

BLYTHBURGH

FOCUS

SERVING BLYTHBURGH,
BULCAMP AND HINTON



Issue No 82

<http://blythburgh.onesuffolk.net>

Aug/Sept 2025

WILL ANGEL LANE AND DUNWICH ROAD BE CLOSED TO THROUGH TRAFFIC?

It remains the plan for the B1125 to be shut off in order to address the anticipated additional traffic caused by Sizewell C. The idea is to put a barrier south of the village, near the Water Tower close to the junction with the road into Walbersick (the B1387).

The Walberswick Parish Council has made clear that their approval to shutting off the B1125 is contingent on the B1387 being repaired to a level where it can safely handle the additional traffic the closure will generate. They have expressed particular concerns about the A12/B1387 junction, and the state of the B1387 from the A12 to the Water Tower junction. Representatives from Walberswick and Blythburgh Parish Councils, EDF and Suffolk Highways attended a “walk through” in October 2024 in order to view the issues along that stretch of the road. An update from EDF and Suffolk Highways is awaited

The last timing for the works proposed by Sizewell was in the third and fourth quarters of this year, but a recent update indicates potential delays to the resurfacing of the B1387 necessary to deal with the consequences of additional traffic running along it to and from Walberswick.

Parish Council

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BLYTHBURGH DAY SHINED ON

It's a tribute to the Blythburgh community spirit that – despite the very wet weather – so many people turned up for Blythburgh Day this year, and that so many stayed through to the end.

Huge thanks are due to so many.



Firstly, to Arthur Pooley for hosting the event at Mill Farm, and for the enormous amount of time and effort he went to in preparing for the day. Special mention is also due to Chris Shone for providing the music and upbeat comments throughout the afternoon. Thanks also to the White Hart, for providing Keira to run the bar and for generously subsidising the drinks. A big thank you is also due to Andrew Blois and his team for providing the muscle and vehicles to move some of the

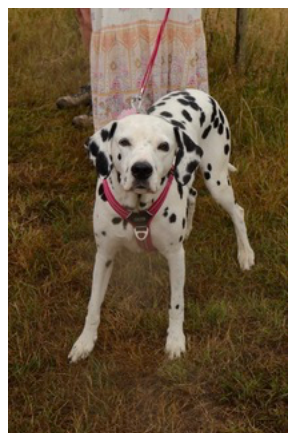
heavier items to, and from, Mill Farm.

Beyond this the list of people who contributed is endless. To those who helped set-up the tents, tables and chairs. To those who provided and served the teas, coffees and cakes, and similarly to those who made the barbecue a success. To those who manned the games during the pouring rain. To the dogs, and their owners, who made the dog show such a fun event. To those who provided the great prizes for the raffle, and of course those who bought tickets. Forgive us if we have missed anyone out, but you all know who you are!

The ultimate thanks goes to everyone who braved the elements to make this a thoroughly enjoyable and memorable occasion.

Finally, the announcement of Villager of the Year was made at Blythburgh Day. Congratulations to **Ro Williams** on being elected as our 2025 “Villager of the Year”. Ro works hard on so many of the village's activities, often behind the scenes, and has done so for a number of years. Well done Ro – very well deserved!





BLYTHBURCH CHURCH –WALK ON THE WILD SIDE

Despite the Royal Mail issuing a Black Shuck postage stamp this year, there will be no Devil Dogs at the **Blessing of the Animals Service on Sunday 17 August at 11am**. Last year we had 60 dogs, all of whom were positively angelic. All creatures great and small are welcome at this ever-popular event.

For the first time in 14 years, sadly there will be no Neville the horse striding out through the church porch, because he died last year at the magnificent age of 31. But we hope other horses will join us on the day. Do spread the word about what has become Blythburgh's signature service.

Melody in stone

It's been a musical summer so far, with some splendid solo and choral renditions. The Medieval stone is humming with melody. This will continue on **Tuesday 12 August** when the Luceat choir make a welcome return visit. More information at www.luceatchoir.co.uk.

