, Wingfield, Hoxne and Denham. There are 1,727 registered electors, Elizabeth Gibson-Harries is our District Councillor.

■ **NEW REEDING WOODS GROUP:** A poster in the newly-installed notice board at Pound Lane Wood advertised our “putting the wood to bed for the winter” day, and on a bright but cold November morning a small army of volunteers arrived. Armed with shears, secateurs, rakes and hedge cutters the volunteers set about clearing the fence and ensuring that the rides remain free of overhanging brambles and branches. A few of the more able replaced wobbly fence posts and repaired the netting so that this woodland remains secure for children and dogs and mainly free of deer and rabbits. Encouraging new enthusiasts to get involved in the task of maintaining the woodland has become more pressing as this project will need support for many years. As they worked on this bright but cold day there were buzzards soaring overhead, a skylark was singing in the oaks along Pound Lane and a kingfisher was seen on the pond. The area is now an established wildlife area. A notebook in the notice board encourages visitors to list flora and fauna observed during their visit and so far has mainly been used by children during the half-term holiday. If you are interested in any aspect of maintaining this woodland please come along to one of our working parties to see how you can help to keep this project going. Watch the noticeboard or call Mike Reeves on 01379 668 179 for details.

Margaret Reeves

changes

The proposal is to create a larger ward, called Hoxne and Worlingworth, by adding the parishes of Worlingworth, Southolt, Bedingfield, Bedfield and Tannington whilst removing Syleham and Wingfield (given to the Fressingfield Ward).

This Ward will have 2,550 electors (projected to rise to 2,565 by 2023, an increase of 15) and the ward would have one District Councillor.

Physically this will be a very large ward. The questions you should be asking yourself are: Do I agree with reducing the number of District Councillors? Should there be more or fewer Councillors? Is the proposed number of electors too many for one Councillor? Is the proposed area too big for one Councillor? Do I think the right parishes have been added to our ward? Should the new ward be bigger or smaller and if so, which parishes should be added or subtracted from it? Is the forecasted growth in the number of electors reasonable?

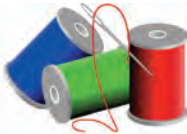
The proposals are online at www.lgbce.org.uk/current-reviews/eastern/suffolk/mid-suffolk. The interactive maps are at <https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/node/9230>. You can give your views online, by email (reviews@lgbce.org.uk) or in writing (The Review Officer (Mid Suffolk), Local Government Boundary Commission for England, 14th floor, Millbank Tower, Millbank, London SW1P 4QP). The links and documents are also on www.redlingfield.suffolk.gov.uk.

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Redlingfield's Old School

THOSE WHO WATCH Anglia News may have seen a short piece on Redlingfield Old School recently. It is for sale with planning permission to become a residential property.

Lee Alston, architectural historian, prepared a report on the building. A quote from it tells us about the beginnings of the school: "The picturesque old school house at Redlingfield was built in 1872 to a set of plans and elevations dated July 1871 by Charles Penning of Eye that survives in the Suffolk Record Office. The Mock Gothic design includes cusped window arches identical to those drawn up in May of the same

year for the Oaksmere Hotel in Brome by Daniel Penning, who may have been Charles' father, and designed several other schools in East Anglia.

"The diminutive red-brick and slate-roofed structure consists of a single room of just 20 feet in length by a little over 16 feet in width but was intended for 32 pupils and had an average attendance of 31 in 1911. It was entered by symmetrical porches lined with coat hooks at each gable, one for boys and one for girls, and its rear yard was divided by a central wall. The two brick privies at the back of this yard were conveniently separated by a coal bunker"

It was built as a National School.



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children as attendance was likely to “exceed accommodation”. A monitress was employed at 1/6 per week – Keziah Stone, Alice Baldwin then Florence Coe, daughter of Wheelwright Joseph

Coe, are named in the minute book.

The National Society was founded in 1811 and aimed to provide a school in every parish to teach the Three Rs plus religion. They were usually run by the local clergy.

In 1894 Redlingfield became a Board School. The first state-run schools were created under the 1870 Education Act and abolished by the 1902 Education Act which established local Education Authorities.

Ipswich Record Office holds the Minute Book for 1894-1922. It starts with the first meeting of the School Board on March 29th 1894. Mr. G.F. Goldspink of Green Farm was elected chairman and the first task was to advertise for a certificated mistress. The salary offered was £60 per annum, the average attendance being 30 pupils.

There were only two applicants. Mrs H. E. Last, previously of Finningham School was appointed from 2nd July. An outbreak of measles closed the school for a fortnight from 13th July. Mrs Last resigned with effect from January 1896. She was replaced by Miss Barnes of Kings Lynn, the only applicant. Later that year the first inspector’s report since the board was formed was “very satisfactory”. It was decided to exclude “extra district”

In October 1897 Miss Barnes resigned due to difficulty in finding lodgings under a mile away. Rather than lose her the Board granted 5/- a week in winter so that she could be driven to school when necessary. Miss Barnes returned to Kings Lynn in November 1897 because of the death of a friend. There was typhoid in Lynn so she had to spend three weeks’ quarantine on half pay before returning to school. She resigned through ill health in 1898.

