The Messenger



Issue 145
February
2024

Serving Gislingham, Mellis and the Thornhams

WINNER
NATIONAL
PARISH
MAGAZINE
AWARDS

THE MESSENGER TEAM



Please send your letters and articles to the Editor
email: themessengereditorial@gmail.com

Editor & Photographer: Jeff Norman 01379 788669
Strawberry Fields, High Street, Gislingham. IP23 8JD

Advertising: Tracey Askew 01379 783427
email: traceyaskew@outlook.com

Treasurer: Terry Williams 01379 783903
email: terry.williams1947@gmail.com

Mellis Correspondent & Features Writer: Angeline Braidwood
email: angeline_braidwood@yahoo.co.uk

Thornham Correspondent: Stephen Schwarz
email: sandts30@gmail.com

Graphic Design: Jo Clifford, email: joclifford@cadecreative.com

Website: Mallen Baker & Bob Stuart, email: mallen@mallenbaker.net

Facebook: Charlotte Norman, email: charlotte_norman@me.com

Distribution Co-Ordinators: Chris & Jo Pitt,
email: chris@thepitts.org

News and features from the Messenger are added every month to the Messenger website **www.the-messenger-online.com**

Next issue: March 2024
Copy deadline: Monday 12th February

E-mailed or hand-written submissions always welcome. The editor reserves the right to edit, amend or omit submitted items at his discretion.

You can find the Messenger Facebook page at:
https://www.facebook.com/themessengergismeltho

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Disclaimer: The articles published herein do not necessarily represent the views of The Messenger. They are the opinions of individual contributors and are published with a view that free expression promotes discussion and interests.

WELCOME TO THE MESSENGER



EDITOR'S NOTES – February 2024

After our short seasonal break, welcome back to our first issue of 2024 which we hope you will find an interesting and informative read.

With January out of the way, our villages are already offering a variety of events in 2024 for us all to enjoy, and I am delighted to announce that the Gislingham Summer Fair will be back this year, after a 4-year absence!

If you can offer voluntary support, this is much needed in our villages. Gislingham Parish Council need Councillors, The GUC is looking for a new Clerk and Litter Pickers are required in both Mellis and Gislingham as well as Tree Planters in Mellis. (You will find details of all these vacancies and requests for help through the magazine).

If you are new to our villages and want to meet people, please help us by contributing to the maintenance of our villages' social fabric.

Each year we enter this magazine in the Annual National Parish Magazine awards. It's our chance to find out how the magazine is perceived by an independent judging panel against similar publications throughout the UK. In the past two years we have come 1st and 3rd, so I am disappointed to advise, we slipped to 9th place in 2023. (Out of over 450 entries). But to be in the Top 10 consistently for the past 3 years, is a credible achievement. Thank you to everyone who contributes to the content of the magazine and also my fellow committee members who give up a lot of their spare time to help bring this magazine to your doormats.

This year, we will be running a "Down Memory Lane" feature every month, using some of the photos and information which has been appearing on the popular "Gislingham History Hub' Facebook page; along with our own records and research. Each month the article will be relevant to our villages and the surrounding areas. The first article in the series appears on pages 14 & 15. I would like to thank Debbie Collyer who actually lives in West Sussex, but who is researching her Husband's paternal family history and in 1797, they purchased The Rectory in Gislingham. She has very kindly shared some of her research and written an article for us.

Finally, please note, our March issue has a very early deadline date of 12th February, please send your contributions as soon as possible.

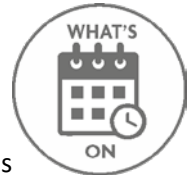
Until next month!



Jeff Norman, Editor e) themessengereditorial@gmail.com

Cover photo: taken in Workhouse Road, between the White Horse and the Four Horseshoes

DIARY & LOCAL EVENTS



Friday 2nd February: The Village Social Pop-Up Bar
- Gislingham Village Hall: 5.00pm – 10.00pm. See page 13 for details

Saturday 3rd February: Book Sale
- Gislingham Village Hall: 10.00am – 12 noon

Tuesday 6th February: Rural Coffee Caravan
- Mellis Memorial Hall: 10.00am – 12.00 noon. See page 47 for details

Tuesday 13th February: Coffee Morning in aid of EACH
- Gislingham Village Hall: 10.30 am. See page 9 for details

Saturday 17th February: Jumble Sale
- Gislingham Village Hall: 10.00am. See page 16 for details.

Sunday 18th February: Thornham Sunday Breakfast Club
- Thornhams Parish Hall: 10.00am. See page 18 for details

Wednesday 21st February: Gislingham WI - Chris Turland - 'Roman Suffolk'
- Gislingham Village Hall: 7.30pm

Friday 23rd February: Thornham Film Night – The Lunchbox
- Thornhams Parish Hall: 7.30pm. See page 31 for details

Friday 26th January: Cinema at Eye: 'Barbie'
- Eye Community Centre: 7.30pm. See page 58 for details

Saturday 9th March: Mellis Community Tree Planting
- See page 43 for details

SAVE THE DATES:
Thursday 6th June: Mellis D-Day 80th Anniversary, beacon and BBQ
Saturday 15th June: Gisfest
Saturday 6th July: Gislingham Summer Fair

Events and Club meetings etc., for inclusion in future issues should be sent to: themessengereditorial@gmail.com

Our next issue is March 2024. The "What's On" Diary deadline is: Wednesday 14th Feb.

CLUBS, CLASSES & REGULAR EVENTS

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

Baby and Tots Group for the Under 2's: Gislingham Primary School.
Every Wednesday 9.45am – 11.00am. Contact Debbie Nicholls: 07931 665 205

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

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

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

Yoga Classes: Gislingham Village Hall. Tuesdays 7.00pm - 8.30pm
Contact Clare Hall on 07704 570877 or email: thornhamyoga@yahoo.com

Pilates Classes: Thornham Parish Hall.
Tuesdays 9.30am – Pilates gentle, no floorwork. Contact: Michelle via email: hello@yapl.co.uk

Circuit Training Fitness Class: Mellis Memorial Hall. Mondays 7.30pm – 8.30pm
Gus: 07540 473203 / anguswilkinson@btinternet.com

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

Gislingham WI: Gislingham Village Hall.
Meet the third Wednesday of every month at 7.30pm. New Members welcome. For more details contact Sue: 01379788093 or Terrie: 01379 788521.

Mellis Canicross: Mellis Memorial Hall.
Meet Saturdays 7.30 am Autumn/Winter; 7.00am Spring/Sumner
Jog with your dog. Check out our Facebook page for updates.
Contact Lorraine on 07913 183534

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

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

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REMEMBERING PIETA FILBY



Sadly, long term Gislingham resident Pieta Filby, passed away on 1 Jan 2024. Pieta moved to Gislingham from Leicester in 1978 and was active in all aspects of village life, from volunteering at the Gislingham discos and Youth Club in the 80s and 90s, to baking award winning sausage rolls for the village Flower and Produce shows. She cleaned the church and the village hall and helped organised village fêtes and a multitude of other village activities. She was also, alongside her late husband Peter, the community 'newsagent' for many years, delivering newspapers to houses throughout Gislingham and the surrounding villages in their bright yellow van, 7 days a week, 363 days a year.

She was very community minded, an incredible friend to many and the kindest, most generous and bravest soul. She was a fierce supporter of anyone in need but had the softest of hearts.

Unfortunately, she was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease in 2005 and, gradually, this robbed her of some of her independence. She became unable to walk her dog at the crack of dawn every day or tend to her garden to her satisfaction, which were her greatest pleasures.



She battled her illness with incredible bravery and stubbornly refused to let it stop her pottering among her flower beds or seeing her friends at village coffee mornings and Beyond the Wall events.

She had been a resident of Cedrus House Care Home in Stowmarket since 2021 and was very contented there, taking part in all the activities on offer, from arts and crafts to exercise classes, and from concerts to trips to the seaside.

