

BLYTHBURGH

FOCUS

SERVING BLYTHBURGH,
BULCAMP AND HINTON



Issue No 62

<http://blythburgh.onesuffolk.net>

Apr/May 2022

A SUFFOLK JOY RIDE 100 YEARS AGO



In 1922 travelling by car in Suffolk was very different from what it is today. Main roads might have tarred surfaces but many byroads were unsurfaced, rutted by carts, and presented a real challenge. Motoring is just one of the subjects covered by a journal kept by 18-year-old Janet Becker, daughter of artist Harry Becker, describing six one-day expeditions made in October of that year with a friend, Miss Gooch.

In a *430 Miles' Joy Ride*, they travelled as far as Bungay, Wingfield, Long Melford and Orford. Janet was in search of church registers; Miss Gooch concentrated on lists of Cromwellian rectors. The 12,000-word journal, illustrated with watercolours and pencil sketches, has charm and humour. This verges on the black in the case of the unfortunate Mr Pitchers, holder of the key to Fritton church. On their first visit to his house, the travellers were told that he was out and had the key with him. Not finding the key in the church they “carried away a very unfavourable impression of the parson and

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Mr Pitchers” whom they believed had been at home all the time. But as they passed the house again, on driving away from the church, they saw a hearse with black horses drawn up outside the Pitchers’ home. “We at once freely forgave” him!

The journal describes a voyage of discovery. A wonderful afternoon was spent in Lavenham, seen for the first time. Every house, they thought, was a sight in itself. It was sacrilege to wake the peace of the town with the noise of a car. On the other hand, Framlingham church, which they “expected to be worthy of our rapture” they thought ordinary. In the stuffy gloom were varnished pews, “hideous wallpaper patterns” on the chancel walls, and new cement steps round the altar, for which the Howards, “lying in stiff state” could not atone.



Tannington church was “dirty, untidy and miserable” and the visitors were almost choked by the dust and stuffiness that met them. But first impressions could be reviewed. Ufford church porch was initially described as “uninteresting”, then an insertion dated 1925 says “WHAT?? A very fine example”.

Motoring itself provided excitement. Tyres punctured on five of the six journeys. Changing wheels became routine. Help came, for example, from a chauffeur in a car whose passage they had blocked; from a man by a duck pond cleaning a “Ford”, and a passing lorry. There were frequent visits to the Smith and Wesby garage in Saxmundham to have tyres repaired (the name still exists, as the proprietors of the Darsham filling station). And there was the incident of the ditch near Fressingfield from which a horse had to pull them out.

Janet Becker noted that the journal was intended for Miss Gooch and herself. She wrote that by the fire light they could build again the places they saw in “those glorious six days of the tour”. The fragrance of their memories would “bring back the laughter which rang like our engines”. For us the journal conveys the excitement of seeing places for the first time and a view of a county now much more accessible.

The journal is in Simon Loftus’s collection of Becker papers and thanks are due to him for the opportunity to publish this article.

Alan Mackley

BLOOMING ARTS ROUND UP

With spring around the corner, there's a spurt of growth in arts events, locally.

INK Festival

After two years of dormancy The INK Festival of new writing is back from **21 to 24 April**. The Festival is expanding into a number of different venues, including: The Cut, The Rifle Hall, MR King & Sons, The Halesworth Museum, The White Swan and more. Each venue will have hour-long performances of three or more short new plays, showing several times during each day – more than 50 plays in all. A day ticket allows you to visit as many performances as you wish. These include plays by Miranda Hart, Will Gompertz, Elliot Cowan as well pieces by many first-time writers. Details and tickets from inkfestival.org.



Blythburgh artist in Aldeburgh

Malcolm Doney has a one-man exhibition of his paintings and objects at the Courtyard Gallery in Aldeburgh from 2 to 8 May, entitled *Close to Home*. Malcolm says: "I've always loved everyday things: a mug of tea and a bacon sarnie; a soft jumper that's fraying at the edges, walking the dog down a familiar path. Domestic, functional things, like kitchen implements or garden sheds – especially when their

edges have been eroded by use or age – have a kind of vernacular beauty. Inspired by the pared-down vision of folk art, I find what the metaphysical poet George Herbert called 'Heaven in ordinary'."