Growing together

The church is hosting the Blythburgh **Horticultural Society Summer Flower and Produce Show on Saturday 9 August**.

Coffee & Cake

Do join us at Blythburgh Church's enjoyable café and mini-market takes place on **Friday 29 August and 26 September from 10.30am to 12pm**.

On Yer bike

The church will be open as usual for riders/walkers to book in on the **Suffolk Historic Churches Ride and Stride day on Saturday 13 September** and we hope to field a few cyclists to ride on behalf of Holy Trinity. If you would like to join them, please contact paul.simmons@uwclub.net or phone 01986 295 838. Sponsorship forms and information will be at the back of the church

Harvest ahead

We'll be celebrating **Harvest Festival at 11.15 on Sunday 21 September**. The service will be followed by a hearty Harvest Lunch. If you'd like to join us for lunch, feel free just to turn up and tuck in, but it does help our catering if you could let us know. Just email jennyanddick@aol.com. Everyone is welcome.

Construction site

Ongoing works in the church mean that the north door is blocked off and screens have been placed to give builders access.

Holy Trinity, Blythburgh

Blessing of the Animals

Sunday 17 August 2025
11.00 am

All creatures great & small very welcome




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STARRY, STARRY NIGHT

I am neither one of those people who gets up very early, nor one who goes to bed very late. As a result the window for studying the night sky is still quite limited at this time of the year. However, there is always something to see if you know where and when to look.

The star Arcturus should be easy to spot. By mid-August the Sun still doesn't set until almost 8:30pm, and you really need to wait another hour for the sky to start to get properly dark. Arcturus will then be one of the first stars to become visible. By this time it will be in the western part of the sky, slightly south of true west, and about a third of the way up from the horizon.

If you still can't find it, then look for the familiar shape of the Plough constellation, which will be to the north-west (left) of Arcturus and a little higher in the sky. As the third brightest star visible from the UK, Arcturus will be shining considerably brighter than any of the Plough's seven stars.

So what are we looking at when we see Arcturus?

It is by far the brightest star in the constellation of Bootes (boh-oh-teez). It is a red giant star and, at a distance of a mere 37 light years, is the second closest giant star to us after Pollux.

When we say giant, we mean that it's far larger than our rather average local star, the Sun. In fact it has a diameter of more than 25 times the Sun. It also shines around 110 times brighter and, together with Vega and Sirius, is one of the most luminous stars in the Sun's neighbourhood.

The Sun is about 4.6 billion years old. The age of Arcturus is open to debate but is generally estimated to be around 6 to 8.5 billion years. Unlike the Sun, Arcturus has depleted its store of hydrogen, after which it took on the form of a red giant. Eventually it will enter the end of its life, shrink, and become a white dwarf.

August also offers the chance to view the Perseid meteor shower which will peak on 12 August. However, be aware that this is only a few days past full moon and so the bright moon may well douse out all but the brightest of meteors.

Colin Huggins



The Blythburgh Latitude Trust is making grants

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

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the honorary administrator,
Jim Boggis, Marsh End,
Church Road, (478 687)**

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

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Waller and Tom Smith**

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Planning Advisory Committee: Paul Lacey

Finance Advisory Committee: Roderick Orr-Ewing,

Councillors: Matthew Saunders, Jude Blois, Claire Lyth, Harriet Strachan

Clerk: Philip Stone

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FREE CHRISTMAS TRIP TO THURSFORD

Fancy going to the ever-popular Thursford's Christmas Spectacular? It's set in the surroundings of mechanical organs and fairground carousels, with a cast of 130 professional singers, dancers and musicians – most of whom are straight out of the West End. The three-hour performance delivers an extravaganza of non-stop singing, dancing, music, humour (adult) and speciality acts. It's a fast-moving celebration of the festive season featuring an eclectic mix of both seasonal and year-round favourites, with famous and much-loved chart toppers being performed alongside traditional carols. The finale of the show includes a fly over of white doves across the auditorium.

The Blythburgh Latitude Trust has organised a trip for parishioners to a matinee performance of the show on Thursday 18 December. A coach will leave the village at 10am and departing from Thursford at 5pm to return to Blythburgh.