By April Miss Burkinshaw was appointed and was able to live in the School Cottage which was “near the Cross”. Possibly part of what is now Hill Cottage. There was another favourable report by the inspector who recommended a bell should be obtained. In 1899 Miss Burkinshaw moved to a cottage on Mr Goldspink’s farm which had become the School Cottage. Laura Douse from Walton replaced Miss Burkinshaw in 1901. In August 1903 Laura married William Wadley of Wivenhoe in Redlingfield Church.

The minute book documents closures for infectious illnesses, work carried out and various changes in staff.

Continued over

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Then on July 31st 1922 we learn that Mr Watkins of the East Suffolk Education Committee came to explain to the board that carrying on the school with so small a number in attendance was not feasible. It was proposed and seconded that the children would be “conveyed” to Eye and the school closed.

This was not the end of use for the building. The formation of the local WI took place in December 1922 and meetings, whist drives and children’s parties took place here. Reports in local papers refer to it as the village hall, the reading room or the meeting room. These reports imply that good times were enjoyed here throughout the 20s, 30s and 40s. It was also used

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as a Home Guard Post during WW2. The *Diss Express* ran an article about a whist drive being held in March 1952 to raise funds for enlarging the village hall. The WI secretary reported in September 1952 that the school room

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was in a bad state of repair and members should be advised that it was not covered by insurance other than fire. In November it was decided to move all WI property from the school.

The advertisement, left, appeared in the Diss Express 5th August 1955.

Did the Education Committee get planning permission to convert to a dwelling in order to maximise profits and prevent the village from being able to purchase the building?

The old school was bought by Freddie Hambling. Many local people remember him living in a caravan on the site. Since his time nature has taken over and the building became almost hidden. Now the site has been cleared of growth and the old school awaits the next chapter in its story. *Linda Hudson*

■ **COFFEE MORNINGS:** The second Redlingfield coffee morning is on Wednesday 6th December at the home of Nick and Maria Ford at The Willows, Cranley Green. It will include a free raffle, mince pies, sherry, tea and coffee (but you don't have to have all of them). For Wednesday 3rd January 2018 the coffee morning will be at the home of Linda Hudson, Woodvale, Redlingfield. The coffee morning on Wednesday 7th February has yet to be arranged. Would anyone like to host this one? The final coffee morning of this winter is on Wednesday 7th March at the home of Chris and Midge Gibbons, Rush Meadow, Redlingfield. There will be another free raffle this day. Coffee mornings are from 10am until noon. Everyone is welcome to join us. **Jacqueline Love (678805)**

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Tony's trek nets

REDLINGFIELD RESIDENT TONY Rose-Freitas, along with friends Steven Capps, Robert Griffiths, and John Chapman completed a fundraising walk along the Suffolk Coastal Path from Lowestoft to Aldeburgh raising more than double their £1,000 target for the village's Doorstep Green.

Redlingfield is raising funds to convert two acres of farmland in to a recreation and wildlife amenity for the village, adding it to the existing three quarter acre Doorstep Green that villagers created in 2006.

Tony and his friends carried out their walk on Sunday 21st October, a number of venues

along the way were kind enough to supply them with refreshments, The Sailors Home at Kessingland, Southwold Pier, the Beach Café at Dunwich and The Brudenell Hotel at Aldeburgh, who also sponsored their T-shirts. Tony said: "We had a

wonderful day for it, bright and sunny, if anything it was a little too warm. It was harder than we thought it would be but well worth it. We are really pleased that we raised so much"

"Along the way people were great. At our first stop at the Sailors Home in Kessingland, we were delighted to find that the regulars had raised £300 for us, which was a great surprise and very generous."

Top left: Tony Rose-Freitas with his daughters Samantha Rose & Freya Rose and Marley their dog. Bottom left: The four weary walkers Steven Capps, Robert Griffiths, John Chapman and Tony Rose-Freitas at the Brudenell Hotel in Aldeburgh having walked from Lowestoft. Photos: Janet Norman-Philips.



£2,000 plus

A number of Redlingfielders turned out to support Tony and his team along their walk and to cheer them home at the finish.

His efforts also made a splash in the local newspapers with pieces in both the *Diss Mercury* and *Diss Express* and, along with parish clerk Janet Norman-Philips, a piece on Radio Suffolk.

Janet said: "We are really delighted that Tony and his friends have done so well. It's a real boost for the project. We are just full of admiration for his tenacity and want to thank everyone involved and everyone who has donated to this project".

"What we didn't realise back when we created it, was just how popular the Doorstep Green was going to be nor that it was far too small. Over the past few years we raised £27,000 to buy an additional two acres of agricultural land to extend the Doorstep Green.

"Our immediate goal is to create highway access and parking along with fencing the site and planting native hedging and areas of wildlife meadow.

"However the costs involved are far greater than we had hoped and the £10,000 we have to do this initial work simply isn't enough, we need to raise a further £10,000 to get it finished. Tony's walk has really helped a lot."

More fun fundraising events are planned for 2018 and access to the site is due to be completed this December. Among the events planned are a sponsored "bike and ride" by Tom and Phoebe Smith. Tom, eight, will cycle while Phoebe, five, will ride her pony.

