

Methwold Times

Serving the villages of
**Brookville, Methwold
& Methwold Hythe**

**Issue 474
April 2024**



LEAF OPEN FARM SUNDAY

VISIT A FARM AND DISCOVER THE WORLD OF FARMING

Come and join us on 9th June at
O. W. Wortley & Sons LTD
Holmebrink Farm

Thornham Road, Methwold,
Thetford, Norfolk, IP26 4PH

Gates open at 10:00 with fun activities aimed to engage children. From 14:00 we will focus more on talks and demonstrations towards adults.

Tea, coffee, cold drinks, light refreshments, and ice-pops will be available free. You're welcome to bring your own picnic.

Please call or message 07775898246, 01366728246, paulwortley@live.co.uk, should you have any questions and to help us plan for numbers



www.farmsunday.org

[@Openfarmsunday](https://twitter.com/Openfarmsunday)

[LEAFopenfarmsunday](https://www.facebook.com/LEAFopenfarmsunday)

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LEAF Open Farm Sunday is managed by LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming). Charity no.1045781

Diary of Events

March

26th	Coffee Morning	St Georges Church	10am-12pm
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April

10th	Ladies Group	Peggy's Room, St George's Hall	7.30pm
9th	Coffee Morning	St Georges Church	10am-12pm
23rd	Coffee Morning	St Georges Church	10am-12pm

May

8th	Ladies Group	Peggy's Room, St George's Hall	7.30pm
14th	Coffee Morning	St Georges Church	10am-12pm
28th	Coffee Morning	St Georges Church	10am-12pm

June

9th	Open Farm Sunday	Wortleys Farm	
11th	Coffee Morning	St Georges Church	10am-12pm
12th	Ladies Group	Peggy's Room, St George's Hall	7.30pm
25th	Coffee Morning	St Georges Church	10am-12pm

THE POST OFFICE

Methwold Branch

St. George's Hall, High Street, Methwold IP26 4NT



Opening times

Mon:	09.00 - 13.00	14.15-16.30
Tue & Thru	09.00 - 13.00	
Wed:	09.00 - 13.00	

We also have the following products & services:

Instant cash - Free (no charge)

All mobile phone Top-ups

Written contributions to the Methwold Times,
by the **13th of every month** may be sent to the editor:

Mo Truss, 46 Globe St, Methwold

Thetford, Norfolk, IP26 4PQ

Phone 01366 727462

or E-mail: mo@mtruss.co.uk or

maureen.truss@btinternet.com

**Please note: The views expressed by our
contributors are not necessarily
those of the Methwold Times**

From The Editor...

I would like to thank the people who came forward to deliver the Methwold Times for us. However, we do still have one vacancy for someone who can deliver on maybe two or three times a year when one of our regular team members is on holiday or off sick. This can be anywhere within the parish and would involve delivering any number of copies from 10 to 90, usually for just one month. Please contact me if you would be willing to fill this role.

Thank you

.....The Editor

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#### **Methwold Investment Club**

Have you ever wanted to have a go at wheeling and dealing on the stock market? This club could be for you. If you want more information please contact the club secretary, Julie Clement on 01366 728926

#### **FOR SALE**

Hardtop for 2002 Mitsubishi L200 Ha Double Cab - Black with chrome roof bars -  
Sensible Offers

Brand New Generator - never used, again, sensible offers

Tuhyuri (Swedish) Cross Trailer - Hardly used - best offer over £200. (cost £700)

Tuhyuri (Swedish) Exercise Bike - again hardly used. Offers around £

Rise & Recliner "Brown Brocade" covered with blanket when used since new -  
Offers

If interested in any of above items  
Please ring Les on 07799 073 435  
Sensible offers only please.

#### **NEW LADIES GROUP**

Our April meeting will be held in The 21 Room,  
St George's Hall Complex, Methwold  
on Wednesday, 10th April at 7.30 pm.

We have invited Alice Webster, Chief Executive Officer  
of The Queen Elizabeth Hospital NHS  
Foundation Trust to give us a presentation. This will be  
followed by a Question and Answer Session.

