

BLYTHBURGH

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Issue No 79

<http://blythburgh.onesuffolk.net>

Feb/Mar 2025

‘NO COOK WEDNESDAY’ SERVED UP



At lunchtime on Wednesday 8 January, 22 villagers gathered in the Village Hall, lured in by the promise of a hot meal in the company of friends and neighbours, cooked by a volunteer team organised by the Village Hall Management Committee. Were they disappointed? We hope not! Everyone was served sausages, mash and vegetables with gravy (vegetarian alternative available), followed by a choice of different flavoured bread and butter puddings with cream. ‘Seconds’ were available and enthusiastically received! Coffee and tea followed. Sounds good but couldn’t come on 8 January? Don’t worry – No Cook Wednesday is going to take place every fortnight for the foreseeable future. Future dates are 5 February, 19 February, 5 March, 19 March, and so on. No need to

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book, just come along to the Village Hall at 12.30pm. There will always be a vegetarian option on offer, but for any other special diets or allergies, just let us know in advance, preferably by email (bookings@blythburghvillagehall.org.uk). Everyone is welcome, from babies to baby-boomers and above! If getting to the Village Hall is difficult for you, just let us know and we’ll be very happy to arrange transport.



Although this is an initiative of the Village Hall Management Committee, while it was being planned we became aware of possible funding from the East Suffolk Cost of Living Community Grant Fund. Our application was successful, with the result that we are not having to charge anything for the first few sessions – thus proving that there is such a thing as a free lunch! After the first few sessions, we will be charging £5 per person to cover the costs of food and energy.

See you there we hope!



Jude Blois, Sue Gerrard, Val Carse, Jenny Allen Chris Shone and Ro Williams

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A FRESH VISION FOR THE WHITE HART

You may already have noticed changes to our local with a new team in place since last August. These changes spring from the acquisition of the tenancy at The White Hart by the Anjuna Pub Company led by David Booth. I asked David to tell us more about the business and what we might expect in the near future.

David, himself a Suffolk man, says "We're thrilled to bring our passion for hospitality to Blythburgh. Our vision is to create a pub where people can gather, enjoy exceptional food, and feel at home. We can't wait to welcome everyone to The White Hart."

He tells me that the Anjuna Pub Company is known for its success with other establishments such as The Blue Fig Restaurant in Bury St Edmunds, and that the team, along with Lisa (Manager), Jonathan (Head Chef) and the rest of the crew at the White Hart, are excited to transform this beloved local pub into a destination for elevated pub food and a relaxed, welcoming atmosphere.



David Booth with Kaitlyn, Lisa and Jonathan from the White Hart Team

David says that the Anjuna Pub Company is renowned for developing pubs into vibrant community hubs with a focus on quality food, outstanding service, and memorable experiences. The wider Anjuna Group operates several successful establishments across Suffolk and beyond, with more in the pipeline.

The White Hart already features a refreshed menu showcasing seasonal ingredients and inventive takes on classic pub dishes. Guests are promised a warm and inviting environment.

To connect further with the local community, The White Hart will host a variety of events throughout the year. Some of you will already be

aware of, such as the monthly Quiz Nights, which seem to be becoming ever more popular, and also the addition of live music on occasions.

Other upcoming highlights include:

- **Valentine's Day Dinner:** Friday, 14 February – a romantic menu designed for couples to celebrate love in a cosy setting.
- **Walking Club Launch:** Guided walks in the stunning Suffolk countryside, starting and ending at The White Hart.
- **Daily Breakfast Service:** Starting immediately, the White Hart will serve breakfast daily from 8:30 am.

I'm sure we all welcome David and his team to Blythburgh and wish them every success in making our local a great place for us all. If you live in the village and haven't visited recently, then pop in and introduce yourself to the team. They are very keen to meet us locals.

For further details, menus, or to book a table for upcoming events, please contact David Booth at davidb@anjunagroup.co.uk

Colin Huggins



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BLYTHBURGH SOCIAL

2024 finished for Blythburgh Social with a very enjoyable Christmas meal in The White Hart which was attended by 34 people. A good time was had by all and the team at the pub did a great job.

