The Messenger



Issue 170
May
2026

Serving Gislingham, Mellis, Yaxley and the Thornhams

THE MESSENGER TEAM

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WELCOME TO THE MESSENGER



Welcome to the May issue!

As we step into May, there's a wonderful mix of events bringing people together and celebrating everything that makes our communities so special.

There's certainly plenty to look forward to. Whether you're planning to dust off your dancing shoes for the Retro Dance Night in Gislingham, enjoy the beauty of spring at Blossom Day at The Walled Garden, or spend an evening in good company at Rhyme and Wine at Mellis Church, there is something for everyone. Our community spirit continues with the Gislingham Annual Village Meeting, where the 'Watson Bowl' and 'Volunteer of the Year' awards for 2025 will be presented. And if you're feeling inspired to try something new, why not head along to Thornham Bowls Club on May 2nd for their open day? It's a great way to meet others and perhaps discover a new hobby. If you fancy a bingo night, that comes courtesy of Yaxley Village Hall and the monthly film night continues at Thornhams Parish Hall. There's also a 'Blossom Day' at The Walled Garden in Thornham Walks.

While we celebrate these events, we also pause to reflect on the sad passing of Gislingham resident David Braybrooke. Many will have known David and will remember his presence in the community. Our thoughts are with Anne and their family at this time.

We'd like to take a moment to thank all our loyal advertisers, whose support makes it possible to publish this magazine free to over 1,200 households each month. Every advert represents a local business or service helping to keep our community thriving — so if you're in need of something, please consider contacting those who appear in our pages first. These are not faceless companies, but local people offering real services—builders, electricians, decorators, gardeners, lawn care specialists, beauticians, hairdressers, and many more - many of whom live and work right here in our community. So, if you're planning a job at home, need a repair, or are looking for a reliable local service, or fancy a meal out; please take a moment to look through the advertisements and consider using one of the businesses featured. By doing so, you're not only supporting them—you're helping to sustain the magazine itself.

It's a simple cycle: local businesses support the magazine, and in turn, the community supports those businesses.

Finally, if you're planning an event, have local news to share, or would like to contribute an article or photograph, we'd love to hear from you. The deadline for the June issue is Saturday 16th May. This magazine belongs to all of us, and every contribution helps keep it relevant.

Until next month,

Jeff Norman, Editor e) themessengereditorial@gmail.com

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DIARY & LOCAL EVENTS



MAY:

Saturday 2nd May: Thornham Magna Bowls Club Open Day
– Thornham Magan Bowls Club: from 10.00am all day! See page 27 for details

Saturday 2nd May: Coffee morning & Book sale
- Gislingham Village Hall: 10.00am – 12 noon.

Tuesday 5th May: Rural Coffee Caravan
- Mellis Memorial Hall: 10.00am-12.00 mid-day.

Saturday 9th May: Blossom Day
- Beyond the wall, Thornham Walks: 12.00 mid-day – 3.00pm. See page 25 for details.

Saturday 9th May: Retro Dance Night
- Gislingham Village Hall: 7.30pm – 10.00pm – See page 12 for details.

Saturday 9th May: Bingo Evening
- Yaxley Village Hall: 7.00pm – See page 22 for details

Friday 15th May: Film Night – 'The Friend''
- Thornhams Parish Hall: Tickets £6 pay on the door. See page 24 for more details.

Monday 18th May: Gislingham Annual Village Meeting.
- Gislingham Village Hall: 7.30pm. See page 7 for details.

Wednesday 20th May: Gislingham WI - speaker Anne Stanford 'Beekeeping'
- Gislingham Village Hall 7.30pm.

Wednesday 27th May: Rhyme & Wine
- Mellis Church: 7.00pm. See page 17 for details

WHAT ARE THE NEIGHBOURS DOING?

2nd, 3rd & 4th May: Finningham Flower Festival at St. Bartholomew's Church – See page 59.

Sunday 21st June: Games on the Green at Finningham from 2.30pm

Please note, any event changes after the magazine goes to print are updated on our Facebook page at: https://www.facebook.com/themessengergismeltho

SAVE THE DATES:

- **Saturday 13th & Sunday 14th June: The Hidden Gardens of Mellis.** See p.17 for details.
- **Saturday 27th June: Gisfest at Gislingham Village Hall.** See p.43 for details.
- **Saturday 11th July: Gislingham village fete at Village Hall (1.00 pm to 4.00 pm)**
- **Saturday 8th August: Gislingham Garden, Arts and Produce Show.**

Our next issue is June 2026. The "What's On" Diary deadline is: Saturday 16th May

CLUBS, CLASSES & REGULAR EVENTS

GISLINGHAM

Chat & Craft Club: Gislingham Village Hall. 1st Wednesday of every month. 12.00-2.00pm. Contact: Elspeth Tranter on 07473 131841.

Baby and Tots Group for the Under 2's: Primary School (School Term time only)**.** Every Wednesday 9.45am – 11.00am. Contact Debbie Nicholls: 07762 116 335

Carpet Bowls Club: Village Hall. Every Monday 2.15pm to 4.15pm. £3.00 per session. All equipment provided.

Pilates Classes: Village Hall. Wednesdays 9.15am and 10.15am and also Thursdays 7.10pm. Becky Cruickshank: 07734 414151

Total Fitness: Village Hall. Every Thursday 6.15pm - 7.00pm. A cardio fitness class that can be adapted to all abilities. Becky Cruickshank: 07734 414151

Gislingham WI: Village Hall. Meet the third Wednesday of every month at 7.30pm. New members welcome. For more details contact Margaret: 01379 783903 or Terrie: 01379 788521.

Gislingham Silver Band: Band Hut. Tuesdays 7.30pm - 9.30pm. Contact Iris Debock: 01379 788066 or debock.iris@gmail.com

Yoga Classes: Gislingham Village Hall. Tuesdays 7.00pm - 8.30pm And via zoom on Thursdays 7.00pm – 8.00pm. Both term time only Contact Clare Hall on 07704 570877 or email: thornhamyoga@yahoo.com

Gislingham Variety Club:
A local multi-talented group who perform twice a year in the Village Hall. If you are interested to join us, please contact by email: gislinghamvariety@gmail.com

THORNHAM

parkrun: Thornham Walks
Every Saturday at 9.00am. 5k. www.parkrun.org.uk/thornhamwalks/

Pilates Classes: Parish Hall every Tuesday.
Sit to Stand Pilates – 10.00am.
Pilates – Strong, Stretch, Relax – 11.30am
For information please contact: Michelle 07572 500465 or via email: hello@yapl.co.uk.