Sculpture in the Valley

From **27 May to 26 June**, Waveney and Blyth Arts is opening Sculpture in the Valley, a sculpture trail in the picturesque, 10-acre grounds of Pottton Hall (in between Blythburgh and Westleton). This year's theme is Between two worlds and, will include works for sale. Early bird visitors can book whole-day tickets on reduced reduced price at waveneyandblytharts.com until 30 April. Opening hours are 10am to 4pm, admission is £6 on the door, and under-18s are free. More details at waveneyandblytharts.com.

Looking ahead

Watch out for **The Southwold Arts Festival 25 June to 2 July**: southwoldartsfestival.co.uk, and the 10th anniversary of the **Inspired by Becker Art Society exhibition** to be held in Blythburgh Church **30-31 July**: ibbas.co.uk.

EASTER AND BEYOND AT BLYTHBURGH CHURCH

Easter run-up

We're anticipating Easter on **Saturday, 9 April 9 at 7 pm**, when the Ipswich Choral Society and Music Director Robin Walker make their debut at Blythburgh with a performance of **Bach's St John Passion**. This performance could prove popular, so early booking is advisable. Tickets available at <https://ipswichchoralsociety.org/events/>.

Easter proper

Easter services begin this year on **Palm Sunday 10 April with a service at 11.15am**. The rest of the Sole Bay team of churches (of which Holy Trinity is a part) will join us in Blythburgh for a **Maundy Thursday service at 7pm**. On **Good Friday April 15 at 5pm** is our popular family-based building of the **Easter garden and egg hunt**. Our **Easter Day service takes place at 11.15am on Sunday 17 April**.

Take a break

Please join us for coffee and cake at Blythburgh's gathering place – the monthly **café and mini-market: 10.30-12pm on Friday 29 April**.

'The Dig' – Blythburgh style

At the Friends of Holy Trinity Blythburgh's **Open Afternoon on Saturday 14 May from 2-4pm**, Simon Roberts of Union Farm (a close neighbour to the village) will present an illustrated talk showing how recent local finds reveal our history. This will be followed by time for questions led by Dr Alan Mackley. Afternoon tea and a tour of the church, led by village resident guide Colin Huggins, will complete the day. Everyone is welcome. Admission is free to Friends of Holy Trinity – donations are welcome from everyone else.

Summit meeting

Holy Trinity's **Annual Parochial Church Meeting**, which will take place on **Tuesday 17 May 7pm** in the church. Anyone on the church's Electoral Roll is welcome.

BLYTHBURGH FIELD NOTES

Late January saw the reappearance of the White-tailed Eagle over the Blyth Estuary, while a second winter Glaucous Gull, a Spotted Redshank and two Great White Egret were also seen on several occasions.

On 3 February, a Glossy Ibis was seen flying East over the Blyth Estuary, being located a few days later on Town Marsh at Walberswick, where it's still to be found west of the harbour car park.

An early Osprey flew north over the Blyth on the 3rd and early March also saw a considerable increase in Grey Plover, Knot and the first Ringed Plover on the estuary, obviously Tundra breeding species heading back north.

The winter generally has been the worst in living memory for northern birds, with exceptionally low numbers of duck, geese, divers and grebes. The mild winter has probably caused some species to stay further north, but there has been a drastic decline in northern wintering species in recent years – in the 70s, 80s and early 90s, close to a million wintering Starlings roosted in the reedbeds at Westwood Marsh. This attracted numerous birds of prey, three or four Merlin regularly harassing the Starling flock, while the Hen Harrier roost here once reached a total of 23.

Rough-legged Buzzard and Goshawk were also regular winter visitors. Three or four Great Grey Shrike regularly wintered in the area too, one for a number of years along the old railway line behind the White Hart, but the football then was very limited.

The mild weather has also brought several early summer visitors to the coast, with Sandwich Tern, Garganey, Stone Curlew and Chiffchaff being seen in recent days.

