



THESE BOOTS WERE MADE FOR WALKING

Colin Huggins is involved in many village related activities and congratulations are due on his recent award of Blythburgh Villager of the Year. But what many will be unaware of is that since 2014 Colin has undertaken an annual long-distance walk. Now in his 11th year, Colin has covered a total of 1,074 miles over 70 days walking mainly in Suffolk and Norfolk but also visiting parts of Beds, Bucks, Cambs, Essex, Herts and Lincs. I sat down with Colin to find out a bit more about his walks.



Why did you start?

A situation arose in early 2014 that made me think about my Bucket List. Strangely, I only put one thing on it and that was going on a long-distance walk. I was retired, had time on my hands and that's what triggered it. I set about planning where to go, when to go and sorting out all the logistics. That first year (2014) I walked the Peddars Way (Knettishall Heath to Old Hunstanton) and then on to Cromer.

Relatively easy to do something like that as a one off but it really is a commitment to keep doing it year after year. What keeps you doing it? Do you enjoy it so much?

Yes, I really do. I guess that when I started I didn't think of it as more than a one-off but then I did really enjoy it. I get such enjoyment out of planning it and the logistics – where to stay, how to get bags from A to B, and is there somewhere to stop for lunch or are we going to end up in a field. Planning and then seeing if I can carry it out and learning lessons when things go wrong. I would certainly like to carry on doing it as long as I am fit enough and people come.

You mention people, when did you decide to get others involved?

That's the thing that has really changed. In the early days I would be walking on my own or with relatively few people. For example, in 2018 I walked from Newmarket to Felixstowe via Ipswich and had only one co-walker on one of the six days – perhaps my loneliest walk. But gradually I've invited others – school friends, family members, neighbours – who have joined for a day or more. It's quite nice watching my co-walkers get to know each other. Walking encourages people to bond and chat and if you are walking for six or seven hours you are going to talk to everyone at some point. Get to know people you don't know and get to know others better. I really enjoy this aspect. It's also a bonus if people stay on for the evening and have a meal and because you have at least that day's experience of walking in common, you will chat about the rain coming down, where we took a wrong turn and so on. It's very sociable.

Do you have a stand out moment?

I immediately think of a stand out "terrible" moment – my worst time. I was walking on my own. It was day one of a walk, quite a long day of 20 miles. I made the assumption that at the end of the day (in a place called Sturmer) I would be able to get a bus or taxi to my overnight hotel which

was another 2.5 miles away & in the wrong direction. No bus, no taxi and I had to walk those extra miles along a dual carriageway. Not a great way to end a day! This was definitely a low point. On the flip side, finishing is always a high point!

Apart from finishing, what do you find most enjoyable?

Apart from the planning, it's really about people. Meeting someone out of the blue when I was sheltering in her church and she now lives in the next village (yes, that's you Margaret). On my own on the outskirts of Sudbury I got chatting to two women one of whom it turned out was from Heacham & went to the same school as my partner Mary. On the same day, another woman who asked me a question about the path, turned out to run a business in the market place in Halesworth – a very small world. And in 2022, a couple I hadn't seen for 20 years, welcomed five sweaty walkers as we passed their property walking the Icknield Way. Basically, everyone has been so nice and you really do see the best of people. I enjoy doing it and want to carry on as long as I am able.

Colin's Walks in numbers

11: total number of walks
 20.4 miles: highest daily average (2018)
 12.2 miles: lowest daily average (2023 & 2024)
 23.7 miles: longest distance walked in a day
 231: number of cities, towns, villages and hamlets visited (35 more than once)
 4: number of years walks broken and completed later due to blisters
 18: total number of co-walkers
 1,242 miles: total distance walked by co-walkers
 2024: friendliest walk with between one and five co-walkers each day

Sonia Boggis

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NEW PARISH WELCOME BOOKLET

Delivered with this edition of *Blythburgh Focus*, is a copy of a new, free, parish publication, which aims to welcome anyone new to the community, but also to inform all residents about what's going on in their community. This includes a comprehensive guide to what places, activities and services are available. It's published by the Blythburgh with Bulcamp and Hinton Parish Council. If you haven't received a copy or need extras, you should be able to find them in the White Hart or Holy Trinity Church.