If you'd like to go, please apply for this event to Val Carse by sending an email to valc@btinternet.com, or by post/by hand to White Hart Cottage, Station Road, Blythburgh IP19 9LH **by 31 October** with the following information:

- Name of contact
- Number of adult tickets
- 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. Please note – places for this event are limited, and will be allocated strictly on a first-come-first-served basis.

DAISY BANK CXII

Hello again. It's me, the chronicler of Daisy Bank and all the exciting events and 'goings on' that happen on the periphery of Blythburgh, deep in marshland. Realistically, not a lot happens down here apart from complaints about the lane's inaccessibility and, in the recent past, people using our hedges as a substitute public loo. Thank God the church is now addressing that problem with facilities in the church being built, which is to be applauded. And of course, we mustn't forget the the train enthusiasts and their desire to have a line eventually laid along the back of our gardens so we can enjoy the diesel fumes. I think and still presume that the original idea was for a replica engine using oil and not steam, the original railway having died in 1929.

Apropos nothing to do with DB, here is a little story. My oldest friend who sadly died last year had two daughters, the eldest of whom Elizabeth, came with her husband to visit us for a couple of days, staying in the White Hart. While they were here, they gave some positive comments as to accommodation and food and enjoyed their stay there which was reassuring.

Several years ago I came across a band that I liked and consequently bought several of their CDs. The name of the band is 1975; they recently headlined at Glastonbury. Last year, at a concert in Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia, they performed at another musical festival. At one point in their set, Matthew Healey, the singer kissed one of his fellow bandmates, I think to highlight the anti-LGBT sentiment that exists in that country. I have a feeling that he might have got away with it further south in my old home Singapore, but not Malaysia. As a result of this so called indiscretion, the entire festival was cancelled and 1975 returned to the UK vowing never to return. Unfortunately, the festival organisers sued 1975 for loss of revenue and Elizabeth's husband Mark, who is a barrister, was instructed by their solicitor to fight their case. He won.

I think that the destiny of our garden is to become a wood. You may remember I planted 150 roses when I took over the garden from B and, for the first few years they flourished but not so now. And the reason is that the trees have just got bigger and bigger, and several new ones have sprouted up and intend to stay. There will still be open spaces, but gradually these will become less and less until they completely take over.

Am I worried? Not really. The birds and squirrels love it, and so do we. If you gave me the option of sitting on a beach or sitting in the middle of a wood, it would unequivocally be the latter. Grey seas and pebble beaches are not my idea of fun. Far better to disappear into a wood. Several years

ago I was keen to buy a house in the middle of Dunwich wood which was up for sale but B gave it the thumbs down; she likes neighbours and the comfort of Blythburgh village and, so really do I.

Paul Bennett

BLYTHBURGH FIELD NOTES

This is a quiet time of year for birds, but up to 56 of the Northern subspecies of Ringed Plover stayed on the Blyth into mid-June, along with a few other odd Northern birds. On 7 July, two Yellow Wagtails were seen, an adult female and a juvenile, these are now a scarce species in the parish.

Recent information has shown that many of the wing-tagged male Cuckoos, who are no longer required for mating and with no parental duties to attend to, are on the way back to their African winter quarters in the Congo rainforest by mid-June, although many break the journey in West Africa to gain weight before continuing South. Young Cuckoos leave much later when their small overworked foster parents manage to fledge them, but how these foundlings find their way to the same wintering area as their parents is still one of the many mysteries of migration. Since the early 1980s ,there has been a huge decline in the number and distribution of this species, with them going from green to amber and now red on the species data protection lists.

It’s an amazing year for the vast number of Ladybirds present, here to help clear up the even larger hordes of aphids, the fearsome looking black and orange lava of this small flying beetle, have also been far more noticeable, with several people asking what they are. This is also the best time of year for some of our rarer butterflies, with Silver-washed Fritillary, White Admiral and White-lettered Hairstreak showing well in Dunwich Forest, as well as the illegally introduced, but now established Purple Emperor in Theberton Wood. Several attractive moths such as the black and red Six-spotted Burnet and the Cinnabar Moth are on the wing, the latter’s poisonous orange and black caterpillars the only natural controller of Ragwort. Few people are aware that we have more day flying moths than butterflies.