The village has also been successful in its bid to get 420 free trees from the Woodland Trust. They should have been planted by the time you read this. *Janet Norman-Philips*

■ CHRISTMAS CARD TREE:

Stradbroke will this year have a life-sized cut-out Christmas tree, adorned with fairy lights and containing hundreds of Christmas messages to your friends and family. The spirit of Christmas will be celebrated by everyone signing the tree in All Saints Church on Saturday December 9th. On Sunday 10th the tree will be on show at the traditional Christmas Lights illumination, with mince pies, sausage rolls, mulled wine, carol singing and reindeer. December 9th tree signing 8am-4pm, suggested donation £5, all welcome. December 10th 4.30pm-6pm. There is a further opportunity to add your message on 16th December outside Spar. In aid of church repairs.

Margaret Streeter

■ **SHCT BIKE RIDE:** The Suffolk Historic Churches Trust sponsored cycle ride raised £2,425.16 across the benefice. Half of the amount raised will go to SHCT and half to the individual churches. St Peter, Athelington, had 35 visitors and raised £340; St Mary, Horham, had 28 visitors and raised £120; and St Andrew, Redlingfield, had 21 and raised £150. Many thanks to all those who sponsored the riders, the cyclists themselves and the church stewards. Cyclists for St Mary's were Daniel Streeter, Lawrence Weaver and David and Michael Whatling.

Rev Michael Womack

■ **POLICE CHANGE:** Long-serving local Police Community Support Officer Steven Long is leaving to join Norfolk Constabulary as a Police Officer. I am sure you will join us in wishing him well. He will be much missed. Our local Police contacts are now PC Dan Peck and PCSO Kane Martin.

Mike Ager

There's lots on at Old School

HORHAM OLD School's coffee mornings continue to buzz with activity on Wednesday mornings.

Come and taste our delicious cake and coffee or avail yourself of free computer support or tuition from 10.30am to noon every week. We are very lucky to have Brian's help, he is an IT wizard and has helped retrieve lost files and photos and has restored several virus ravaged machines to working order.

The replacement of the windows is under way and we are expecting to have them all in place by Christmas! We are also planning to put in a new door from the bar to the garden. This will greatly improve access and make the garden a lovely asset and extension to the bar area next year. The bar is open on Tuesday and Friday evenings and on Sunday lunchtimes.

Our yoga sessions are well attended and very successful. There are a few places available, get in touch if you would like to join!

Our craft afternoons are once a



Christmas cheer at the Old School.

month and during these sessions Pip will be helping us all create the stained glass panels for the refurbishment of our phonebox. Please come and have a go, it will be lovely to see your panel on display in the village. The first session of 2018 will be on Friday January 19th.

On the evening of Monday 11th December the traditional music group invite us all to join them for a feast of Christmas music and on Friday December 22nd the bar staff will set the mood for Christmas with mulled wine and mince pies. Happy Christmas!

Christine Cooper

■ PLANNING:

TO BE DECIDED: plan to erect a two-storey side and rear extension and detached garage, **Frances Cottage, Athelington Road, Horham;** plan to erect rear extension, loft conversion with dormer roof extension, front porch and new three-bay cart lodge with room over, **Old Rectory, Horham Road, Athelington;** plan to convert single storey building and extend one-and-a-half storeys to create 3-bedroom dwelling, **The Homestead, The Street, Horham.** **APPEAL ALLOWED WITH CONDITIONS:** application for Outline Planning Permission for the erection of one two storey dwelling & separate garage with access, **Barnacre, Worlingworth Road, Horham.**

Planning information from Midsuffolk District Council' (www.midsuffolk.gov.uk).

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School is 'going for green'

THE WILBY CEVC PRIMARY School year began with great excitement as we lined the streets in Horham to cheer the Tour of Britain on its way. Everyone in the village made us feel very welcome and the children were delighted to have seen this event with their own eyes.

In addition to the woodland learning experiences that the children have at school we also took them to Charlotte's Wood in Wilby to take part in some Forest School's sessions there. The weather was perfect and everyone had a wonderful time.

In October the whole school travelled to Ringsfield Hall where they enjoyed a variety of activities focused

on learning about the environment in the environment. This tied in beautifully with our whole school topic of 'going for green' which has focused on how we are damaging the environment and what we can do to look after it better! Our 'environment evening' in October was a wonderful final celebration of the art, dance and the spoken word derived from our 'going for green' topic.

Our newly formed Arts Award Club is well attended by enthusiastic children who are working towards gaining certificates to celebrate their achievement. All of our children from Pre-School to Year 6 have been taking part in a variety of dance workshops.

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Wilby girls football team won bronze in the inter-schools tournament.

The sessions, which have been led by West End In Schools dance company, were all focused on the environment and helped the children to explore our current topic focus through the medium of dance.

To celebrate Inter-faith week pupils of all ages are being challenged to produce the art work for a school calendar focusing on the theme of 'light, life and love'. Calendars sold will raise money to support multi-faith learning opportunities for Wilby pupils. The school enjoyed a brilliant 'experience your Church' day at St Mary's in Wilby. Our Harvest Festival in October was well attended by parents and church/community

members and all are welcome again to join us in church for our Carol Service on Friday December 15th.

