

SERVING BLYTHBURGH,
BULCAMP AND HINTON



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<http://blythburgh.onesuffolk.net>

April/May 2025

THE PAST IS A FOREIGN COUNTRY: BLYTHBURGH IN 1851

Censuses can be much more than head counts. Names, gender, age, place of birth, relationship, status or occupation, household composition and

[illegible]

addresses can be read from the forms. The 1851 census for Blythburgh is especially significant. The village was on the cusp of the replacement of the horse for the movement of goods and people, and the powering of agriculture. The railway reached Halesworth in the 1850s. Steam engines for agriculture were developed in the 50s and 60s.

I have looked at the numbers for Blythburgh with Bulcamp, without the workhouse. Hinton is included with Thorington and is difficult to disentangle. The population peaked in the mid-19th century. In 1841 it was 485 and in 1851 458 (238 males and 220 females). It was a young community, with nearly half under 20, and a quarter under 10 years old. They squeezed into 98 dwellings, with an average occupancy of 4.7. At the

extreme, agricultural labourer John Eade, 40, and his wife Alice, 38, were crammed into a cottage with seven children aged one to 17.

Susannah Evans, a 72-year-old widow, with her daughter kept the toll gate. Cornelius Fisk was paid by the parish to look after the roads. But the Blythburgh population was almost totally involved with agriculture and its servicing. There were nine farmers. James Cooper at Westwood Lodge farmed 600 acres, more than all the other farms put together. There were gamekeepers and shepherds, millers, blacksmiths and wheelwrights. Above all there were agricultural labourers. Of the 98 households, they headed 60. Suffolk labourers were among the worst-paid in the country. Blythburgh was a relatively poor place. There were eight lodgers, including five widowers, and two unmarried men. Widows were more likely to look after themselves or live with children.

Tradesmen, and women, included shoemaker James Burton. The Burtons were to run the grocers and drapers at Little Thorbyns well into the 20th century. Ann Lumkin was a grocer, James Catchpole a shopkeeper and William Wollage a tailor. At the centre of the village was the White Hart, run by Henry Trueman. He employed two house servants (aged 19 and 13) and an ostler, all born in Blythburgh. In all, there are 19 servants recorded. Other than those at the inn and a house-servant kept by Charles Whincop the blacksmith, they were all kept by farmers. Most were described as farm-servants, but there was also a cook, dairy-maids and washerwomen.

Before the advent of the bus and bicycle, it might be expected that most marriages would be contracted within the community. That was not so. Of 71 married couples, only 14 were between Blythburgh-born partners. Another 26 marriages had one Blythburgh-born spouse and 31 marriages were between partners born elsewhere. There were four individuals from Norfolk, and one from Essex. The rest, the overwhelming majority, did come from north-east Suffolk. How did they meet? The church and chapel may have played a part. I don't know the answer.

Thirty-five children are described as scholars, 19 girls and 16 boys. School attendance was not compulsory and the village did not have a Board School until the 1870s. The church and chapel will have had Sunday Schools. Mary Ann Pattman, born around 1820 in Beccles, is described as schoolmistress in the censuses from 1841 to 1871, first as a lodger and then with her own cottage. The sons of farmer John Woods, aged 13 and 17, might have been too old for a village school, but the other 33, aged five to 12, might have attended a private village school. Interestingly, 15 were the children of agricultural labourers.

In *The Go-Between* L.P. Hartley wrote "The past is a foreign country. They did things differently there". That's certainly true of Blythburgh in 1851.

Alan Mackley

SEE THE SUFFOLK SHOW FREE!

Each year the Blythburgh Latitude Trust funds an annual trip or visit which is open to all residents. This year, the Trust is funding two! Following last year's success, there's a return visit to the Suffolk Show. Later in the year, there's a chance to visit the Thursford Christmas Spectacular – and details for this will be circulated nearer the time.

