

January 2026

Box River News

Boxford • Edwardstone • Groton • Little Waldingfield • Newton Green



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Looking Back on 2025

Happy New Year! Welcome to the first Box River News of 2026. As we begin another year in the Box River Benefice, it is worth looking back at what 2025 brought - a year shaped by major local decisions, moments of transition, and a full calendar of village events.

One of the most significant and difficult stories for Boxford was the proposed closure of Boxford Surgery. The plans prompted strong and often emotive public engagement, reflecting just how central local healthcare has been to village life. Despite determined efforts, the practice was ultimately absorbed into Hadleigh Surgery, ending a long-standing village service.

There were also more positive developments. The Old Gaol Project opened to the public in July, becoming home to an exhibition depicting Boxford Through the Ages. Designed to inform both residents and visitors, it explores the village's rich and eventful history and has attracted strong local interest since opening, adding a new cultural presence to the village centre.

Transport was another defining theme. After months of uncertainty, the loss and subsequent introduction

of new and revised bus services, including Sunday provision, marked one of the most significant practical changes of the year. Environmental improvement featured strongly too, with Boxford Croft undergoing work to improve access, condition, and long-term usability.

The year also brought notable transitions within the wider community. After many years of caring for local animals, SESAW announced its closure, marking the end of an era for a much-loved local charity. Within the benefice, Father Rob left at the end of June, and we now look ahead to the appointment of a new rector during 2026. At the same time, the Ven James Ridge, Associate Priest in the Box River Benefice, was appointed a King's Chaplain, a notable personal distinction.

Community life remained lively throughout the year. Boxford and Newton Open Gardens were summer highlights, raising funds for churches and community groups. Flower festivals in Groton and Little Waldingfield, quizzes, talks, and social events filled village halls, while Roger

Loose's Old Picture Show talk proved so popular it had to be repeated! Seasonal moments such as the VE80 beacon lighting, Newton Picnic in the Park, Boxford Fireworks and lantern making, and the Edwardstone Christmas Fair helped mark the seasons and bring people together.

Behind the scenes, Box River News itself changed. From the August issue, the magazine moved to a new full-colour format, expanding to 64 pages and allowing broader coverage of village life. Historical and environmental features remained a strong thread, from Natural Boxford to history society articles tracing connections between local stories and wider events.

As always, none of this would be possible without the contributions of so many people. Thank you to our volunteer distributors, local business advertisers, and all contributors who share updates, photographs, memories, and notices. This remains a community paper because it is built by you.



Box River News

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Editor

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 www.instagram.com/BoxRiverNews

The copy deadline for the February issue is Thursday 15th January at midday.

Festive Start in Newton with Christmas Tree Light Up

Residents gathered in good numbers on the crisp winter evening of Sunday 30th November for Newton's annual Christmas tree light up, marking the start of the festive season in the village.



The countdown was led by Parish Council Chairman, Cllr Paul Presland, before the switch-on illuminated the village tree to warm applause. Traditional carols were sung, adding to the atmosphere as the lights brought a welcome glow to the village. Everyone then retired to the Saracens Head for some festive spirit!

With thanks to Jo Parker and her team of volunteers, whose work ensures that Newton's Christmas tree remains a striking spectacle for those passing through the village and a focal point for the community at this time of year.

The event has become a firm fixture in Newton's calendar and continues to draw support from across the village.



Newton Fireside Club

It doesn't seem possible that Christmas will have been and gone by the time you read this. Everyone at the Fireside Club would like to wish you all a happy, peaceful and prosperous 2026.

Our beetle drive was, as always, a noisy and very competitive afternoon. Everyone had a great time and enjoyed the cakes as well.

On November 2nd we made some Christmas decorations and enjoyed some mince pies and fizz to get the holiday season started. A big thank you to Vivienne and Pauline for organising the session.

Our grand finale is Christmas lunch at the golf club on Tuesday 16th December and we are all really looking forward to it.