This term Wren Class will be putting on a performance of 'Ralph the Reindeer' on Wednesday December 13th. Everyone is welcome to come to the performance at 6pm in the school hall. On Monday December 18th everyone is welcome to join us for a Christmas Music Afternoon at 2pm-4pm. There will be a variety of refreshments, raffles and gifts produced by the children on sale. We will also have a visit from Father Christmas and all children (school age and younger) will receive a free gift!

Following the appointment of our own Sports Lead – Mr Isaac Chapman – participation in additional sport activities across the school has soared!

All of before school, lunch-time and after school clubs are now free including: dodgeball, football, high fives netball, gymnastics and many more. The extra training is paying off – our girls' football team won bronze in the inter-schools tournament in October! Well done girls!

Roisin Wiseman, headteacher

CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR WASTE & RECYCLING COLLECTIONS

RECYCLING		REFUSE		RECYCLING	
Usual day	Revised	Usual day	Revised	Usual day	Revised
Mon 25 Dec	Wed 27 Dec	Mon 1 Jan	Wed 3 Jan	Mon 8 Jan	Tues 9 Jan
Tues 26 Dec	Thur 28 Dec	Tues 2 Jan	Thur 4 Jan	Tues 9 Jan	Wed 10 Jan
Wed 27 Dec	Fri 29 Dec	Wed 3 Jan	Fri 5 Jan	Wed 10 Jan	Thur 11 Jan
Thur 28 Dec	Sat 30 Dec	Thur 4 Jan	Sat 6 Jan	Thur 11 Jan	Fri 12 Jan
Fri 29 Dec	Tues 2 Jan	Fri 5 Jan	Mon 8 Jan	Fri 12 Jan	Sat 13 Jan

There will be no brown bin collections over Christmas and New Year (between 25th December and 5th January). Please check www.midsuffolk.gov.uk for further details.

From Monday 15th January normal waste and recycling collections resume.

Waste Helpline: 01449 778678

WHAT'S ON

FRIDAY DECEMBER 1

Christmas Late Night Shopping:

Framlingham. From 5.30pm. Choirs on the Hill, Father Christmas, BBQ, grand draw & range of offers in the shops.

Lost in Translation, and Friends:

Wingfield Barns, 7.30pm. Tickets £10. In aid of East Anglian Air Ambulance.

Stradbroke Bands End of Term

Concert: Stradbroke High School, 7pm, £7 adult, £5 student/child.

Tickets 01473 281866 or

county.musicservice@suffolk.gov.uk.

FRIDAY DECEMBER 1-SUNDAY DECEMBER 3

Fram Fairtrade Pop-Up: Fram Library.

SATURDAY DECEMBER 2

Christmas Fayre: St Mary's Worlingworth, 2pm.

Harwich For The Continent:

Made2Measure Theatre Company, Wingfield Barns, 7.30pm. Tickets £8.

SUNDAY DECEMBER 3

Foxy Rock Rock 'n' Roll Club:

Eye Community Centre, 2-5.30pm. Hop with DJ Crazy Nadge. Refreshments & cake inc. £5.50 (info@foxyrock.co.uk).

Carols: St Peter's Athelington, 4.30pm.

SUNDAY DECEMBER 3-SUNDAY DECEMBER 17

Santa Specials:

Mid-Suffolk Light Railway. On 3rd, 9th, 10th, 16th & 17th.

Tickets in advance only

www.mslr.org.uk.

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 6

Redlingfield Coffee Morning:

10am-noon, at the home of Nick and Maria Ford at The Willows, Cranley Green. Free raffle, mince pies, sherry etc.

Redlingfield & Occold WI Christmas Meal.

FRIDAY DECEMBER 8

Hoxne Film Night: Viceroy's House (12A) St Edmund's Hall.

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Christmas Dinner Dance: Horham CC.
3-course meal with entertainment.
Tickets from Angela 384625.

SATURDAY DECEMBER 9

Vintage, Craft & Collectibles Market: St. Michael's Rooms, Church Street, Fram, 9.30am-4.30pm. Free entry.

Christmas tree signing: All Saints Church, Stradbroke, 8am-4pm.

SUNDAY DECEMBER 10

Christmas Lights: 4.30-6pm, the lighting up of Christmas Trees, Stradbroke churchyard. Carols with organ music, refreshments & Santa.

MONDAY DECEMBER 11

Christmas music: Horham Old School.

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 13

Ralph the Reindeer: Wilby School, 6pm.

THURSDAY DECEMBER 14

Christmas Open Morning: Wilby School, 9.30-11am.

FRIDAY DECEMBER 15

Wilby School Carol Service: Wilby Church.

Eye Bach Choir with Castleton Brass:

The Glory of Christmas, Eye Town Hall, 7.30pm. Christine Hooker 871272 or christinehooker@btinternet.com.

SATURDAY DECEMBER 16

Spirit of Christmas: Christmas tree signing, outside Spar Stradbroke.

Christmas Fairtrade in the Co-op:

Fram Fairtrade Pop-Up stall in the foyer Fram Co-op, 9am-2pm.

Framlingham Ladies Choir Christmas

Concert: St Clare's Catholic Church, Fore Street, Fram, 7.30pm. Entry £6.