Thornham Bowls Club: Thornham Road. New Members welcome.
For more details contact Keith: 01379 871881

Bellringing: Thornham Magna Church. Mondays 7.30pm – 9.00pm. For details contact Sylvie: 01379 788130

Mellis Cricket Club plays at Thornham Estate
Saturdays and Sundays (May to Sept.) New Players phone: James on 07789 111165 or email: jameshkw@icloud.com

MELLIS

Circuit Training Fitness Class: Memorial Hall. Mondays 7.30pm – 8.30pm
Gus: T: 01379 788506 or 07716 118235 / anguswilkinson@btinternet.com

Scentwork for Dogs
Meetings on Tuesdays 2.00pm – 3.00pm at Mellis Memorial Hall
Further details: 07725 567110 or email: info@trailingtails.co.uk

YAXLEY

The Art Club
Meetings on Tuesdays 10.00am to 12 noon once weekly at Yaxley Village Hall
Dates: 5th, 12th 19th & 26th May.
All abilities are welcome. £4.00 per session. Come and create something artistic in your own style. Further details: Glyn Owens 07768 026065 or email: gavowens@aol.com

The Garden Club
Thursday 5th May: Afternoon Visit to Greenacre House, The Street, Hinderclay. IP22 1HX.
More details: Abby Brett: 01379 783984 or email: tony1andabby2@hotmail.com

Yaxley Needlework & Craft Group
Meetings on alternate Wednesdays (13th & 27th May) from 2.00pm to 4.00pm at Yaxley Village Hall - £2.50 per session
Finish old projects or start a new one – enjoy a chat and a cuppa!
Further details: Celia Armstrong 01379 788754 or email: celiaarmstrong@hotmail.co.uk

GISLINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL VILLAGE MEETING

18th May • 7.30pm

Presentation of Watson Bowl and Volunteer Award

Followed by a Performance from Gislingham Variety Club

Drinks and Nibbles Available!

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REMEMBERING DAVID



Dear Friends,

My family and I have been overwhelmed by the wonderful cards, flowers and messages we have had from so many of you in the village and the surrounding area after David died. I want to say a huge thank you to you all for your kindness.

David and I have lived in Gislingham for nearly twenty years, the longest we have ever lived in one place! As most of you know David loved having conversations with anyone he met, his walks always took longer than expected! We both thought from the beginning what a friendly place it was, and so it proved to be.



He served for nearly thirty years in the Royal Navy, in several ships and two posts abroad, in Aden and Malta. He served for two years on HM Yacht Britannia which was I think the highlight of his time in the Royal Navy.

After he retired from the Navy he worked as the Secretary and ADC to the Governor of Jersey. We had eight happy years there before coming to live in Suffolk, which was not planned but turned out to be our best move, and we had had a lot of those!

He worked for the Game Conservancy Trust for some years before we moved to Gislingham.

David spent nearly thirty years as the Poppy Appeal Organiser first in Whepstead and then again soon after we came to live in Gislingham before eventually giving it up, but he continued to do house to house collection.





I have been so lucky to have had sixty-four years with him.

Anne Braybrook

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GISLINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL NOTES



We are trying to arrange for the energy companies both Pylon and Solar to give an updated presentation as to the current status of both future projects. Our Clerk has been and continues to be very active in this process.

I have recently been advised of some theft of oil from oil tanks, 2 in Palgrave and 1 near Eye ... If you have an oil tank, please ensure that it is locked and be aware of any suspicious vehicles parked near your property when you have an oil delivery.

Annual Village meeting Monday 18th May starting immediately after the Parish Council Meeting which will start at the earlier time of 6.30pm, your chance to meet, chat, interact with Councillors, pose any questions you may have... any thoughts about joining the Parish Council. We will be happy to provide full information and will try to answer any questions about our role etc.

The Watson Bowl and Volunteer of the year awards will be presented and course refreshments will be provided.



Martyn Bryant very kindly organised our b-annual Gislingham Litter Pick. There was a brilliant response as 17 adults and 7 children helped out. For the first time in ages, we managed to cover all the areas on the village list. Although you will see plenty of bags in the photo, surprisingly enough, the feedback has been that not much was collected. The worst areas as always are the Thornham Road and Mill Street after the last bungalow going out of the village and we all know why..... irresponsible drivers, who chuck out their rubbish whilst leaving or entering the village.

Finally, and it is with deep regret that I have to announce the passing of Mr David Braybrook following a recent illness, my personal thoughts and those of this council go out to his family.

David as many of you will be aware is ex-Navy and proudly represented the armed forces on most occasions in the village. In addition, David will be remembered for his sterling efforts with the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal for which he did an excellent job. He will be sorely missed by all.

Christopher Tranter, Gislingham Parish Council Chair



NEWS FROM GISLINGHAM VILLAGE HALL





The Village Hall Committee organised two Basic Life Support and Automated External Defibrillator Awareness Classes at the hall on Thursday 9th April 2026.

These were attended by 23 villagers, with all who came along stating the benefit they obtained from the course.

The Hall is available for hire at a cost of £10 per hour, which includes tables, chairs, lighting, heating, water etc. There are also village hall assets available for hire at an additional cost. These include, a sound system and a large screen television. Additionally, there are tables and chairs and a marquee which can be used outside of the hall.

FUTURE EVENTS

Saturday 16th May: Quiz Night
- Doors open at 7.00 pm. Bring your own food and drinks. £5.00 entry. Tickets available from Terry Williams at gislinghamvillagehall@gmail.com or 01379 83903

Saturday 27th June: Gisfest - Details to follow.

Saturday 25th July: Quiz Night
- Watch this space for details.

Saturday 22nd August: Jumble Sale
- Watch this space for details.

Saturday 12th September: Quiz Night
- Watch this space for details.

Saturday 17th October: Bingo Night
- Watch this space for details.

Saturday 12th December: Quiz Night
- Watch this space for details.

Follow us at www.facebook.com/GislinghamVillageHall/
PLEASE SUPPORT YOUR VILLAGE HALL

YAXLEY PARISH COUNCIL NEWS



As I write grey skies have given way to blue and spring has truly arrived. April and May are my two favourite months with flowers, blossom, the smell of new-mown grass and summer within touching distance.

Now to more prosaic matters. Yaxley Parish Council met on 8th April giving me some news to impart through these pages. I am lucky to lead a council with a truly broad age range and a wealth of experience and enthusiasm. Matters are discussed fully, and decisions are not taken lightly. The salient points of that latest meeting follow.

County Councillor Jessica Fleming Not Standing for Re-election

The first point of note is a sad one. Jessica Fleming, our long serving county councillor took questions on her usual comprehensive report then announced that she would not be standing for re-election in the forthcoming county council elections in May. This will be a great loss. Councillor Fleming has been of enormous help to Yaxley Parish Council over many years. Despite her large workload and a very large number of parish councils to serve she has attended an impressive proportion of our meetings and has supported many of our projects with generous grants from her locality budget. The Keith Pawsey Play Area in our village benefitted from such a grant, as did the placing of chevrons on a local hazardous bend, refurbishment of the Village Hall and most recently our much-needed horse warning signs. She has always fought our corner in our battles for action from Suffolk Highways and has been a good listener and sage advisor to us on many occasions. We are very sorry to see her go and wish her well for the future. Whomever is elected in her place on May 7th will have a very tough act to follow. Good luck!

National Grid Access

The decision was then taken to extend use of the temporary haul road across the hardstands on the A140 (owned by the Parish Council) to National Grid on a yearly licence as its engineers connect the Yaxley Substation and separate Synchronous Condenser to the National Electricity Grid. The Yaxley Substation will then allow power from the recently constructed gas power station on the Yaxley Airfield to enter the National Grid, and the Synchronous Condenser will even out ebb and flow in the input of solar and wind energy, also to the Grid. Allowing use of the Haul Road prevents National Grid trying to use the single-track narrow Leys Lane which would seriously inconvenience and disturb the residents. Of course, this also brings in revenue to the Parish Council for use in our local community. For example, such revenue meant we were able to bear the lion's share of the considerable cost of the refurbishment of our Village Hall in 2024/5.