Next term's programme is more or less organised and we look forward to seeing everyone on the 6th of January.



SPRING 2026 PROGRAMME

Tuesday 6th January	Bring & Share Lunch 12:30 Start
Tuesday 20th January	Games or Bingo
Tuesday 3rd February	TBC
Tuesday 17th February	Pancakes
Tuesday 3rd March	Talk on Marks Hall
Tuesday 17th March	Easter Egg Painting
Tuesday 31st March	Talk on Medical Detection Dogs

All meetings are held in the village hall and start at 2pm unless otherwise stated and anyone is welcome. Subs for members are £25 this term and must be paid in advance. This includes refreshments, activities and subsidised events. Non-members are welcome to come along to any session. The fee will be between £5 and £10 depending on the activity. We are excited to say that we now have a card reader, so payments can be made by card. New members are always welcome. Usually, the first session is free.

Please contact Moira on **01787 374652** or Sue on **07881 383 998** if you would like more details.

RIP Argur Hills

Argur Hills, of Newton Green, passed away peacefully in November at Catchpole Court, following a short illness. He was 93.

Originally from Nayland, he had lived in Airey Close for over 75 years. He is survived by his niece, Carol and nephew, David. He was a familiar figure locally and well known for his many years delivering the BRN.

A proper Suffolk boy, he will be much missed around Newton.

His funeral will take place on **Monday 29th December**, at Colchester Crematorium at 1:45pm.

Family flowers only, donations to the British Heart Foundation, please.



Newton Village Hall Matters

Coffee Morning: The second village hall coffee morning of the year took place on Saturday 22nd November. There were the usual stalls, a raffle and lots of chatter. It was well attended and there was a very convivial atmosphere. Thank you to everyone who support our village hall. The coffee morning raised just over £350 and a collection for Age UK raised £14.

Quiz: We held a very successful quiz on Saturday 29th November. As usual, we had a full house of 10 teams of 6. Ged Fisher and Paul Presland were the quiz masters and Sue Presland was the scorer and caterer. A big thank you to everyone who helped set up and clear away. For the first time, we had a team from outside the village and they celebrated this by being our winners. Thanks to everybody's generosity, £786 was raised to be divided between All Saints Church and the village hall. We hope to hold another quiz in the spring.



Decorating: As part of our ongoing maintenance schedule, the back corridor and gents toilet will be decorated between Christmas and New Year.

Dishwasher: The committee has had several requests for a dishwasher to be purchased. We are discussing this but think it may have to be part of a kitchen refurbishment.

Bookings: The only number for bookings is now **07955 199 000**. To help with the booking process, please visit www.yourhall.co.uk/hall/newton-green where you will find a detailed description of the hall, along with photos and a diary of bookings. Although you cannot book on this site, you will be able to find out if the hall is available for your function. For public events and clubs there is also a description and contact details.

Coffee mornings 2026

Saturday 21st February - Newton Village Hall
 Saturday 28th March - Parish Council
 Saturday 18th April - St Nicholas Hospice
 Saturday 16th May - Fireside Club
 Saturday 20th June - Newton Trust
 Saturday 4th July - Open Gardens Review
 Saturday 26th September - Macmillan Cancer Support
 Saturday 24th October - Newton Charities
 Saturday 21st November - Newton Village Hall

All coffee mornings are in the village hall and start at 10am. Donations for raffles and cake stalls and good quality bric-a-brac would be much appreciated. Raffles are usually called at about 11.15. Please do come and support these charities and village organisations.

Special Thanks

A special thank you is extended to Maureen Williams who, after 35 years of dedicated service to the community, has chosen to step aside from delivering the BRN to residents of Little Green. The community thanks Maureen for her long-standing help and commitment. Thanks are also extended to Hayley, who has agreed to take on the role.

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Christmas Hours from December 17th - January 4th
 See our website for more!!