She was a beloved daughter, much loved wife and a treasured friend to many. Above all, she was our Mum and, while she was ready to go, we were not ready for her to go. We will miss her terribly but we are glad that she has been released from the frustration and suffering that 20 years of Parkinson's Disease inflicted upon her.

She was adamant that she didn't want any 'fuss' when she passed away so we held a family only cremation on 23 January, where she was 'sent off' with her favourite song 'Hi Ho Silver Lining'. We are planning to plant a tree in her memory in the spring.

Donations can be made to Barnardo's in her memory at: https://pietamagrietwillemsfilby.muchloved.com/

We thank everyone who supported Mum and our family over the years and all of those who have sent their condolences. Rest in peace Mum.

Jo and Dany (Pieta's daughters)

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AMANDA'S COFFEE MORNING AND HALF MARATHON



Amanda will be running the Cambridge Half Marathon for EACH on the 3rd March 2024.

If you would like to sponsor Amanda, her Just Giving page can be found at:

https//www.justgiving.com/page/amanda-kemp-1699346716083

She will also be holding a coffee morning (with cake of course) at Gislingham Village Hall on 13th February at 10:30am.

If anyone would like to donate any unwanted gifts/wine etc for raffle prizes, it would be much appreciated.

each

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Amanda Kemp
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GISLINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL NOTES



A belated Happy New Year to all Gislingham Residents

Agendas and Minutes from Parish Council Meetings can be found on the Parish Council Website. These Minutes are also affixed to the Parish Council Noticeboard located outside the Village Shop.

The first point of contact for any matters relating to the Parish Council, is the Parish Clerk on **clerk@gislinghamparishcouncil.com** or you can contact the Chair of the Parish Council on **07900 963471**.

Councillors would encourage all residents to look on the Gislingham Parish Council website at **http://gislinghamparishcouncil.com** to keep up to date on items which are discussed at meetings by Councillors. At these meetings there is time set aside for the public to voice any concerns they have in the Village.

Parish Councillors would like to thank **Councillor Lucinda Tacey** who recently resigned as a Councillor, due to work commitments, for her contribution to the Parish Council.

*We currently have **Parish Councillor vacancies** on the Parish Council.*
We meet once a month on the third Monday of the month.

If you are interested in becoming a Parish Councillor and would like details, please contact the Chair, Cllr Julie Bell by email
julie.bell@gislinghamparishcouncil.com** or on **07900 963471

The **Parish Clerk** has decided to step down from her position. Councillors would like to thank her for her support to Councillors whilst in the role. We will be advertising the position in due course.

Requests to the Parish Council for **Grants and Donations** will be considered at the Parish Council Meeting on **Monday 18th March**. To apply please email the Parish Clerk at clerk@gislinghamparishcouncil.com.

For further details please refer to the link to the Policy on the Parish Council website: https://gislinghamparishcouncil.com/assets/Uploads/Grants-and-Donations-Policy2.pdf

A vacancy has arisen for a Parish Council Nomination on
***GUC (Gislingham United Charity)**.*
Trustees meet 6 times a year.

If you would like further details, please contact the Chair of the Parish Council at
julie.bell@gislinghamparishcouncil.com** or on **07900 963471

Julie Bell, Chair, Gislingham Parish Council

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A BIG THANKS TO ALL THE MUSICANS THAT PLAYED AT OUR FIRST POP-UP OF 2024. IT WAS A GREAT NIGHT – KEEP YOUR EYES PEELED FOR FUTURE LIVE MUSIC EVENTS.

HARRIS'S HOG ROAST WILL BE BACK AGAIN FOR FEBRUARY, AND WE'LL BE SERVING OUR USUAL RANGE OF LOVELY BEERS, CIDERS & WINES.

SEE YOU THERE!

GISLINGHAM SPRING LITTER PICK
SUNDAY 10th MARCH



10am start – for approx 1 hour

Please meet at the village hall

Hi-viz, grabbers and bags provided

Refreshments afterwards supplied

Once again, the Mendlesham Scout Troop will be organising the event this year. They are pleased to volunteer as it will help go towards their badges.

We are asking for your continued support on the day, as the Scouts will not be able to cover all the areas of the village to pick up the litter.

If you do require further information, please contact Martyn Bryant on 01379 788998/07900 147912.

GISLINGHAM RECTORY AND THE COLLYER FAMILY



Gislingham Rectory was home to my husband's paternal family for almost one hundred years. The association began in 1797, when Nathaniel Collyer, a wealthy London army agent, purchased the parish advowson (giving him the right to appoint a priest to the parish) for £3,000 (about £300,000 in today's money) and nominated his son. Thomas moved into the rectory along with his amiable, as she had been described, wife Sophia. Over the years they had fifteen children, four of whom died in infancy. The boys, Tom, Fred (and probably Nat), were sent to Norwich Grammar School under the tutelage of the Reverend Valpy, who had revived the flagging reputation of the school. In later years the former pupils enjoyed reunions, styling themselves 'The Valpeians'. Sadly, only Tom would survive to attend these gatherings. The nominated president of the Valpeians was an old schoolfellow, James Brooke, who achieved fame as the Raja of Sarawak.

Of Thomas and Sophia's children, Frederic joined the 5th Bengal Light Cavalry and left the rectory in 1825 to travel to India. After one period of furlough, or leave, he returned to India with his bride, Emily Gedney, who was from a Bungay family. Sadly, Emily died of fever the following year and Frederic left behind their infant son as he rejoined his regiment in Kabul. The occupation of Kabul and the disastrous retreat of January 1842 are well documented. Frederic was one of the last mounted officers who rode ahead of Dr. Brydon promising to send help. However, it was Dr. Brydon who survived to reach Jalalabad, having noted Afghan tribesmen leading away Captain Collyer's horse.

Nathaniel, served his medical apprenticeship with Surgeon Plowman Young of Bury St Edmonds and completed his studies at Guy's Hospital in London. He also joined the East India Company's service and departed for India. Whilst on leave in 1851 he lived with two of his sisters on Lambseth Street in Eye. Nat returned to his duties and in due course his regiment made a long journey to Cawnpore. In 1857, another well-known series of events occurred when several Indian regiments mutinied. Cawnpore was besieged and, during the awful conditions, it is believed that Nat succumbed to the heat. His body was thrown into a well, along with many men, women and children who had been killed during the siege. You can see memorials to both Frederic and Nathaniel in St Mary's Church, Gislingham.

After serving as curate in several parishes, including Littleport in Cambridgeshire, Thomas jnr. was appointed vicar of Holy Trinity in Bungay. He had married Elizabeth Ann Ward of a Thelnetham family and they arrived in Bungay with their young family. Three of their sons would later leave England to seek their fortune abroad – two to Canada and one to South Africa where their descendants still live today.



In 1851, Thomas senior died and his son was appointed Rector in his place. However, Thomas junior did not wish to relinquish Bungay and held the two livings until his death, employing curates to take services at Holy Trinity. In 1861, aged just 59, Elizabeth Ann died and was buried in one of two Collyer family graves in Gislingham.

Three years later, at the age of 65, Thomas remarried. His bride was Emma Ripper, the daughter of a laundress and agricultural labourer. She was just 24 years old. They were married at St Nicholas Church in Great Yarmouth by licence. Only one family member, Emma's sister Matilda, signed the register as witness, which suggested it was a quiet affair. The event wasn't announced in any newspapers. Thomas and Emma had eight children, six of whom survived to adulthood.

The family's residence in Gislingham came to an end in 1890, on the death of Thomas. His widow, Emma, moved to Norwich with their children, the youngest being only nine years old. The 1891 and 1901 Censuses show a clergyman called Arthur Horatio Bellman, from Helmingham, residing at the Rectory. He passed away in 1905. The 1939 Resigter shows a Rev. Thomas Arthur Pytches in residence. By 1974 the rectory was in a sorry state and was sold by the diocese for £22,500. For a number of years, it was known as 'Suryodaya' and was an alternative health retreat where one of the courses offered was laughter therapy. They say "if only walls could talk" and what a story this rectory could tell!