I.Knownowt

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SOLICITORS & NOTARIES



STARRY, STARRY NIGHT

Setting aside 'Star Trek' and similar works of fiction, human travel beyond our planet is limited to the Apollo missions of 60 years ago. So what chances are there that one day we will be able to travel to the other planets, and even further to the stars?

Before we can consider this question we need to have some appreciation of the distances involved. This is something I looked at when I was invited to speak to The Blyth Belles last month.

The nearest star is of course our very own Sun. The Sun is 865,000 miles across and 93,000,000 miles away from Earth. Already the numbers are hard to imagine so let's think about a scale model to help us.

Let's say that the Sun is the size of a football. Then to the same scale the diameter of the Earth is the size of a black peppercorn. By comparison Jupiter, the largest planet in our solar system, would have the same diameter as a £1 coin.

Now let's place that football, representing the Sun, in the doorway of the Village Hall. So where would you need to place the peppercorn? The answer is in the middle of the car park. The Moon would be just over 2 inches from the Earth. The £1 coin representing Jupiter would be at the start of Angel Lane and Neptune, the most distant planet, would be at the old Blythburgh School. Remember, so far, humans are still in the Village Hall car park.

Opportunities for life in our solar system seem limited, so what would it take to travel to the stars? The closest star that we can see in the night sky from the northern hemisphere is Sirius. You can currently

see it low in the sky to the south. It is the brightest evening object other than the Moon. Sirius is 51,119,336,000,000 miles away (give or take a few million miles). Using the same (Village Hall) scale, travelling to Sirius would be the equivalent of a journey to the west coast of Australia.

Maybe we should be thinking about unmanned flight. The furthest any manmade object has travelled is Voyager 1 which was launched in 1977. It carries data and images on a gold disc so that if it ever encounters life they will know we are here. How far has that got in the 45 years it has been travelling through space – the answer is as far as Walberswick!

Colin Huggins



IT'S ALL GROW!

It's wonderful spring weather as I write this, and lots of seeds have been sown both outdoors and in the greenhouse – so fingers crossed for a successful growing season.

We have our next outing of the year (our second) on x May, which will be to the East Ruston Old Vicarage Garden, so we're looking forward to that.

Don't forget to start planning and planting for the summer show on Saturday 6 August.

If you'd like to join the Horticultural Society, or want to know more about what we do, please get in touch with me (details below); membership is a bargain at just £5 a year!

Happy gardening!

Val Carse

Chair, Blythburgh Horticultural Society

valc@btinternet.com



THE QUEEN'S PLATINUM JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

Plans are well under way for Blythburgh, Bulcamp and Hinton to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee over the weekend of 2 – 5 June 2022.

Firstly, the committee would like to express their grateful thanks to those of you that completed the survey which was recently circulated. There were some wonderful ideas which have all been discussed at length.

Staying Informed

We will keep you informed via leaflets and the Blythburgh M@tters mailing list. If you are not on the list and would like to be included, please email ro@blythburgh.plus.com and your name will be added. We will also update the village website (www.blythburgh.onesuffolk.net), the Church website (www.holytrinityblythburgh.org.uk) and the village Facebook page.

Register Children in the Village

We are hoping to provide all children resident in the parish (up to and including Year 11) with a souvenir and, in order to ascertain numbers, it would be useful if you could register your children by emailing Ro Williams as above or telephoning her on 07886 465552.

Photographs of Blythburgh

In addition, if you have any photographs of Blythburgh over the last 70 years that you think might be of interest in the photography exhibition please contact Colin Huggins on 07508 888460.

So keep your eyes and ears open over the next couple of months and we hope to see as many of you as possible celebrating this momentous occasion.

Jubilee Events being planned so far

- Hog roast with live music
- Bring your own picnic
- Photographic Exhibition
- Scarecrow Trail and Competition representing events over the last 70 years
- Treasure Hunt
- Fancy Dress Competition
- 'Where is This' photograph competition
- Firework Display
- Bunting decoration of village

Further details of these events will be published nearer the time as well as news of other exciting happenings being planned.

Please come along or take part in as many events as you can to celebrate this historic occasion.