**Our meeting will be open to all as we feel  
it is of local interest.**



## St. George's Church, Methwold

|                |                 |                                     |
|----------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------|
| Ministers:     | Revd Ray Burman | 01842-828891<br>rayburman@me.com    |
|                | Diane Mantle    | diane.mantle@btinternet.com         |
| Churchwardens: | Alan Burbridge  | 01366-727002                        |
|                | Paul Smith      | 07787 503545<br>paulsmith50@msn.com |
| PCC Secretary  | Revd Ray Burman | 01842-828891                        |

Our Church is open every weekend but during the week will be kept locked for security reasons. If you would like access then please contact Alan Burbridge (01366 727002).

### Planned Services:

|                         |                     |                  |
|-------------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Sunday 7th Apr. 9.30am  | Holy Communion      | Revd. Ray Burman |
| Sunday 14th Apr. 9.30am | Service of the Word | LLM Diane Mantle |
| Sunday 21st Apr. 9.30am | Holy Communion      | Revd. Ray Burman |
| Sunday 28th Apr. 9.30am | Service of the Word | TBC              |

Online Zoom services are also available every Sunday, please message Janet Tanton for the link via the Wissey Valley Benefice Facebook page.

Our Church is open every weekend to receive donations for the Foodbank, all items can be left in our collection box in the Porch. Although the organisers, Trussell Trust, still collect 6 to 8 bags of products every month we know that the demands on them have risen hugely. In particular short supply at the moment are Meat Pies, Puddings, Dry Pet Food, Tinned Fruit, Coffee and Hot Chocolate, UHT Milk, Shaving Foam, Tinned Fish, Biscuits, Tin Openers and Snacks or Treats. During these difficult times with rising prices, the foodbank is in even greater demand which will grow during school holidays when free school meals are not available. Any donations will be greatly appreciated.

Our Community Coffee Morning will be open on Tues. 9th and Tues. 23rd April from 10am till noon. If you haven't been before then come along to sample the delicious cakes and savouries. Spend the morning catching up with old friends or meeting new people in our beautiful Church.

Preparations are underway to mark the 80th Anniversary of D-Day on Thursday 6th June, more details to follow next month.

Our Church has a variety of books for sale, please feel free to come inside and have a look. If you would like to bring along one of your own books and swap it with one on display, that's absolutely fine. If anyone has any fiction books in good condition that they would like to donate then feel free to leave in the church by our bookstall, sadly we are unable to take Magazines. All books are £1 each or 3 books for £2, all proceeds go to the upkeep of our beautiful church. New stock is regularly added.

These are worrying times with ever increasing fuel and food costs so should you find yourself in any financial difficulties, free advice can be found at the following sources:

Christians Against Poverty <https://capuk.org/> or freephone on 0800 328 0006.  
Norfolk Community Law Service <https://www.ncls.co.uk/> or telephone 01603  
496623  
Alan Burbridge  
Church Warden

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I was reading an article recently that reported nine out of ten of us feel stressed every day. The survey of over 2,000 adults showed that we deal with stress in very different ways and the most popular method of de-stressing was the simple act of having a cup of tea, a much more popular choice than yoga or meditation. The article went on to describe 27 ways to calm down to lower cortisol, heart rate and tension in our body and of these, the top ten were:

1. Curl up with a good book – it can lower your heart rate in six minutes
2. Have a ‘podcast walk’ – listening to a Ted talk helps you switch off
3. Go for a 15 minute run – it can lower stress levels by 87 per cent
4. Put the kettle on – tea contains an amino acid to relax you
5. Put ice packs on your face or neck – slows your heart rate
6. Listen to loud music – it helps the brain to process emotions
7. Chew gum for ten minutes to lower your cortisol levels
8. Hands in the air – dancing stimulates the vagus nerve
9. Do some gardening several times a week
10. Eat a teaspoon of Marmite on toast to lower your brain’s stress response

Another report, published last November, showed that attending church regularly makes you happier and more optimistic about the future. The research, conducted by the Institute for the Impact of Faith in Life (IIFL) showed that more than eight in ten people who go to a place of worship at least once a week reported being happy, compared to just half of those who never attended a religious service. More than 2,000 adults across the UK were surveyed and over 70 per cent said that their faith was important to their identity and they reported having “good psychological wellbeing” compared to less than half of atheists. Among those with a strong attachment to God, more than three quarters said they were confident in handling life’s challenges. Across the survey, people who attended church services also reported higher levels of self-control, better psychological wellbeing and more satisfaction with their lives than others. While it may be considered unfashionable and outdated, I believe that attending church can be the greatest de-stressor of all.