Debbie Collyer



Footnote: Located in a stunning, rural setting on the edge of the village, these days The Old Rectory is a fine, Grade II Listed country house of classic proportions with an attractive red brick facade. The house dates from circa 1791 and is typical of the architectural style in Georgian era.

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JUMBLE SALE

Gislingham Village Hall

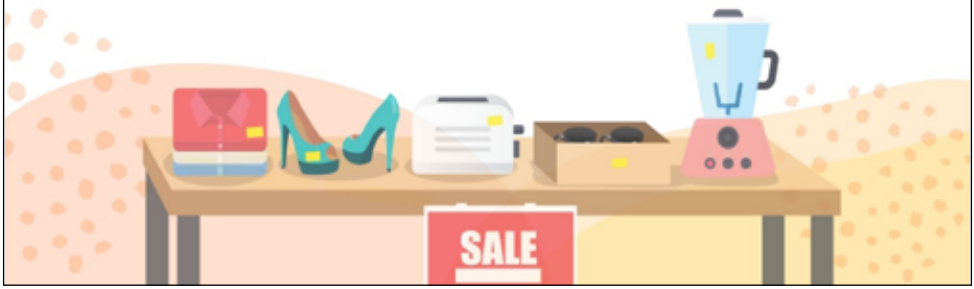
Saturday 17th February 2024

- Toys
- Clothes
- Books
- Bric a Brac
- Refreshments
- No Electrical Goods

Please bring jumble for sale to the Hall on the day between 9:00am and 9:30am

Doors open at 10:00am

Free entry



NEWS FROM GISLINGHAM VILLAGE HALL

The Trustees would like to wish everybody a happy and healthy New Year.

FUTURE EVENTS

Friday 2nd February: Pub Night (with Live Open Mic music)
Doors open at 5.00 pm. Last Orders 9.45 pm.
We would like to point out that under the terms of our licence, only drinks purchased at the bar can be consumed on the premises.

Saturday 17th February 2024: Jumble Sale
Doors open 10.00 am. Free Entry. Clothes, Bric-a-Brac, Toys and Books. Refreshments available. Please take items for sale to the Hall on the day between 9.00 am and 9.30 am.

Saturday 16th March: Quiz Night
Doors open 7.00 pm. Entry £5. Bring your own drinks, glasses and food. Tickets available from Terry Williams. Phone 01379 783903 or gislinghamvillagehall@gmail.com

Saturday 27th April 2024: Mystery Event

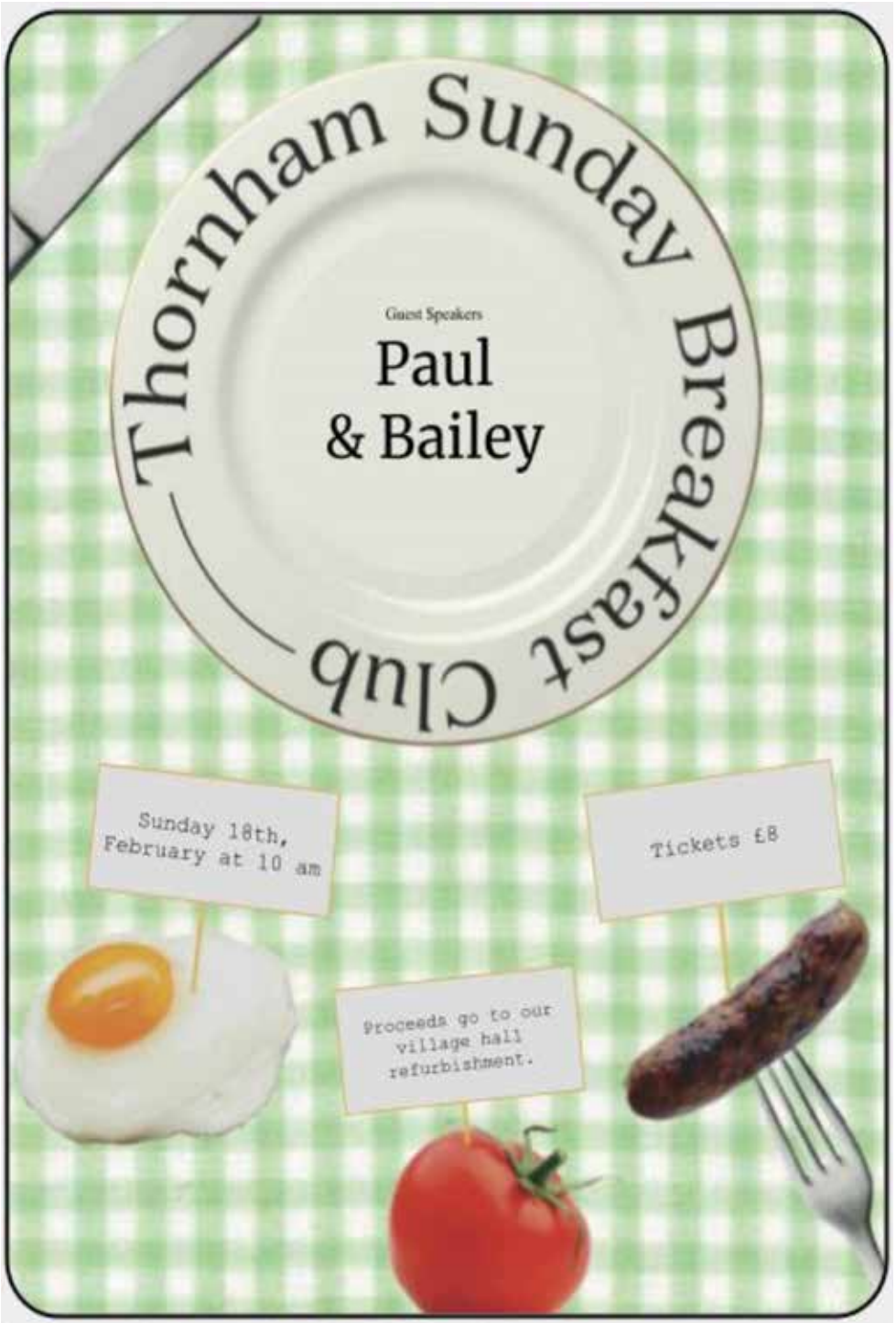
Saturday 18th May 2024: Quiz Night

Saturday 15th June 2024: Gisfest



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

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.


Thornham Sunday Breakfast Club
Guest Speakers
Paul
& Bailey
Sunday 18th, February at 10 am
Tickets £8
Proceeds go to our village hall refurbishment.

NEWS FROM THORNHAM PARISH HALL



FUTURE EVENTS:

Sunday 18th February:
Breakfast Club – Suffolk Lowland Search and Rescue
10.00am: Bookings: breakfast@thornhams.org

Friday 23rd February:
Thornham Film Night – The Lunchbox
7.30pm: Bookings at films@thornhams.org

Friday 15th March:
Thornham Film Night – film tbc
7.30pm: Bookings at films@thornhams.org

Saturday 24th March:
Mini Spring Fair - raffle, tombola, made in Thornham, cakes and more….
11.00am – 3.00pm

Saturday 13th April:
Grand national evening.
4.30pm – 7.00pm: Sweepstake and posh fish finger sandwich supper - £10

Friday 19th April:
Thornham Film Night – film tbc
7.30pm: Bookings at films@thornhams.org

Sunday 28th April:
Breakfast Club – speaker details tbc
10.00am: Bookings: breakfast@thornhams.org

REGULAR WEEKLY EVENTS:

Tuesday 9.30am: Pilates gentle no floorwork



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NEWS FROM MELLIS MEMORIAL HALL



Mellis Memorial Hall is adding to its available facilities.

Back in 2019, we were excited to be able to get a BT line to the hall and install Wifi… welcome to modernisation! Now, after some delay (mainly due to the Covid Pandemic and lockdown), we have been able to add the next item on the halls facility list … a full AV system. The new film quality projector and large drop-down screen have been installed and ready for use.