Suffolk Show

If you live in the parish of Blythburgh with Bulcamp and Hinton, you're invited to go to the Suffolk Show on **Wednesday 28 May**. A bus will leave Blythburgh at 9.30am and leave the showground at 5pm to return to Blythburgh. The journey takes about an hour. Further information about Suffolk Show can be found at <https://suffolkshow.co.uk>

Please apply for this event to Val Carse by sending an email to valc@btinternet.com, or by post/ hand to White Hart Cottage, Station Road, Blythburgh IP19 9LH. **Applications must be received by 18 April** with the following information:

- Name of contact
- Number of Adult tickets (aged 19-64)
- Number of Senior tickets (aged 65+)
- Number of Young Person tickets (aged 15-18)
- Number of Child tickets (aged 0-14)
- Postal address of contact
- Email address of contact

Please note that all persons 15 and over for whom tickets are requested must be residents of the parish of Blythburgh with Bulcamp and Hinton. Places are limited and will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.

TRY LINE DANCING

Anyone for Line dancing? Every Friday at 4pm in Blythburgh Village Hall. We would welcome new members – those who have experience, and those who have none. There's no instructor - we use line dancing DVDs on the Village Hall screen. It's a very social, fun hour - good for the body and the brain: £4 a month. Interested? Please contact **Roselyn Crane** on **01502 478801**.

LATITUDE FESTIVAL – TICKET APPLICATION FORMS

Application forms for Resident tickets to the Latitude Festival (24-27 July) should now have been delivered to all households in the Parish. If you have not received your application forms, please contact:

BLT_Resident_2025@btinternet.com

ONLY IN BLYTHBURGH:**ROBERT BURNS AND ALEXANDER NASMYTH**

Robert Burns is probably the best known Scottish poet. First and foremost, a man of the people, much of Burns poetry is about life's cruel injustices. But he was also known as a legendary womaniser and wrote frequently and passionately about his affections, penning some of the most memorable words of love ever written.



Burns also collected folk songs from across Scotland, often revising or adapting them. He wrote *Scots Wha Hae* which served for a long time as an unofficial Scottish national anthem and *Auld Lang Syne* is one of his too.

Well-known for enjoying a tippie, his habit of intemperance was said to have aggravated a long-standing rheumatic heart condition and he died at the very early age of 37.

Burns Night is still celebrated worldwide and this year, on 25 January, we celebrated the 266th anniversary of his birth. Incredibly, in one small corner of Blythburgh, our celebration this year brought together descendants of both Burns and his very close friend Alexander Nasmyth – only in Blythburgh!

There are few contemporary portraits of Burns and the best-known was painted by his good friend, and well-respected Scottish artist, Alexander Nasmyth. Burns and Nasmyth had become firm friends, sharing a love of nature as well as an interest in radical politics. On trips to Edinburgh, Burns was a frequent visitor to Nasmyth's studio and they often walked together in the surrounding countryside.

The reason we have access to the above picture is because Alexander Nasmyth is the great, great, great grandfather of Blythburgh resident Chris Abbott. The connection is via Alexander's son James and Vertue Squibb: Vertue was a low-born Weymouth chambermaid who had a "side hustle" as it was called in those times. As if that wasn't enough of a Burns Night surprise, also in attendance at our celebration was, again from the "wrong side of the blanket", a direct descendant of Robert Burns himself. To steal a phrase from Chris, the consequences of fate and chance encounters are endlessly fascinating.

As you can imagine, over the course of the evening many stories were told, anecdotes shared and glasses raised as Chris and Gavin, our doughty duo, toasted their famous ancestors and feasted on the traditional Burns Night fare of haggis, neeps and tatties.

*Fair fa' your honest, sonsie face
Great Chieftain o' the Puddin'-race!*

Sonia Boggis (with thanks to Chris Abbott)



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TABLE-TOP SALE

February 1 saw a table-top sale held in the Village Hall. The idea of this experiment was to give people a chance to de-clutter their homes by selling things that they no longer needed, in the hope that others would find a use for them – genuine recycling.