At this time of year especially, as we are longing for the winter to end and as new life is appearing all around us in the fields and in the gardens, we also have the promise of the new life that Easter offers. At Church we will remember that Jesus, through his death and resurrection has come to set us free from our sins, our guilt and our anxiety. And if that doesn’t de-stress us, I don’t know what will!

Reverend Ray Burman
St. George’s, Methwold

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# METHWOLD HISTORY GROUP

**FIRST AN APOLOGY:** Until now it has been possible for the History Group, which meets on the third Thursday of every month, to swap its meeting venue from Peggy's Room to the 21 Room if numbers necessitated it. Unfortunately in March another group had booked the 21 Room and we were unable to move resulting in us having either to use another venue or curb our numbers. As we didn't want to move our equipment or give our guest speaker a different room to the ones we showed him we decided to hold the meeting in Peggy's Room which necessitated numbers being restricted to 'members only'. This is the only time that this has happened in five years and we will do our best to ensure that it doesn't happen again!

**FOR NEXT MONTH'S MEETING** (Thursday April 18th 7.30pm ) we will be welcoming Sarah-Louise Miller who will be giving a talk on her new book "The Lancaster Story". The 21 Room is booked and as it will take an audience of 90 we should have no problem in getting everyone in!

## AN OLD STORY WITH A NEW TWIST

A few years ago I enjoyed giving a talk in St. George's Church about the brass of Sir Adam De Clifton which is displayed in the north aisle. What intrigued me was why the brass of a knight who was born in Buckenham, died in 1367, and had no connection with Methwold whatsoever, should be buried in our church. There were lots of possibilities to be considered but none of them appeared to provide any plausible answer. Recently I decided to make a journey to Old Buckenham (near Aldborough) to see if there was any evidence in the very old and beautiful local church. Old Buckenham today is a lovely village with a huge green at its centre which is surrounded by a pub, schools and houses old & new. It didn't take long in the church to find a genealogy of the De Clifton family which read –

"The de Clifton family was an important family in England. The first de Clifton came over with William the Conqueror and was given estates in Nottinghamshire; his descendants being the Sheriffs of Nottingham among other high offices. .... Osbert (Adam) de Cailly was Lord of Buckenham Castle in the late 13th Century. His daughter Margery (or Margaret) married Roger de Clifton – linking the two important families together. Their son Adam de Clifton was born in Buckenham castle in about 1308. The Cailly family remained important in the history of the area; John de Cailly was Sheriff of Norfolk in 1334-1335."

Unfortunately, apart from one or two mentions of Sir Adam's grandsons, there was nothing else! So the mystery continues ... and yet there is hope! At the back of the Church guidebook there were links to "The Friends of Merton Priory" (which the Clifton family endowed with money and where Sir Adam may originally have been buried) and to the Parish Council & the local history group. Having left my contact details I have had a telephone call & an email from them already and they are going to report back on the evidence that is held in the village. I can't wait for the reply or to write it up in next month's Methwold Times ! Chris Stone

If you have any documents, maps or artefacts relating to Methwold's History and would like to donate them to the village archive please contact me on 01366 728478 or [chris.stone27@btinternet.com](mailto:chris.stone27@btinternet.com) Lets keep Methwold's history in methwold!

# WHAT DOES THE DOCTOR THINK THIS MONTH?

April 2024

Well, here we are. Dank and dark days, standard Midlands weather, rain all the time. Nothing special has happened – the choir is coming along very well and Deannie has still left a massive hole in our lives. Thank God for the family and all my good friends. The garden is full of daffodils and blossom so colour is returning.

I found a couple of jokes which you may enjoy.