It had been on the 'wish list' for some time and due to the very diligent Memorial Hall Trustees committee, were able to raise the needed funds. Many thanks must go to Rowland Warboys for obtaining a Locality Grant, Mellis Parish Council and a funeral collection from the late David John Towill, passed to the hall by Mrs R. Towill.

In an age of technical connectivity, it keeps the hall up to date and open to many more reasons to hire. Meetings, parties, films, demonstrations, to name a few. In case you're unsure how to use, rest assured, training will be given for its operation.



Our little hall has come a long way from the original building which was erected approximately 100 years ago! Long may it continue to serve our local community.

There is an additional £10 charge when hiring the hall to include the use of this new facility.

Booking the hall is as usual via the booking clerk. e: bookingmellishall@gmail.com

https://www.facebook.com/MellisMemorialHall

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IN THE GARDEN



Happy New Year from us all at Beyond the Wall!

The new year has started with rain and then a cold snap. With frosts our double border looked spectacular, leaving herbaceous chopping till late winter really can have a visual benefit when there are not so many flowers to enjoy. That said, Wintersweet and Sarcococca are in flower and creating beautiful scents.

Jobs on the estate have been keeping us warm, at the pet cemetery, we have been completing some leaf clearing, leaves can be great as a mulch or put into compost bins to make leaf mould to mulch with at a later date, so tidying not only looks good, but can create a free and sustainable resource.

Other winter jobs have also been started, with us making compost bins, this is our big winter job this year. Mulching borders with wood chip to help reduce weeds in spring is something we will do as soon as all of the winter chopping has been completed, this will gradually rot down slowly, releasing nutrients into the ground and help raise the organic matter content of the soil which is always good for worms and other soil dwelling insects.

We are utilizing large pieces of apple trees that have been chopped to add to wood piles and make new wood piles in the garden, to provide homes for nature, something that is also of help to maintaining a healthy and balanced garden.

On really cold days we have been working inside, to sort seed packets and plan vegetable growing for the year ahead. Already we have got Tomato and Chilli seeds into heated trays to give them an early start, hopefully it will be another productive year in our kitchen garden, produce from which will be available to buy at our shop and of course used in what we sell in our café, which will be closed through January, keep an eye on our socials (Facebook and Instagram) for reopening dates and times.

Phill Williams, Lead Project Worker (Horticulture)
Beyond The Wall, The Walled Garden



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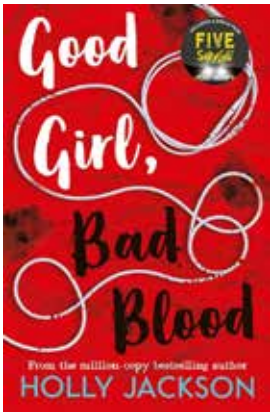
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CHARLOTTE'S BOOK BLOG



Good Girl Bad Blood by Holly Jackson ★★★★★ 5/5

Hello Bookworms! I hope everyone is doing ok and has been reading some great books lately! Following my review of Holly Jackson's A Good Girl's Guide to Murder at the end of 2023, I have since read the sequel!



Following on from Pippa's crime-solving frenzy in book one, where she tried to solve a double murder mystery and prove her friend's brother innocent, she has now decided that, after putting herself and her family in danger the way she had, it was now time to stop. She took the evidence to the court; it was now no longer her place to be part of the case.

Pip is no longer a detective. With the help of Ravi Singh, she released a true-crime podcast about the murder case they solved together. The podcast has gone viral, yet Pip insists her investigating days are behind her. However, when her friend Connor's brother Jamie suddenly goes missing and the police refuse to consider it a priority, she is soon convinced to reverse her decision and start her own investigation along with a new series of the podcast.

After interviewing those closest to Jamie, she finds that he had attended a party that night and had been talking to a mysterious woman online in the weeks leading up to his disappearance. Numerous sightings of Jamie had come to light having spoken to some of the listeners of her podcast, yet no one knows where he ended up after the party. So, with the uncovering of some more dark secrets of the village and this time with millions of people listening in on the case via the podcast, Pip soon learns it's only a matter of time before Jamie would end up killed and it's a race against time for Pip to find him.

This is a bold and immensely fascinating sequel which delivers increasing layers of suspense with very unexpected results at the end. I genuinely thought I was good at solving murder mysteries until I read Holly Jackson's books - the outcomes are just so unguessable and are incredibly well written. This is definitely another book I shall be recommending to a lot of people. My only job now is to read the third instalment of the trilogy when I get the time... it looks huge! For those interested in beating me to it, it's called As Good as Dead. My copy is sat waiting for me on my shelf when I have the time.

Jackson also has other books out that aren't part of this trilogy that also sound amazing, along with a tv adaptation of A Good Girl's Guide To Murder on its way to BBC3 and iPlayer which is currently in the making. I shall keep everyone posted here when I know about when it'll be shown and available to watch!

Want to chat more about this series with others who have also read it? You can find me on Instagram @charlottes.bookblog - where I review and chat about books all day long with the nicest community of people you could ever meet. Can't wait to see you there!

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Elizabeth Evans, Group Chair:
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Jonathan Freeman, Deputy Group Leader:
07756 761590 / jonathan-freeman@hotmail.co.uk





A TO Z OF MELLIS BY ANGELINE BRAIDWOOD



A Mellis abounds with **Artists and Authors** both past and present. Today you'll find Mary Jane Reilly and Peter Langhorne glued to their keyboards. So much artistic talent lives in the village with Michelle Watson, Sally Tyley and Frances Beasley at their canvases. Surinder Warboys creating beauty from glass and Philip Cunningham working with a myriad of media to name but a few...

B Residents of Mellis, dog walkers and those just driving through can often enjoy the spectacle of **B**arn Owls hunting on the common. There are several barn owl boxes and the Suffolk wildlife trust rings the chicks to monitor the population.

C St Marys the Virgin on Mellis Common is a **C**hurch without a tower, it collapsed in 1730 and was never rebuilt. There are plenty of fundraising events held to fund its upkeep.

Cowpasture Lane is one of the many green lanes in the area, it extends from Mellis Common to Thornham Walks. It is said that St Edmund's body was carried along this Medieval Drovers Road after being killed in battle at Hoxne and carried to Bury St Edmunds in 870.

D **D**am Lane (also called Drury Lane) is another green lane, perfect for walkers and horse riders.

E The stunning **E**lm Tree Farm House is a Grade 2* listed building because of some amazing historic features including the Archangel above the front door.

F This is not a place of tracks and trails, but a living breathing **F**armed landscape to be explored and enjoyed – Mellis common is a grazing common and is still farmed to this day.

Football matches are played on the pitch on the common every Sunday morning just a stone's throw from the Memorial Hall and the Mill.

G Mellis has its own **G**reen Party counsellor (as well as artist) living by the common, Rowland Warboys is part of the country's first majority Green Party council.

H A photographic **History** of Mellis is kept by Bill Spencer and this is currently being digitised by the Parish Council.

I For local **I**nformation check out one of the village noticeboards, located on the side of the Memorial Hall and on Earlsford Road.

J **J**oin the Parish Council and be part of your local community. There are several co-option vacancies and if you are interested in applying, or finding out more contact Jane Challis on mellisparishcouncil@gmail.com

K **K**eep fit in Mellis, why not join Saturday morning's Canicross club if you've got a dog and would enjoy a social jog, search for Mellis Canicross Club on facebook. Speak to Gus about circuit training in the Memorial Hall – details on the noticeboard.

L The **L**evel Crossing splits the village in two, in the past this was also Mellis Station connecting the village to Norwich and the branch line to Eye. Other level crossings can be found on Cowpasture Lane and Rectory Road.

M Our award-winning Community Magazine, **The Messenger**. Published every month, it is full of interesting articles and events. A must read as it plops through your letterbox.