Handel's Messiah sung by the Phoenix

Singers: Framlingham College Chapel, 7.30pm. Tickets £12 & £10 (or £6 & £5 for under 18s) from Hall Farm Butchers, or William Glasse (0780 2597071).

SUNDAY DECEMBER 17

Christmas Breakfast & Family

Service: Horham Baptist Church, 9.30am-noon (service 10.45am). Free breakfast & bacon butties, 9.30am.

Carol Service: St Mary's Horham, 4.30pm.

■ VENUES etc:

The Bank Eye: The Bank, 2 Castle Street, Eye, IP23 7AN, 873495 & www.thebankeye.org.

Framlingham: www.framlingham.com. **Helmingham Hall:** 01473 890799,

events@helmingham.com, www.helmingham.com. **Horham & Athelington Community**

Centre: Karen, 384754. **Hoxne Film Nights:** 7.30pm, Hoxne Village Hall, Goldbrook, Hoxne, bar, popcorn & choc-ices available before & in the interval. Further info/booking:

668060 or www.hoxnevillagehall.co.uk. **Mid-Suffolk Light Railway,** Brockford Station,

Wetheringsett, Suffolk, IP14 5PW, www.msrl.org.uk, 01449 766899. **Museum of East**

Anglian Life, Stowmarket, enquiries@eastanglianlife.org.uk, 01449 612229. **Redlingfield**

village events, 678835, pc@redlingfield.suffolk.gov.uk, www.redlingfield.suffolk.gov.uk.

Midsuffolk Showgrounds & Stonham Barns: Stonham Barns, Pettaugh Road, Stonham

Aspal, IP14 6AT, <http://stonham-barns.co.uk>. **Stradbroke Cinema:** Stradbroke

Community Centre, 7pm for 7.30 pm. Adults £5.50, 16 and under £3. Bar open, ice-

creams in the interval. **Suffolk Owl Sanctuary,** Stonham Barns, 08456 807897,

info@owl-help.org.uk, www.owl-help.org.uk. **Wingfield Barns,** 384505,

enquiries@wingfieldbarns.com, www.wingfieldbarns.com. **95th Bomb Group Heritage**

Association/Red Feather Club, Coldhams Hill, Denham, IP21 5DG,

www.95thbg-horham.com, enquiries@95thbg-horham.com.

WHAT'S ON

MONDAY DECEMBER 18

Christmas Music Afternoon: Wilby School, 2pm-4pm. Children (school age & younger) will receive free gift.

TUESDAY DECEMBER 19

Village Carol Service: Worlingworth Community Centre, 7-8pm.

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 20

Redlingfield Village Christmas Lunch: Badingham White Horse, 12.30pm. Contact Linda - 678984.

Beer & Carols: Horham Community Centre, 7.30-9.30pm.

THURSDAY DECEMBER 21

Stradbroke Cinema: A Sense of an Ending (15), Stradbroke CC.

FRIDAY DECEMBER 22

Christmas evening: Horham Old School. Mulled wine & mince pies.

SUNDAY DECEMBER 24

Carols by Candlelight: Horham Baptist Church, 6.30pm. Short candlelight service followed by festive treats.

Midnight Mass: St Mary's Horham, 11.30pm.

SUNDAY DECEMBER 31

New Year's Eve Ceilidh with The Harbour Lights Band: Wingfield Barns.

WEDNESDAY JANUARY 3

Redlingfield Coffee Morning: the home of Linda Hudson, Woodvale, Redlingfield.

■ **SANTA & HIS SLEIGH:** The Rotary Club of High Suffolk's Santa, with his sleigh, will be visiting the towns around us in early December. Listen out for the music from 6pm until 8pm in Eye on Monday 11th, Debenham Tuesday 12th & Wednesday 13th, Stradbroke on Monday 18th and Framlingham on Monday 18th, Tuesday 19th & Wednesday 20th.

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FRIDAY JANUARY 19

Membership renewal & Fish & Chips: Horham CC.

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 2

Bar Meals: Horham CC.

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 7

Redlingfield Coffee Morning: venue TBC.

Redlingfield Village Committee Meeting: venue TBC.

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 9

Old Herbaceous: Kick In The Head, Wingfield Barns, 7.30pm Tickets £14/£12 conc.

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 16

Fish and Chips: Horham CC.

FRIDAY MARCH 2

Bar Meals: Horham CC.

SATURDAY MARCH 3

Traditional Music: Tribute to Percy West O'Connor 'King of Steppers', Debenham CC, doors 5.30pm for 7pm, tickets £10 (no tickets on door) from Doreen 07591 499912. With The Quay Street Whalers' folk & seaside songs, Andrew Stannard (singing postman), traditional music & songs, Stan/Maggie, traditional music & songs, stepdancing & jig dolls.

WEDNESDAY MARCH 7

Redlingfield Coffee Morning: at the home of Chris and Midge Gibbons, Rush Meadow, Redlingfield.

SUNDAY MARCH 18

Measure for Measure: Wingfield Barns, 7.30pm £10/£8.50 conc.

FRIDAY MARCH 23

Fish and Chips: Horham CC.