From USA: A farmer named Clyde had a tractor accident. In court, the lawyer who was questioning Clyde said "Didn't you say, at the scene of the accident, 'I'm fine,'?" Clyde responded, "Well, I'll tell you what happened. I had just loaded my favourite cow, Bessie, into the..." "I didn't ask for any details", the lawyer interrupted. "Just answer the question, ...please. Did you, or did you not say, at the scene of the accident, 'I'm fine!'" Clyde said, "Well, I had just got Bessie into the trailer behind the tractor and I was driving down the road..." The lawyer interrupted again and said, "Your Honour, I am trying to establish the fact that, at the scene of the accident, this man told the Highway Patrolman on the scene that he was just fine. Now several weeks after the accident he is trying to sue my client. I believe he is a fraud. Please tell him to simply answer the question. By this time, the Judge was fairly interested in Clyde's answer and said to the lawyer, "I'd like to hear what he has to say about his favourite cow, Bessie"

Clyde thanked the Judge and proceeded. "Well, as I was saying, I had just loaded Bessie, my favourite cow, into the trailer and was driving her down the highway when this huge semi-truck and trailer ran the stop sign and smacked my John Deer Tractor right in the side. I was thrown into one ditch and Bessie was thrown into the other. I was hurting, real bad and didn't want to move. However, I could hear old Bessie moaning and groaning. I knew she was in terrible shape just by her groans. Shortly after the accident a Highway Patrolman came on the scene. He could hear Bessie moaning and groaning, so he went over to her. After he looked at her, and saw her fatal condition, he took out his gun and shot her between the eyes. Then the Patrolman came across the road, gun still in hand, looked at me, and said, "How are you feeling?" "Now tell me, what on earth would you say?"

.....  
I mowed the lawn today, and after doing so, I sat down and had a cold beer. The day was really quite beautiful, and the drink facilitated some deep thinking. My wife walked by and asked me what I was doing and I said, "Nothing". The reason I said "nothing" instead of saying "just thinking" is because she then would have asked, "About what?" At that point I would have had to explain that men are deep thinkers about various topics, which would lead to other questions. Finally I pondered an age old question: Is giving birth more painful for a woman than getting kicked in the testicles is for a man ?

Women always maintain that giving birth is way more painful than a guy getting kicked in the testicles, but how could they know? Well, after another beer, and some more heavy deductive thinking, I have come up with an answer to that question. Getting kicked in the testicles is more painful than having a baby, and even though I



obviously couldn't really know, here is the reason for my conclusion: A year or so after giving birth, a woman will often say, "It might be nice to have another child." But you never hear a guy say, "You know, I think I would like another kick in the testicles."

Just to avoid confusion - The above joke refers, of course, to biological males and biological females.

Hopefully, Spring is around the corner and all will be well. Take care of yourselves and treasure each other

All good wishes,

*Jan*



**Visit O.W.Wortley & Sons LTD  
on  
LEAF Open Farm Sunday (9th June 2024)**

**Farming's annual open day**

**On Sunday 9th June, farms across Britain will be opening their gates to the public offering the chance to discover first-hand where their food comes from, how it is produced and allowing the rare opportunity to get up close and personal to farming.**

**So, make a date to visit O.W.Wortley & Sons LTD at Holmebrink Farm, Methwold, IP26 4PH.**

**LEAF Open Farm Sunday** offers a unique chance to see what happens beyond the farm gate showing your support for British farming. This is your opportunity to speak with Paul and other members of the team to learn more about the farming industry, how your food is produced and what is being done to care for the countryside. Have all your questions answered and come away with a plethora of new information and understanding of countryside!!

Look out for more details, information, and plans on social media in the coming months, or call/message 07775898246 with any questions.



### **Councillor Tom Ryves. KLWNBC**

I thought I would like to share this interesting article on the dynamics of defeating an inappropriate application for a factory farm, finally decided in June 2023. The article is based on newspaper reports in the Shropshire Star. The moral I get from this is that where a council grants a planning application which is eventually overturned by the Court of Appeal, that Council will be liable for all costs incurred by the applicant after this initial approval

## **Six-year Bridgnorth chicken farm battle is over after landowner drops fight**

Shropshire Council initially granted permission for the Footbridge Farm scheme but a legal battle ensued after TAG secured a judicial review.

The High Court upheld the council's decision in June 2018, but the group took its fight to the Court of Appeal which ruled in May 2019 that the planning permission should be quashed – meaning the application went back to the council to be decided again.

When the scheme went before the southern planning committee in December 2021, members voted to refuse permission – going against the advice of planning officers.

A six-year fight to stop an intensive chicken farm being built on the outskirts of Bridgnorth has ended in victory after the applicants confirmed they were dropping the plans. The owner of the land has decided not to challenge the decision.

The proposals would have seen four poultry units housing a total of 210,000 birds constructed at Footbridge Farm in Tasley, on land which is now likely to be used for housing as part of the planned 'garden village'.