Sourdough Pizzas & Boards & Bites Menu
 Boards: Wed-Sat 12-8, Sun 12-4
 Pizzas: Sit in/Takeaway - Thurs 5-8pm, Fri & Sat 12-8, Sun 12-4
Thursday Nights Pizza & a Pint for £15 (5-8pm)

Christmas Carols
 with Phoebe Austin & Elliott Porter
 Saturday, December 20th 7pm-9pm

Acoustic Nights
 Wednesday, December 10th from 7pm
Christmas Acoustic! Sunday Dec 21st - 2-5pm

January Shut Down
 The pub will be closed from Sunday, Jan 5th - Jan 22nd
 Reopening Friday, Jan 23rd from 12pm!

Street Food
Follow us on Facebook/Instagram for weekly updates!
Wagyu Burgers - Nov 29 (Sat) Fridays in Dec plus NYE!
Tasty Turk - Fri Nov 28th & Sat Dec 27th
My Thai Chef LM - Sat Dec 13th & 20th
Taqueria La Gringa - Sun Dec 21st 1-5pm

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Newton
Open Gardens
SUNDAY 14th JUNE 2026

Planning for next year's Open Gardens will commence in the new year.

After last year's success we are really looking forward to it.
 Once again, we would like to appeal for volunteers to:

- * Open their gardens on the day
- * Help with organising and setting up
- * Help on the day
- * Have an advertising board in their garden

Everyone who opened their gardens said they had a really lovely day and all of the hard work had been worth it!!

If you feel able to help, please contact Sue on
07881 383 998 or at sue_presland@hotmail.com

Christmas Opening Hours

Monday 22 December: 10am to 3pm
Tuesday 23 December: 10am to 3pm
Wed 24 Dec - Sun 4th Jan: Closed
Monday 5 January: 10am to 3pm



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Boxford Bounty Winners!

The Boxford Bounty would like to thanks members of the Community Council for drawing the following winners in the December Draw:

Nov - Dec 2025 Winners		
1 st	£250	Mr J Lambert, Boxford
2 nd	£125	Mrs Elford, Cox Hill
3 rd	£75	Mrs K Smith, Boxford
4 th	£50	Mr Vipond, Groton

Well done to all the winners!

We are currently inviting members and those wishing to join the Boxford Bounty to renew their subscriptions for 2026. The Bounty costs £20 per year for a ticket that is entered into 6 draws during the year.

If you'd like a ticket for next year's draws, please contact Mark Miller on **07534 953 843**, email boxfordbounty@gmail.com, or complete the online form at www.boxford.me.uk/boxford-bounty.

If you are an existing member we will be contacting you shortly to invite you to renew your ticket.

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All profits assist Boxford Community Council in providing funding for projects, events and facilities for organisations and clubs in Boxford, Edwardstone and Groton.



BOXFORD COMMUNITY COUNCIL
 BOXFORD, EDWARDSTONE AND GROTON

www.boxford.me.uk
boxfordcommunitycouncil@gmail.com

Charity No.: 304862

A Message from Father Christmas

Dear Children and People of Boxford, Edwardstone, and Groton villages.

Thank you so much for the wonderful welcome you gave me when I visited your villages on the evening of Saturday 13th December. It was a truly special night, and I was delighted to see so many smiling faces while raising money for your beautiful school.

I am safely back at the North Pole, getting the toys ready that you have all asked for.

My sincere thanks go to RDK Electrics, Suffolk Fruit Farms, Tony Suckling and Tim Groom for their generous help and support once again this year, helping to make my sleigh journey possible.



A very special thank you to my elves, who did a fantastic job, covering many, many miles for such a worthy cause. Your effort and enthusiasm made the evening a great success. Finally, thank you to The Fleece Pub for such a warm and wonderful welcome party.

