



BLYTH VIEW MEMORIAL DEDICATED

I was privileged to dedicate a new memorial to those who died at Bulcamp Union Workhouse, now called Blyth View, on Sunday 24 November.

The “House of Industry” was opened on 13 October 1766 and admitted 56 “paupers”. By the next year the workhouse had 352 inmates in residence. They were employed in spinning, weaving linen and woollen cloth for the use of the house, knitting stockings, mending shoes, and cultivating the garden and land.



What started as a place seeking to offer genuine care to the very poorest, soon became a victim of its own success and some locals saw the House of Industry as an easy option. One report said that the residents “were supplied with milk and best butter – better than the guardians of the workhouse could get even for their own tables!”

The Blything Incorporation which founded the institution was dissolved and replaced by the Blything Poor Law Union in 1835 which took over operation of the Bulcamp Workhouse. It ceased to be a place where people would come willingly. From now on, “it would be a place of hardship, of coarse fare, of degradation, administered with strictness, with severity; it should be as repulsive as is consistent with humanity.” It was evil done in the name of good.

The Victorians, who are blamed for a lot, would slowly bring reforms to bear on this awful place, and by the end of the 19th Century it was as much an infirmary as a home for the poor. In later years, the workhouse became the Red House, a home for the chronically ill, and then Blything Hospital, which closed in the 1990s.

It is believed that over 4,000 “pauper” graves are located at Blyth View, including a mass grave for victims of the Small Pox, and yet only one very small and almost hidden gravestone remains.



Revd Russ Gant with Margaret and Roger Harwood and the new memorial.

The new memorial was the idea of Roger and Margaret Harwood, who have a home at Blyth View. Before retirement, Roger was head of the property department at the Diocese of Oxford and is also a Churchwarden at their home church. They were concerned that with the redevelopment of Blyth View, the history and particularly the importance of the workhouse burial ground, which has been incorporated into the very pleasant gardens, might be forgotten.

Roger and Margaret's idea was for a permanent memorial to the former residents of the workhouse located on the burial ground. The Management Committee of the property gave their blessing and John Goadby, a sculptor from Fornham All Saints, was engaged to produce the acorn leaf sphere sculpture.

Around 40 guests, including representatives from Holy Trinity Church, attended the dedication which took place in the midst of Storm Bert! It was therefore appropriate that, as well as words from Psalm 139, the memorial also features a quote from Shakespeare's *Tempest*!

Russ Gant, Sole Bay Team Rector



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BLYTHBURGH SOCIAL

October started off with a talk by Steve Garlick on *Qi Gong* – an exercise based on Chinese theories similar to *Tai Chi*. It's not known if anyone was enthused enough to join his class on a Wednesday afternoon at The Cut in Halesworth, but it was an interesting talk.

An extra event this month was a Christmas bauble decorating session run by Thea Cutting, our well-known local ceramicist. Eleven members created and painted their own designs, with Thea's help, on to ceramic baubles which she took away to be fired, to be returned in all their glory two weeks later.

All those present thoroughly enjoyed the experience and produced decorations of snowmen, Christmas trees, stars, intricate patterns and even a football, amongst many others.

Perhaps best described as a little gem, Southwold Museum in Victoria St is a treasure trove of artifacts, history and collections of objects from local shops and industries - all



A sample of Christmas baubles



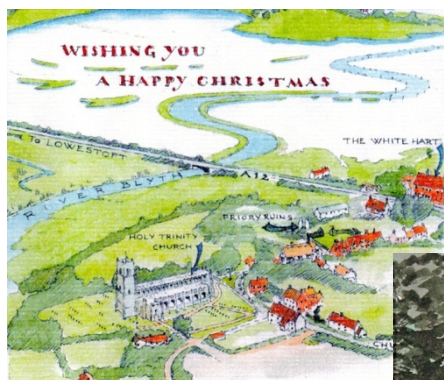
Visit to Southwold Museum

rudders, 1000 years old, found locally and on impressive display?

We already have a full programme of events, talks and outings planned for 2025 and will circulate this after Christmas. If you are not on the Blythburgh Social mailing list and want to be added then please email Mary at marygundry@tiscali.co.uk

Mary Gundry
Secretary

imaginatively displayed. Some 25 Blythburgh residents enjoyed a private visit on 7 November – most having never previously visited, others perhaps a decade ago! Who knew there are two huge Viking ships'



Courtesy of Charles Morris, Mary Gundry, Malcolm Doney and Jeff Fisher

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Clerk: Philip Stone

www.blythburgh.onesuffolk.net

KEEP YOURSELF INFORMED

If you want to keep abreast of events and news in Blythburgh, we have an email circulation list, called Blythburgh Matters. To sign up simply make an email request to join the mailing list: blythburghmatters@gmail.com.