SATURDAY MARCH 24

Dance: Horham CC, details TBC.

■ **ARCHIVE FILM NIGHT:** Horham CC on either February 24 or March 3.

■ **REGULAR EVENTS:**

MONDAYS: Coffee & Chat: Horham Baptist Church hall. 10am. No charge. Everyone welcome. Alan Hawes, 388330. **Ballroom dancing:** St Edmund's Hall, Hoxne, 7.30pm-9.30pm (for adults). Sandra Hartley, 01728 723887.

TUESDAYS: T Plus: Community Café with stalls, All Saint's Church, Thorndon every Tues, 10am-noon. **Bingo:** Thorndon Village Hall, 7.30pm every other Tues. 678178.

Debenham Historical Society: Regular lectures at Room 31, Debenham High School, 7.30pm, £3 per lecture, including a soft drink in the interval. Enquiries: Clive Cook 01728-861754. Non-members welcome to see what's on.

WEDNESDAYS: Coffee mornings & cyber cafe, every Wed, 10.30am-noon at Horham Old School. **Redlingfield & Occold WI,** 1st Wed of the month at 7.45pm, in Occold Village Hall. **Hoxon Hundred:** Summer dance-outs at local pubs. Winter practices. Ron Ross, 643563. Eye Country Market, every Wed 10am-11am, Eye Town Hall (closed Jan).

Social mornings: Horham Old School. 10.30am each Wed tea, coffee, cake, crafts, a chat and good company. Info from Christine (384168) or Pip (384370). Admission free - small charge for refreshments. Wingfield barns Midweek Movies : alternate Weds 7.30pm screening £5. For info 384505 or email enquiries@wingfieldbarns.com

THURSDAYS: Zumba: Worlingworth Community Centre, 7pm, Terri Cave, 01728 627756 & 07563534086.

FRIDAYS: Bingo: Stradbroke Community Centre, Wilby Road, 2nd Fri monthly. 7.30pm. Mary Ellis, 384642. Worlingworth Swan, live music, last Fri evening of month.

SUNDAYS: Public open days: Red Feather/95th Bomb Group Heritage Association & 95th BG Hospital Museum last Sun of month May-October inclusive,

■ ERNEST CHARLES EDWIN

CONSTABLE: Ernie died suddenly and unexpectedly on 26th August 2017, aged 83 years. He had lived in Horham for 31 years and was the beloved husband, of more than 60 years, to Patricia and much-loved proud father of Neil. Ernie, a true gentleman, spent his working life flying. He started with the Royal Air Force and then flew with BEA (British European Airways) before becoming a senior training captain with British Airways and then for Cyprus Airways for the last eight years of his career. If you saw a picture of Ernie in young flying days you would say he looked exactly how you would imagine an RAF pilot should look. Ernie was



totally unflappable and had a deep belief that everything would pan out and it usually did. He built a 1935 Alvis Silver Eagle out of a rusty old box of bits and

went on many organised tours with his car and other Alvis owners. Ernie always had a smile on his face and saw the good in everybody. He will be sorely missed by those who knew him. The tributes to Ernie include a former trainee, Andy Antoni, who wrote: "None of us who came under his tutelage on the Cyprus Airways BAC 1-11 fleet will ever forget his influence and guiding hand when starting out in the airline industry. You will always be revered Ernie!"

Patricia Constable & Robin Bendall

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100 years on from Russian

JAN AND I VISITED THE DDR, known to everybody as East Germany, in its dying days just before the Wall fell. I got the distinct feeling from some people that it was something that I had said over there.

After the unpleasant and chilling experience of the border crossing, we took a train to stay with friends in a small town on Lake Murtitz in Mecklenburg. Much to our friends' discomfort and embarrassment we had to report on the first day at the local police station.

The policemen on duty were most welcoming and avuncular as we sat together sipping coffee in a cosy office which was furnished with pots of

geraniums and gingham curtains at the windows.

Gingham seemed to be in behind the Iron Curtain. One day, wandering around the market, we came across a rather neglected looking van belonging to the Red Army. Presumably it was ready at a moment's notice to roll remorselessly Westwards and overwhelm any NATO force that might be in its way. Hanging in the window there were some faded blue curtains, giving it the air of a Wind in the Willows gypsy caravan. How disappointing, you would have thought that the curtains might at least have been red!

The trip was an eye-opener. Life in



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revolution

the countryside took me back several decades to my childhood, visiting relatives in the Fens. Much of the heavy work still being done by horses and a horse and cart was a common means of transport.

In town there were no apparent shortages but there was limited choice. One afternoon a group of around half a dozen of us took shelter from the biting East wind in a hotel and to warm up ordered coffee and Cognac. The waiter who was decked out in a well-worn monkey suit went off and returned to apologise that there was only enough brandy for four people!

There were no apparent signs that the system was about to collapse except on our last day, on the train back to Berlin. The train which was scheduled to continue after Berlin on to Czechoslovakia was crowded with young people all with camping gear. The reason for this was that the West German embassy in Prague had opened its doors to East Germans and was issuing them with passports to the West. The response to this had been overwhelming. The embassy was soon full up and the overspill was camping in the embassy compound.