I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

*With best wishes,
Father Christmas & the FoBS team*

Carols Around the Tree

Monday 15th December was a cold but dry December evening, just right for the annual Carols Around The Tree outside the White Hart in Boxford. Organised by Boxford Community Council, the event attracted a crowd of more than 100 people from across the benefice and local area, all gathering to sing traditional carols and enjoy the festive atmosphere. Spirits were kept high, and the chill kept at bay with good company and the welcome help of a cup (or two!) of mulled wine and mince pies kindly provided by the White Hart. On the run-up to Christmas it's lovely that what has become a much-loved tradition in the benefice was so well supported by the community.




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The Butcher's Wife

The daily struggle: what's for tea tonight?

I spent so much of my childhood wanting to be a grown up and now I am an actual grown up I realise that most of my time is spent trying to decide what to cook for dinner every single night. Don't get me wrong, I love cooking, I just hate having to choose what will make everyone in my house happy. If it was up to me, we'd have some form of pasta or Mexican every night. Obviously, the Butcher hates pasta and finds Mexican food 'too spicy'. Wimp.

One of his favourite dinners is pork chops and mashed potatoes. I would rather go hungry than eat a pork chop. Or any meat off the bone for that matter. I think this stems from being a small child, eating a chicken drumstick and biting into the grisly part. It traumatised me and I've never eaten meat off the bone since. Sometimes the Butcher brings home BBQ chicken wings and he and the mini Leeders eat their way through them like a pack of wolves. Gross.

Some days I'd be happy with a sandwich and a packet of crisps. Can you imagine the outrage if I made a plate of sandwiches for dinner? Although this has its own issues. I somehow ended up responsible for making everyone's packed lunches. I use the term loosely, I just make everyone a sandwich to take to work or school every day. The mini Leeders

are happy with whatever I chuck in it. The Butcher, on the other hand, is on the brink of getting knuckle sandwiches.

Nearly every day I receive unsolicited feedback on that day's offering. He's like Goldilocks when it comes to sandwiches. Too much butter, not enough butter, needed a bit of salt, would have been better with mustard. He doesn't want tuna mayo or egg mayo. Cheese sandwiches are okay, but only with onion or tomato, not pickle, and the cheese has to be grated, not sliced. He doesn't want ham or sliced chicken and he gets bored if I make the same sandwich twice in one week. I've reminded him more than once that I'm not running a delicatessen, but still the critique continues.

While we are on the Butcher's fussiness, it's also worth mentioning that he hates soggy food. This means that if he has beans on toast, he doesn't actually have the beans on the toast, or even on the same plate. The toast has to be completely cold before buttering and the beans go elsewhere. When I first met him, he didn't even have gravy on a roast dinner. He's realised the error of his ways now and loves a bit of gravy, but the Yorkshire puddings are still kept on a separate plate just in case they get soggy. A trait he's inherited from his mum. Turns

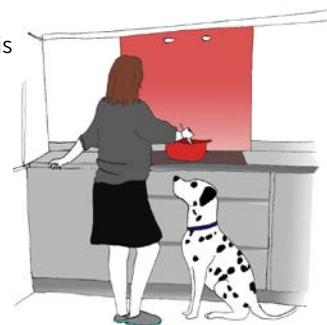
out weirdness is genetic.

He doesn't have the same pickiness when it comes to desserts though and, much to my horror, slathers

whatever is offered with copious amounts of cream or custard.

I've tried to do a weekly meal planner on a Sunday for the week ahead. It's all very well thinking of dinners in advance, but nobody fancied chilli on Wednesday and we didn't have time for cottage pie on Thursday, so we went back to the daily 'what shall we have for dinner?' conversation. The Butcher's response is, nine times out of ten, 'I don't mind', yet every suggestion I make is met with a face that says otherwise. I look around the shop at all the meat on display hoping inspiration will leap out. It doesn't. It's like I have amnesia and have forgotten every meal I've ever cooked.

So, if you ever walk past the shop and see me and the Butcher just staring at each other, we aren't lovingly gazing into each other's eyes. We are trying to decide what to have for tea - again.