We also have a Facebook group which you can sign up to at: www.facebook.com/groups/3747207978636436 or simply go to Facebook and search for Blythburgh Village.

Alternatively, you can sign up at the Blythburgh village website which hosts all sorts of useful local info: <http://blythburghmatters.suffolk.cloud>.

BLYTHBURGH CHURCH THIS CHRISTMAS

Christmas comfort

Holy Trinity is a notoriously cold space, especially in winter months, but help is at hand. We've recently purchased some blankets to keep you cosy. What's more, we can now offer foam pads to prevent 'numb bum' syndrome from our hard pews. All this will help you get more than usual enjoyment from our Christmas programme.



On **Sunday 1 December at 6pm** is a service of **Advent Carols** rather than the normal Choral Evensong, led by the Blythburgh Singers.

On **Friday 20 December from 6pm**, members of Holy Trinity's congregation will venture out on a **carol singing** expedition door-to-door round the village. If you'd like a visit, let Jenny Allen know at jennyanddick@aol.com.

The day after, on **Saturday 21 December at 4pm**, we'll be holding our candle-lit service of **Lessons and Carols** with the Blythburgh Singers.

On **Christmas Eve at 5.30pm** there will be a family-friendly **crib service** in the church.

On **Christmas Eve** we're holding Midnight Communion at **11.00pm**.

And on **Christmas Day at 10am** we have a family-friendly morning service.

Christmas giving

This year, the collections across our Christmas services will, once again, go to **Crisis UK**, as levels of homelessness continue to rise. Rough sleeping across England rose by 27% in 2023, alongside the cost of living crisis and housing crisis. Beyond providing food and shelter for homeless people at Christmas, Crisis helps them build skills and confidence and begin their journey out of homelessness.

We welcome in 2025 on **Sunday 5 Jan at 6pm** with **Choral Evensong**.

STARRY, STARRY NIGHT

The most eye catching object in the night sky this winter will be Jupiter. You will seldom get a better opportunity to see it.

On 7 December Jupiter will be at opposition, meaning it will be exactly opposite the Sun in the sky and at its very brightest, but it will be easy to see on any clear night this winter. It's around three times brighter than Sirius, the brightest star in the sky. It will be visible throughout the night but will reach its highest position, due south, around midnight at the start of the month and around 10pm by the end of the month. Just below Jupiter is Aldebaran, the brightest star in the constellation of Taurus, but this is outshone almost nine-fold by Jupiter.

Jupiter is 380 million miles away but a good pair of binoculars will show the planet's disc and you may get to glimpse its four largest moons. Io, Callisto, Europa and Ganymede are known collectively as the Galilean moons, after the astronomer Galileo Galilei who was the first to observe them in 1610.

Remember that Jupiter is huge compared to Earth. It has a diameter eleven times that of our home planet.

On another subject, I want to share a recent image. This breaks my rule to restrict this article to objects you will be able to see without any or much equipment. Comet C/2023 A3 is an object that you can no longer observe for yourself.

Some around the world saw it with the naked eye, but I could only manage it with a long camera exposure, and even then it took three evenings of effort! This image was taken on 18 October from the river bank behind the church. The comet was low in the sky to the west not long after sunset and about 50 million miles from Earth.



Comet C/2023 A3 as seen from Blythburgh

Comets are effectively balls of ice left over from the formation of the solar system. As they near the Sun some of the ice converts to gas, which creates the tail. Radiation from the Sun pushes the gas away so the tail always points away from the Sun and does not indicate the direction of travel. This shot was with my 20 year old camera, and my 30 year old telephoto lens on an even older tripod.

If you missed it, it will be back in 80,000 years.

Colin Huggins

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DAISY BANK CXIX

Fifteen years ago, the then owner of Chantry Cottage in Church Road asked me to replace a picture that had been painted in a false window on the northern exterior of their house. With a certain amount of reluctance, due to its awkward positioning, I agreed. So for a nearly a week in the hot summer weather of 2009, I climbed the ladder each day and lay on my back on duvets various, trying to keep my hand steady while I tackled the job. The owner wanted lead light windows as opposed to wooden glazing bars, so creating the *trompe l'oeil* effect was almost impossible as you need shadows to give a three-dimensional effect and a flat lead line window just doesn't give those. The God of *trompe l'oeil* is of course Rex Whistler whom I admire immensely and I'm afraid my pathetic attempt would have him rolling over and over in his grave. He died from a direct hit on his tank just before the end of the second world war.