2025 events start on **Thursday 6 February at 7:30pm** in the Village Hall with a **Fun Race Night**. Ro Williams and Chris Shone have organised horse racing on film for people to come along and forecast a winner and win some money. There will be an opportunity to sponsor a race for £5. Minimum bet – £1 and there will be eight races. We are expecting this to be a popular event so tables for up to six, at £10 per table, need to be reserved in advance by emailing ro@blythburgh.plus.com - bring your own refreshments to help the night go with a swing.

The next month there will be a talk on **Thursday 6 March at 7:30pm** in the Village Hall when Jo Risby from the Chantry Kitchen in Saxmundham will be doing a **bread-making demo**. Some of you may remember Jo's wonderful bread from the church mini-markets last year. The Village Hall should be filled with delicious baking smells, and we hope for a good turnout on this occasion.

The programme for 2025 has been circulated and it offers a wide choice of talks, demos and days out to suit everyone. If you're not on the Blythburgh Social mailing list and want to be added then please email Mary at marygundry@tiscali.co.uk.

Mary Gundry
Secretary



SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS AT BLYTHBURGH CHURCH

Medieval churches weren't built with the needs of contemporary congregations or visitors in mind.

The church hosts a great number of events such as concerts and receptions, as well as regular services, including weddings and funerals, and village events such as the café and mini market. But it hasn't been equipped to cope with those demands, especially for elderly people or those with disabilities.

The current WCs are unwelcoming, and access is down a sloping, uneven, poorly-lit path and a flight of steps. And the catering facilities are served by a solitary sink in the vestry, which is at the 'wrong' end of the church for serving refreshments at most functions (such as the monthly Café and Minimarket). But all that is about to change.

The church has planning permission to provide two WCs, one of which is wheelchair accessible, and a galley/servery. These will be sited in the area inside the base of the tower. The bells will then be rung from a first floor ringing chamber (similar to the arrangement at St Edmunds, Southwold).

The proposals involve no loss of significant fittings nor of any historic fabric, and the external drainage works will follow existing footpaths, and so will not disturb any recent (20th and 21st-century) graves. Builders will use the north door for access and use a covered, partitioned walkway to the tower, minimising dust and disturbance. A consultant archaeologist will be appointed to oversee excavations.

As part of this development project, much-needed maintenance work will also be undertaken on the mechanical elements of the bell structure,



to ensure future safety and effective use of the bells (which will not need to be removed during this process).

It's hoped that the drainage preparations will take place in April and May. The bells maintenance should happen between May and June, and the main build on the WCs' galley and ringing chamber is scheduled for July until October. All normal services, events and activities can continue while the work is in process, and there will be temporary portaloos available in the churchyard.

If you have any questions about this development, please contact the Church's Fabric Officer, Paul Simmons, at paul.simmons@uwclub.net.

Other news

Our popular Christmas Market, held at the end of November, raised £1,140 for church funds, over and above the money raised by Blythburgh Social hamper and raffle ticket sales for the RNLI. Our Christmas services attracted a huge aggregate congregation of around 400, and raised £1,300 for Crisis UK.

GET READY TO GROW

At the time of writing (early January) our garden is starting to wake up and the white heads of the snowdrops are clearly visible although they do still have some way to go before they display their full beauty.

Your committee will be putting together a programme of events for 2025. This will be circulated in due course and we look forward to welcoming members to a variety of events throughout the coming year. Thanks to all who have paid your annual subs to our Treasurer Jenny Allen for the coming year.

New members are always welcome and with annual membership at just £5 we think it's particularly good value. Do please get in touch (sonia.boggis@btinternet.com) if you would like to know more.

The committee for 2025: 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, Blythburgh Horticultural Society

The Blythburgh Latitude Trust is making grants

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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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BOOK A TABLE FOR THE NEXT PUB QUIZ

The January Quiz Night saw a record attendance of almost 50 quizzers. In order to help the pub prepare for us it's been decided to ask people to book ahead in future. The quiz is the third Wednesday of each month, the next one being on 19 February. It would be helpful if one member from each team could call the pub on 01502 478217 prior to the quiz to book a table. Make sure you tell them you're coming for the quiz, and the number of people in your team (maximum of 4). Thank you.