The **M**ill at Mellis is an extremely recognisable building, formerly Multiyork it is still a busy furniture and interiors shop.

N Are you **N**ew to Mellis? There's lots going on from quizzes, open mic night at the pub, The Railway Tavern; fitness classes and the parish council. Get involved and meet your friendly neighbours.

O **Open** Gardens is a popular event and allows residents and visitors a peek into the eclectic and beautiful gardens of the village. Open Gardens raises money for the upkeep of St Marys and the memorial hall.

Oliver Cromwell is said to have exercised his troops on Mellis Common.

P The many **Ponds** you find running along the length of the common were once a source of clay for building of houses in Mellis. They are now home to a huge variety of plant and animal life including the Great Crested newt.

Q **Q**uiz Nights are held at the Memorial Hall a couple of times a year. Come along to raise money for the Hall's upkeep.

R **R**oger Deakin, Mellis's most famous resident. Author of Notes from Walnut Tree Farm, Waterlog and Wildwood, a wild swimmer and countryside pioneer his legacy continues with interest in his work and house as well as the more recent book Life at Walnut Tree Farm by The Swimmer by Patrick Barkham.

S **S**uffolk Wildlife Trust owns much of the common and they say, "It's hard not to be taken aback by the sheer scale and prettiness of Mellis Common. Framed by cottages and farm houses it is a place that has changed relatively little over hundreds of years."

Mellis Primary **School** is part of the heart of our village.

T The beautiful stained glass **T**elephone Box located just opposite the Railway Tavern contains the village defibrillator.

U Mellis has the largest **U**nfenced Common in England with 239 acres of land at its heart.

V Our **Village** Hall is a hub for village life, recently hosting quiz night, farmer's markets, the coronation party and exhibition.

W The best way to enjoy Mellis is by **W**alking. With green lanes and footpaths radiating out from the common you can see so much of this beautiful part of Suffolk.

Walnut Tree Farm – Roger Deakin's famed residence sits back from the common surrounded by the moat still used for swimming by its' current residents.

X **X** marks the spot. Can you see where the Mellis **W**indmill used to stand or the **W**ell?

Y **You** are all the heartbeat of our village and your support with events and neighbourly care for each other keeps Mellis alive and a great place to live.

Z Mellis is a gra**Z**ing common and from late spring to mid-autumn you'll see cows enjoying the lush grass (unless we're having a heatwave). It is still farmed by the common rights holders.

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NATURE NOTES by Darrel Charles



Hello everyone, welcome back to Nature Notes and Happy New Year!

I'm going to start the New Year here with a visit report from Wensleydale, Yorkshire. Being fond of Red Squirrels, that's where I went at the end of last November on a Red Squirrel safari! I'd heard of a place there called Snaizeholme where there was thriving colony of Reds. To maximise my chances of seeing the cute characters, I'd booked myself some time in a hide on private land owned by a professional photographer. When I arrived at my hotel near the village of Hawes the day before my appointed time in the hide, the outlook was not good. It had been raining very heavily for days and there were very strong winds. However, on the day itself, the rain had stopped and the winds had died down, although it remained very wet underfoot Moreover, under the canopy of the trees there wasn't much light - not the best conditions for photography and I was initially feeling rather disappointed as I arrived at the hide. Those feelings were soon dispelled, however, as within minutes of my arrival a cheeky Red Squirrel appeared close by to see what was happening! That set the tone for the next 5 hrs when there was a Red in sight practically all the time, sometimes four or five of them. Not to mention Greater Spotted Woodpecker, Blue, Great and Coal Tits, Chaffinch, Pheasants, Nuthatch and a Tree Creeper! The location offered a good variety of situations in which to photograph the wildlife including moss-covered dry sone walls, trees, rustic sign posts, fences and even a pond. Given this potential you may not be surprised that I took over 1,500 photos! By the time my session had come to an end I was well pleased but also getting cold. Time to head back to my hotel, a hot shower and a brief nap before dinner of roast pheasant and a glass of Pinot Noir - job done!











Tree Creeper

Whilst Wensleydale is some 250 miles away from Gislingham my next subjects are rather further away - light years away in fact! Both of these objects are very faint and barely visible through my telescope. These photos were each taken from my garden over a few hours and needed a lot of work in Photoshop to bring out the details. That on the left is the gloriously coloured (Barbie pink?) California nebula at 1,000 light years away, and that on the right is the Triangulum galaxy 2.73 million light years away and estimated to contain around 40 billion stars - impressive but less than the 400 billion stars of our own Milky Way!





Until next time, keep warm and 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.

VILLAGE SOCIAL OPEN MIC NIGHT – FRIDAY 12TH JANUARY

The inaugural, 'Village Social Open Mic Night' was held on Friday 12th January. Despite the cold weather, over 100 people attended at different times during the course of the evening. Outside catering on the night was provided by Harris's Hog Roast.

Music ranged from: Blues, acoustic instrumentals, 60's and 70's pop, Jazz, and a Ukelele duet.

The music was provided by 'The Zillionaires'… which consists of Chris T., Chris S., Leanne, Rob, Ian and Andrew. Also, performing during the course of the evening were:- Alex Mackenzie on guitar and singing (complete with the sound/feedback problems); Norman Herbert on solo guitar; Reg Siger on keyboard and harmonica; and Mike Laycock and Richard Adams singing and playing ukeleles.

Chris Saunders who organised the music on the night said:
"I would like to thank everyone for turning up and supporting this event (both punters and musicians). I would like to point out that this a first try-out to see how this type of evening would go, and was impromptu, mostly un-rehearsed (which makes it great fun for us)… but hopefully not too painful for anyone listening. We are talking with the 'Village Social' to do more evenings like this in the future, but it will never be the same music twice!"







Dan, who runs the Village Social events, commented: "This event was very well attended, and it seemed like the music went down well too, but equally wasn't too imposing for people who wanted to sit a bit further away and have a chat. With the success of January's live music night, and positive feedback from those that attended, we're looking forward to planning more Open Mic nights throughout the year. Watch this space, and keep an eye on social media for announcements"

THE VILLAGE SOCIAL
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These are a few of the comments from those who attended:-

"It is great to see local people showcasing their musical talents."

"Having live music has created a much livelier atmosphere to this event, drawing crowds of all ages!"

"This is a really big hit for the village!"

"Great that music has added a new dimension to this regular event."

"I met some new residents to the village tonight, so it is a great social event."

Jeff Norman











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TRIED & TESTED RECIPES by Debbie





CHICKEN AND BROCCOLI AU GRATIN

Chicken and Broccoli au Gratin is a quick and easy recipe. It can be served on its own or for a more substantial dish with potatoes, pasta or rice on the side. Who can resist a quick chicken dish that can be on the table in about 30 minutes?

Ingredients: Serves 6

- 3lb / 1.4kg chicken, cooked and cooled.
- 9oz / 250g broccoli, cut into florets
- 15 ½ oz / 440g can, cream of chicken soup
- Four spring onions, finely chopped
- 1 tsp curry powder
- 8 fl oz / 250ml sour cream
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 oz / 25g grated Cheddar cheese
- ¼ tsp sweet paprika

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 180c / 350F, gas mark 4. Remove chicken meat from carcass and cut into large pieces.
2. Cook the broccoli in boiling water for one to two minutes, drain, then refresh in cold water. Put to one side.
3. Combine the chicken soup, spring onions, curry powder, sour cream and pepper in a bowl.
4. Place the broccoli in a large, greased casserole dish. Top with the chicken.
5. Pour the soup mixture over the chicken and broccoli and sprinkle with the grated Cheddar cheese and paprika.
6. Bake in the oven for 30 to 40 minutes until the top is golden brown.
7. Serve this chicken broccoli au gratin with baked potatoes and vegetables.

Notes:

Not suitable for freezing. I served this with garlic mash potato.

CIRCULAR WALK AROUND HOXNE, WHERE THE KING LOST HIS HEAD!