There was an eclectic selection of goods and a good turnout. The sale was the initiative of Ro Williams and Chris Shone and the enthusiasm for the event was such that they may organise a repeat later in the year. Watch this space!

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 Sarah Wickham, Val Carse, Malcolm Doney,
Roderick Orr-Ewing, Paul Lacey, Sue Ireland-Cutting, Harry
Waller and Tom Smith**

Your Parish Councillors

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Planning Advisory Committee:

Paul Lacey

Finance Advisory Committee: Roderick Orr-Ewing,

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Clerk: Philip Stone

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SEASONAL TIPS FOR YOUR GARDEN

The flower garden

Spring is a busy time in the garden as it begins to wake after winter. Although the winter has been very wet this year, there have also been a lot of strong winds, so now is the time to check for any damage to trees and shrubs and prune back any dead or damaged material.

Bulbs planted last Autumn are now bursting into flower. Snowdrops and yellow winter Aconites have finished flowering now, so can be divided and replanted, to make new plants for free, before their green leaves die down. Daffodils, Crocus, Hyacinths and Muscari can flower through to April, followed by Tulips bringing a lovely succession of colour. After they've finished flowering leave their leaves to die down naturally.

If flowering bulbs such as Gladioli and Lilies are wanted in the garden this Summer, now is an ideal time to plant them directly where bare patches in your borders can still be seen. These spaces seem to disappear once summer arrives and more foliage grows.

In the vegetable garden

Clear away any winter vegetable plants as they finish producing, but leave the Purple and White Sprouting Broccoli till they have finished. Potatoes can be planted out now and summer root vegetables. Broad beans and Peas can also be sown in the now-warming soil, but take precautions against mice who are on the look-out for an easy meal. Onion Sets and Shallots can be planted out now leaving only the tips exposed or the birds will try and take them.

Seeds of tender summer vegetables such as Tomatoes, Chillies, Aubergines can now be sown indoors either on a sunny windowsill or in the greenhouse. Keep warm and moist to aid germination.

A spring flower audit to help the pollinators

Take stock of what you already have in your garden that flowers in spring to aid early bees and butterflies. A good-bee-friendly spring garden could



have snowdrops, aconites, primroses, hellebores, crocus, spring irises, lungworts and daffodils. Also consider winter-flowering shrubs such as Pussy willow, winter heathers, winter honeysuckle and flowering currant which flower over a longer period to provide a more reliable nectar and pollen source for the early emerging bees.

Plant a Bee banquet for later in the year to include such things as Verbascums, Foxgloves, Achilleas, Sedums and Lavender. Lots of these can be sown now as seeds so will be less expensive. The more expensive option is to visit the Garden Centre each month throughout the year (try not to be too tempted!) but try and buy something you like that's in flower. Then you will have a colourful garden throughout the year and one that naturally will have some nectar available every month for the bees and other pollinators.

Green Fingered Gal

HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY: SPRING IS SPRUNG!

It's definitely time to start the sowing process in readiness for a successful (hopefully!) growing season (see the 'Seasonal Growing Tips' page).

The Horticultural Society committee met in March to agree the 2025 Programme (unfortunately too late for the April / May copy deadline). That said, the date for our eagerly anticipated Summer Show has been fixed for Saturday 9 August, and is open to all. There are sections for: Vegetables & Soft Fruit, Flowers & Plants, Flower Arrangements and Cookery. In years past, our judges have been very impressed by the number of entries and it would be great if you were able to enter.

If you'd like more information on the categories in previous shows do contact me, as now is a good time to start planning and planting for some of those categories. If you prefer not to plan ahead, all is not lost. There are categories that allow for plant material not grown by the exhibitor and entries for several of the cookery categories can be made at the last minute.

We currently have a healthy 60 plus members but there is always room for more, so please do get in touch (sonia.boggis@btinternet.com) if you would like to join us; membership is £5 a year.