Chicken Pot Pie

Ingredients (serves 4-6)

8-10 skinless and boneless chicken thighs, diced
2 onions, finely chopped
2 carrots, finely chopped
2 stalks of celery, finely chopped
50g butter
50g plain flour
500ml milk
1 chicken stock cube
1tbsp Dijon mustard
1tsp of dried thyme
1 egg, beaten
375g sheet ready rolled puff pastry

Method

1. Heat 1 tbsp vegetable oil in a large flameproof casserole over a high heat. Brown the chicken on both sides, season, then transfer to a plate.
2. Reduce the heat to medium and add the remaining oil. Fry the onions, celery and carrots for 8-10 minutes, stirring and scraping the base of the pan, until softened. Tip onto the plate with the chicken.
3. Melt the butter in the pan and stir in the flour to make a paste. Cook for a couple of minutes until golden, then gradually whisk in the milk to make a smooth sauce.
4. Crumble the stock cube into the sauce and add 250ml water. Bring to a gentle simmer, then return the chicken and veg to the pan. Stir in the mustard and thyme, season well, cover and simmer for 15-20 minutes until the chicken is tender.
5. Heat the oven to 200C. Shred the chicken in the pan into bite-sized pieces.
6. Transfer the filling to a pie dish or individual dishes. Brush the rim with beaten egg, lay the pastry over the top and trim the edges, leaving a slight overhang. Brush with more egg and poke a few holes in the top to allow steam to escape.
7. Bake for 35-40 minutes until golden and bubbling at the edges.



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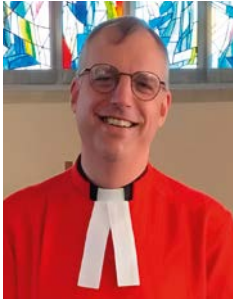
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Reflections from the Ministry Team

Dear Friends,

Happy New Year!

The month of January is named after Janus, the ancient Roman god of beginnings, transitions and doorways. Janus was depicted with



two faces, one looking forward and the other backward, symbolising reflection on the past and anticipation of the future. Because January marks the start of the new year, the Romans dedicated this month to Janus as a time of change and new beginnings. The Latin word *lanuarius* eventually evolved into the modern name January.

So in January, like Janus, we might spend some time looking back and some time looking forward. Looking back, 2025 had, as every year has, its fair share of both challenges and joys. As a benefice, we said goodbye in the summer to our dear friend and rector, Fr Rob, as he went to be Vicar of Spalding. Since then, it has been great to see that the communities of our five villages have supported our churches in their ministry. This was never more so than at Christmas, when it was wonderful to see events and services well supported by the community, with a real atmosphere of warmth, encouragement and celebration.

Looking forward into 2026 might seem like a daunting prospect. With the festivities of Christmas over, the lights taken down and the trees reduced to wood chippings, January often feels like a very long and very dark month. Many people struggle both practically, as they face the financial cost of the Christmas celebrations, and emotionally, with the cold, dark weather.

We know that there are many challenges ahead, globally, nationally and locally, as our nation deals with the task of managing our limited resources and ensuring that people are treated fairly and with decency. Helping our society to be a place where all are respected and valued sometimes seems like a very difficult task.

As the Church, we look forward to welcoming our new Archbishop of Canterbury, Sarah Mullally, as she is installed in Canterbury Cathedral later in the year, and our new Diocesan Bishop, Joanne Grenfell, as she is installed as Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich in Bury St Edmunds on 24 January. Both of them, and all those who lead the Church, will need our prayers as they attempt to steer the Church into a new future.

As a benefice, we also hope to appoint our new rector during the coming year and to welcome him or her among us, no doubt with new ideas and new ways of doing things - yet more change! What a time of change and transition for the Church, both locally and nationally!

Change can be unsettling, and many of us dislike too much of it, as we are creatures of habit and like to stay in our comfort zones. But change brings opportunity for new growth, for people to discover new talents, and for our communities and churches to develop, better serving the people who live, work and worship within them.