So, for the intervening years I've had to drive past that painting avoiding looking at it as much as possible unless it depresses me further. To add insult to injury, it faces the village sign which was designed by my dear friend Ray St Clair Brown, which is a triumph. That is his legacy and mine is that dreadful painting. I even offered the subsequent owner to take it down and paint a new version for free.

A couple of weeks ago I received an email from the present owner to inform me that they were repairing some of the windows on that side of the house and the painting had become rotten. Would I like it back when they removed it. I replied, with relief, that probably the best place for it was on the bonfire.



Drastic change of subject! A few people who have visited us over the years have remarked that they feel a sense of peace when they come down the lane, "It's a time stands still moment", someone once remarked. I also remember a villager, who'd lived over the other side of Blythburgh for several years, being amazed that Daisy Bank even existed. She'd never realised that there were several houses down here. Maybe we don't exist anymore, and we're just a memory from the past: the old London to Yarmouth road that is no more?

Looking out the window over the years we have noticed several people taking pictures of the cottage. I suppose it is in reality an odd looking building with the false windows, and the ivy that's beginning to envelope us in a blanket of greenery. And, for the past few years – because of our circumstance – we're little seen by passers-by, and they may wonder if anyone still lives here at all. We sometimes wonder ourselves ...

Paul Bennett

OUR GARDENING YEAR DRAWS TO A CLOSE

Blythburgh Horticultural Society's 2024 programme of events came to a close in November and what a year it has been. Standout moments have included an evening with television and radio presenter Bob Flowerdew, former Head Gardener at Somerleyton Hall Bob Coutts – who shared his secrets of growing show quality vegetables – and a record number of entries at our eagerly anticipated summer show.

Since our last report in *Blythburgh Focus*, we've welcomed Marian Cannell who spoke about "The Honey Bee and The Honey" and led us on a honey tasting journey. We held our Annual Dinner at The White Hart: the food was delicious, the staff couldn't have been more helpful, and it was lovely to relax and enjoy the company of so many members. We concluded the year with our AGM and Social Supper in the village hall where members enjoyed homemade soup followed by a cheese board. Cilla Wilson, our President, masterminded a quiz and Sue Ireland-Cutting organised a splendid raffle to raise money for Society funds. Congratulations also to Jenny Allen, winner of the best autumnal table decoration.

Total membership for 2024 was a fantastic 84 and thanks are due to the whole committee who worked so tirelessly throughout the year to put together such an interesting and varied programme of events.

2025 membership fees are now due and new members are always welcome, so please get in touch (sonia.boggis@btinternet.com) if you would like to join us in 2025: membership is £5 a year.

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

Sonia Boggis

Secretary



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BLYTHBURGH FIELDNOTES

A brief period of East-North East winds in early October provided our only autumn influx of Siberian birds, mainly Yellow-browed Warblers, one of which was seen in our parish on the South side of the Blyth. While Southwold Churchyard held at least two more Yellow-browed as well as a Pallas's Warbler, these two very small very active bright coloured *Phylloscopus* warblers are not much larger than a Goldcrest. Other migrants in the church yard at the same time included Firecrest, Pied Flycatcher and Ring Ouzel. This shows the significant importance of old churchyards as wildlife habitats, compared to Crematoriums, especially in urban areas. Many even have local nature reserve status due to rare plants surviving due to little or no herbicide usage. So, saving land may not be the best prognosis in ecological terms.

Another very interesting occurrence at this time was a Red-breasted Flycatcher caught at Felixstowe's Landguard Bird Observatory, which had been ringed in Denmark.

November 10 saw the first autumn/winter visitors, with a flock of 26 Fieldfare, while two Red Knot were also seen. Other species seen around the village include Great White Heron, Red Kite, Hen Harrier, Peregrine Falcon and large flocks of Golden Plover.

Unfortunately no Stone Curlew nested in the parish this year, although a pair were present briefly. This is a nidifugous species (which includes most waders and game birds) as they lay large eggs, which are generally incubated longer to enable the chicks to be larger, and born with their eyes open and a covering of down, allowing them to leave the nest soon after hatching. Nidifugous is from the Latin *nidus* meaning nest and *fugere* meaning flee.

I Nonowt

SHORTLISTED!