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WARM WELCOME AT HALESWORTH LIBRARY

Feeling the winter chill? You're always guaranteed a Warm Welcome at Halesworth Library

Hot drinks are still available for everyone at the library, so please pop in.

Wednesday 5th February at 7.15pm for 7.30pm The Friends of Halesworth Library will be hosting a Quiz. £12 for a team of 4 (we will match up teams if needed) - bring your own nibbles and drinks.

Thursday 20th February, 2.30pm, The Friends of Halesworth Library welcomes author Ann Shearer for this month's book talk. Ann Shearer worked for The Guardian on and off for 20 years. Since then, she has been a Jungian analyst and psychotherapist, engrossed in stories people tell about themselves. Her books reflect these interests, from 'Disability: Whose Handicap?' (1981) to 'Why Don't Psychotherapists laugh?' (2016). Talks and refreshments are free, but donations are always welcome.

If you have little ones at home, join us **every Tuesday 10.00-11.30 for our free Rhyme Time & Play session** to sing fun songs followed by free play with our toys. We also hold a **Time Out group for older people every Wednesday 10am** to make new friends and chat over a cup of tea. There are also **two sessions of Sociable Sundays on 9th and 23rd February 10.30-12.30pm and Board Games Cafe is 24th February 2-4.30pm**, both hosted and run by volunteers of the Friends of Halesworth Library.

You can find advice drop-ins from East Suffolk Council Customer services every Tuesday 10.00-16.00 and Barclays Bank on Wednesdays 09.00-17.00. Citizens Advice have a drop-in every other Tuesday 10.00-12.00, please ask a member of staff for future dates.

Did you know that the library can deliver books to your home? If you're unable to visit us at the library, one of our volunteers can come to you. Please contact us on [01986 875095](tel:01986875095) for further information.'

LATITUDE IS COMING, KEEP A LOOKOUT

Application forms for tickets to the Latitude Festival (24-27 July), will be delivered slightly earlier this year. If you have not received your application forms by the end of March, please contact blythburgh.trust@gmail.com.



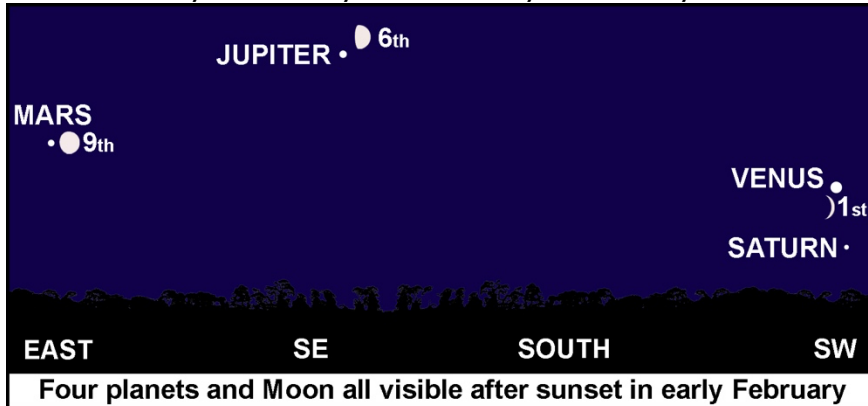
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STARRY, STARRY NIGHT

Since the start of 2025, the four naked eye planets have been visible in the evening sky – if you know where to look! To catch all four you need to be viewing the sky one hour after sunset. Start looking at 17:40 at the start of February, or 18:05 by mid-month. By then the sky should be dark.



Venus is the very bright object to the south west about a quarter of the way up from the horizon. It's difficult to miss. Venus is nearer to the Sun than we are and, if you have a telescope, you should be able to see that it displays a phase, similar to our Moon. Currently, it is about half-lit.

Saturn appears close to Venus but is dimmer and nearer to the horizon, so much harder to see. A telescope will show its rings, although they're currently edge-on as seen from Earth, making them harder to spot.