Allotment Incentives

It had been brought to the Parish Council's attention that although the site was generally kept neat and tidy a few of the unused allotment plots were becoming overgrown with brambles and that the rabbit prevention fences were no longer in any fit state to deter our long-eared friends. This state of affairs was considered possibly responsible for the low uptake of plots. The Council thereby decided that all unused plots would henceforth be properly cleared of brambles and weeds by our contractor, and any people taking up a currently unused plot would have the fence fully repaired and the soil rotavated for the first time at our expense in order to give them the best possible helping hand on their new plot. Allotments can provide great exercise and be very rewarding, but we do recognise that the prospect of clearing a forest of weeds and cracking untilled soil before growing anything was unfairly daunting. The rent for our allotment plots is £30 per year and we accept applications from all local villages. Why not give it a go?

Planning

Much of a Parish Council's time is taken up discussing and commenting on planning applications within our parish boundary. Parish Councils do not have the final say on any application but are expected to give a local perspective on the possible effect of the building being planned or change of use of any premises in the Village. Would it be in keeping with its surroundings? Does it unfairly intrude on adjacent properties? Does its road access provide a hazard? The Parish Council can support, oppose or choose to make no comment on an application. Any comment then provides one of the many documents considered by Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council Planning Officers in making their decision. Other documents can come from neighbours, Suffolk Highways, Heritage Officers, Environmental Officers, Fire Officers and other parties whose views are of relevance to a particular application. Sometimes particularly contentious issues go to the BMSDC Planning Committee where it is considered in public session by elected councillors.

A Parish Council will of course take into account views put to it by local residents in reaching its own view. If these are conflicting and local people seem divided on the issue the Parish Council will attempt to come to a consensus through extensive discussion. If this does not prove possible then a vote will be held among council members with the Chairman holding a casting vote in the event of a tie. All of this is done in public. Planning discussions are usually the longest items in our meetings and are taken very seriously. We cannot always please everybody, but we do take great care in trying to be fair. Our last meeting considered two applications but sometimes many more can appear on any one agenda.

Monitoring and Maintenance

Every meeting ends by receiving a verbal report from Parish Councillors responsible for monitoring both Parish Council land and our equipment placed around the Village and maintained at Parish Council expense for the benefit of the community. These are: the Keith Pawsey Play Area; the defibrillator; the two speed indicator devices; the Parish Council cemetery and our historic Old Well with its cover and seat (which provided drinking water for Yaxley until 1952), the bins and bottle banks and the water bowser at the allotments, I am grateful to all councillors who carry out this monitoring. Your work makes a difference. Thank you.





Finally, we move to any other business where councillors have a chance to air urgent issues brought to their attention by villagers since the last meeting. These can include potholes, uneven pavements, overgrown footpaths and many more issues.

If anybody living in Yaxley or owning/running a business there, would like to join us on the Parish Council we currently have one vacancy. If you would like to be considered please email our clerk, Mr P Freeman on philip.c.freeman@btinternet.com

Ian Luff (Chairman, Yaxley Parish Council)

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The Hidden Gardens of Mellis 2026

13th & 14th June 2026
10.30am - 4.30pm

Approximately 14 gardens will be open

Tickets and refreshments for sale on the day at the Memorial Hall
Plant sale
£5 per adult, accompanied under 16s free

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YOUR STARTER FOR 10*

Having recently watched the 1953 British classic film comedy, 'Genevieve', about pre 1905 veteran cars competing in the 62 mile 'London to Brighton Run', it brought to my mind just how far the automobile has progressed. The film featured in particular a 1904 Darracq and a 1905 Spyker, both cars suffering reliability issues throughout the journey. Classic cars are still standing the test of time, according to government figures, in 2024, 415,000 historic vehicles were licenced in the U.K.

Fifty years ago, the population in Britain outnumbered the motorcar by a ratio of seven to one; the ratio is now estimated to be two to one, that's 34 million cars! Whether driving petrol, diesel or electrically powered cars, motorists can only look forward to ever increasing congestion on U.K. roads. The first section of the M1 opened in 1959, the same year that that the B.M.C. Mini was introduced and the first single two-way Dartford tunnel opened four years later in 1963. In recent times, adding another lane to the M1, another Dartford tunnel and a Dartford bridge still can't cope. I won't mention the M25, Chris Rea describes it better! No doubt the time will come to by-pass the M1 and the M25 and the reality is another Dartford crossing is already in the planning stages. The internal or infernal combustion engine, depending on your point of view has become an increasingly important part of many people's lives since the end of the Second World War.



Although not legally permitted to drive on the public highway, I bought my first car in 1963. It was a 30-year-old Austin 10* costing three pounds, ten shillings (£3.50.) I was permitted to drive the Austin on my parent's farmland in Essex; occasionally this might have meant a quick diversion along a road very much similar to Yaxley's Leys Lane. If you visualise the stereotypical 'Al Capone' gangster era car with huge headlamps fixed atop the front wings with 'running-boards' beneath the doors on both sides, the Austin 10 was a smaller version. In comparison to a modern car which is fabricated from steel and plastic, the old Austin had a steel chassis frame with a wooden floor; the body frame was also made in part from wood covered with something similar to leather. Car ownership obviously required carpentry as well as mechanical skills in the old days?

Something missing on a modern car is the starting handle, this onetime essential accessory required expertise to operate. Inserted through a cut out shaped like a small version of the 'London Underground' emblem in the front bumper, the end of the handle connected temporarily to the engine. The starting method is not simply like winding a clock and if done incorrectly, could break your wrist. Never, ever push down on the handle; it will kick back with a vengeance. The art was to reach a point of resistance turning clockwise to a theoretical position of 7 o' clock then the handle was pulled forcefully upwards, hey presto the engine bursts into life … or not. You soon get the hang of it or run out of strength for repeat performances.

My first road legal car was a three-year-old Ford Anglia that was already becoming the victim of the happy motorist's arch enemy, RUST! Most cars rusted prematurely by today's standards, a joke at the time was, "don't leave your new Vauxhall Cresta out in the rain overnight because in the morning only the engine block will remain." The weekend desire for tinkering with the motor car brought about an increasing demand for car accessory shops such as Halfords. Men would often return from the accessory shop laden with perforated zinc sheet, fibreglass matting, resin, 'Isopon P38' filler, sheets of wet n' dry paper and little spray cans of cellulose paint. The whole weekend could be spent cutting out rusted areas above the headlights and where the mud was trapped behind the front wings, all to be filled, rubbed down and spray painted …only to go through the process again a few weeks later when unsightly paint blisters appeared.



It can be taken for granted that cars nowadays come equipped as standard with a radio, wing mirrors, screen washers, reversing lights in fact the list can go on and on. Back in my young days, you would be lucky if you had a heater fitted as standard. More weekend trips to the accessory shop follow over a period of time to purchase all manner of essential but optional car accessories. Problem with so many of the accessories was the fact holes had to be drilled in the, hopefully immaculate bodywork, especially the front wings and also the dashboard. Who today would take a power drill to the paintwork of their Ford, Toyota or Volkswagen? Holes for a Radiomobile or Motorola car radio, without CD player to be drilled under the dashboard, and a huge hole in the top of the front wing for the retractable aerial, panic, panic.