The one thing which is guaranteed in the coming year is the promise of God's love for each one of us. Trusting in him will enable us to have a firm foundation and not to be rocked by the inevitable changes, both welcome and unwelcome, which are bound to come our way during the course of the year.

New Year's resolutions to take more exercise, eat and drink less, keep our desks tidy, etc are often broken within a few days (or is that just me?), but a New Year's resolution to trust God for the future, to leave our worries and cares at his feet knowing that he loves us, is far more likely to stand us in good stead for the coming year than any short-lived health kick!

I pray that 2026 will be a time of great blessing for you and your families, and that you will know God's love in your lives in the coming year.

I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year, "Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown."

And he replied: "Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way." Minnie Haskins

Fr. James

January

Dates for your diary

Friday 2nd 10:30am
Coffee Morning
St Lawrence's, Lt Waldingfield

Tuesday 6th 10am
Drop in for Coffee
Mary's House

Tuesday 13th 10am
Drop in for Coffee
Mary's House

Saturday 17th 10am
Coffee Morning
St Mary's, Boxford

Tuesday 20th 10am
Drop in for Coffee
Mary's House

Wednesday 21st 10am
Coffee Morning
All Saints', Newton Green

Friday 23rd 7:15pm
Fun Quiz
Groton Village Hall

Tuesday 27th 10am
Drop in for Coffee
Mary's House

Contact Information

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Hydrating Hydro

New year, new skin... sounds good, right?!

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New Year Offer

Skinbase Hydro Treatment, just £95
(usually £125) *

Call 01787 211 000 for more info

* Treatment lasts 55 minutes. Offer valid once per person; until 31/01/2026.

Suffolk Medical & Beauty Clinic, 6 Broad Street, Boxford.

Tel: 01787 211 000 www.suffolkmedicalclinic.co.uk



Service Schedule for January 2026

Sunday 4th January <i>The Epiphany</i> <i>Christmas 2</i>	09:30	<i>Sunday Eucharist</i>	St Lawrence's, Lt Waldingfield
	11:00	<i>Sunday Eucharist</i>	St Mary's, Boxford
Wednesday 7th January	10:00	<i>Communion & Coffee</i>	Mary's House, Boxford
Sunday 11th January <i>Baptism of Christ</i>	09:30	<i>Sunday Eucharist</i>	St Bartholomew's, Groton
	11:00	<i>Sunday Eucharist</i>	St Mary's, Boxford
	16:00	<i>BCP Evensong</i>	St Mary's, Boxford
Wednesday 14th January	10:00	<i>Communion & Coffee</i>	Mary's House, Boxford
Sunday 18st January <i>Epiphany 2</i> <i>1st Day of the Week of Prayer for Christian Union</i>	09:30	<i>Sunday Eucharist</i>	St Mary the Virgin, Edwardstone
	11:00	<i>Sunday Eucharist</i>	St Mary's, Boxford
Wednesday 21st January	10:00	<i>Communion & Coffee</i>	Mary's House, Boxford
Sunday 25th January <i>Epiphany 3</i> <i>Last Day of the Week of Prayer for Christian Union</i>	09:30	<i>Sunday Eucharist</i>	All Saints', Newton Green
	11:00	<i>Family Worship</i>	St Mary's, Boxford
Wednesday 28th January	10:00	<i>Communion & Coffee</i>	Mary's House, Boxford

All our churches across the Benefice are **OPEN EVERY DAY** for Private Prayer.

If you need support, please contact the Benefice Office in the first instance, all enquiries will be treated in confidence and passed on to the appropriate person.





BOXRIVER BENEFICE

COFFEE MORNINGS

DROP IN FOR COFFEE AT MARY'S HOUSE, SWAN STREET, BOXFORD
BETWEEN 10AM TO 12PM TUESDAY 6TH, 13TH, 20TH AND 27TH JANUARY

FRIDAY, 2ND JANUARY
10.30 AM - COFFEE MORNING AT ST LAWRENCE'S, LT WALDINGFIELD

SATURDAY, 17TH JANUARY
10.00 AM - COFFEE MORNING AT ST MARY'S, BOXFORD

WEDNESDAY, 21ST JANUARY
10.00 AM - COFFEE MORNING AT ALL SAINTS', NEWTON





Happy New Year!