Full committee for 2025: Val Carse (Chair), Jenny Allen (Treasurer), Sonia Boggis (Secretary), Sue Ireland-Cutting, Terry Goss, Claire Lyth, Rachel Morris, Carol Nichols, Cilla Wilson (President)

Sonia Boggis

Secretary

CLARICE CLIFF: THE DOYENNE OF ART DECO

Southwold Arts Society presents an Illustrated talk by Viv Lawe. Hear about this visionary artist whose designs are admired and collected the world over a century after their launch. Thursday May 15th at 11am Wenhaston Village Hall. **Email sallygoodsell3@gmail.com for more information. Tickets £8.**





An impromptu pancake race took place at the No Cook Wednesday in the village hall on 5 March. Pictured are Jim Boggis, Jude Blois, Ursula Mackley and Heather Humphreys.

The logo for Suffolk Car Centre features the company name in a white serif font against a dark blue background. The word 'Suffolk' is in a smaller font, 'Car' is in a larger, bold font, and 'Centre' is in a medium font. A stylized white swoosh arches over the text, and a dark blue swoosh arches underneath it.

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WILDWATCH

We humans are what anthropologists describe as 'neotenuous', which means we retain our juvenile traits into adulthood. We share these traits with many of our primate cousins; Chimps, Orangutans and Gorillas all have extended childhoods, and their young spend at least ten years being dependent on their mothers.

One reason is our shared big brains. Primates have evolved to interpret and understand their environments in order to survive. Infants, once they have been suckled, are still taught by their adult groups what is safe to eat, how to avoid danger and, most crucially, how to interact.

Big brains, however, are not the only reason for an extended childhood. Size plays a part as well. Elephants, for example, have a childhood that may last 20 years before a calf becomes fully adult.

Smaller animals have much more compressed childhoods. Our common garden birds may not live more than five years, so their offspring need to grow up fast, especially as their parents may want to raise another brood in the same season. A fledgling will have, at most, three months to learn how to fend for itself.

Small mammals may have even less time to learn the ways of survival from their parents. Field voles leave the nest after a month of dependence on their mother's milk. So it may come as something of a surprise to learn that the UK's largest mammal, by weight, has perhaps the most truncated childhood of all.

The grey seal is a regular visitor to our East Suffolk coastal beaches and, along with its cousin, the harbour seal, sometimes ventures up the Blyth Estuary. Not too far to the north of us, however, is one of the UK's largest grey seal breeding sites.

In December 2018 and 2019, I volunteered to take part in the annual survey of breeding seals at Winterton and Horsey Beaches in Norfolk. This involved photographing the females and their pups as part of a marine mammal survey.

We had a very short window in which to work, as the grey seal breeding season is also brief.

Individual females come ashore, give birth, mate and return to the sea – all in the space of four weeks. A grey seal pup, raised on some of the richest milk produced by any mammal has perhaps the shortest childhood of any large animal.

By comparison, our childhoods seem more like one never-ending beach holiday.

Paul Lacey



Grey seal pup at the Winterton breeding colony

BLYTHBURGH SOCIAL

Horse Racing Night

Our first meeting in 2025 was on Thursday 6 February in the Village Hall. The attendance was small but very appreciative and great fun was had laying bets on the racehorses displayed on the screen. Ro Williams and Chris Shone did a terrific job of organising the betting, working out the odds, making the betting slips and preparing the DVD for the races. The event covered the cost of the hall and buying the racehorse DVD, so it was regarded as a success. And some lucky winners made a profit!

As the DVD belongs to Blythburgh Social now, there may be another such event planned later in the year – on not such a cold and miserable night as it was in February.

Breadmaking

On Thursday 6 March, 17 people were treated to a talk and demonstration on breadmaking in the Village Hall by Jo Risby of the Chantry Kitchen in Saxmundham. She talked about the benefits of homemade bread with its lack of preservatives whilst proceeding to



demonstrate the hypnotic art of kneading the prepared dough for a wonderful wholemeal loaf. Another pre-proved Challah Jewish bread

dough was given to volunteers – Val and Sonja – to tackle plaiting which caused some amusement for the audience.