FAREWELL TO THE INDOMITABLE OLIVE FORSYTHE

Olive lived in Abbey Cottage, Blythburgh and was married to David Tytler, then Chair of the Parish Council. She was extremely active in village life, as Chair of the Village Hall management committee, and founder of the Blythburgh Film Club, and received the honour of villager of the year.



Olive was born in 1946 in Lurgan, County Armagh, Northern Ireland. Her dad Robert was a Protestant, and her mother Susan a Roman Catholic. She was the third of eight children. The family migrated to England in 1950, settling in Leyton, East London.

From the beginning, Olive took education seriously, taking a law degree at the University of London. She also encouraged other members of the family to pursue their education. Her sister Dorrie recalls: "Olive was always there for me. She ensured that I stayed at school and college, doing an academic course." Her niece Kelly adds: "Education was at the core of Olive's beliefs – she helped all of us, at one time or another, to reach our full potential."

Olive herself spent the large part of her adult career in education, ultimately becoming Press & Publicity Officer for the National Union of Teachers. The position was a good fit for her values of fairness and equality. And she thoroughly loved the job, liaising with MPs and newspaper editors and journalists.

Of course, this was how she met David Tytler. This was in the 1990s. David was Education Correspondent for *The Times* newspaper, which put them in each other's orbit. They were married in 1998. They lived together in Olive's flat in South London and – after David bought Abbey Cottage in Blythburgh – they often shuttled between here and London until retirement.

Olive and David threw themselves into village life, the pair of them were a thoroughgoing partnership – core members of the life and times of the village. They were fixtures in the White Hart back then, poring over their crosswords, and on Fridays at the centre of a convivial village gathering. In village life, David was the front man, but Olive was the administrative hub, and a force to be reckoned with!

Olive was always organised and practical. David was allowed to do the ironing and pour the wine, but he wasn't allowed in the kitchen or near a screwdriver. It was Olive who put up the shelves and hung the pictures.

Olive knew her own mind and was determined to make a difference. Which she did, making a real contribution to the community. Two of her pet projects were the Village Hall and the organisation of the Latitude Festival tickets. Both of them considerable logistical tasks for anyone. But Olive did them with her own brand of drive and command. You could have an argument with Olive, in fact she enjoyed a bit of give and take – banter. But you could rarely change her mind. She liked people who were prepared to stand up to her, but she was never wrong. Her robustness, and the fact that she wouldn't take prisoners, got things done but didn't always make her popular.

But Olive was no harridan. There was also a soft and gentle side: she was extremely loyal to her friends and family, engaging with her nieces and nephews whom she doted upon, free with her time and friendship when they came to visit. And she loved David deeply. His death in 2019 broke her heart, and it's probably fair to say that she was never the quite the same after. She seemed to retreat into herself in recent years.

But, on a cheerier note, we can't talk about Olive without talking about Liverpool FC. From early on, she admired Liverpool – not just for its football – but as a kind of left-leaning social entity. She loved the way the club was run, with Bill Shankly and Bob Paisley and the concept of the Boot Room where football matters were discussed and decisions made. Jurgen Klopp was a Nye Bevan-like hero for Olive, and she thought Stevie G strode the Anfield pitch like a Colossus. Incidentally, it's said that Olive was also a great fan of John Barnes' shapely legs.

When Olive retired, she sold her London flat and bought an apartment in Liverpool – less a retreat, more a place of pilgrimage. She loved the drive there, particularly in her Mercedes convertible. David would fall asleep almost before they hit the A12, but Olive loved the road and a good burn-up.

We remember with affection Olive's cleverness with words: a whizz at cryptic crosswords. Her love of numbers too, she became a big fan of Sudoku in later years. But mostly, we will remember her impish sense of humour, her drive to get good things done regardless of who stood in the way. Her sharpness, her determination of what was right. And her loyalty to whom and what she loved.

To say that Olive was a character is to under-play the size and depth of her personality. But she was a one-off, and many of us will miss our audiences with her in the sin-bin at Abbey Cottage, with a cigarette in the ash tray, and newspaper spread out before her, very much in her domain.