Shop on Wheels, the book assembled by local historian Alan Mackley, has been shortlisted for a 2024 East Anglian Book Award in the Biography and Memoir category. Up there with titles from Penguin, Faber and Simon and Schuster, category winners will be announced in January and the overall winner at a ceremony in Norwich on 13th February 2025. Shortlisted books are also considered for the "Cover of the Book" award to celebrate illustrators.

THOSE WERE THE DAYS. . .

Mary Montague is probably not a name that's widely known in Blythburgh these days but that hasn't always been the case. Mary Mont, as she was affectionately known, has recently passed away and those who remember her and her contribution to village life wished to share a small insight into the difference she made.



Before moving to Hinton and purchasing a B&B, Mary and her husband were based on the south coast running a private school - he was headmaster and Mary the headmistress. Mary settled in quickly. She loved Blythburgh church and everything that went on in Blythburgh. She was quite a private person, but always got involved. The Women's Institute was a core activity in the village, and Mary was secretary. Every year there was a big WI conference, and

Blythburgh sent a couple of representatives. Mary attended and wrote the report of this conference: well written, humorous and always a joy to read.

When Blythburgh WI folded, Mary joined Wenhaston WI. But Blythburgh WI lived on in a different guise. Seven or eight of the core group continued to meet monthly at different places to share a meal: Mary, Ann Short, Beryl Stringer, Christine Sanderson, Gillian Lond-Caulk, Mary (Mynie) Lond Caulk, Mary Mould and Sheila Pegg. How they did enjoy themselves!

This same group formed the core of Blythburgh Monday Meets in the Village Hall. Each took their turn cooking a main course and dessert in their own homes. Initially over 30 members from the village came every Monday for lunch and this continued for 15 very happy years. Over time the numbers attending reduced but it was the introduction of new hygiene rules that brought things to a close.

Mary was part of the group who organised Halloween and Christmas parties in the village hall and also village fetes at The Green where Audrey Malan lived. Mary loved games: how many objects on a tray could you remember when they were covered up, how far could you throw a welly, and what about an egg and spoon race? She also played music at village gatherings on an old record player. Asked by one youngster, "have you got anything different to that?" Mary responded by asking what would

they would like played. The reply was "Heavy Metal". Rarely was Mary lost for words.

Mary was fantastic with children and at one time there were as many as 18 youngsters at Highfields. Carol and Christine remember Mary pulling up in her sports car: top down, music playing, yellow sunflower on the dashboard and timeless peaked cap on her head. Their youngsters couldn't wait to pile in the back seats (no seatbelts then), and head off to Hinton for a couple of hours making sweets and truffles. They were in seventh-heaven and still talk about it to this day.

Mary drew people to her and she made a difference. Those truly were the days, our friend.

As told to Sonia Boggis





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REMEMBERING PETER COGHILL

Peter and Diana Coghill became our friends within weeks of them buying *Athel Cottage* in dear Daisy Bank. Even though it wasn't their permanent home, most weekends would see them travel up from north-west London to enjoy our wonderful Blytburgh and this part of coastal Suffolk. Eventually they moved here permanently and then subsequently to Halesworth where, sadly, Diana died last year. And now, Peter has joined her.

Both B and I look back at some happy Christmases that they and Peter's sister Jane, and Jane's friend Hilary spent with us before they moved. Diana even brought glamour and celebrity with her from time to time with their friend Cheryll Campbell, the famous actress. And Diana and her association with Tuscany – having lived there for many years with her first husband and three children – arranged our third holiday to Tuscany where we stayed for our annual visits thereafter.

You will find Peter's name in *Burkes Landed Gentry*, which is one down from *Burkes Peerage*. I remember Peter telling me that when he was attending the local school in East Sussex, he would get the school bus to stop short of the lodge gates to his father's estate because of his embarrassment at where he lived. And of course later in adulthood he joined the Labour party and became a prominent part of Labour's push to get Ken Livingstone elected in Brent East. After leaving school and with a background in law, he worked for the probationary service and then had involvement in the prison service.

Peter was erudite and informed, and of course our politics being more or less the same, made for a special *rapport*. Towards the end of his life, and not being able to drive anymore, we were able from time to time to get him over here to sit in our garden which he loved.



Peter and Diana were great travellers, and in the time we knew them, there were not many countries that they didn't visit. Peter and his love of steam trains allowed him to go, sometimes with a friend to most of the heritage railways in the UK. He even became a level crossing guard on one of the vintage railways in Norfolk.