Due to Jo's careful planning of the event she managed to cook a soda bread with seeds in from start to finish. The two plaits and the wholemeal loaf were taken away to be cooked by volunteers, and very delicious they were too!

Next Meeting

Women's Land Army, **Thursday 3 April at 7:30pm** in the Village Hall. A fascinating talk by Nicky Reynolds who has been an avid collector of Women's Land Army ephemera and uniforms over 25 years.

Mary Gundry

Secretary

HOLY TRINITY, BLYTHBURGH



You can now buy Black Shuck postage stamps, as of 27 March Royal Mail issued a series of Myths and Legends stamps which include Blythburgh's very own hellhound.

"All down the church in the midst of fire, the hellish monster flew, and, passing onward to the quire, he many people slew," goes the legend.

In case you're not familiar with the story, in 1577 the congregation had just settled down for the priest's Sunday sermon when, accompanied by

a clap of thunder, Black Shuck – a huge, ghostly hound which roamed the coastline and countryside of Suffolk – leapt from a beam, ran down the middle aisle, pausing only to kill two men and a lad, before bounding towards the terrified clergyman, it's eyes fixed and flaming. A few feet short of the altar table the infernal creature seemed to disappear into thin air – or some say he bounded away down the aisle and clawed his way out of the great north door. The congregation had hardly regained their wits when a great rumble sounded from the foundation of the church. Cracks splintered along the walls and the steeple gave way, crashing through the nave roof. Later the same day, Black Shuck is said to have struck again 12 miles away, killing two worshippers during a service at St Mary's Church, Bungay, while the storm was still raging.

If you stand inside the church by the north door – the one on the left as you look towards the altar – you will see scorch marks in the



woodwork which imaginative folk attribute to Black Shuck's flaming claw marks, scorched into the woodwork, as he made his desperate exit. Then look upwards to the roof above the font. The ceiling is plain. There are no angels. Much of this damage is probably due to the collapse of the steeple.

The story of the great storm of 1577 was later recorded, with embellishments, in a pamphlet, *A Straunge and Terrible Wunder*, by a firebrand clergyman named Abraham Fleming.

Scorch marks like those in Blythburgh have been discovered in many historic buildings. New research has shown them to be what are called protective apotropaic symbols. They were probably made as part of a protection ritual. The wood would be charred with a candle or taper, then gouged out with a tool and rubbed with the finger, to form a droplet or tear shape. They were designed to ward off the Devil or evil spirits, or to protect against fire or lightning – a very real hazard in the days of wooden houses.

More details on the stamp issue at shop.royalmail.com.

Easter at Blythburgh Church

Following a long tradition, there will be a **Good Friday, family-friendly gathering on 18 April at Blythburgh Church at 5pm**. Attendees will help construct our Easter Garden, and people are invited to bring along a small plant, flowers or an attractive stone to decorate the garden. A re-telling of the story Passiontide story is followed by Easter egg hunt in churchyard.

There will be an **Easter Day Service in the church at 11.15 on Sunday 20 April**.

The Easter flavour continues on Saturday 26 April at 7pm with a concert by Britten Pears Chamber choir. This concert features music by Johann Sebastian Bach and includes soloists who are alumni of the Britten Pears Young Artist Programme, and the Suffolk Ensemble. The two uplifting cantatas featured are miniature epics, each telling a part of the Easter story through a combination of arias, choruses, and recitative. They are complemented by two eight-part motets and a rousing orchestral overture. For tickets and details go to www.brittenpearsarts.org/events/bach-cantatas-blythburgh.