This hot weather is a very suitable time for just sitting still in the shade for a while, especially if a puddle or other water is available. After 10 minutes or so birds will appear to drink and bath: Warblers, Tits and Finches. And I have recently on several occasions seen Firecrest, one of our most beautiful small birds.

I Noknowt

WHAT’S ON IN BLYTHBURGH

Date	Time	What	Where
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AUGUST

Fri 1st	7:30pm	Film Night: Mufasa: The Lion King (2024)	Village Hall
Sat 2nd	11am-1pm	Table Top Sale	Village Hall
Sun 3rd	6pm	Choral Evensong	Church
Wed 6th	12:30pm-2pm	No Cook Wednesday	Village Hall
Thurs 7th	7:30pm-9pm	Blythburgh Social: Re-cycling	Village Hall
Sat 9th		Hort Soc: Summer Show	Church
Sat 9th	6pm-9pm	Music: DJ Colin Reid	The White Hart
Sat 16 th	6pm-9pm	Music: Annika Rands	The White Hart
Sun 17th	11am-12:00	Blessing of the Animals Service	Church
Wed 20th	12:30pm-2pm	No Cook Wednesday	Village Hall
Sat 23rd	6pm-9pm	Music: Jonny B Good	The White Hart
Sun 24th	5:30pm-8:30pm	Music: DJ Vinyl Night, Soul & Motown	The White Hart
Fri 29th	10:30am-12:00	Café & Mini-market	Church

SEPTEMBER

Wed 3 rd	12:30pm-2pm	No Cook Wednesday	Village Hall
Thur 4th	7:30pm-9pm	Blythburgh Social: Moths + River Blyth monitoring	Village Hall
Fri 5th	7:30pm	Film Night: Conclave (2024)	Village Hall
Sun 7th	6pm-7pm	Choral Evensong	Church

Fri 12th	6:30pm for 7pm	Hort Soc: Annual Dinner	The White Hart
Sat 14th	All day	Narrow Gauge Railway Open Day	Blythburgh Station
Wed 17th	12:30pm-2pm	No Cook Wednesday	Village Hall
Sat 20th	11.15am	Harvest Festival	Church
Fri 26th	10:30am-12:00	Café & Mini-market	Church

PAUL IRELAND STEPS DOWN

There's a changing of the guard in Southwold. Blythburgh resident Paul Ireland is stepping down as the Manager of Southwold Sports Pavillion.



Paul took on the role nine years ago, and he has been at the heart of running the pavilion ever since. For the past seven years, he's held the licence and managed the pavilion "not just with dedication but real care for the rugby club, as well as the cricket and football clubs that share the space," said a tribute on Facebook.

Under his leadership, the pavilion became a profitable business. He also took the pavilion and Southwold rugby club through the difficulties of COVID and post-COVID effects.

Over the years, Paul has worked behind the scenes to maintain the pavilion as a welcoming environment for all, organising redecoration, ongoing maintenance, and contributing to improvements across the pavilion. And let's not forget those 7am dray deliveries or his knack for tracking down the best wine deals in local supermarkets!

Whether it was weddings, wakes, parties, match day lunches, or post-match pints, Paul was there behind the bar, running the show (and, occasionally, enjoying propping it up too!).

Southwold Rugby club say, "We are grateful for all that Paul has done for the pavilion and the rugby club. Over the years, he has become a familiar and welcome addition at all club events and has become one of us through the years he has dedicated....and not just because he's the one pouring the pints (although he's certainly poured more than his fair share for our thirsty players and supporters!). Thank you, Paul!"

BLYTHBURGH SOCIAL

On Thursday 5 June, 12 people went to Southwold Golf Club for an introduction to golf. Peggy had suggested this idea and she had been in touch with the professional Tom Kirtley to arrange the visit along with the chance for a bite to eat in the golf club afterwards.