Malcolm Doney

WILDWATCH

The annual Blessing of the Animals service in Holy Trinity was a heart-warming example of how close we humans are to many of the other creatures on Planet Earth. We love our animal familiars, especially those who return our love and companionship.

Almost without exception, however, our affection and protective nature is directed towards those creatures we can see without difficulty – which are known to the biologists as ‘mega-fauna’.

An animal large enough to suit our scale of perception is bound to make an impression on the medium-sized human species. Much of the effort and money that goes into nature conservation is directed towards those creatures that we notice, whether while out birdwatching or on Safari.



Coquillettidia richiardii mosquito; *Cercopis vulnerata*;

The greatest percentage of life on Earth – at least, those we have studied – are much smaller than humans, and the vast majority of those are even smaller still.

Contemplating things at my kitchen window recently, I happened to notice a tiny invertebrate crawling along the brickwork. It was only because it moved that I saw it. It turned out to be a tiny fly, barely a millimetre long. I started thinking what species it could possibly be – probably a puzzle only a dedicated entomologist could solve. Then I wondered what role it might play in the ecology of Blythburgh.

Almost as soon as I'd had that thought it was gone.

Here was a creature that I could hardly see, going about its business. Something that could fly, crawl, seek out a mate, an energy source, and to what purpose? While not likely a sentient being, it was obvious that it had a reason to exist.

Just because things are small doesn't reduce their importance in the scheme of life. In fact, without many of them, our ecosystems could break down, and have a knock-on effect on the larger inhabitants that share their world.



Ichneumonidae poss *Pimpla hypochondriaca*; *Dolichopus popularis* fly

People have noticed a drastic reduction of pollinators about this year. Bees and wasps are on our radar but there are many that aren't, including those that we swat without a thought, or exterminate in their thousands with pesticides.

All creatures great and small, whether we like or loathe them, and provided they haven't been thoughtlessly introduced from elsewhere by careless humans, serve a purpose, and might be a vital cog in the machinery of life.

If, indeed, the Lord God made them all, perhaps He did so for that reason.

Paul Lacey

BLYTHBURGH CHURCH



Animals head to church

Our annual service for the blessing of animals in August was a great joy, as ever. It was attended by 116 humans, 60 dogs, three horses, two cats, one rabbit and a toy yak, and toy whale!

Curlew River update

For two nights at the end of June, Holy Trinity Blythburgh was transformed into the set of the epic Benjamin Britten opera, *Curlew River*, as part of the Aldeburgh Festival. In mid-September, one of its lead singers Sir Willard White made a return visit to Holy Trinity, with a film crew, to shoot an introduction to the BBC TV broadcast of the production which, we're told, will be transmitted on **BBC4 on 24 November**.

Evensong and more

After a month's break, Choral Evensong and the Blythburgh Singers return to Holy Trinity at **6pm on Sunday 6 October and 3 November**. There will be an evening of **Advent Carols on Sunday 1 December**.

Coffee & Cake

The final Café and Mini-market of the year will take place on **Friday October 25 10.30am-12pm**.

Christmas Market

Christmas will be here before you know it, here's a date for your diary: our hugely popular Annual Christmas Market will be held at Holy Trinity on **Saturday 30 November, from 11am to 3.30pm**. Many stalls selling a wide range of Christmas gifts including cakes, Christmas wreaths, cards, homemade items, etc. Homemade soups, tea, coffee and cakes available. Everyone's welcome.

THE ANIMAL SERVICE





DAISYBANK CXVIII

Our neighbours, Paul and Sue had a wedding recently. One of their daughters got married and the reception was in their garden. We were warned there would be noise but, so what? Listening to happy people having a happy time can't be bad can it? It definitely beats the noise of the ghastly motorbikes hands down. We've to put up with that 25 times a year over many weekends. When I moved here 37 years ago, I knew that I would have to put up with the A12 and occasional flooding in the back garden. But I didn't sign up to the roar of many motorbikes destroying the peace of our weekends. Daisy Bank just doesn't deserve that! Anyway, congratulations to the wedding couple for bringing some joy to Daisy Bank.

There I go again on a rant. So much to rant about these days, including my own party kicking the heating allowance into touch. Sorry to all you out there who really need it. We don't, and are happy to give it up. Hopefully there is a U-turn in the pipeline before Christmas. Now, all we have to worry about is the odious Trump getting his hands on the White House keys again.