O/S Map: 230 Distance: 4.5 kms/2.8 miles

This is a very interesting walk which will culminate with visiting the monument as to where King Edmund was reportedly killed. Hoxne is steeped in history and has many old buildings thought to be from the 10 Century.

THE HOXNE HOARD

On 16 November 1992, a man named Eric Lawes was exploring a farm field at Hoxne, in search of a hammer lost by the farmer. Lawes was a metal detecting enthusiast, but what his detector turned up that day was not a hammer, but the largest hoard of 4th-century Roman silver and gold ever found in Britain.

To start your walk, park at the Village Hall which is sign posted as you arrive at Hoxne.



Leave the car park and turn left over Goldbrook Bridge. Check out the inscription on the far end of the bridge. It is believed that a newly married couple who were crossing the bridge, saw King Edmund's spurs reflection under the bridge and reported him, so he was arrested and then executed.

The bridge crossings the River Dove. Pass the Swan Inn and cross the road and pass the post office/ cafe/shop. Check the village sign and the village seat on the Village Green. Continue to the top of the lane where you meet the main road opposite the Church of St Peter and St Paul.







Enter through the church gate and you will see a war grave. The church yard is very large and inside the church, you will see a book that identifies all the graves and cremation sites, something that I have not seen before. There is a display of a dig in 1974 with pictures of what was found. As you pass the organ, you will see a display highlighting the story of how St Edmund met his demise.



As you turn to walk back up the aisle, look up at the lights. They must have used oil in the past, but have now been converted to electric.

Leave the church through the gate, turn left and cross the road so as to walk on the pavement. Take the second left into Watermill Lane with a 'No through road sign'. As you reach the metal gate follow the track to the right.

The water meadows to your left, you will see the River Waveney which marks the Norfolk/Suffolk border.



As you reach the entrance to the mill, which is a private residence, bear right on a track and pass several dilapidated sheds. Continue onto a grass path. At the last building on the left cut through the opening by a metal gate. Walk along the edge of the field with the hedge on your left. As you pass the house on the left, follow the pea shingle driveway and pass several wild fowl cages with ducks, geese, swans and a pheasant. At the end of the road, Havensfield Farm is on your right.



Turn left and cross the road and walk on the grass verge. Turn right onto the 'Quiet Lane', Wittons Lane. After you cross a small stream, turn right and go through the kissing gate to enter Brakey Wood. Continue on the path to the right-hand side following the stream and continue around the woods until you reach another kissing gate next to the sewage works.

Follow the footpath. On your right in the distance you will see the monument. As you reach a small wood, turn right and walk through a farm/industrial site until you reach the road.

Turn right and walk down the road until you reach two new builds on your right. In-between there is a set of steps and a sign to the monument. This is where it is believed that King Edmund was tied to a tree and killed by arrows shot at him and his head cut off. Unfortunately, the tree fell many years ago. (P11)

Return to the road and continue back to the Village Hall. Maybe have a refreshing drink at the Swan Inn. They have a good menu. The cafe across the road is another option.

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

The Trustees will consider all applications received up to 48 hours before each meeting.

The remaining meeting dates for 2024 are 15th March, 17th May, 19th July, 20th September, and 15th November.

All applications should be made to:
The Acting Clerk at 'Woodberry', High Street, Gislingham, IP23 8JD.
Telephone: 01379 783541. Email: gislinghamunitedcharity@gmail.com

Gislingham United Charity is a registered charity, No. 208340. The Trustees are volunteers.

The Trustees are seeking to appoint a new permanent clerk. Anyone interested in this part-time paid position should contact the Chair on chairguc@gmail.com

Galloway



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20th March - *from £80pp*
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24th Mar or 25th Aug - from £155pp
Legoland, Windsor
2nd April or 14th August - from £75pp
Bure Valley Railway & Cruise
15/4, 11/6, 9/8, 17/9, 9/10 - *from £59pp*
Windsor Lunch Cruise
7th May or 8th August - *from £72pp*
Chelsea Flower Show
23rd or 24th May - from £139pp
Buckingham Palace & Covent Garden
29th July or 23rd August - from £85pp
The Devil Wears Prada the Musical
29th November - from £89pp

www.travel-galloway.com - info@gallowayeuropean.co.uk - 0330 1000 360

Gislingham

SUMMER FAYRE

SAVE THE DATE

Saturday 6 July

The Messenger will bring you more exciting details in the months ahead!

Mellis Community



Tree Planting

Volunteers needed to plant 23 fruit trees at our new Mellis Garden
(next to the primary school)

Saturday 9th March 2024 from 10am

Please bring gloves, spades, wellies

Text Cllr Lorraine Farley: 07913 183534
Mellis Parish Council

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TERRAPIN NEWS





Often, it's not until sometime has past that the significance of an event finally begins to be realised.

Friday the 6th of January found me, as Chair of Mid Suffolk District Council in the corner of a muddy field, a quarter of a mile west of Larters Lane, Middlewood Green, (What3Words location ///lookout.stables.clocking). I was at the centroid of Suffolk as calculated by the University of Suffolk.

I was there at the invitation of Clair Countess of Euston, the Lord Lieutenant of Suffolk, to join a distinguished party, planting an oak sapling to commemorate the coronation of King Charles.

Gary Battell, the recently retired Senior Woodland Officer at the County Council had managed to source an oak sapling from the Windsor Estate through connections at the Duchy of Cornwall, "a young English or pedunculate oak from one of the ancient Windsor parkland trees."

So, what was so significant? Most people enjoy planting trees, many of us chose to plant a tree to mark a significant event, Mid Suffolk even offers free trees to parents who wish to celebrate the arrival of a new member of the family, https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/w/tree-for-life.

We weren't aligning giant stones with the sun or moon, it wasn't a solstice or equinox, although we were near Middlewood Green, its name suggesting an ancient recognition of the site.

The spell of the event is I think in the royal Connection and modern science.

St Edmund, martyred in 1066 was the first English King said to possess the healing power of "The Royal Touch" although the tradition is older across the continent. It wasn't until the reign of George 1 that the healing power of a coin touched by the Monarch or the actual laying on of hands was superseded by an early form of inoculation.

Still the sapling, was of royal association, it was a very vigorous looking individual, little pink buds already present. Windsor Great Park contains one of the largest concentrations of ancient oak trees in Europe, the oldest King Offa's Oak, also a pedunculate oak is possibly 1,300 years old, germinating in the reign of the Mercian King Offa.

With a lifetime spanning centuries, these ancient trees amass a huge amount of genetically diverse material. Now transplanted to Middlewood Green.

Apparently, a deep dark forest is not as simple as one would think, underfoot there is a web of filaments of fungi, intertwined with the roots of trees. A mycorrhizal network that may enable trees to transmit chemicals to each other triggering defence mechanisms against insects and diseases.

Oak trees are embedded in our history and myths, hiding kings and outlaws. Kett's Oak, between Wymondham and Hersett marks where Robert Kett joined a rebellion against the enclosure of common land. Further back we have Julius Caeser reporting that the Celtic Druids worshipped and practised their rites in Oak Groves.

So perhaps there was a little late Christmas magic happening in Middlewood on the 6th January 2024. Planting any tree is a message of hope for the present, this young oak will grow, spread its branches to shade many future generations and have who knows what Ent like conversations with its neighbours.

Rowland Warboys Cllr.

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THE MESSENGER CHRISTMAS ARTWORK COMPETITION 2023

Pictured right is Jemima Ross, age 8 from Mellis celebrating after finding out that her artwork had been chosen for the cover of the December issue of The Messenger.

Jemima, along with all the other age category winners, received a winner's certificate, a £10 Book token and a bag of additional "festive goodies!"

We would like to thank all the children who submitted entries for the competition and we hope that the number and quality of entries next year will be as high as this year.



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Local Trading Standards are warning us of three scams currently very prevalent in Suffolk and Norfolk.