Why am I telling you all this? Well it's my one and only, albeit brief experience of life in a totalitarian state and my mind returns to it now as, at the time of writing, it is 100 years since the October Revolution in Russia. Which as we know took place in November!

Continued over

■ **VILLAGE WHATSAPP GROUP:** Due to recent events in Horham and Athelington (a young woman going missing in Horham and Athelington Hall being burgled) I have set up a WhatsApp group for people of these villages to join. This way, if any suspicious activity is spotted or someone goes missing, people can message all those in the group instantly keeping everyone alerted. The app is free to download to any smartphone and once done, they can either click on the link in the Facebook post, or email me with their name and mobile number and I will add them to the group. Or you can scan the QR code which will link you to the group. Just wanting to make our community a safer and secure place.

Hawk Honey





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Continued from previous page

For much of this period the USSR seemed implacable but eventually – starting with the fall of the Wall and the opening up of East Germany to the West, the whole system began to contract and by 1991 had collapsed.

Why did it fall? The prevailing theories all seem to come down to economics. The economic system had

shrivelled to a husk and collapsed. As with the economy, so in the field of the arts where any experimental or non-approved activity was banned. This was a bitter disappointment as in the early days following 1917 experiment and freedom in the arts, particularly painting, music and literature, had been encouraged by the emerging state. Life in the new

■ **POETRY: Are we alone?** Manday Miller

Ever looked up at the night sky and
asked are we alone?
Of course we are not alone!
We are watched spoken about.
Looked out for and eagerly awaited,
Our movements are noted,
Our new purchases are openly talked
about.

We are observed from near or far,
Questions asked. What are we doing?
Oh yes, we are not alone.
Who are our watchers that talk about us?
Not little green men,
But our pets, the wild birds, farm
animals - all those that we care for and
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promised land was to be so much better in all ways for the common people than in the previous repressive regime. This renaissance was relatively short lived and with the ascent of Stalin the lid was firmly screwed down on creativity. Only state-approved activity was permitted and any deviation was punished. With the death of Stalin in 1953 there was a slow, intermittent thaw which has never completely melted.

Russian art literature music and film have only spasmodically and haphazardly been revealed to us in the West, but when they have the impact has often been great and left us wanting more. This 100 years has been hard for the Russian people, even by the standards of their own history – the

centenary is not being much remembered in their own country; much more emphasis is always laid on The Great Patriotic War in which millions perished. We can only hope that eventually the people will be allowed to flourish as the very talented and hard working race that they are.

For my part, I still occasionally remember the young people on the train to Prague and hope that they made it and led fulfilling lives. I also remember that dilapidated khaki van with the gingham curtains and I wonder what became of the two pale young men – boys really who emerged from it in boots that were too big for them and went off to buy provisions in the market in a small town in East Germany.

Neville Butcher



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ELIZABETH GIBSON-HARRIES, YOUR DISTRICT COUNCILLOR



THERE HAVE BEEN A LOT of changes to the structure of Mid Suffolk District Council in the past few months – the council has moved its

headquarters to Endeavour House in Ipswich, the HQ of Suffolk County Council, so all staff and council meetings are based there. Babergh District Council has also moved there as we are now sharing a Chief Executive and other officers, making more savings to protect our statutory services.

We have joint meetings and are moving towards a merger in the future like many other councils in the country. We will be able to make stronger bids for grants.

There is now one number you can use to access all council services and that is 0300 123 4000. There is also a small office in Stowmarket where you can make appointments to meet officers if needed.

The Government has directed all councils to build more houses and Mid Suffolk is listening to this. Our part of Suffolk is rural but we would welcome more homes if they both fitted in to the villages and were the sort of houses we need. Although we are mainly small villages and are happy in our “skin”, if we are to leave a legacy we need to think

about growth to bring younger people into the community. I have stressed for many months the need to look at the future of your villages and see where a small development might fit in.

As the council does not have a five-year land supply, permission is being granted outside the existing envelope. Farmers are releasing parcels of land for various reasons and when they do come up they are naturally considered for housing.

I don't like to use the word “affordable” as this depends on the circumstances of the individual, but we must press for smaller units when an application comes forward. Whether they are rentable, rent-to-buy or buy outright, we need to bring life into the villages for the future.

I hear you ask “what about the infrastructure?” Roads, sewage, even broadband and other such issues should be part of your response to an application. Where there are more than ten houses proposed the changes to the infrastructure can be negotiated .

I end as usual wishing you a warm and wonderful Christmas and New Year and ask you to look after the more vulnerable in your villages, especially if we get some really harsh weather. That is what living in a village is all about.

***Elizabeth Gibson-Harries, Chairman, Mid Suffolk District Council
Councillor for Hoxne Ward (384680 or 07766 224390)***

■ **ONLINE BOOST FOR CHURCHES:** You can raise funds for the churches of the Hoxne Benefice by shopping online. If you visit easyfundraising.org.uk a percentage of what you spend is passed to the benefice. More than 2,700 online retailers are available through the easyfunding portal and all give a percentage of what's been spent back to your chosen charity. You can register at www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/hoxnebenefice. If you want to talk through the process email Hoxne benefice administrator Virginia Skoyles on hoxnebeneficeoffice@gmail.com. Let's get signed up and our online Christmas shopping can then help the benefice. **Rev Michael Womack**

THE RECTOR REFLECTS ... THE DARK SIDE OF CHRISTMAS

'Christmas is coming, the doors are being locked'



AS YOU'VE PROBABLY noticed there are hardly any trains on Christmas Day, and when I worked on them there weren't any at all; but sometimes there would be a big engineering project and signalmen were needed to work.