As well as smartening up the exterior, there were all sorts of 'lotions and potions' to add that certain something to the engine. Oil additives were in abundance, S.T.P. and Wynns being the most popular. These had the consistency of Tate and Lyle's golden syrup and were designed to increase the engines performance? Nowadays how many people top up the engine oil each week, not many, I guess. You would have been lucky to travel more than 150 miles in a 1960's Mini before having to add half a pint of oil, in fact the majority of cars required regular top ups. Nowadays a new car hardly uses a drop of oil in 10,000 miles. Not content with adding all sorts to the engine oil, there was also 'Redex' upper cylinder lubricant available on the petrol station forecourt to add into the petrol tank. One penny a shot for each gallon, it was no surprise that most cars spewed out blue smoke from the exhaust.

I remember a time before the 70mph speed limit, no M.O. T's, no drink-drive limit, no seat belts and no tyre regulations. A tyre change was due when the canvas showed through from beneath the non-existent rubber tread or if you were brave, when the inner tube made a brief appearance before … bang!

Considering the lack of safety related regulations, there was still the desire for speed. The monthly motoring magazines featured regular performance enhancing articles for all the popular cars. 'De-coke' is a word not often heard or even understood nowadays, basically, the top of the engine would be stripped down at regular intervals to clean out the carbon deposits around the top of the pistons, the cylinder head and exhaust ports. Grinding in the valves was a part of this regular chore. Including me, many boys left school with the knowledge of using a 'valve lapper' with four dabs of grinding paste under the seat of each valve. All this work occupied another precious weekend and all in the pursuit of a few extra miles an hour and an extra mile or two per gallon … hopefully.

John Hawes

MELLIS, MEET YOUR LOCAL... COUNCILLOR



I'll be introducing you to various Mellis residents and business owners over the coming months, so please don't be alarmed if I approach with pad, pen, camera and a question or two! To kick off, I'm Lorraine Farley, a local resident since 2021, with my other half Harry, my 3 children who all attended Hartismere school from year 7 to 13, our dog Jasper and cat Freddie. I work full time for a global confectionery and snacks manufacturing group, love being outdoors and you may see me walking or jogging with Jasper or on my bike. Mellis is a great place to live and we should all feel proud to reside in an area with such history and charming scenery. As a family we were made to feel very welcome when we moved here, from across the great divide of the A140 having lived in Thorndon for 15 years. I joined the Parish Council a year later to be more involved in community life and because I'm nosey I wanted to know what was going on "behind the scenes". Your parish council works hard, attending monthly council meetings amongst many others, delving into projects that will affect not only Mellis but surrounding areas, managing budgets, improving our community, liaising with parishioners, supporting local organisations and our young people, running events, ensuring our local environment is protected and much, much more. Come along to our next Parish meetings on 21st May from 6:30pm to learn more about what we do.

I have really enjoyed the community BBQ's, beacon lighting and singing, bringing us all together to our hub at the Memorial Hall and Railway Tavern. I have also enjoyed working with the regular supporters that turn up rain or shine to pick up rubbish, plant bulbs, clear ditches – you know who you are and we are very grateful for your time, your humour and commitment to ensure our village remains a beautiful place to live.

Other Mellis news

The railway crossing was closed for several days in April to improve the level crossing. Removing ballast and enhancing the crossing surfaces to give passengers and road users a smoother ride (their words not mine!).



The churchyard has had quite the makeover with a load of clearing done so that we can now actually see the church and it's looking really lovely. Huge thanks to Mike Charnley, Pete Scott, Alan Cross and Andrew Peel.

Fellow councillors Alan and Ghed, took Will Cranston (from Suffolk Wildlife Trust who manage **The Common**) around the land to discuss work that needed to be done to clear brambles, which has now already started, and to make plans on the next stage of works for later this year. The common cannot just be left to its own devices, so careful management is needed to prevent it becoming barren and to encourage even more diversity of flora and fauna.



The **Coffee Caravan** get togethers are the 1st Tuesday of each month at MMH, so the next ones are 5th May and 2nd June. These are funded by the parish council so free to attend and are "a social space in a rural place" offering an opportunity to meet up with neighbours, access information and receive support for happy, independent living.

Mellis Garden is really coming on, with the fruit trees blossoming and the odd piece of fruit produced in their first year, so very promising indeed and there are hopes to be able to hold a harvest festival event here when they are more mature, using their fruits to produce some lovely offerings. The bulb planting certainly paid off and swathes of daffodils were in flower in March which was stunning to view whilst taking time out, seated on one of the benches.



Mellis Canix meet every Saturday morning at 7:30am for a jog with your dog and a very enjoyable Easter Egg Hunt was held Easter weekend with plenty of games and treats along the way. Thanks Alan Bunny Carter.





You should all now have your additional blue and food waste recycling bins. Remember the collections don't start until June. "Around 31,000 tonnes of household food waste each year could be sent to the new facility at the Adnams Distribution Centre, in Reydon near Southwold, which will be processed to generate green fuel (biomethane), and turned into soil fertiliser – meaning Suffolk's food waste is put to better use." More info can be found at https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/council-news/all-suffolk-food-waste-to-be-processed-in-the-county. This is a great initiative to reduce our demand for fossil fuels, helping the UK achieve its net zero target and to enable us to be more self-sufficient as a nation, as we still import huge volumes of gas from the US and other countries. The pictogram is a generic view to show how anaerobic digestion works using food waste, to produce electricity.



Councillor Farley

Yaxley Village Hall

Old Ipswich Road, Yaxley IP23 8BT

Presents

Bingo

Bingo Evening

Saturday, 9th May 2026 from 7 for 7.30pm

With a guest Caller John Hawes

Bingo Books £1 each or 6 for £5

Bring your own drinks and nibbles for a fun evening with great prizes

YAXLEY VILLAGE HALL NEWS



The Village Hall's Centenary Celebration will take place from Friday 4th September to Sunday 6th September. The calendar of events is beginning to take shape:

Friday 4th September: The hall will be open from 3pm presenting a static display on the history of the Village over the last 100 years. There will be a bar for refreshments and in the evening from 7.30pm a musical evening with music across the decades.

Saturday 5th September: The hall will be open throughout the day to view the display. In the afternoon a Magic show will take place for all the family. This will be followed in the evening by a talk about the village and hall presented by Mr John Hawes and Mr Ian Luff. The bar will be open throughout.

Sunday 6th September: The hall will again be open throughout the day. There will be a presentation of Morris Dancing in the afternoon and musical evening of folk music to enjoy bringing the weekend to a close.

We hope you will put the dates in your diary and join us to enjoy our Centenary Celebration.

Remember, the Hall is available to hire for your event at a very reasonable all-inclusive rate for your family celebration, club or party. Just ring the Booking Secretary on 01379 788754.

On the 9th May there will be a Bingo evening, for all the family with prizes for each lucky person calling "House" John Hawes will once again be the caller. We do hope you will be able to come along and join in.

Our committee would like to organise more events to support the Hall and we are looking for volunteers who would like to join us to help us. If you have an hour or so a month to spare and would like to assist us in running the Hall then please get in touch with Gill Stone (Chairperson) gill.ianstone@yahoo.com.

Also, our Treasurer will be retiring shortly so we are looking for someone to take over the role as soon as possible. If you have the relevant experience to take over from him, please e-mail i.muir@btinternet.com.