Looking ahead

On **Saturday 17 May**, the friends of Holy Trinity, Blythburgh will be hosting a **Friends Open Afternoon from 2.30 to 4.30pm**. This annual event will be entitled **Blythe Spirit: A conversation about the remarkable writer Ronald Blythe**. It will feature a live interview with Ronald Blythe's biographer Ian Collins, undertaken by Malcolm Doney who also knew the great man. Admission is free, though contributions are welcome, and tea and refreshments are provided together with an optional tour of the church.



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BLYTHBURGH FIELD NOTES

It's been a poor winter generally for Northern birds, but there have been very good numbers recorded on the Blyth for several species, including up to 576 Black-tailed Godwit, 458 Avocet, 600 Lapwing, 300 Golden Plover, 72 Knot and 28 Grey Plover, although the American term Black-bellied Plover now seems to have been adopted for this species.

Up to six Ruff have also been seen, one with a white head and the start of a ruff, these are an intriguing species, the Ruffs being the males while the smaller females are called Reeves. The males gather at special breeding sites called leks, where they display by jousting and dancing inflating their ruffs and fluttering and trailing their wings, making bows and leaps. The birds' ruffs vary in colour and are mainly black, chestnut, white or a variegated grey, and research has proved that the females who visit the lek, mainly in the evening, show a preference to mate with the chestnut males followed by the black ruffed birds, while the poor old white birds get the least couplings of all.

In the early 1980s, there was a group of Ruff with a lek, displaying just outside our parish on Tinkers Marsh, with up to five females joining them in the evenings. The nests of this species are exceptionally difficult to locate and no chicks were seen, so breeding was never proved, partly due to not wanting to disturb the birds and the fact that two pairs of Black-tailed Godwit and a number of Avocet were also nesting. But it was a wonderful opportunity to watch two of our rare breeding birds displaying.

More unusual sightings in the parish were five Whooper Swans on 22 February, and a White-tailed Eagle on 12 March. There have also been spasmodic sightings of Great Egret, Peregrine Falcon, Red Kite, Barn Owl and Great Crested Grebe. While outside the parish, two Cattle Egrets have been frequenting the fields opposite Henham Quarry.

Two Green Sandpipers have frequented the pig fields at Hinton throughout the winter, while in January as many as 300,000 Starlings were roosting in Westwood Marsh, creating wonderful murmurations, particularly on one evening when the dense flock created the shape of a whale under the arc of a beautiful rainbow.

I Noknowt

ART AFTERNOON: WENHASTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Last month, Blythburgh Church echoed to the excited voices of 27 children from Wenhaston Primary School enjoying a tour of the church, and an art workshop. The idea came from the staff at the school itself, who were aware that the celebrated artist Harry Becker both lived in Wenhaston and is buried in Blythburgh. The church was happy to help. They contacted artist Wil Harvey, a member of the now closed Inspired by Becker group,



who agreed to bring along two original Becker lithographs, talk about the artist, and encourage the children to make their own charcoal drawings. The afternoon was a great success, not only in enhancing the school's arts curriculum, but forging a happy community link with Blythburgh.

The project was supported by Blythburgh church and The Arts Society, Southwold.

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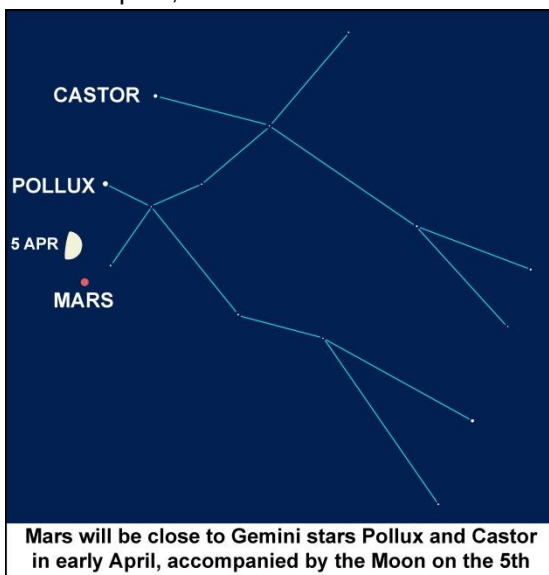
SOLICITORS & NOTARIES

STARRY, STARRY NIGHT

This winter the planets have been putting on a show for us Earthlings. If you have missed all of the talk of a planetary alignment or a planetary parade then maybe you have been in hibernation. Even allowing for the inevitably exaggerated headlines that feed our clickbait society, it has been the case that the main planets have been well positioned.