Text messages offering loans

Residents are warned to be wary of unexpected text messages claiming to be offering loans. Scammers often try and target people when looking to take out loans or may contact you unexpectedly offering money at very low interest rates. But before giving the loan, they'll ask for an upfront payment as a deposit, administrative fee, or insurance. They might claim it's because of issues like a bad credit history. They'll often put pressure for the fee to be paid quickly via a bank transfer, or they may ask for vouchers to be used, for example from Google Play, Amazon or One4all. Scammers have even started asking for payments to be made via crypto exchanges.

Some scammers will claim that the fees are refundable but no matter what amounts are paid no loan will ever be given. Suspicious or scam text messages can be reported by forwarding the message to 7726.

Telephone cold callers regarding solar panels

Once again, TS are warning residents with solar panels on their property to be on their guard for telephone cold callers who call making claims regarding existing systems and checks which they state are needed. The cold callers will then attempt to make an appointment for someone to visit and inspect the system.

Be very wary of any approach made in a telephone cold call and never agree to services, to having work done or for someone to visit your home if approached in this manner.

Solar panel owners should always talk to their supplier before allowing any work or 'maintenance' to take place on their panels. Generally, a solar panel system does not need servicing, but it may benefit from being cleaned if the panels are dirty.

Next '£200 gift card' WhatsApp messages

There are scam WhatsApp messages which are circulating which claim to offer '£200 Next Gift cards'.

The message, which will often come from a known contact, provides a web link to 'claim your exclusive voucher code'. Anyone who clicks on the link will be taken to a fake Next website which requires you to complete a 'survey', which is used to gather personal and financial information, and then share the message with your WhatsApp contact list to claim your 'prize'.

By including the sharing element, the scammers are ensuring the scam approach continues to be distributed to more people. The message is a scam and is not connected with Next in any way. If you receive this message do not interact with it in anyway and please do not share it with your contacts.

To report scam WhatsApp messages, press and hold the message and select 'report'. To report senders on WhatsApp, click on the number, scroll to the bottom of the list and select 'report'.

You can also report suspicious messages you suspect are a scam to us by contacting our partners the Citizens Advice consumer helpline on freephone 0808 223 1133.

THE MESSENGER CONNECTION QUIZ

There are 10 questions. Each answer to the first 9 questions form a connection of some kind.

Question 10; What is the connection?

1. American fast food chain specialising in Tex-Mex foods.
2. English comedian who co-presents 'The Great British Bake-Off'.
3. The State capital of New Mexico.
4. The World's highest uninterrupted waterfall.
5. The name of the pet cat in "The Simpsons".
6. The video game where Mario made his first appearance.
7. Nickname for the home of the US film industry.
8. UK food outlet specialising in gourmet snacks and sandwiches.
9. Card game that uses wooden pinboard for scoring.
10. What is the connection?

Answers appear on page 55.

SUDOKU CHALLENGE

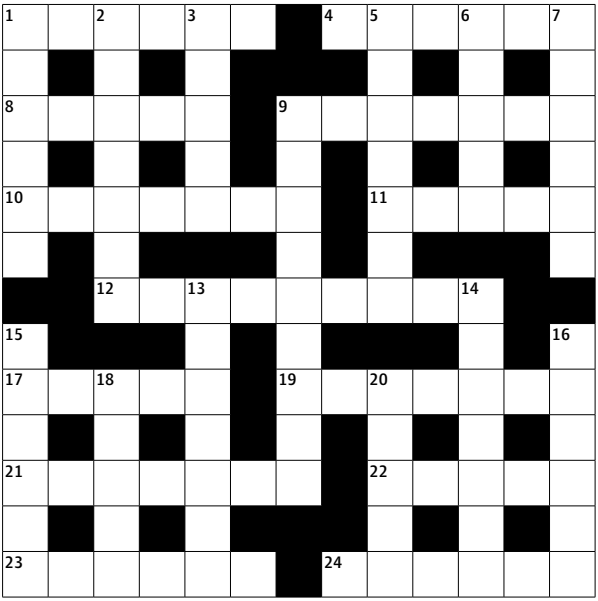
			9				7	5
		9	2			4		
5	2				4			
6			8	9		1		
		8				9		
		3		1	6			8
			4				1	3
		4			8	7		
9	3				1			

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

Last issue solution

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

CROSSWORD CHALLENGE



Across

1 Pointless talk (6)
4 Protection granted to political refugees (6)
8 Express indirectly (5)
9 Devoid of expression (7)
10 Made a mistake (7)
11 Contribution (5)
12 Child's seat at table (4,5)
17 Biscuit eaten by Jews during Passover (5)
19 Flower of Scotland (7)
21 Confiscate (7)
22 Follow — path (5)
23 Place offering temporary accommodation (6)
24 Funny business? (6)

Down

1 Fanciful notion (6)
2 Dandy-like (7)
3 Store for the future (3,2)
5 I'm Santa (anag) (7)
6 Accept with pleasure (3,2)
7 Note of who said what at a meeting (6)
9 Loyal — cadet died (anag) (9)
13 Small ball (7)
14 Go back over (7)
15 Playful — mischievous (6)
16 In a feeble manner (6)
18 Spanish appetisers (5)
20 Start to a popular song (5)

Last issue solution

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

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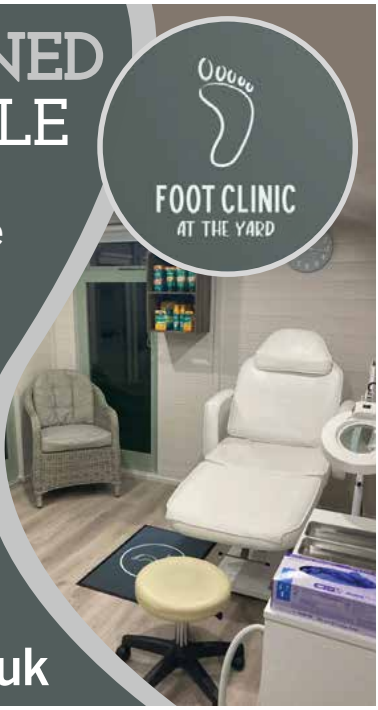
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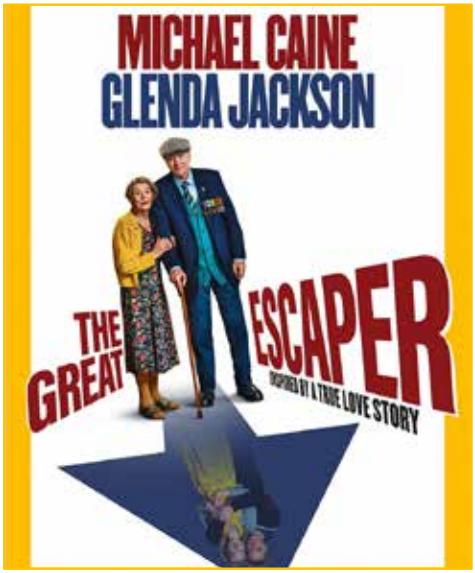
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NOTICES



CHRISTMAS LIGHT DISPLAY

at 10 Chapel Farm Close, Gislingham

A massive thank you to everyone who came and visited our Christmas lights, we raised a fantastic £108.63 for Diabetes UK.

Kerryann & Charlie Baxter

GISLINGHAM CAROL SERVICE

Thank you to all who gave so generously at the Carol service and church services in December.

The total raised for the Children's Society was £323.

Ann Cottee, Churchwarden

THE ARTS SOCIETY, DISS: ART THAT TALKS...

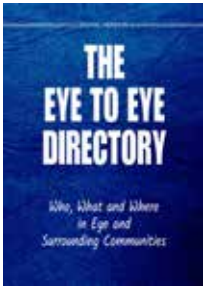
THE ARTS SOCIETY DISS

We are a friendly and welcoming society that meets at the Corn Hall, Diss, at 2 pm on the third Tuesday of the month to enjoy a wide range of illustrated talks about the arts, given by highly qualified speakers.