HIRE OF YAXLEY VILLAGE HALL
To book or enquire, please contact Celia Armstrong on 01379 788754 or by email: celiaarmstrong@hotmail.co.uk

Thornhams Film Night
Friday, 15th May 7:30pm

A writer's life gets thrown into disarray after her closest friend bequeaths her a Great Dane



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Also, we have an open day on Saturday 2nd May from 10.00am
The address of the Bowls Club is, Gislingham Road, Thornham Magna, IP23 8HH
(Opposite the estate farm entrance)
(Just come with flat shoes, everything else will be provided)

If you can't make the 2nd May and you are interested, come and give it a try, we will be there every Saturday morning from 10-00am to 1-00pm, May to September.



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VOLUNTEERS WANTED

GET INVOLVED

MELLIS MEMORIAL HALL - Treasurer

The volunteer committee who run and manage the Memorial Hall meet approximately 4-6 times per year. Our treasurer has recently moved from the village so we are actively seeking a new treasurer. For more information, please email our Chairman, Doug Rogers on: bookmellishall@gmail.com

YAXLEY VILLAGE HALL – Committee members & Treasurer

Our committee would like to organise more events to support the Hall and we are looking for volunteers who would like to join us to help us. If you have an hour or so a month to spare and would like to assist us in running the Hall then please get in touch with Gill Stone (Chairperson) email: gill.ianstone@yahoo.com

Also, our Treasurer will be retiring shortly so we are looking for someone to take over the role as soon as possible. If you have the relevant experience to take over from him, please e-mail i.muir@btinternet.com

GISINGHAM PARISH COUNCILLORS

If you feel that becoming a Parish Councillor is something you would like to do or if you would be willing to take on any role to help the community, please contact our clerk and we can give greater insight into what is involved in any role.

Email: clerk@gislinghamparishcouncil.gov.uk or Tel: 07833 705915.

GISLINGHAM COMMUNITY SPEEDWATCH

If you're passionate about road safety and want to connect with your neighbours, consider becoming a Community Speed Watch volunteer in Gislingham. It's a rewarding experience that can have a lasting impact.

To get involved, contact Steve Critchley at: s.j.critchley@btinternet.com

YAXLEY PARISH COUNCILLOR

We are looking for a person to come forward to fill the one vacancy on Yaxley Parish Council.

If you are interested in becoming a Parish Councillor, please contact our Clerk to find out what the role entails. To express an interest, or request further information, please contact the Clerk via email: Philip.c.freeman@btinternet.com

MELLIS PARISH COUNCILLORS

There are currently three councillor vacancies, so if you would like to be involved to improve the local community, and can commit to attending the monthly meetings, we would be very pleased to hear from you. To express an interest, or request further information, please contact the Clerk via email: clerk@mellisparishcouncil.gov.uk, or by calling: 07796 410694.

If your group or organisation is looking for volunteers and you would like us to publish the details in a future issue, please email: themessengereditorial@gmail.com

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NATURE NOTES by Darrel Charles



Hello everyone, welcome back to Nature Notes

Pottering around in the garden last month I heard some beautiful birdsong that I tracked down to a Song Thrush singing away in a nearby oak tree. This was a very handsome bird indeed and I was pleased to have the time go indoors, get my camera and return to see him still there for this shot. Seeing this particular bird reminded me that it had been quite a long time since I had seen a Song Thrush. On that occasion, I'd been lucky to see one showing classic behaviour - breaking open snail shells on a stone to get at a tasty snack inside. Sadly, Song Thrushes are not as common as they once were and they are currently listed as amber on the list of conservation concern.



A pleasing thing to have heard when walking along village footpaths recently has been the sound of woodpeckers drumming away. This sound is almost certainly being made by Greater Spotted Woodpeckers - Green Woodpeckers do drum but much less and tend to make a softer sound. The reason for the drumming is thought to be mostly for communication, eg: to proclaim a territory or to help find a mate. They may also be heard building nests in trees or when they remove bark from trees in search of insects to eat.



Have you spotted many butterflies yet this year? My first sighting was of a Brimstone on 22nd March. Since then I've seen several more Brimstones as well as Peacocks, Small Whites and a Holly Blue. My most recent sighting was of a favourite of mine, the Orange Tip - I snapped this one last year in the garden taking nectar from Forget-Me-Not flowers. This particular specimen is a male, as identified by the orange tips to his wings. The female is not endowed with this attractive feature.



I'm still looking forward to seeing Bluebells in numbers. I came across this solitary specimen whilst walking in fields around Eye - hopefully, there'll be many more to come in the weeks ahead.

Still around Eye, walking along Brome Avenue, I came across this Roe Deer. On other occasions I've seen a large herd of these animals in this area, which contrasts with the Muntjacs we see around Gislingham all the time.



The first three months of this year proved to be pretty hopeless for astro-photography. We had a lot of cloudy nights and when the skies were clear there was a lot of moonlight, which tends to obscure fainter objects. Happily, this all changed in early April, which coincided with the start of galaxy season. During that time of year galaxies appear high in our night skies, which is good for photography and is when I took these images of two of my favourite deep space objects.



Bode's Galaxy, M81, 12 million light years from earth.

These two galaxies are both of the classic spiral form, with their arms swirling out from their bright centre, or hub, where the stars are packed in most tightly.



The Whirlpool Galaxy, M51, 31 million light years away.

In addition to their popular names, these galaxies also have "M" number designations. The letter M here refers to the French astronomer Charles Messier who, using his dozen or so telescopes, sought out astronomical objects. That work resulted in him publishing a catalogue of 103 such objects way back in the year 1781 - quite an achievement I think. A handy summary of Messsier's catalogue can be found online in Wikipedia.

Until next time, happy wildlife watching!

See these and other photos at my Flickr site: flickr.com/photos/darrelphoto/

See Tony Clarke's monthly list of local bird sightings at The Messenger on Facebook.

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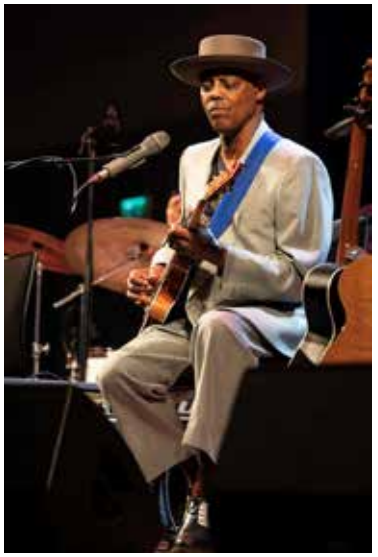
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A WARM EVENING OF BLUES AND SOUL AT THE APEX: ERIC BIBB LIVE

MUSIC NOTES

On Monday 23rd March, three members of the Gislingham 'Blues, Rhythm and Rock' WhatsApp group went along to the Apex in Bury St. Edmunds to watch another blues masterclass from Eric Bibb.



There was a real sense of ease and warmth as Eric Bibb brought his UK tour to town. From the moment he stepped on stage, it felt less like a formal concert and more like being welcomed into a room of old friends, with Bibb guiding the evening through song and story.

There are few artists who embody the spirit of roots music as completely as Eric Bibb, and this was a powerful reminder of why he remains one of the most respected voices in contemporary blues and folk. Performing with warmth, humility, and quiet virtuosity, Bibb delivers not just songs, but stories—each one steeped in history.

At the heart of the tour is material from his latest album, 'In the Real World (One Mississippi)'. Bibb's voice—rich, expressive, and reassuring—guides the listener through narratives that feel timeless.