The Footbridge Farm scheme was rejected by the council in 2021 and the decision was backed by a planning inspector last month, after an appeal by landowner Matthew Bower. Tasley Action Group (TAG), which was formed in 2017 after the plans were lodged, said it was the right decision as the application was "fundamentally flawed".

TAG spokesman and Tasley parish councillor George Edwards said: "It's been six very long, hard-fought years and we are absolutely delighted that this Footbridge Farm industrial poultry scheme has finally been laid to rest once and for all.

"Shropshire Council's planning officers should have binned this application right from the start – it was too close to housing, both existing and planned."

Mr Edwards said it was concerning that the council had accepted the applicant's odour assessment, but the planning inspectorate who heard the appeal later ruled it "could not be relied upon". This issue was put to the council's cabinet at a meeting last week in a public question by Dr Alison Caffyn, who researches the impacts of intensive poultry units in Herefordshire and Shropshire.

She asked how the council would respond to the inspector's concerns over the odour assessment – which was produced by the same company used by applicants behind plans for other intensive poultry units across Shropshire.

However the council said its own environmental protection team and consultancy firm – who were "experts" in the field – had judged that the modelling was fit for purpose.

Mr Edwards said this response showed council officers were “still unable to accept they got it wrong”. He said it was now time for the council to take stock of the number of intensive farming units it has permitted across the county – and say enough is enough. For well over a decade, planning officers have been recommending applications for similar industrial livestock units and Shropshire now has more of them than any other county in England, all of which cumulatively pollute the environment with a progressive detrimental effect on people’s health.

“Yet there has never been any statement from Shropshire Council spelling out precisely what the actual benefits are to Shropshire and its inhabitants from these clearly harmful developments imposed upon communities.

“The national press tells us that the true cost of industrial livestock farming is paid for by the environment, and that the whole model is not, nor has never been, sustainable. Whilst we firmly support British farmers and farming, this cannot be done at the expense of the very environment on which we all rely.

“Herefordshire has called for a moratorium on industrial livestock farming developments for these very reasons, and it is suggested Shropshire Council follow suit, particularly in the light of it having declared a climate emergency.

“Instead of supporting and approving yet more types of these developments, which threaten the environment and health and wellbeing of communities across the county, Shropshire Council’s decision-makers should be supporting the transition of agriculture away from industrial livestock factory farming towards more diverse, sustainable and profitable farming methods.”

**Tom Ryves writes - As an afternote**, the Council who originally agreed the application was required to compensate the applicant for the costs incurred in this first decision by the Council to support the application, such costs being those associated with building the units.

We should note that in the case of the Methwold factory farm application, which I think will be decided on environmental issues, our Council has appointed an well respected external consultant, Reading Agriculture Consultants ( who normally act for applicants) who have pointed out that Cranswick have failed to satisfy Natural England on ammonia projections by just not providing the data, on the doubtful grounds that the application is for the continuation of an existing business. Cranswick, having cast aspersions on the competence of RAC have only one route left...to provide data to satisfy Natural England that the adjacent Special Protection Area is not at risk from the ammonia output of 6,000,000 chickens,

Our MP, the Hon Ms E Truss,MP, ex-PM, has failed completely to support our community as it challenges this major application, some suggesting her close relationship with the Managing Director of Cranswick might be a factor. Her only contribution to my knowledge has been to say that “ the people need cheap food”. We are all only too aware of the impact of factory farming on the quality of the chicken we consume and I would suggest that given the health crisis we all face (and I include myself in the obese category) what we need is healthy food. And that is what real farming is about, not this travesty.

My wishes for 2024 are a rejection of this appalling factory farm planning application and the replacement of Ms Truss by an MP who actually is interested in our lives and our problems and will understand and respond to our concerns

And if you hold Cranswick shares in your retirement portfolio now might be a good time to sell.

## FELTWELL BOWLS CLUB

The indoor bowling has now finished for us outdoor bowlers, it continues through the summer for those wishing to carry on. We ended up with mixed results, the team in the morning Triples Div 2 finishing at the lower end of the league. The 2 teams in the evening Pairs Div 2 fared better with Martin and Neil finishing 5th and Colin, Max and Roger finishing 6th in a league of 12.