Next is Jupiter, the largest planet in our solar system. Bright, but not as bright as Venus, it is to the south east about half way up the sky. The bands of cloud across the surface of Jupiter are visible through a telescope, as are its four main moons.

Finally, Mars is rising in the east at this time. Easily distinguishable by its red colour. NASA's 'Perseverance' is a car sized rover which has been exploring the surface since it landed four years ago.

Venus and Mars are rocky planets, similar in size to Earth. Jupiter and Saturn are huge gas giants. Their current distances from us vary hugely, with Venus and Mars being comparatively close at 48 and 64 million miles respectively, whilst Jupiter and Saturn are 423 and 969 million miles away.

The Moon wanders across the sky each night 'visiting' each of the planets. On 1 February it is a thin crescent between Saturn and Venus. By the 6th it is a half moon and close to Jupiter, and by the 9th it is almost full and very close to Mars.

Colin Huggins

Daisy Bank CXIX

I've decided to give up on sending Christmas cards. I have been making my own for decades, and the thought of producing another one and, then to go through the boredom of stamping, labelling and posting has become too onerous. I have to confess that the whole routine has begun to pall.

In my last one, I included some of the Christmas cards from yesteryear which in itself was a cop out. So rather than reverting to shop-bought ones or the ubiquitous 'moon pig', the time has come to call it a day. So sorry to those in the village who usually get one, but this year's was the last. A huge sigh of relief from me, and for those who can now think again whether they're going to continue sending Christmas cards to us! I assure all of you, we won't be upset if you don't. B still likes getting cards and is not keen on the above decision. . . But!

Snow? Are we ever going to see it again? I doubt it. I remember B and I walking across Henham Park, when you were allowed to do so, and we were up to our knees in deep snow. I also remember looking out of the window of my previous house in a village near here, and seeing snow piled up either side of the road with a snow-plough clearing a path.



Years ago, I was a salesman for a well-known food manufacturer in Surrey, and I would never dream of leaving the house without a shovel and some warm blankets. Even before then, I remember being in a van with my dad in the Chiltern Hills, just outside Henley-on-Thames and getting stuck in a snow drift. Eventually, we were rescued by some people coming back from a funeral in a nearby village.

I feel sorry for future generations who'll never have had the experience of seeing snow and enjoying its inconvenient beauty.

I think I may have used this drawing before in a previous article, but anyway here it is again. It's my interpretation of the Southwold Railway outside our back gate with the fireman digging the train out of a snow drift. Coincidentally, its known down here as the driftway so maybe there is some kind of connection. I included our black and white cat Mimi watching him at work. Sad to think that Daisy Bank may eventually never see snow again, or dear Mimi.

Paul Bennett

BLYTHBURGH FIELDNOTES

It's been a surprisingly quiet winter for Northern birds, although the cold snap in early January did bring in several hundred more Widgeon to the estuary, while other species seen included regular Great White Egret and occasional Red Kite, Kingfisher, Barn Owl and Bullfinch.

In early December a wintering Green Sandpiper was seen at Hinton, and on Christmas Eve two Great-crested Grebe and a fine male Goldeneye were seen on the Blyth, this latter species is one of our rarest breeding ducks, with now probably less than 100 pairs regularly nesting in Scotland. They are tree nesters, using large holes, often quite high up in trees, so the small ducklings often fall to the ground from a height, before making their way to water. Due to competition for nest holes over 80% of the population now nest in specially provided boxes.

Numerous poison plants occur in our parish, although I have never encountered the famous Deadly Nightshade, *Atropa bella-donna*, which is a rare plant and not as poisonous as some others, while it is often confused with much commoner Woody Nightshade. A surprisingly useful, although not necessarily diagnostic test for *Atropa bella-donna* poisoning entails placing a few spots of urine from the patient into the eye of a human or other animal, which will make the pupil fully dilate within 30 minutes, while the other eye will remain normal.

Many other common garden plants are poisonous, including the three common species of Spurge, which have milky latex in the stem, this as a youngster I often used as glue. I know that one of two children died after licking this substance, with both experiencing painful burning in the mouth and stomach. Among other frequently encountered poisonous species are Cuckoo Pint, Box, St John's Wort, Birdsfoot Trefoil, Wood Anemone, Hemlock, Dog's Mercury and Foxglove; this latter plant has caused death to sheep, goats and even horses.