But enough of all that. The dreaded winter approaches, but so far we've been able to sit out in the garden most days, and we can still hear happy families making their way to the creek for swimming, boating and crabbing. We had the annual visit from our friends in the west country staying across the other side of the church car park in Mrs Jeans old place. For those of you who don't know, she was the wife of a former vicar of Blythburgh and the two cottages were then one farmhouse and that was the vicarage.

Our friends tried to get out of our back gate to do some swimming themselves but it proved impossible. We haven't used it for a year or so, and it's now reverting to wild nature much the same as we are. They managed to fit in a barbecue while they were here. I'm not a great lover of barbecues, but this time it wasn't half bad, and the beauty of it was that we had to do absolutely nothing in its preparation. All we do is eat. A good time had by all apart from my dear friend, their dad, being absent. He died a couple of weeks ago and that was a big blow for me. We'd known each other since our early 20s, and he took a lot of my memories with him when he went. I must remember to tell him off when I see him again.

A happy autumn to you all from us marshlanders, and at least you must be relieved that I didn't talk about cars this time.

Paul Bennett

GROWING INTO AUTUMN

In August, following the Horticultural Society summer Garden Party hosted by Rachel and Charles Morris at The Green our Chair, Val Carse said: "Some 40 members attended the summer Garden Party this year which was held in the wonderful garden of Rachel and Charles with refreshing Sangria, tea, coffee and lots of delicious food. We had fantastic weather and a most enjoyable afternoon was had by all. Many thanks once again to Rachel and Charles for opening up their garden to Hort Soc members." Many thanks too to Sue Ireland-Cutting who organised the raffle and raised £140 for Society funds.

In September, a good number of members gathered in Blythburgh Village Hall for an extremely interesting, informative and tasty talk entitled "The Honey Bee and The Honey". Marian, our speaker, has been a bee-keeper for more than 15 years and shared a wealth of knowledge. We explored the structure of a hive and how honey bees forage nectar and pollen, before learning about how honey is harvested. Our taste buds were titillated with a honey tasting of five different honeys (four local and one from Spain). Local Raw honey was a definite winner! Marian was bombarded with a plethora of questions and a good time was had by all.

Thoughtfully, as we're a horticultural society, Marian followed up with a few pages of "Planting for Honey Bees". If any of you who aren't members would like a copy of these plantings, please just drop me an email (details below).

The Annual Dinner is again being held at The White Hart in early October and we are grateful to the new team at the White Hart for their support.

Our gardening year draws to a close in November when we will once again host our AGM and Social Evening in the Village Hall.

New members are always welcome, so please get in touch at sonia.boggis@btinternet.com if you would like to join us in 2025: membership of the Horticultural Society, currently £5 a year, will be confirmed at the AGM in November.

The full committee for 2024 has been: Cilla Wilson (President) Val Carse (Chair), Jenny Allen (Treasurer), Sonia Boggis (Secretary), Terry Goss, Sue Ireland-Cutting, Claire Lyth, Rachel Morris, Carol Nichols, Sarah Wickham
Sonia Boggis, Secretary

STARRY, STARRY NIGHT

So far, 2024 has been a poor year for viewing the planets, but that's all about to change.

Throughout this year, the Earth's orbit has meant that we have been on the opposite side of the Sun to the other planets. The planets revolve around the Sun at different rates and so Venus, which takes just 225 days, is now catching us up. By comparison, we have caught up with Jupiter and Saturn, which take around 12 and 29 years to orbit the Sun respectively. We of course take just over 365 days.

Saturn is the first planet this year to be in a really favourable position when viewed from Earth. It reached opposition on 8 September, which means it was directly opposite the Sun in the sky and at its brightest. Although this event has now passed, the planet will remain well positioned for the rest of this year.

During the first week of October you'll find it in the southern part of the sky all evening, being due south and at its highest around 11pm. However, an easier time to identify it may be on 14 October when the Moon will appear very close to the planet. They will be closest between 7pm and 7:30pm. At that time they will be quite low to the south-east but, with an almost full moon, should be easy to spot. Saturn will be about two moon widths above the Moon.