Recently, he went to stay with his stepson Nicholas in Tuscany and then Nicholas accompanied him back to Halesworth where shortly after their arrival, he sadly died. Above is a painting I did some years ago. With cigarette in hand and a book in the other, it is a legacy of Peter that I will remember with fondness.

Paul Bennett.

ALL CHANGE AT THE WHITE HART

You may have noticed that the pub is under new management. We wish good luck to David, Lisa and the team and look forward to hearing about their plans for our local.

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SOLICITORS & NOTARIES

IT'S ALL KICKING OFF AT THE VILLAGE HALL!

Before Christmas

On **Friday, 6 December** - as a tribute to Maggie Smith the Film Club will be showing *The Lady in the Van*: **Admission £4, 7.30pm start**. Don't forget to book your pre-show Fish & Chips in the White Hart.

Saturday 14 December, there's a **Christmas themed evening** showing the film *It's A Wonderful Life* starring James Stewart: **6.30pm start – admission £5** to include Christmas snacks and mulled wine.

New Year

Film Club **Friday 3 January 7.30pm** *The Old Oak* (2023): a pub owner in a previously thriving mining community struggles to hold onto his establishment. Meanwhile, tensions rise in the town when Syrian refugees are placed in empty houses within the town. In an unlikely friendship, he meets a young Syrian woman. Can they find a way for the two communities to understand each other?

Introducing **No-Cook Wednesdays**. Come to the Village Hall on **Wednesday 8 January at 12.30pm**. For just £5, enjoy a hot, home-cooked two-course lunch followed by tea/coffee, in the company of friends and neighbours. If you need a lift, just let us know, and also if you have any allergies or special diets – we can cope with anything as long as we know in advance. Let us know if you're joining us: bookings@blythburghvillagehall.org.uk, 01502 478314 or 07886 465552. We hope to make this a regular event, possibly every fortnight, according to demand.

Table Top Sale, Saturday 1 February 11am- 2pm. Tea, coffee and bacon rolls are also on offer. if you'd like to book a table at £5, please contact Chris Shone on mrcshone@gmail.com or 07900 900748.

Live Music Night, Friday 14 February: more details to follow

For more information or to book the hall please go to blythburghvillagehall.org.uk

If you'd like to book the Village Hall for an event, a party or gathering of any kind, we have special rates for residents. Morning, afternoon or evening sessions are £25 for residents, £35 for non-residents. Use of the kitchen is £5 extra. Day hire is £40 for residents and £60 for non-residents. Kitchen use, as above.

WILDWATCH

About thirty years ago, in my capacity as joint editor of an English Nature magazine, I met an extraordinary man. Virtually self-taught and from humble origins, he has become one of the leading practitioners of woodland and veteran tree management. Now, at the age of 90, he remains the principal 'go-to' source of tree-related advice throughout the UK and Europe.

Ted Green's name won't be familiar to many people outside the world of arboriculture. But anyone who has worked in the world of woodland management – especially ancient woodland – will certainly understand and appreciate his wisdom and knowledge. He has pioneered new ways of prolonging the viability of old and dead trees so that they continue to be of value to other wildlife.

My task in the 1990s was to meet and discuss some of his what were then 'new' ideas on managing dead (or, as he prefers to call it, non-living) wood, and extract an article from him for the magazine. We met at a location in Windsor Great Park, and he took me to areas where he was

experimenting with ways that made the best use of this non-living wood.

Recreating suitable conditions provided by hollow trees was one of his principle achievements. Hollow trees have become rarer thanks to our prissy habit of 'tidying up' woodland. By strapping an already fallen and rotting hollow tree to a strong living one, it provides a breeding site for invertebrates which need the rich compost found in a standing rotting tree to support their life-cycle.

One of these is an extremely rare insect called the violet click beetle. Ted experimented with different ways to recreate the conditions that this critically endangered creature needs.

This even included putting a dead cat into the base of one of his experimental trees. This, along with other natural ingredients, produced exactly the right type of compost needed by the beetle.



This is just one of the creative ways by which this remarkable man has moved woodland management forward. There are many more, but space doesn't permit me to list them here.

Instead, let me recommend you buy a copy of his recently published book, *Treetime*. Published this year by the Arboricultural Association, and available directly from their website www.trees.org.uk/Book-Shop/Products/Treetime-Ted-Green, this book would make a suitable Christmas gift for anyone with an interest in woodland wildlife management – or even those who just like reading about exceptional people.

Paul Lacey



Courtesy of Colin Huggins