What really made the evening special, though, was Bibb's connection with the audience. Between songs, he shared stories and reflections with an easy charm, bringing a gentle humour that kept the atmosphere relaxed throughout. The Apex proved to be the perfect setting for this kind of intimate, engaging performance. There is a sense of connection in the room—an understanding that these songs carry meaning beyond entertainment.

A standout element of the night for me was the contribution of acclaimed guitarist Robbie McIntosh, whose playing added a real depth to the performance. Many will know him from his work with Paul McCartney and The Pretenders, but here his role was more understated—tasteful, expressive, and perfectly in tune with Bibb's style. McIntosh brings a subtle brilliance with his slide guitar to the music and together they create a musical dialogue that feels effortless and deeply engaging. But it would be rude not to mention the excellent musicianship of drummer Paul Robinson and Glenn Scott on Bass and keyboards.

In all, it was an evening that felt uplifting without being showy—just honest, soulful music delivered with skill and heart. For those who were there, it was a reminder of how powerful simplicity can be.

For anyone with a love of blues, folk, or simply honest music, this is a performance and an album not to be missed.

JAN

Author's Rating: ★★★★★ 5/5

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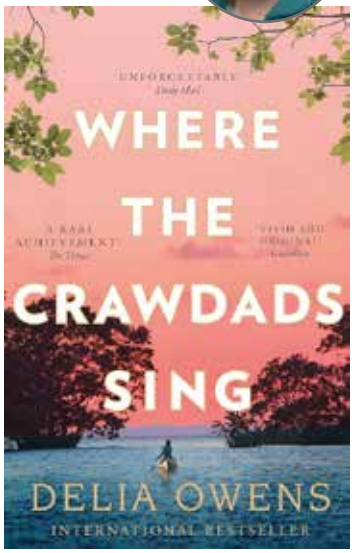
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DI'S BOOK BLOG



"Where The Crawdads Sing" by Delia Owens (2018)



I hadn't heard of this novel when it was first published. However, I became aware of it when the film came out in 2022, and there seemed to be a lot of very positive comments.

A friend offered to lend me her copy of the book, and I was curious to know what all the fuss was about. I finished it in two days - it is breathtakingly beautiful!

The story is set in the North Carolina coast and focuses on a girl called Kya Clark, telling her story from the age of 6 until her death at the age of 64. It simultaneously follows two timelines from 1952 and 1969 onwards.

Kya, to put it mildly, has an extremely hard life. The Clark family live in a run-down shack set amongst the marshes some distance from a small town. Access is by walking for miles through challenging terrain, or by using a boat along the reeded river. They have a difficult life scraping a living and struggle to make ends meet.

In 1952, Kya's mother walks out, leaving the family. Then Kya's siblings leave. And inevitably her father leaves. Kya is therefore left to fend for herself from the age of ten years old.

And in 1969, there is a murder leading to Kya being arrested as the main suspect. This timeline is devoted to the detective work, forensics and the court case, which is all very interesting.

Alongside the intrigue of the murder investigation timeline, the earlier timeline tells how she learns to cope emotionally and practically, as a bewildered little girl whilst living completely alone. She is intelligent, resourceful and a survivor, so she does slowly start to work things out.

Kya explores, discovers, then truly knows, understands and appreciates, all the fauna and flora of the marshlands, the river and reed banks. The town folk aren't sure what to make of her and early on in the story she acquires the nickname "Marsh Girl", which isn't initially meant kindly.

As she grows and matures, Kya starts to form relationships with other characters, including....

Jumpin - who with his wife, lookout for Kya and help her with practical matters.

Tate - who as a friend, is an older-brother type figure advising and helping her. But then later on he starts to mean much more. Chase - who sees Kya as a challenge and a prize, especially as she matures to become an enigmatic woman.

What really captured me is the incredibly descriptive, almost poetic writing, portraying the beauty of Kya's surroundings. It describes Kya as being at one with the stunning wildness of nature - whilst managing to live and survive in it. There are themes of self-preservation, discrimination, friendship, love, coming of age, betrayal, forgiveness, murder and intrigue.

It does end well and the epilogue is very satisfying.

I really hope you enjoy it as much as I did.

Di Herbert

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Gislingham Village Hall	Wednesdays	10:15am
Gislingham Village Hall	Thursdays	7:10pm

TOTAL FITNESS (45 mins):

Gislingham Village Hall	Thursdays	6:15pm-
Westhorpe Village Hall	Fridays	10:00am

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SCAM ALERT

While it might be tempting to agree to low prices being offered on the doorstep, please think twice.

Know your rights – Contracts made at home come with a 14-day cooling-off period.

If you pay or agree to pay over £42 for any services or goods that are sold to you in your home, then:

- You have 14 days to cancel the agreement. If you cancel, any monies that you have paid should be returned to you
- The trader must give you a written notice of your cancellation rights when you agree the contract. If the trader doesn't provide you with this information, they commit a criminal offence.

Be very wary of signing anything as you may give up your rights to cancel.



Our normal advice is to never agree to anything, including a home visit, when approached by a cold caller on the phone, at your door or via email. Do your research first, and find out if it is a product or service that you want or require.

- Never agree to have any work done as a result of a cold call, and don't be pressurised into having the job done immediately.
- If you think work needs doing to your home, get quotes from 2 or 3 traders. Ask friends and family for recommendations of traders who have carried out work for them. You can also check Suffolk Trusted Trader for traders that have been vetted and approved by us: https://trustedtrader.team/Suffolk/
- Ask for the full name & address from a trader before considering dealing with them, and never rely solely on a mobile phone number.
- Ask for a written quotation detailing all the proposed work and a final price for the job BEFORE the work is started.
- Only pay in full once the work is completed to your satisfaction and don't pay cash.

Report all doorstep callers to us via Citizens Advice Consumer Service on 0808 223 1133.

Although doorstep calling is not illegal, the law states that a trader who ignores a resident's request to leave and not return commits a criminal offence. You can show you do not want to receive visits from cold calling doorstep traders by displaying our sticker. If you would like to receive a FREE 'No Cold Calling' sticker for your door, please email us with your address at: trading.standards@suffolk.gov.uk

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Gislingham United Charity

Registered charity: No. 208340 • Trustees are Volunteers

Gislingham United Charity continues to welcome applications for short term support from **Gislingham residents** who find themselves in hardship or need. We also consider requests for educational purposes, for **Gislingham residents** of all ages, whether at School, in further or higher education, or undertaking vocational training.

All applications are treated in the strictest confidence and in accordance with GDPR Data Protection Regulations.

GUC Trustees meeting dates for 2026 are: 8 May, 10 July, 11 September, 13 November
Dates for 2027 are: 8 January, 5 March, 7 May, 2 July, 3 September, 5 November.

Applications, together with the necessary supporting documentation, should be received **seven working days before the meetings** to allow Trustees time to consider applications and request additional information if required. In the event of emergency applications, Trustees will consider an application when received and, if necessary, will call a special meeting to review the application.

Application forms can be obtained from: The Clerk, Lilac Cottage, Mill Street, Gislingham, IP23 8JR
Tel: 01379 783380, Email: gislinghamunitedcharity@gmail.com
Or can be downloaded from the "Organisations" page on the Parish Council Website:
https://gislinghamparishcouncil.com/organisations/gislingham-united-charity/

Gislingham United Charity. Registered Charity No. 208340. Registered address: Lilac Cottage, Mill Street, Gislingham, Eye, Suffolk IP23 8JR



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Gislingham Primary School

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Lunch Club 11.45am to 12.45pm

Afternoon 12.45pm to 3.45pm

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Please visit our website www.gislinghamplaygroup.com
or phone us on 01379 788934

WHERE AM I? QUIZ

Below are six clues as to where I am.