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BLYTHBURGH STATION IMPROVEMENTS ON TRACK

Volunteers have worked hard at Blythburgh Station to ensure that the brush and bramble work would be complete by the start of the bird nesting season. The platform has been cleared, and the 1879 holly hedge resurrected: two tries at planting holly sprigs have both been frustrated by ravenous rabbits!

A number of artefacts have been found in the course of the work – some are from the railway, some from the army (in 1940). A Society member has made a faithful replica of one of the station oil lamps: this will be put back exactly where it used to be. Another Society member will be sponsoring two benches, which, when placed along the platform, should provide a popular picnic facility. The timber fencing will be re-erected along the rear of the platform, using some original material.

In mid-March, volunteer Tim, with a hired digger, dealt with the large mounds of fly-tipped builders' rubbish on the platform, and removed the dead and diseased stumps. Next, the platform timber edging will be replaced as it was, and a gravel top-surface will be added, to replicate the 1879 condition.



Then the track alongside the platform will be re-instated. This section, forming part of the original main line, is being funded by sleeper sponsorship: half of all the sleepers

needed are already funded at £35.00 each. Sponsors' names will be displayed – and any Sponsor can lay their "own" sleeper if they wish. In this track will be a point (in a more westerly position than the original, which was underneath the now-demolished A12 bridge) which will give access to the Goods Shed. Here, a display is being made of typical goods items and of artefacts found on the site. A replica goods wagon, as would have been seen here before 1929, is being made up at our workshop: this will form part of the display, and can be used on shunting demonstrations.

There will be three Open Days in 2022: Sunday 3 April, Tuesday 21 June (celebrating Suffolk Day), and Sunday 11 September (with a model show) – all between 10am and 4pm. The Village Hall has been hired to provide facilities for visitors and staff. Volunteers will be on hand to explain progress and discuss future developments. The first two events are free to enter, with the September one having a nominal entry-charge to the Hall, to cover expenses. We hope to see many Blythburgh residents there.

**James Hewett and Ken Penrose, Co-Chairmen,
Halesworth to Southwold Narrow Gauge Railway Society.**

More information at www.halesworthtosouthwoldrailway.co.uk

The Blythburgh Latitude Trust is making grants

**The Blythburgh Latitude Trust
makes grants to individual
parishioners, families and
organisations to meet specific
needs.**

**For your grant, contact
the honorary administrator,
Jim Boggis, Marsh End,
Church Road, (478 687)**

**All applications will be treated in
complete confidence.**

Apply now

**The trustees are Jenny Allen, chair, Sarah Wickham, Michael
Nicholls, Val Carse, Malcolm Doney and Harry Waller.**

Your Parish Councillors

Chair: Roderick Orr-Ewing

Planning Advisory Committee:
Val Carse, Paul Lacey

Finance Advisory Committee:
Roderick Orr-Ewing, Chiara Saunders,
Al Besly

Councillors: Malcolm Doney,

Clerk: Al Besly

Blythburgh Associations

Blythburgh Latitude Trust
Jim Boggis 01502 478687

Film Club
Olive Forsythe 01502 478521

**Village Hall Management
Committee**
bookings@blythburghvillagehall.org.uk

Horticultural Society
Val Carse 07973 389898

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Sarah Wickham blythbelles@gmail.com

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Wild watch

"Spring is sprung, the grass is riz', I wonder where them boidies is". At this time of year, them "boidies" is pretty busy. We humans, who experience seasonal change, welcome the lengthening of the days and perceptible rise in temperature. For our feathered friends, however, it heralds the start of the busiest time of their year.

As I write, the dawn chorus here in Blythburgh is starting to get underway. From earliest light – sometimes before – the singing begins. Usually, it's the blackbirds and song thrushes that kick off first. They're followed by the robins, wrens and then the tits, and finally the finches. Punctuating the singers are the woodpeckers and wood pigeons.



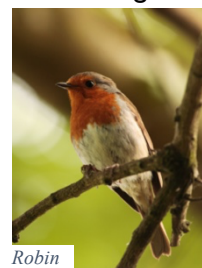
Male chaffinch

It can be quite difficult to distinguish many of these birds in such a varied choir, although the flute-like notes of the thrushes are probably the easiest to pick out.