A good time was had by all at the Southwold Golf Club

There was a mix of non-players and ones who has played but some time ago. As it turned out, it was fortuitous that it was raining, as they had use of the very high tech facilities indoors to practise with. The group was split into two and the professional took one section and the club captain the other – practising driving and putting – to much hilarity and fun. Hopefully, someone will be encouraged to take it up!



Blythburgh Social Group setting off for a fun day on the River Waveney

A bright sunny mid-July morning saw the assembly of 20 villagers at a boat yard in Beccles. All were soon on board the three hire boats plus one steam powered launch and set off for the Locks Inn at Geldeston. A very relaxing leisurely journey down the River Waveney followed with sightings of Red Kite, Kestrel, Swallows and Swifts to name but a few. It took a little over an hour to reach the Inn where very welcome refreshments were available and a lovely lunch was enjoyed sitting outside in the sunshine. All too soon the return journey was undertaken and all safely returned to Beccles. A most enjoyable day out.

Our next meeting on **Thursday 7 August at 7:30pm** will be a talk by Amanda Childs from East Suffolk Coastal District Council on Recycling – a subject that affects all of us, so do come along.

The meeting on **Thursday 4 September at 7:30pm** is unusual in that there will be two speakers, both passionate about their separate subjects – Blythburgh resident David Wilson will be telling us about the variety of moths in this country and what to look for; in the second half Wenhaston resident Dr Wil Harvey of the Blyth River Project will tell us about the monitoring of the Blyth's water quality.

Mary Gundry

Secretary



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IS THE BLYTH SAFE TO SWIM IN?

This is a very good and pertinent question, and one that's not easy to answer! Over the last three years the Wilder Wenhaston River Group has been sampling and measuring pollutants in the Blyth – mainly the non-tidal river between Blyford bridge and its sources beyond Halesworth. In summary (as reported in the previous edition of *Blythburgh Focus*), the Blyth is polluted with an array of contaminants, both chemical and bacterial, originating predominantly from sewage effluents.

Recently we have started to test the Blyth for bacterial contamination in the tidal area of the 'beach', by Blythburgh church. Although there are potentially several micro-organisms that can cause illness, of most concern for swimmers nationally has been E coli. Most strains of E coli (a common gut bacteria) are harmless, but some can be virulent. The Environment Agency guideline for safe bathing limits of E. coli in bathing water is a maximum of 900 per 100ml of water. In our initial series of tests at the Beach, our cultures show a range of between 200 and 2,300 per 100ml.

Why the variation? Many factors influence the E coli count, including:

- Rainfall:** run-off from agriculture (grazed pastures, slurry etc); overflows of raw sewage from sewage treatment works; increased river flow...
- Tide:** the degree of mixing of freshwater from upstream with salt/brackish water from the estuary (E coli survives less well in salt water)
- Estuary flow:** many bacteria survive better in silt/mud, so a fast tide may stir up these deposits
- Sunlight:** UV will decrease bacteria numbers, but cloudiness of the water will reduce this effect.

You'll see that it's very difficult to predict contamination levels at a particular time. What we can say so far is that E coli above 'safe' swimming levels *can* occur at the Beach. Advice? Most authorities advise against river swimming during periods of heavy rain. We'll be doing a series of tests for E coli along the length of the Blyth this summer in different weather conditions, and hope to build up a better picture of where and when this pollution occurs. So, it's a case of 'watch this space' and, perhaps, keep your heads above water...

Wil Harvey

Wilder Wenhaston River Group

HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY HIGHLIGHTS

June and July saw two of the Horticultural Society signature events and the weather was kind on both occasions.

In June, the Summer Garden Party was hosted by Claire Lyth and Roderick Orr-Ewing in their beautiful garden. Members brought along delicious food to share. A raffle and guessing games were organised by Sue Ireland-Cutting, Jenny Allen and Carol Nichols. It was a very pleasant afternoon and a good time was had by all.