May this fresh beginning bring renewed hope and abundant opportunities for growth in our faith and in our communities. As we look back on the joy of the Christmas season, we offer our wholehearted thanks not only to the many volunteers whose dedication, hard work, and generosity of spirit made the celebrations possible, but also to everyone who came along to our churches during this special time. It was wonderful to see so many familiar faces and to welcome new ones into our congregations—we look forward to seeing you again in 2026.

St Mary's Christmas Tree Festival

This year's Christmas Tree Festival was a truly joyful celebration, filling the church with a wonderful atmosphere of light, music, and community spirit. Visitors were treated to live carols played by Tom Cogan and the beautiful harmonies of the Madrigalia Choir, which added to the festive cheer. The creativity on display was remarkable, with every tree decorated in imaginative and unique ways.

Competition was fierce, but the winners were:

- 1st – *Boxford Cubs*
- 2nd – *Boxford Friendship Group*
- 3rd – *Boxford Explorers*
- 4th – *Boxford Primary School*



Each entry brought something special, and together they created a magical forest of festive colour. Delicious refreshments and the warm welcome contributed to the wonderful atmosphere. A sincere thank you to everyone who came along and to the volunteers whose hard work made this wonderful festival possible.



Thank you to Peter Norris for the photos.

Festive Coffee Morning with stalls

Despite reduced numbers this year – largely due to a major event at the golf club – we're delighted to share that our Christmas Coffee Morning in Newton raised almost £500. A huge thank you to all the stallholders whose hard work and creativity made the morning so enjoyable, and to everyone who attended. Your support ensured the event's success.

A highlight, once again, was the much-loved coffee with Bailey's. First introduced three years ago, it has now become a tradition, with several newcomers joining us specifically to

try the "special coffee." It's a reminder of how a little festive indulgence can bring people together.

Thank you to everyone who helped make this event possible—we couldn't have done it without you.

Volunteering

At the heart of our villages, our churches rely on dedicated volunteers, and we're always glad to welcome new faces alongside those already giving their time. Volunteers play a vital role in keeping our churches and communities vibrant. You don't need to be a regular churchgoer, and there's no set level of commitment—everyone is welcome to offer whatever time or skills they can.

Perhaps 2026 could be the year you try something new. There are many ways to get involved: flower arranging, opening and closing churches, helping at coffee mornings, supporting Mary's House, cleaning, maintenance, gardening, fundraising, or assisting at the foodbank.

If you'd like to know more, please contact the Benefice Office—we'd love to hear from you.

St Mary's Food Bank: Here for You

If you—or someone you know—could benefit from help, please reach out to the Benefice Office in confidence. We know that asking for assistance isn't always easy, especially during the winter months, but you are never alone. Our commitment is to walk alongside our community, providing practical help throughout the year.

Fun Quiz at Groton Village Hall

St Bartholomew's Fundraising Team is delighted to host a fun-filled quiz night on **Friday 23rd January 2026**. Doors open at 7:15pm, with the quiz kicking off promptly at 7:30pm.

Form a team of up to six and enjoy an evening of friendly competition, laughter, and community spirit. A hot supper will be served, followed by tempting puddings – all included in the ticket price of £15 per person. Don't forget to bring your own drinks, and look forward to a raffle with fantastic prizes. It promises to be a wonderful night, so gather your friends and book your team today by contacting Jayne on **01787 211360**.

Boxford Study Centre Literature Group

A 6 week course on Mondays 2:30 - 4:30pm
Meeting in Groton Village Hall, CO10 5EL
Starting on Monday February 23rd 2026

Great Pretenders

Tutor: Mrs Alison Davidson

This Term we shall be studying four classic texts
which feature deceptions.