The club opening date has not been agreed at the time of drafting this, we have a committee meeting on the 13th March when it will be discussed but too late for this edition

Can now confirm we have entered the following leagues:-

Rosie Smith, Dave Allen, Ashill and Downham and District Triples.

The first game is in the Rosie Smith on May 13th.

The cancelled coffee morning of 10th February was rearranged for the 2nd March, this was well attended with around 35 attending, and a handsome profit to add to the mower fund.

The Quiz held on the 23 March will report in the next edition.

**Max**

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### **METHWOLD SPIRITUALIST CHURCH SERVICES**

Friday Meetings Doors open 7pm for 7.30 start

**22nd March JOHN ENNIS.**

**12th April An Evening of Clairvoyance With POPPY BOWLING.**

**26th April CLARE QUADLING.**

**10th May GREGG PETTIT.**

**The 21 Room, St George's Hall Complex  
16 High Street, Methwold Norfolk IP26 4NT**

**Entrance donation £3. Evening of Clairvoyance £5 (towards costs)**

**Ample parking at rear. For further information ring 01366 727160**

**(Ample parking at rear)**

**For further information ring 01366 727160**



# FELTWELL VILLAGE MUSEUM

2024

Hi all, 😊 we're back open again 😊 MMXXIV

Every Last SATURDAY of the month, March - October

**11AM - 3PM**

*See...*

Feltwell's Wellington bomber crash remains & the story of it's sole survivor.

*Look...*

Our Village Millenium photo books, see your house in the year 2000?

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Paul Garlands 'Then & Now' books, all you need to know of who lived here before us!

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## SPRING INTO ACTION WITH MAGPIE CENTRE ACTIVITIES

Shaking off the winter blues in fine style, more than 90 participants enjoyed the Ceilidh/ Barn Dance at Stowbridge Village Hall on February 17.

The event was a huge success and boosted funds for the Magpie Centre, home of West Norfolk Riding for the Disabled by £1175.

Next up is a Quiz with Hog Roast supper (with veggie alternative), scheduled for Saturday April 27, again at Stowbridge Village Hall, Downham Road, Stowbridge PE34 3PW. Bring your own drinks and glasses. The Hog Roast is accompanied by an array of salads and followed by a mouthwatering selection of desserts.

Teams of 4 – 8 people are welcome or come along and make up a team on the night. Doors open at 7.00 pm for a 7.30pm start.

To book tickets, £12.50 each, call 07715 467866 or email [magpiecentrewnrda@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:magpiecentrewnrda@hotmail.co.uk).

Calling all crafters.....there will be a Craft Fair on Saturday June 8 at the Magpie Centre, Wallington Hall, South Runcton, PE33 0EP 10.00 am – 3.00 pm. Find us on the A10 about three miles north of Downham Market. The fair will be held in the indoor school, with wheelchair-accessible surface, so no worries if the weather is wet. Stalls are £12 per 3 metre space and more than 30 have already been allocated. To book yours, please contact 07715 467866 or email [magpieccfcraft@outlook.com](mailto:magpieccfcraft@outlook.com).

And last but not least, our popular Tea With a Pony afternoons will resume in April. These take place on Wednesday afternoons from 2.00 pm – 3.00 pm at the Magpie Centre and offer the opportunity for those living with health/mobility difficulties to meet, stroke and spend time with one of our friendly ponies; enjoy tea/coffee and cakes; chat to friends, and take time to relax in our new sensory garden, full of fragrant flowers, plants and water features.

Complete wheelchair access is available, and we welcome individuals, small groups or larger groups, up to a maximum of 30. Booking is essential, at £6.00 per person. To secure your place, visit our website: [www.rda-westnorfolk.org](http://www.rda-westnorfolk.org), call the Magpie Centre on 01553 810202 or email [magpiecentrewnrda@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:magpiecentrewnrda@hotmail.co.uk). We look forward to hearing from you.

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WNAS March 2024

Amanda Harrison, latter-day Amy Johnson, was our celebrity guest speaker this month. We say 'celebrity' because she has rubbed shoulders with the famous:- sports personalities, politicians, film stars and royalty, the latter being, in her own words, the least self-

opinionated and the least pretentious. The opportunity for this privilege resulted from becoming, later in her career, a commercial pilot instructor.