1. The Grand National was run here during the First World War
2. I was home to several RAF squadrons during the Second World War
3. A plane carrying Turkish Prime Minister Adnan Menderes crashed here in 1959. He survived.
4. In 2002, a prankster panicked passengers by painting a huge "Welcome to Luton" sign in a nearby field. (But I am not Luton!).
5. In 1958, I became the world's first airport with a direct mainline railway link to a terminal.
6. I am the world's busiest single-runway airport, but plans are afoot to add a second.

The answer appears at the foot of page 59.

SUDOKU CHALLENGE

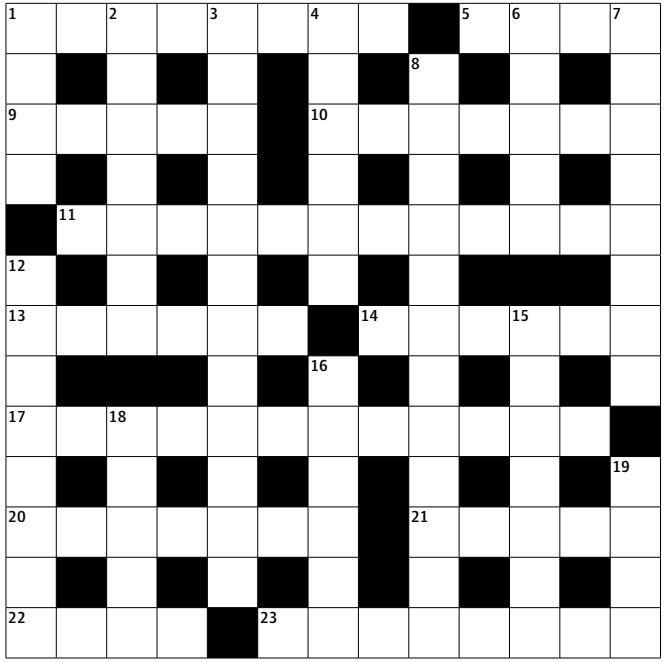
			6					5
8	9							
5		1			8		7	
2				4	1		6	
		9		3		2		
	5		9	7				4
	2		4			7		3
							4	2
4					9			

Each 3 x 3 box, each row and each column must contain all the numbers 1 to 9

Last issue solution

5	9	3	4	1	8	2	7	6
8	1	4	6	2	7	9	5	3
6	2	7	5	9	3	8	1	4
9	5	8	1	4	2	3	6	7
2	4	6	3	7	9	1	8	5
3	7	1	8	6	5	4	9	2
1	8	5	2	3	6	7	4	9
4	3	9	7	5	1	6	2	8
7	6	2	9	8	4	5	3	1

CROSSWORD CHALLENGE



Across

1 Asian condiment and provider of umami (3,5)
5 Apple's Steve (4)
9 Junk – fracas – vestige (5)
10 Popular bathroom colour of the 1970s (7)
11 Spineless sort (12)
13 Not noticed (6)
14 Mariner (3,3)
17 Copacetic – up to scratch (12)
20 Landlocked country with two capitals (7)
21 Posh, like some gases? (5)
22 Rugby player until 2022 (4)
23 Their wails portend doom (8)

Down

1 Scarf or frame (4)
2 They're pants (1-6)
3 Trepidatious (12)
4 Modest or immaculate (6)
6 US president #44 (5)
7 Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic (5,3)
8 Uncomfortable surface to cycle over (12)
12 Busy POWs (anag) – blouse adornment (5,3)
15 Abidingly sturdy (7)
16 Port – wine – birthplace of Picasso (6)
18 Knells – road fees (5)
19 Part of an eye, camera or monocle (4)

Last issue solution

■	B	O	M	B	A	Y	D	U	C	K	■	■
■	R	■	A	■	L	■	I	■	O	■	G	■
M	A	G	N	O	L	I	A	■	P	R	O	P
■	S	■	T	■	Y	■	M	■	S	■	O	■
■	H	E	E	D	■	L	O	Z	E	N	G	E
■	■	■	A	■	F	■	N	■	■	■	L	■
■	S	Q	U	A	R	E	D	A	N	C	E	■
■	U	■	■	■	E	■	S	■	A	■	■	■
C	L	A	V	I	E	R	■	R	I	F	F	■
■	L	■	I	■	K	■	J	■	R	■	L	■
M	E	M	O	■	I	S	O	T	O	N	I	C
■	N	■	L	■	C	■	H	■	B	■	N	■
■	■	N	A	P	K	I	N	R	I	N	G	■

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NOTICES

BELL RINGING AT ST. MARY'S GISLINGHAM DURING MAY

May will be a busy month for bell ringing at Gislingham. Not our local band but three Saturdays when we will welcome visiting ringers. On Saturday afternoon 2nd May from 4.45pm to 5.30pm we will welcome ringers of the Guildford cathedral band who are taking advantage of the bank holiday weekend to have a short break in Suffolk ringing at a number of towers. It is quite common, almost traditional, for ringing bands to go on the road at bank holidays. Not something that our local band has done but we have ventured into Norfolk to ring at the Lophams, have lunch there, and ring at Blo Norton and Thelnetham on the way home. Saturday 9th of May is available 10.00 to 12.00 for bands to practice for the upcoming Guild Striking competition to be held the following weekend. The Suffolk Guild of Ringers hold striking competitions at different venues each year. This year the six-bell competition is at Wickham Skeith in the morning of Saturday 16th May and the eight bell at Gislingham in the afternoon 2.30pm to 5.30pm. Competing bands will ring for five or six minutes in turn with a secret draw so that the listening judges will not know which band is ringing each piece. On all three of these Saturdays there will be ringing of an excellent standard.

Finally, if you are interested in learning to ring, please contact me on 07834 964188

Alan Stanley

METAL DETECTING ON CHARITY MEADOW IN GISLINGHAM

Gislingham United Charity (GUC) has granted permission to a Gislingham resident to carry out metal detecting on Charity Meadow providing that he commits to:

- Reporting any finds to GUC
- Declaring to the Coroner any object that meets the legal definition of Treasure under the Treasure Act 1996
- Ensuring that any finds (or photographs of the finds) are made available for viewing by residents (unless they meet the legal definition of Treasure under the Treasure Act 1996)
- Making good any damage done by digging and leaving the site as he found it.

Please note: Metal detecting on Charity Meadow is only allowed at the discretion of, and with permission from, GUC.

Finningham Flower Festival

60th Anniversary

1966 – 2026

Remembering the last 60yrs and All About '60'

is being held in our beautiful St Bartholomew's Church throughout the Spring Bank Holiday weekend

Sat 2nd May 2-5pm
Sun 3rd May 11-5pm
Mon 4th May 11-5pm

Come and join us in the church on Sunday 3rd May at 5pm for a Joyful Songs of Praise. Children most welcome!

Visit the Marquee to buy jams, cakes, plants etc. Try your luck on the Big Raffle, Fun Tombola, and much more!