For us humans, the dawn chorus is a thing of joy and beauty. It amazes those new to rural life by its presence and sheer volume, as dawn is usually still and there's not much artificial noise about.

For the singers, this chorus is more than just a celebration of the start of a new day. It's a combination of morning news and an indication of which bird is where. A proclamation of territory, invitations to pair up and a less than subtle reminder to rivals that 'I'm still here and alive!'

The majority of the chorus are male birds. Singing takes a lot of energy and it's the longest, strongest singer who will attract a mate.



Robin

One of the few exceptions to the 'male only' rule of singing is the female robin. At our latitudes, robins are resident, and a pair will establish a territory and defend it together. Two robins in your garden in an amiable relationship is a 'true pair'.

I continue to provide high energy food like mealworms during the breeding season. Birds will continue to search for natural food for their chicks but shortages can happen at any time. Providing dried or live mealworms ensures chicks get their vital nourishment and gives the adults a chance to maintain their energy levels, too.

Like many aspects of nature, birdsong provides us with pleasure, and reassurance in troubled times. For the creatures which provide this service, it's likely that nothing could be further from their minds. To them, it's a matter of life and death.

Paul Lacey

The Friends of Holy Trinity Blythburgh

Open Afternoon 2022

Saturday 14 May from 2.00 – 4.00

New findings near Blythburgh

An illustrated talk
by Simon Roberts of
Union Farm (close
neighbour
to the church) in which
he will show how local
history
is slowly revealing
itself.
This will be followed by
time for questions led
by Alan Mackley.



Blythburgh church from Union Farm

**Join the Trustees for afternoon tea
and a tour of the church
led by village resident guide, Colin Huggins.**

**FREE to Friends of Holy Trinity
– donations welcome from everyone else!**



FRIENDS OF HOLY TRINITY BLYTHBURGH

DAISY BANK CIV

Spring is beginning to reveal its lovely head. The snowdrops are over, and the daffodils and primroses are beginning to flow across the garden. The hellebores are rampant, the pink Verbena and the white jewels of the hawthorn are running wild. Not long now before we are sitting outside with a gin and tonic in our hands; we're not wine lovers.

The front garden, now the trees are reduced, is soon to have loads of plug plants and ornamental grasses. The sun can finally reach them after 30 years of darkness. Once the front of the house is painted, the cottage will look rejuvenated and hopefully have an optimistic smile on its face. Years of gentle neglect will of course shock passers by, who have become used to, and accepted, its oddity. But then, we're still here – so our own personal eccentricity will survive, and hopefully prosper.

Sheds various, which we call "Shed City" is being repaired and renovated, and I'm finally getting rid of loads of junk and things that we don't want, and probably nobody else does. The only thing is that all the sheds are going to have a new life, and I fear some of them may end up empty.

The new 2cv has arrived and is shining bright and blue up on the car park, courtesy of the church of course. And the orange beast in the driveway is awaiting its dragon's roar to be ignited. As a self-confessed petrol head, I often go into the garden just to look at it. With petrol prices reaching new heights of horror, I suspect that I'm going to be doing a lot of that, ie looking and admiring. A five-litre V8 has a healthy appetite for lots and lots of petrol. Thank God for the 602 cc 2cv for day-to-day use. I realise that I'm crazy as well as being odd, but do I care? No!

We've stopped watching the news. I find I can cope with Radio Four news, but to see the horror of it all is far too much. First, two years of Covid and now all this! Add in climate change to the mix, and all of the misery is complete. I think I'll start living vicariously in the world of *East Enders* and *Holby City* and forget what's happening out there. The latter I've just found out is finishing this month, so it will have to be Monty Don, Alan Sugar and Chris Packham – an odd mix but that will be good. And then of course FI and Rugby will always fill the hole. And, when the Ruskies finally start coming up the A12, I'll get my baseball bat out and do the best I can. And I'm sure the rest of Daisy Bank will join me: "**Dasvidaniya tovarishch!**"

Paul Bennet

BLYTHBURGH DAY 2022

After a two-year break due to Covid, Blythburgh Day will be back. Please put the date in your diary: **Sunday July 31st**.