Her fascination for flying began when she was a schoolgirl. Her father and brother were both aero-modellers; the seed was sown; it germinated and, now she has her own full grown 1930s Tiger Moth in which she is re-enacting her hero's epic journey, some of it already completed. Much of Amanda's story is common knowledge and references to her achievements are well documented online. Her presentation at our meeting together with the book she has published help fill in the gaps in this incredible saga.

This vivacious but modest 46 year old trod the Mundford Bowls Club boards with confidence, humour and enthusiasm. It seemed, almost, as if she was enjoying the company of the WNAS as much as she does her beloved aeroplane.



There was an underlying message in her story that was not just about the thrill of flying her own aeroplane but by how much the sensation was magnified by circumstances leading up to her success. Amanda wears her heart on her sleeve: as a teenager with few academic achievements and, being diagnosed with dyslexia, her peers regarded her as a 'no-hoper' destined for a career stacking shelves. Now, she seems to have another quest: to right some of the wrongs our education system has over-looked. She gives up some of her precious spare time to children with learning difficulties; to demonstrate that: 'where there's a will there's a way'. She encourages them into the belief that learning is exciting rather than a chore. In a rather perverse way facing adversity seems to have strengthened her resolve: after undergoing an operation for a double mastectomy, her father dying a few days later and a broken Gypsy Major engine in Beirut her spirits are still high and she is confident that, after she receives air clearance over the war torn Middle East, Australia is only a step away. Our society's thanks must also go to Techie Steve for discovering this treasure trove. Our chatty chairman, Chris H, addressing the floor, closed the meeting with the pithy afterthought: try not to die before the next instalment. www.westnorfolkaviationsociety.co.org

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Internet Security
Repairs & Upgrades
Program installations

Georgina Sims

Egrets in our countryside – a sign of changing times

25 years ago, I wouldn't have been able to write this article- as there had been very few records of any of our three, now common, egret species in the UK. The first species to make landfall on a regular basis was the Little egret- which turned up in significant numbers in 1989. This small, very elegant visitor was a novelty- with its pure white plumage, black bill, black legs and yellow feet. Like Grey herons, they could be found in wet places- ditches, pools and marshy areas, shining bright against a backdrop of browns and greens.

Lakenheath Fen's first record of a Little egret came on 25 April 2002- as part of their rapid northwards expansion from its breeding colonies in the south-west of the UK. Two years later, we hosted its much larger cousin, the Great white egret, for the first time on 25 January 2004. A large influx in 2007-2008 resulted in there being enough here at one time to persuade them to breed, in Somerset in 2008. Like the Little egret, it then expanded its range naturally and both species can today be seen every day on the reserve in good numbers. In Autumn 2023 for many weeks it was possible to see 40+ Little egret and 20+ Great white egret all enjoying a feast of large fish that had made their way into the Hockwold Washes through the inlet from the river Little Ouse. Most days, single figures of both species is more usual, but the high counts of last year really show us how many there now are in the local area.

Much more recently, in 2020, the first Cattle egret was spotted on the reserve- on 15 August. Fast forward to now, and in recent months we've had almost daily sightings of this species and 21 were spotted during a winter wetland bird count on 12 February this year. Cattle egrets are quite different in habits and behaviour from other egrets and herons, as they mostly associate with cattle and sheep- they feed on worms and other bugs turned over by their hooves, and also on ticks, flies and other pests attracted to the animals themselves.

The arrival of these three species of egret in the UK in the past 25 years is thought to be a result of a warming climate. Now, in our local area, it is quite possible to see all four species, including Grey heron, in one day if we keep an eye on ditches and pools and livestock grazing in wet places.

By Heidi Jones (Visitor Experience Officer, RSPB Lakenheath Fen).

~~~~~



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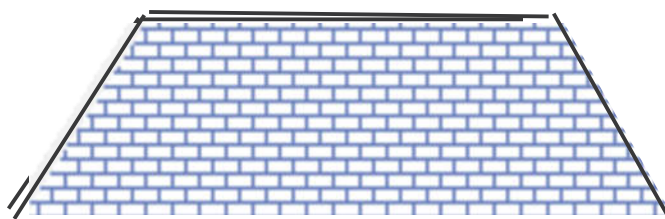
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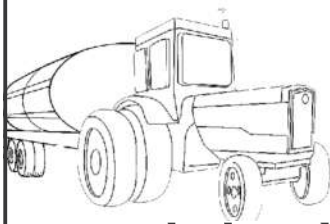


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