We have now lost some of these planets from the evening sky with Saturn, Venus and Mercury all now setting before the Sun. However, an hour after sunset the giant planet Jupiter remains very bright and high in the sky to the south west. The bright object with a red hue to the south, higher in the sky and to the left of Jupiter, is Mars.

Mars is currently in the constellation of Gemini, which you will no doubt be familiar with if your birthday is between 21 May and 20 June - and you're interested in that sort of thing! In the early part of April, Mars is just below the two brightest stars in Gemini, Pollux and Castor, which represent the heads of the eponymous twins in Greek mythology. As a bonus on 5 April, the Moon will pass between Mars and Pollux.



You may think that

Pollux and Castor are 'not much to look at' but think again. They are, of course, much further away than our near neighbours, the Moon and Mars. If you could put yourself into the world of science fiction and were able to travel at the speed of light, it would take you less than 10 minutes to get to Mars. By comparison it would take you 34 and 52 years respectively to reach Pollux and Castor.

Both stars are about the same brightness, being around 30 times brighter than our sun. Pollux looks brighter to us simply because it's closer. Peculiarly, Castor is designated as the 'alpha' star of the constellation and Pollux the 'beta' star. You can blame this on German astronomer Johann Bayer who did not measure their brightness carefully enough when he assigned his designations in 1603. Still, I guess we all make mistakes from time to time.

Colin Huggins



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INDEPENDENT HOME LIVING

DAISY BANK CXX

For the past few months we've been feeding a long-haired black cat. Several years ago Delilah – who lived with Lucy and Nigel at the end of the lane – 'pretended' to be an unwanted cat and was fed regularly by us for nearly a year until we realised we had been 'flanked'. So if anyone has any information about (we call him *Red*) we'd be grateful (tel: 478699). He's black with a reddish hue and is very frightened of anyone, including myself. He now sleeps in my ex-painting studio/office which we heat at night, and he gets fed night and morning. Where he goes in the day, only he knows. Over the years, we've had several strays turn up and lived with us until we could rehome them. Mary and Colin, on the other side of the car park, had many happy years with one of them (pictured).



Sadly, our Siamese, Milo is not very well with diabetes, and we're dreading, as all pet owners do, that he is getting near the end. He's a rescue who we got from the Siamese Rescue near Bury St Edmunds, and we have had ten happy years with him. We all know the pain of losing our pets, but I suppose really we should look at, and enjoy the time that they do spend with us. Heartbreaking though.

Daisy Bank is looking forward to the spring and we definitely are. If you can get through January, February and March without having a major breakdown, then you've cracked it for another year. For me it is the six nations rugby and F1 season, but my partner B unfortunately doesn't quite have that same enthusiasm. But she's pleased for me.

I went to the dentist yesterday for my annual checkup. Not a happy event for me, but something that has to be done. In the waiting room with me were six other patients with I suspect ages ranging from 70 to ten. While I read one of the magazines provided, the rest of them were glued to their mobile phones. I despair. What am I missing? Yes, I have a computer, yes I have an I-phone, yes I have an I-pad, so, I'm not exactly anti-technology. But please tell me what is so fascinating about swiping phones up and down and sending unwanted texts probably about "*how nice it has turned out and at the moment I am in a dentist waiting room*". They never seem to use the phone as a phone. It occurs to me that the word addiction is appropriate, but maybe I'm just as bad for not being addicted to it all.

Paul Bennett