Throughout the weekend we will be serving delicious homemade cakes, sausage rolls, and cream teas so please pop in to see us at

Yew Tree House- just follow the signs

Answers to the Where Am I? Quiz on page 56. *Gatwick.*

SOUTH HARTISMERE BENEFICE



I don't know about you, but for the last couple of months I woken up by the sound of the dawn chorus, nature singing to welcome in the new day. When I then put the radio on and I learnt that this May, is the 70th anniversary of the Eurovision Song Contest, I didn't realise that it had been going on for so long! The first song contest was on the 24th of May 1956. There were seven countries in the final and it was only broadcast on the radio. It is now the longest running music competition and the world's largest music event. In their mission statement they say it "exists to show that we are United by Music". In 2025 the Grand Final was seen by 60.7 million viewers across 232 countries.

Music not only unites us it has an amazing power. Think about when you hear a favourite or meaningful piece of music or song, it can completely change your mood, it can trigger memories (both happy and sad), but mostly it uplifts us.

The benefits of music are numerous, just listening to music, singing, or making music can help improve health. It reduces anxiety and lowers blood pressure.

For anyone who watched the series 'Our Dementia Choir' will have seen the positive effects it had on those suffering with dementia, enhancing their cognitive function and connecting them emotionally and socially. Vicky McClure, who presents the programme, would like music to be prescribed to all people suffering from dementia. The Military Wives Choirs is made up of 2000 women in 70 choirs, celebrating a love of singing and a communal understanding of experiences of the armed forces, offering each other support.

When we sing together, whether in a choir, at a concert, in church, a football match, at school or even with our friends and family in a car, we know how good we feel. It is an inexplicable feeling sometimes, a feeling of joy as the music vibrates through us.

According to researchers this is due to the release of oxytocin, a hormone that promotes bonding and connection, reducing feelings of isolation. Altering our moods by releasing dopamine, reducing stress hormones like cortisol, which the researchers say can also help to lessen physical pain.

At the primary school calming music is played while the children are writing or doing maths. Research has shown that active music making enhances intellectual development, literacy, and numeracy in children.

For almost 2000 years Christians have used music as part of worship, to express praise, joy, faithfulness and thankfulness to God together as one voice.

Paul the apostle writes "Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs".

The word hymn comes from the Greek word 'Hymnos' which means 'a song of praise'.

During the Middle Ages the hymns were Gregorian Chants in Latin. In the 16th century after the invention of the printing press, congregations were encouraged to sing together, often singing psalms from the Old Testament. From the 17th century onwards, ministers including Issac Watts and the John and Charles Wesley started to use simple rhythms and melodies in hymns. Today the most popular hymn, according to BBC Songs of Praise is, Jerusalem.

So, this month whether you are listening to the dawn chorus, singing to Abba in the shower or belting out Jerusalem in a church, reflect on all the good you are doing yourself!

Emma Morris

MAY 2026

SUNDAY 3RD MAY	Thorndon	10.00am	Together @ 10
5th Sunday of Easter	Gislingham	10.30am	Holy Communion
SUNDAY 10TH MAY	Mellis	10.30am	Holy Communion
6th Sunday of Easter	Stoke Ash	10.30am	Worship for All
WEDNESDAY 14TH MAY	Wetheringsett	7.00pm	Holy Communion
Ascension Day			
SUNDAY 17TH MAY	Thorndon	10.30am	Holy Communion
7th Sunday of Easter	Thornham Parva	10.30am	Holy Communion
Gislingham Village Hall	4.00pm	God and Play	
SUNDAY 24TH MAY	Thornham Magna	10.30am	Benefice Holy Communion
Pentecost			
Whit Sunday			
SUNDAY 31ST MAY	Yaxley	10.30am	Benefice Holy Communion
Trinity Sunday			

Telephone Church BCP Holy Communion is on Thursdays at 11.00am



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LOCAL INFORMATION

BUS TIMETABLES

GISLINGHAM AND THORNHAM BUS TIMETABLE

Route No. VC0001: Gislingham to Stowmarket (Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays)
Leaves Gislingham 09.45 / Arrives Stowmarket, Bury Street 10.26. **Returns** from Stowmarket, Bury Street 13.00 / Arrives Gislingham 13.41

Fareline Bus 460 (Thursday only) from Eye to Stowmarket
Leaves Thornham Magna (Four Horseshoes) 09.25 / Gislingham (Shop) 09.31 / Stowmarket (Argos) 10.02. **Returns** from Stowmarket (Argos) 12.15 / Gislingham (Shop) 12.45 / Thornham Magna (Four Horseshoes) 12.52.

Simonds Bus 72 (Fridays only) Gislingham (via Thornham) to Diss
Leaves Gislingham Village Hall 09.30 / Thornham Magna Four Horseshoes 09.41 / Diss Bus Station 10.05. **Returns** from Diss Bus Station 13.00 / Thornham Magna Four Horseshoes 13.30 / Gislingham Village Hall 13.35.

MELLIS BUS TIMETABLE - https://www.simonds.co.uk/local-bus-times)
110 – Eye to Diss
Eye – Diss (Monday to Friday) – **leaves** Mellis, opp. Railway Tavern: 10.46
Diss – Eye (Monday to Friday) – **leaves** Diss, adj. Bus Station: 13.30



Post Van:
Yaxley
Fridays in the layby on Eye Road:
9.00am to 10.00am

Gislingham
Fridays at Village Hall:
12.15 – 14.15



Mobile Library: Gislingham
2026 visits will be on the following Wednesdays: 20 May, 15 July, 12 Aug, 9 Sept, 7 Oct, 4 Nov, 2 Dec, 30 Dec.

Times: Broadfields Rd: 15.10-15.45

Mill St.: 15.50-6.05

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

Anglian Water Emergency	0800 145145
Botesdale Health Centre	01379 898295
Citizens Advice Bureau Diss	0800 8127 138
Connecting Communities = Suffolk Passenger Transport	01449 614271
Crime Stoppers	0800 555111
District Council - Cllr. Rowland Warboys rowland.warboys@midsuffolk.gov.uk	01379 783412
Electricity Emergency	08007 838838
Essex & Suffolk Water Emergency	08457 820999
Eye Health Centre	01379 870689
Hall Bookings:	
Gislingham - Terry Williams: gislinghamvillagehall@gmail.com	01379 783903
Mellis - Helen Timmons: bookmellishall@gmail.com	01379 783449
Yaxley - Celia Armstrong: celiaarmstrong@hotmail.co.uk	01379 788754
Thornham - Beth Fredrikssen-Jones: hallhire@thornhams.org	
Mendlesham Health Centre	01449 767722
Member of Parliament - Adrian Ramsey adrian.ramsay.mp@parliament.uk	07534 933356
Mind's support line - a safe place to talk about your mental health	0300 102 1234
NHS Direct	111
Parish Councils:	
Gislingham (Clerk): clerk@gislinghamparishcouncil.gov.uk	07833 705915
Mellis (Chairperson - Lawrie Read): mellisparishcouncil@gmail.com	01379 788248
Yaxley (Clerk): Philip.c.freeman@btinternet.com	01379 783203 / 07958 623897
Thornham Parva (Clerk - Christine Moore):	01379 783226
Rev'd Debbie Nicholls, Rector of South Hartismere Benefice rev.d.nicholls@gmail.com	07762 116 335
Suffolk Police (non-emergency)	101
Suffolk Doctors On Call	03001 303066
Suffolk Fire Service & Community Fire Safety	01473 260586
Suffolk County Council -Cllr Jessica Fleming jessica.fleming@suffolk.gov.uk	01449 711065
Samaritans – for everyone:	116 123

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