The day will start at 11am with a service in the ruins at The Priory and then will carry on in the gardens of The Priory until 5pm.

Full details to follow but we expect the day to follow the usual format:

- Bbq
- Bar
- Tea and cakes
- Hort Soc stall
- Music
- Games
- Raffle
- Dog show
- Boat rides



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THEY LISTENED BUT REMAINED SILENT

Yet again, I'm reminded that things in this world can and do change very quickly.

When we visited Bletchley Park in the middle of February, our focus was on the



crucial role it played in the dark days of WWII. As I sit down to write this, barely three weeks later, the world is reeling once more from the shocking events unfolding in Ukraine.

For many years, the wartime role of Bletchley Park went unmentioned and unknown to all but a few. The site had good communications links to London and other parts of the country and was the hub of Allied codebreaking activities during WWII.

At its peak, more than 8,000 people worked on the site – coming and going at all times of the day and night, in an effort to break codes that were changed every 24 hours.

Codebreaking efforts may have been centred at Bletchley, but they relied on a network of 'listening stations' (including one at Southwold) to gather the 'raw coded signals'. These were transmitted by Morse code which is what the listeners wrote down and sent on paper to Bletchley by motorcycle despatch riders for processing.

Bletchley codebreakers unquestionably made a contribution to the war effort, but at the conclusion of hostilities these people dispersed, with no mention made of their very existence for some 30 years. Even then, many continued to remain silent, and took their secrets to the grave.

In these days of instant communications, when almost everyone seems to 'post' where they are and what they're doing, it seems almost unbelievable that people stayed silent – but these were different times and stay silent people did.

By the mid-1970s, the Bletchley Park site took on a new purpose and became a training establishment for the GPO (General Post Office). Hence, on Sunday evenings, a rather fresh-faced Mr B could be found driving to Bletchley Park in his Mk1 Ford Cortina for another week of training. On our recent visit, the accommodation building (two young men to a room with communal facilities for the whole block) could still be seen and, as you might imagine, Mr B came under pressure to share a few tales!



If you have an interest in history, communications, electronics, computing or even for those with a healthy curiosity then Bletchley Park is worth checking out.

Sonia Boggis

VILLAGE SUPPORTS UKRAINIANS

On Saturday 19 March, 55 locals crowded into the Village Hall for a fundraising supper in support of war-torn Ukraine. From a doorstep conversation two weeks earlier, concerned villagers rapidly developed the idea, distributed flyers, cooked food, called in great raffle prizes and decorated the hall. The call for support was met with huge enthusiasm and – within days – the event was sold out.



Individuals (too many to name) were extraordinarily generous with their time, their donations and their skills. And the result was a delightfully convivial evening in the village hall, accompanied by good food, good music and good company – all in a very good cause.

And the result: we raised a staggering £3,060, which has been sent to the Disasters Emergency Committee Ukraine Appeal. Thank you so much to everyone who organised the evening, and who came to support this vital, life-saving campaign. It was Blythburgh village at its best.



PARISH COUNCIL AGM AND VILLAGER OF THE YEAR 2022

Your Parish Council (which covers Blythburgh, Bulcamp and Hinton) welcomes all local residents to its **Annual Parish Meeting on Friday 22nd April at 7pm** in the Village Hall. Find out what's been happening in the parish from councillors and local groups. Refreshments will be served.

This is also when we announce your nominated **Villager of the Year** for her or his contribution to village life. These individuals are nominated by residents. Please let the Parish Council know who gets your vote. A candidate can be anyone who lives in the parish, unless they are a serving member of the Parish council.

Please nominate the person you think deserves this accolade and deliver it in a sealed envelope, marked 'Villager of the Year' to, Roderick Orr-Ewing Chair of the Parish Council at Mill End Dunwich Road, Blythburgh, or else you can send an email nominating your candidate, together with your reasons, to Al Besly, Clerk of the Parish Council, at blythburgh.pc@gmail.com. *The closing date for nominations is Wednesday 20 April.*

The winner receives £50 with his or her name on the honours board in the Village Hall.

Name of person nominated:
Proposer/s:
Reasons for nomination