Although Saturn will be the brightest object in the sky after the Moon, you may need a keen eye to spot it against the Moon's glare. Of course the Moon is far larger and brighter, but keep in mind that Saturn is 300 times further away and has a diameter of 35 times that of the Moon.

If you're lucky enough to have a telescope through which to observe Saturn, you may wonder where its famous rings have gone. Worry not, they are still there. As Saturn orbits the Sun the angle of its rings varies as seen from the Earth. Twice in every 29 year orbit they appear edge-on to us. They are approaching the next occurrence of this which will be in March 2025, at which point they will disappear entirely as viewed by us Earthlings.

Colin Huggins



BLYTH BELLES CHANGES ITS CHIME

On 8 August, the Blyth Belles car-shared their way to the Southwold Flower Company on Wangford Road, Reydon for 6.30pm and a talk by the owners Liz and Roger Mobbs.

They explained how the business developed from a 1-acre plot to a 5-acre piece of farm land. They initially had a shop in Southwold, but it became more commercially viable to have premises outside the town with parking. They mentioned a trend these days for bunches of dried flowers - which they dry themselves – even for wedding bouquets. They also concentrate on selling locally produced products and the flowers could not be more local – countless rows of every cut flower you could think of on their fields. They have had their busiest year yet of customers coming to pick their own bouquets, and children have had great fun choosing their flowers even though sometimes they may be weeds! The Belles found it very pleasant wandering the fields with their supplied jam jars cutting and snipping flowers to their individual colour palettes.



The rain held off while the flowers were picked and everyone went home proudly clutching their arrangements. "Some fabulous jars left the farm," according to Liz.

Name-change

A planning meeting was held on 5 September which generated plenty of ideas for our monthly get togethers through to the end of 2025, as well as possible additional events during the year. More details will follow by email to members. This was the first meeting at which we welcomed menfolk. Our group, renamed **Blythburgh Social**, is open to all.

Our next meeting will be on **Thursday 3 October** when there will be a talk and demo in the Village Hall at 7.30pm by Steve Garlick on *Qi Gong* (a practice which is a close cousin to *Tai Chi*). Steve has been practicing *Qi Gong* for 20 years, teaching locally since 2015, and in this talk will give us an overview of the core beliefs, history, and some of the basic exercises that inform its rich cultural heritage.

An extra event on **Monday 21 October** will be an opportunity to paint your own Christmas bauble under the guidance of ceramic artist Thea Cutting who will ask £20 each for firing and producing the final decoration.

Mary Gundry
Secretary

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BLYTHBURGH FIELD NOTES

Late July and August saw a steady trickle of returning Northern waders on the Blyth, with Whimbrel, Bar-tailed Godwit, Ringed Plover, Spotted Redshank, Greenshank and Green and Common Sandpiper, While other species such as Mediterranean Gull, Common Tern, Kingfisher, Barn Owl and Red Kite were also seen.

In early September the wind crept into the East for a couple of days, bringing in a few migrants, including a couple of Whinchat and several Wheatears and warblers such as Whitethroat and Lesser Whitethroat.



On the 9th a lovely male Merlin, our smallest falcon, was seen over the Blyth. In falconry terms a male falcon is known as a tierce, this comes from French, meaning about one-third less in size, because in most birds of prey the male is usually the smaller bird. Numerous interesting words originate from

falconry, such as cadger, who today would be someone who attempts to buy or borrow something for nothing. Originally, he was the menial servant who carried the cadge, this was a wooden frame on which the hooded hawks were carried until required by the falconer.

At least two Ospreys frequented the Blyth for several days and there have also been regular sightings of Spoonbill, with up to 16 birds.

One kind home owner in the village, erected some Swift nest boxes, and was very fortunate to have a pair take up residence and nest in the first year.

It has been a very mixed period for butterflies this year, but one rare species the Silver-washed Fritillary, seems to have done extremely well in the parish.

I Nonowt

PUB QUIZ RETURNS

Blythburgh's popular quiz nights at the White Hart return on **Wednesday 16 October, at 7.30pm**. They will continue on the third Wednesday of every month. Teams of up to four people at £5 per head to include light snack during the interval. No need to book. Just turn up.

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