It always struck me as very sad how they would phone up and beg to work, yes the overtime rate was monumental but they were also desperate to get away from families and relatives.

And they were not alone, alas divorce lawyers know that January is a busy month. The ones who make it that far are the lucky ones as Christmas always sees a peak in suicides and self-harming. That all comes after we've got through December with a constant demand to go and buy things, and to be interested in adverts wanting us to buy things (No! I don't want an exclusive preview of your new advert, I'm sure to see it more than enough very soon). Things which have to be paid for with the big credit card bills that arrive in January!

All of which puts a huge stress and strain on us, so much so that it can be no surprise if many people aren't convinced

that Christmas is about the birth of the Prince of Peace. It makes me wonder, where did it all go wrong?

How did the commemoration of a displaced baby born to an unmarried, and very young woman and a carpenter become such a frenzy of expense and extravagance to such a degree that rather than celebrating the coming of new life, so many will experience various forms of despair?

In Christianity, Christmas isn't even the biggest festival – that is Easter. In the Eastern Church, Christmas passes without a murmur as the attention is on Epiphany in early January. Indeed St Mark's gospel has no Christmas story in it at all and although we always read from St John's gospel the passage isn't really about the birth of Jesus!

Please don't get me wrong, I don't mean to sound like Scrooge and dismiss it all with a, 'Bah Humbug!', but this section is Reflections and my Christmas wish is that we'd all think about what really matters? What is important, and to borrow from the Dogs Trust, 'not just for Christmas, but for life'. Christmas is meant to be about the coming of the Lord of Life; Happy Christmas!

Michael Womack (hoxnebenefice@gmail.com or 388889)

Rev Michael Womack is rector of the Hoxne Benefice.

Enquiries: Daphne Harvey, St Mary, Horham (384216); Evelyn Adey, St Peter, Athelington (01728 628428) Hazel Abbott, St Andrew, Redlingfield (678217).

Services for all churches in the benefice are on notice boards. A monthly benefice newsletter is available in the churches. Email hoxnebenefice@gmail.com for your copy.

Horham Church Register: Burial, Sept 7th, Ernest Charles Edwin Constable, aged 83 years.

■ **THANK YOU:** A big thank you to all who donated to and supported the church stall at the car boot in June and also bought plants, plums and cucumbers from the Post Office during the summer. £399 was raised for church funds. **Daphne Harvey**

CHURCH & INFORMATION

■ CHURCH OF ENGLAND SERVICES:

Dec 3	Redlingfield 9.30am HC; Athelington Carols 4.30pm	Jan 7	Redlingfield 9.30am HC
Dec 10	Horham 9.30am BCP	Jan 14	Horham 9.30am HC
Dec 17	Athelington 9.30am HC; Horham 4.30pm Carol Service	Jan 21	Athelington 9.30am HC
Dec 24	Horham 11.30pm Midnight Mass	Jan 28	Horham 11.15am FS; Redlingfield 10am MP
Dec 25	Redlingfield 10am HC	Feb 4	Redlingfield 9.30am HC
Dec 31	Denham 11.15am Benefice Communion	Feb 11	Horham 9.30am HC
		Feb 18	Athelington 9.30am HC
		Feb 25	Horham 11.15am FS; Redlingfield 10am MP

HC = Holy Communion, FS = Family Service, MP = Morning Prayer
BCP = Book of Common Prayer

If you would like to advertise or contribute to the magazine or have an event or organisation you would like featured contact editors: Evelyn Adey on evelyn.adey@btinternet.com or 01728 628428 at Ivy House Barn, Southolt Road, Athelington, IP21 5EL; or Mike Ager on mike@gn.apc.org or 01379 678835 at Hidcote Lodge, Mill Road, Redlingfield, IP23 7QU. We aim to produce four full-colour issues a year, coming out at the end of February, May, August and November.

Rates for adverts in four issues distributed to approximately 300 homes and businesses in Horham, Athelington, Redlingfield and surrounds are:

1/8 page £9 (42.5mm deep, 60mm across)

1/6 page £12 (60mm deep, 60mm across)

1/3 page £23.50 (60mm deep, 125mm across)

1/4 page £17.50 (90mm deep, 60mm across)

1/2 page £35 (90mm deep, 125mm across)

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You can supply the artwork and/or logos or we can design adverts for you.

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■ DEADLINES FOR ADVERTS & EDITORIAL:

2018 SPRING ISSUE (covering Mar, April & May)	Final deadline February 14 2018
2018 SUMMER ISSUE (covering June, July & Aug)	Final deadline May 14 2018
2018 AUTUMN ISSUE (covering Sept, Oct & Nov)	Final deadline August 14 2018
2018-19 WINTER ISSUE (covering Dec, Jan & Feb)	Final deadline November 14 2018



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