Membership costs £45 a year and guests are always welcome (suggested donation: £8).

Our programme from February to June:

20 February:	The Architectural Madness of William Thomas Beckford
19 March:	What really happened on Easter Island
16 April:	Adventures of an Archaeologist
21 May:	Where have all the Women gone? Women and Art
18 June	Why can't we read them? Conserving the National Trust's Libraries



THE EYE-TO-EYE DIRECTORY

The Eye-to-Eye Directory provides the details of clubs, societies, charities, and many of the services available locally. Subscribers to Eye-to-Eye will receive the Directory and any updates automatically.

If you are not already a subscriber to Eye-to-Eye, and would like to join this free service, all you need do is email your name and postcode to: JOIN-EYE-TO-EYE@OUTLOOK.COM

The current edition may also be viewed via this website: THEBANKEYE.ORG/E2E

Answers to the Connection Quiz on page 52.

1. Taco BELL, 2. NOEL Fielding, 3. SANTA Fe, 4. ANGEL Falls, 5. SNOWBALL, 6. DONKEY Kong, 1. Richard Gere (GEAR), 2. Ariel (AERIEL), 3. Stealers WHEEL, 4. CLUTCH Bag, 5. BONNET, 6. DASH, 7. BOOT, 8. SUSPENSION, 9. SPOILER, 10. They are all parts of a car.

SOUTH HARTISMERE BENEFICE



As I write I am in a reflective mood. Today is 8th December, a day that lives long in my memory. On that day in 1978, as a 10-year-old, I had insisted on walking home from school rather than being driven home by my mother. It was only when I regained consciousness some weeks later and being aware that I was in a hospital bed, with impaired vision, a thumping headache and my leg in plaster that I realised that something had not quite gone to plan.

I had been hit by a speeding pickup truck whilst crossing the road with the "lollipop" lady. The events of the day had put my parents through turmoil, and for a short time they had not known whether I was dead or alive. If it were not for the actions of a passing stranger, who removed my face from a puddle whilst others stood paralysed with fear, not knowing whether to move my motionless body, then maybe I would not be here to tell this story. I still carry his letter that he wrote to my parents wishing me well.

Then came the repercussions from my mother. Why had I insisted on walking home? Why hadn't the driver seen me? Why had he been driving so fast? And then my mother's guilt, that she had given me a choice and despite her reservations, she had allowed me to exercise free will, even if this was against her better judgement. In all this, she never stopped loving me or left her bedside vigil.

As I write, I am dealing with the aftermath of Storm Babet. Fortunately, as distressing as it is to lose personal possessions and suffer property damage, there was no loss of life. Naturally there is some anger about how and why this flooding has happened, and who is to blame and was there more that could have been done to clear blocked drains and ditches. A while ago such events would have been called an "act of God", such as the 1953 floods, the 1987 hurricane and now the 2023 Storm Babet.

Perhaps it is only natural to question God, after all on the cross, had Jesus not questioned God when he exclaimed "My God my God, why have you abandoned me?". So, do we too ask why God allows such things to happen, do we question our faith, or help those who chose to blame a God they do not believe exists?

As I continue to reflect, I turn things round in my mind and if my mother were alive today, perhaps I would ask her about the events of 1978; why did the stranger stop and save me when others stood by? Why did I make a full recovery with no lasting disabilities (although some of course some would question what a large bang on the head has done to my personality!) and perhaps, most importantly why did I not die, as the chances of surviving an impact with a truck travelling 40 mph are just 15%?.

Coming back to storm Babet, perhaps it is an "act of mankind" and we are responsible for the events which are unfolding before us, more than just blocked drains and ditches, so some may say where is the relevance of God in all this? I believe that God allows us to believe or not believe, the freedom to choose and the freewill to effectively do as we please and go the way of our choosing, despite the disastrous consequences that follow. He loves us and will not abandon us, so in addition to the letter of 1978, I also carry the bible, as I believe in the goodness of mankind and also in God's love and mercy – I still have far more to thank Him for than many will ever know.

Tim Rowe, Church Warden, All Saint's Church, Thorndon and All Saint's Church, Wetheringsett

Sunday 4th February *2nd Sunday before Lent*	Gislingham Thorndon	10.30am 10.30am	Holy Communion Worship for All
Sunday 11th February *Sunday next before Lent*	Mellis Stoke Ash Thorndon	10.30am 10.30am 4.00pm	Holy Communion Worship for All CONNECT
Wed. 14th February ***Ash Wednesday***	Wetheringsett	7.00pm	Holy Communion and Imposition of Ashes
Sunday 18th February *1st Sunday of Lent*	Thornham Parva Gislingham Thorndon	8.30am 10.30am 10.30am	Holy Communion BCP Worship for All Holy Communion
Sunday 25th February *2nd Sunday of Lent*	Thornham Magna Wetheringsett Yaxley	10.30am 10.30am 10.30am	Worship for All Holy Communion Holy Communion

Telephone Church BCP Holy Communion is on Thursdays at 11.00am



Reverend Canon Susan Loxton
Rural Dean of the Hartismere & Hoxne Deanery
revloxton@gmail.com ✆ 01379 388 493

Reverend Debbie Nicholls
Curate
rev.d.nicholls@gmail.com 01379 678 753

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LOCAL INFORMATION

Gislingham Bus Timetable

Dan's Coaches (www.danscoachtravel.co.uk):

Route 457 to Stowmarket (Thursdays only – Market Day):

Leaves Gislingham shop 09:15 / Arrives Stowmarket (Argos) 10:18
Return leaves Stowmarket (Adj Station Road West / Bury St) 12.50 / Arrives Gislingham 13:43

Route 456 to Diss (Fridays only – Market Day

Leaves Gislingham shop 10.06 / Thornham Walks & Church 10.09 / Arrives Diss Bus Station 10.35
Return leaves Diss Bus Station 13.15 / Arrives Gislingham shop 13.46

Fareline Bus (Weds only – Market Day) to Bury St. Edmunds:

Leaves Gislingham 09:46am / Arrives BSE bus station 10.48
Returns from Bury St. Edmunds leaves 13:25 / Arrives Gislingham 14.32

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

Thornham Bus Timetable

Fairline Bus 320 (Weds only)

Thornham Magna (Four Horseshoes) 09:40am / Arrives BSE bus station 10.48
Returns from Bury St. Edmunds 13:25, arriving back at Thornham Magna 14:36



Post Van: Gislingham
Fridays at Village Hall:
12.15 – 14.15



Mobile Library: Gislingham
The 2024 dates for the Mobile Library are as follows:- 28 Feb, 27 March, 24 April, 22 May, 19 June, 17 July, 14 Aug, 11 Sept, 9 Oct, 6 Nov, 4 Dec.
Broadfields Road: 15.10 = 15.45
Mill Street: 15.50 – 16.05

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

Anglian Water Emergency	0800 145145
Botesdale Health Centre	01379 898295
Church Wardens:	
Gislingham - Ann Cottee	01379 788633
Mellis - Betty Wells	01379 788155
Thornham Magna and Thornham Parva - James Fawcett	01379 788130
Citizens Advice Bureau Diss	01379 640530
Clerk (Parish) (Gislingham) clerk@gislinghamparishcouncil.com	07900 963471
Clerk (Village) (Tina Schwarz - Thornham Magna)	01379 788207
Clerk (Parish) (Christine Moore - Thornham Parva)	01379 783226
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 -) email gislinghamvillagehall@gmail.com (Mellis - Helen Timmons - Mellis) email: bookmellishall@gmail.com (Thornham) email: hallhire@thornhams.org	01379 783903 01379 783449
Mellis Parish Council Chairperson (Lawrie Read) mellisparishcouncil@gmail.com	01379 788248
Mendlesham Health Centre	01449 767722
Member of Parliament - Jo Churchill jo.churchill.mp@parliament.uk - www.jochurchill.org.uk	01284 752311 020 7219 8487
NHS Direct	111
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
Suffolk Police (non urgent)	101

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