In early July, almost half our membership gathered for the very popular Garden Safari. The gardens we visited showcased different styles and all were spectacular: “serious garden envy” was how one person described the experience. We were very grateful to Stephanie Simmonds, Rachel Morris, Mary Gundry and Sue Ireland-Cutting for welcoming everyone to their gardens. The afternoon concluded with a splendid afternoon tea hosted by Sue Ireland-Cutting with support from



both Carol Nichols and Stephanie Simmonds. Thanks to Colin Huggins for the picture showing our “2025 Garden Safari Team”

Our next event is our eagerly anticipated **Summer Show** which takes place in Holy Trinity church on **Saturday 9 August**. The show is open to all members and Blythburgh residents, so do let one of the committee know if you would like an entry form.

The Society currently has a healthy 69 members but there’s 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.

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

Sonia Boggis, Secretary

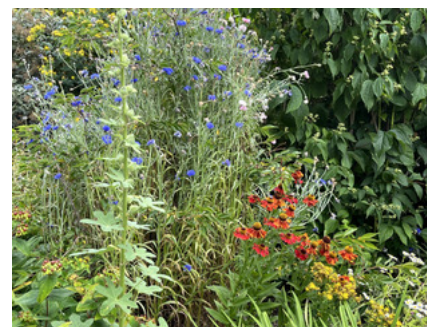
SEASONAL TIPS FOR YOUR GARDEN

The garden in August is filled with many colours, textures and scents and the Summer Holidays offer a break from work and school. Every season has something precious to offer so embrace it and enjoy it while it lasts.

In the flower garden

Try and keep the borders looking fresh by cutting back spent flowers and faded foliage. Stand back and focus on what needs cutting back now, and what can be left for later flowering and winter structure. In August there are many seeds ripe and ready for collecting such as Honesty, Foxgloves, Sweet Rocket, Aquilegias, Verbascums and Hollyhocks. Either collect these into labelled paper bags or envelopes for planting into rows in the vegetable garden now or in the spring. Alternatively, they can simply be scattered around the garden giving an abundance of new plants next year for minimum effort.

Fill any gaps in your borders with late season flowers such as Asters, Echinaceas, Heleniuns, Sedums, Rudbeckias, and Hebes. Verbena Bonariensis wafts in purple drifts above the grasses and borders and self-seeds everywhere, but can be edited if it becomes too much. The more controllable low-growing Verbena Rigida is grown at the front of borders and it appears to die away in winter but has come back reliably for the last two years.



September marks the beginning of autumn and the light in the garden begins to change, softening from the harsh rays of summer enriching the colours and textures of the borders giving a more mellow glow.

It is now time to plan ahead for a colourful display next Spring. Early bulbs such as daffodils, mini daffodils, hyacinths and alliums can all be planted in September, but tulips should be left until November or December. Try something you’ve not grown before, as bulbs are

relatively cheap and come back reliably every year. If you can't find space in the borders now try planting your bulbs in any unused pots, grow them over the winter tucked away in a sheltered space but protect the pots with chicken wire to deter squirrels. In the spring you can transplant these directly into the garden when spaces will be more obvious.

In the vegetable garden

Continue to harvest everything that is now abundant in your vegetable plot. Runner beans and climbing french beans need regular harvesting to keep producing. Sweetcorn should be ready now once the tassle has turned brown and is best enjoyed freshly harvested. Potatoes, carrots, beetroots and onions can all be harvested for use now or storing for winter use. Spinach can be sown now for a crop to last through winter. Spring cabbages can be planted out now along with any late grown sprouting broccoli. These should be planted into ground that has not been dug over as they grow best in firm ground. Remember to protect well against pigeons

Greenhouse crops such as tomatoes, cucumbers, chillies, aubergines, peppers and melons should all be harvested now as much as possible enjoying the sweet taste of summer.

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FAILING TO PLAN

One of the joys of living in this area is the variety of walks right on our doorstep. Whether it's an unfamiliar walk or one you've done many times, there's always something to see regardless of the season: trees, plants and wildlife are ever changing. Chatting to fellow villagers, I know some of you share my sense of wonder when you've spotted something unexpected and the only option is to just stop and enjoy the moment.