I Noknowt

HAPPY DAYS

Connecting Dundee, Blythburgh and Jersey via the Falklands

Christine Sanderson has lived in Blythburgh for 50-plus years and, as we chatted, a captivating story emerged.

Christine was brought up in Dundee. It's hard to detect an accent but those roots manifest themselves in language: ice-cream wafers are sliders, alleyways a closey. They were a close family. Her father's sisters were both schoolteachers, and Christine attended one of their schools. Sadly, her father had been wounded and shell-shocked in the war. The noise of tram cars passing their house was very triggering for him, so the family moved to Hopton (where her mother's mother lived). Christine was just 13.

Despite the move, Christine loved visiting her grandmother in Scotland and, as an only granddaughter, may have been spoiled a little. Christine's grandmother took her from Dundee to London in 1953 for the Coronation. They went by train and stayed in a big hotel for two or three days. On the morning of the Coronation, there were street sellers with trays filled with ribbons and brooches, she has a photograph taken with a polar bear (just someone dressed up, not a real one). Christine remembers standing outside the palace gates waiting for the carriage. They saw the carriage but didn't really see the Queen because there were so many people.

Christine travelled a lot of miles by train with her Grandmother, visiting many interesting places. She even remembers the Tay Bridge being built, and her first train trip across: the views were wonderful.

Back in Hopton, Christine worked in the post office and recalls the first time she set eyes on Sandy. "He was stationed at RAF Honington and was staying with his friend next door to the post office. He came in to get stamps. He said hello. I wasn't interested. That night, a group of us girls were standing outside the Vine Inn Pub. I remember it as if it was yesterday. He came past and said hello. I still completely ignored him.

My friend Ann liked him, so he took her home. Then he took Shirley home and then Brenda. He quizzed all three of them about me. I didn't know him, and wasn't interested. But, he was persistent. He got chatting to my mum and her sister. Mum thought he was nice. I wasn't sure and it took me longer. But, can you believe, we were together more than 50 years."

Newly married, George "Sandy" Sanderson was posted to RAF El Adem (Tobruk, Libya) for two years. Christine went too, and their son David

was born in Tobruk. The next posting was Bawdsy so the family moved to Felixstowe. Christine remembers these as nine very happy years.

When Sandy demobbed, the family were entitled to housing straight away. The newly built houses at Highfield (Blythburgh) were on the list. The family visited and said yes. Initially it was hard, away from everyone and everything they had known but it quickly became home.

Christine kept the home fires burning as Sandy worked all over the world for oil companies as a camp boss and chef manager. The longest they were apart was when Sandy worked in Mongolia – one stint lasting six months. Sandy loved the Falkland Islands and, thanks to the generosity of his commanding officer, Christine was invited to join Sandy for a very memorable Christmas and New Year celebration. A direct flight from Brize Norton and lovely friendly people all helped make this an unforgettable experience.

There was so much more to chat about, but we concluded with another Christmas trip, this time to Jersey, and a memorable coming together of past and present. Christine learned Scottish dancing as a youngster in Dundee, but it was in Jersey that she, Beryl (Stringer) and Mary (Mynie) put it all into practice.

Sonia Boggis





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WILDWATCH

Back in June 2024, our Holy Trinity church, along with Blythburgh's stunning natural scenery, was the setting for a BBC recorded performance of Benjamin Britten's opera, *Curlew River*.

The production made full use of the bubbling call of the common curlew on its soundtrack – a call all Blythburgh's residents will be familiar with.

I'm sure I'm not the only person to have thought Blythburgh and Holy Trinity to be suited to a performance of *Curlew River*, if only for the beautiful setting of our 'Cathedral of the Marshes' and sounds of our river and estuary.

Of course, other composers have taken birdsong as a muse for their compositions.

Ludwig van Beethoven was a lover of nature, and his symphony No. 6, *The Pastoral*, contains in its second movement a cadenza for woodwind instruments that imitates bird calls: nightingale (flute), quail (oboe), and cuckoo (two clarinets).

Ralph Vaughan Williams' *The Lark Ascending* is a piece that is a constant of orchestral performances. It demands a virtuoso violinist to create its sound poem, the song of the male skylark as he soars heavenwards, singing his heart out.

French composer, Olivier Messiaen, composed the piece *Le Merle Noir* (blackbird) for flute and piano. He took this idea further in his 1953 orchestral work *Réveil des Oiseaux*, followed by a collection of 13 piano pieces *Catalogue D'oiseaux* in 1958.

More recently, the Finn, Einojuhani Rautavaara, composed an orchestral composition *Cantus Arcticus* in three movements. It opens with a flute duet, with the birds joining in: the second movement features a slowed-down recording of the song of the shore lark and, in the final movement, a long crescendo for orchestra, is combined with the sounds of whooper swans, ending with both birdsong and orchestra fading into the winter's silence.

If all this classical stuff is not your style, maybe you'd be warmed up by the saxophonist Jan Garbarek. His solo album, *All Those Born with Wings* is, in the words of one reviewer: "... airy and spacy—belting out screaming sax lines. The five pieces here, serially titled, tend to blend together, giving the impression of one long song."

During the dark, dank days of winter, when few birds apart from the robin sing at all, listening to the music that celebrates their songs – in whichever style suits your tastes and moods – might just bring spring a bit closer.

Paul Lacey



ANGEL LANE AND DUNWICH ROAD FUTURE

There is still a plan by Suffolk Highways to shut off the B1125 at Angel Lane in order to address the anticipated additional traffic caused by Sizewell C along this already busy road. The last timing for the works proposed by EDF was the second quarter of 2025, but it seems likely that this will be held off following delays to the Sizewell C Final Investment Decision, and the need to deal with the consequences of additional traffic running along the B1387 to and from Walberswick.

The Walberswick Parish Council has made it 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 both Blythburgh and Walberswick 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. We are awaiting an update from EDF and Suffolk Highways.

Blythburgh Parish Council

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VALENTINE'S DAY: WHO, WHY, WHERE & WHEN?

Valentine's Day on 14 February is the day when people spend huge amounts of money on roses, chocolate, cheesy cards, over-priced meals, and dodgy lingerie. And when singletons, justifiably, feel a bit left out. At least, that's what it's become.

But where did it start? With St Valentine of course. But there, the problems begin. There seem to have been at least three St Valentines, all associated with 14 February. And they're lost in such a fog of myth, legend and uncertainty that the Roman Catholic church has cancelled him (or them), removing Valentine from the General Roman Calendar in 1969, while still recognising him as saintly. Pity really, since he had his uses, being the patron saint of beekeepers and epilepsy, as well as lovers.

The best story of St Valentine is that he was a third-century Italian priest, living under the reign of the Emperor Claudius II. Claudius was short of soldiers, and he had many wars to fight. He believed that single men made better fighters because they were less likely to think of their wives and children back home. So, he outlawed marriage for young men.



Valentine disapproved of this and defied the Emperor, continuing to perform marriages for young lovers in secret, therefore allowing them to avoid conscription. Claudius threw him into prison, and ordered that he be put to death.

Apparently, during his imprisonment he was put to work as a tutor for Julia, the blind daughter of his jailer. After Valentine prayed for her, God restored Julia's sight. On the eve of his execution, Valentine supposedly penned a note to Julia and signed it, “*From your Valentine.*” He was beheaded on 14 February 269.

So how did this doughty saint get associated with hearts and flowers, and the sending of cards, the declaring of love? It probably had a lot to do with the church's nifty footwork in appropriating the pagan fertility festival of *Lupercalia*, dedicated to Faunus, the Roman god of agriculture, on the basis that 14 or 15 February was the day when birds chose their mates. In the Middle Ages, the Church turned it into a spring festival: St Valentine's Day. Also, the English poet Geoffrey Chaucer wrote a poem in 1375, talking of St Valentine's Day as a feast for lovers.

And then, of course, the Victorians went mad with cards, lace, and hearts and flowers. And there you have it. Make mine a prosecco.

Malcolm Doney