Over the years, many of us have been fortunate to see quite extraordinary things: otter, osprey, seals, bitterns, spoonbills. And what about the sight and sound of a murmuration! Other, perhaps more usual sights are still no less exciting: the ebb and flow of the Blyth, red deer, the silhouette & churring of a nightjar, adders, various caterpillars (only two or three which I can identify confidently), marsh harriers and hares. The list goes on...

One of the nice things about the wildlife we meet on our local walks is that they have no desire to harm us. The exception is probably the adder which can give you a nasty bite if surprised or trodden on – so do take care. But, walking in other areas of this country and abroad, we come across situations where the local wildlife can be far less friendly. Usually you find out in advance and take necessary precautions: the Scottish midge has a fearsome reputation, and it's not a good idea to mess with the wildlife in parts of Africa.

They say "failing to plan is planning to fail" and, on a recent trip to Japan, my pre-trip planning certainly failed to uncover the presence of bears in several areas we would be walking. The first hint came in the hills around Takayama. "Beware of Bears" signs appeared on the track and other walkers we met had bear bells attached to their person.



We hired a car to visit *gassho* villages in Shirakawa-go and Gokayama: imagine our surprise when all the school children had bear bells attached to their school bags. We immediately purchased our own bear bells. Bears prefer to avoid humans and the bells act as an early warning system to help them and you avoid nasty surprises.

By the time we reached Kamikochi in the Japanese Alps, we were well versed in bear bell etiquette: carry your own and ring the fixed bear bells on the trail. Fortunately, we didn't encounter a black bear but one had been seen on our hiking path the previous day. Apparently, bears are becoming bolder and sightings more frequent, as more and more people leave the countryside for city living.

Back in Blythburgh, it seems odd to walk with a bell on my backpack but I haven't seen a bear since I returned!

Sonia Boggis

WILDWATCH

"Cor! Are they dinosaurs?"

We were taking part in a local schools outdoor classroom on the beach near Covehithe, part of the Benacre nature reserve. Adam Burrows, the Senior Site Manager, had arranged for us to spend some time explaining coastal erosion to some Year 9 students, and provided some examples of many of the bones that had eroded out of the soft cliffs.

It's understandable why children get excited about dinosaurs; they represent some of most astonishing animals that ever walked the Earth. Many parts of the British Coast have revealed their bones, most famously, the Jurassic Coast in Dorset.

The thing is, not all the coastline of Britain is the same age and our coastline is much, much younger than Dorset's.

Dinosaurs (as everyone knows) died out some 65 million years ago. The area known as the Jurassic Coast includes rock formations documenting some 185 million years of geological history. Over successive periods of time, geomorphic processes have constantly reshaped the surface of our planet, so the Dorset dinosaurs probably lived somewhere a long way away from where their bones are now found.

Water is also an agent of change and, in its frozen form, has covered great parts of the ocean and landmasses over geological time. And, this is another clue as to why Covehithe and our local coastline in general doesn't have any dinosaur fossils.

Our current geological period, the Quaternary, which began about 2.6 million years ago has been marked by warm and cold episodes. These last

about 100,000 years, and the last cold episode of the Last Glacial Period ended about 10,000 years ago. Before the ice melted, sea levels were some 200 metres lower than today and our part of Britain was connected to Europe by a land bridge.

Those lands were inhabited by Mammoths, Irish Elk and Aurochs and it's these large animal bones that are washed out of the soft cliffs by successive high tides. Our soft rock was formed when the meltwater from the glaciers washed down sand and gravels, which is what underlies much of our East Coast. It's far too young to have been trodden by dinosaurs.

The soft rock is ideal for excavating nest burrows, and sand martins regularly set up colonies around Covehithe. It's now accepted that a branch of the Dinosauria evolved into birds.

So, one could argue, we actually do have dinosaurs in our cliffs.

Paul Lacey



Sand martins nesting near Covehithe

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