February 23rd	The Merchant's Tale	Chaucer c1390
March 2nd	Othello	Shakespeare c1603
March 9th	<i>Reading Week</i>	
March 16th	Volpone	Ben Jonson 1606
March 23rd	Volpone	Ben Jonson 1606
March 30th	Hard Times	Charles Dickens 1854

Course Fee: £60 for the complete course,
payable on the first or second meeting.
£10 for each single class.

Newcomers to these classes are very welcome.

Please contact Mr David Jones for further information
and if you are interested in attending.
Telephone 01787 211104.

Boxford Village Hall – Annual General Meeting

The AGM of Boxford Village Hall will be held on
Monday, 13th January at 7.30pm in the village hall.

Everyone is warmly invited to attend.
Come along to hear updates on the past year
and our plans for the centenary year.

Little Waldingfield Pop-Up Pubs

Our next 'Pop-Up Pub' night is Friday 30 January 2026
from 6:30pm - 10:30pm. The nights are really relaxed and
friendly events in the beautiful setting of the pavilion at the
Little Waldingfield Playing Fields, and everyone is welcome
to join us for an evening of great company and a range of
reasonably-priced drinks (both alcoholic and non).

The Kersey Village Art Group

A small, friendly group of amateur artists meets most
Thursdays at 10am at Kersey Village Hall to sketch and paint
in relaxed company. The Kersey Art Group offers a chance
to improve skills, share ideas, and enjoy time away from
day-to-day distractions. There is no formal tuition, but
members are happy to share knowledge across a range of
media.

New members are welcome. Fees are paid in advance
and cost about £2.50-£3 per week. A free taster session is
available. For details, contact Richard Fletcher, Kersey Art
Group Organiser, email djzfletcher@googlemail.com or
phone **07856 899367**.

GROTON VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
PRESENTS



QUIZ AND CURRY EVENING

At

Groton Village Hall

On Friday 17th April 2026 7:30 for 7:45 start

£16.00 per head (entry plus choice of curry & dessert)

Teams of up to 6

B.Y.O. Bar

Raffle - Cash only on Evening please

Phone Joanna: 210619 or Jayne: 211360 to book your place

Polstead Films

The Life of Chuck

Friday 16th January, Doors open 7pm

POLSTEAD VILLAGE HALL

"Buoyant, warm and thought-provoking"

The Life of Chuck is based on one of Stephen King's more
optimistic tales and shows a sweeter side of director Mike
Flanagan. Its impressive cast, headed by Tom Hiddleston,
includes Mark Hamill, Chiwetel Ejiofor and Jacob Tremblay
and tells the story of the life of an ordinary man, Charles
Krantz, in reverse chronological order.

Tickets £5. Email: polsteadfilms@gmail.com to reserve or
buy in Polstead Community Shop.
The film starts at 7:30pm.



Polstead Gardening Club

Our first meeting of 2026 will be on **Tuesday 24 February at 7:30 pm**, when Lisa Matthews (Nature Citizen) will give a talk
on Night Scented Flowers. We look forward to seeing you
there.

All meetings take place at Polstead Village Hall, The
Green, Polstead (CO6 5AL). Entry is free for members;
non-members are welcome for £5 (cash or cheque), which
includes a drink and nibbles.

Membership subscriptions fall due in February (£20 single /
£35 joint), and new members are very welcome.

Queries: gardeningclubpolstead@yahoo.com.

St Bartholomew's Fundraising Team

invite you to a

Fun Quiz

at
Groton Village Hall

on

Friday 23rd January 2026

7:15 for 7:30 start

Hot Supper & Puddings

Teams of up to Six
£15 per person

BYO Liquid Refreshment

* * * Raffle * * *

to book a team please contact

Jayne 01787 211360



Fleece Jazz at
Stoke-by-Nayland Hotel presents

Joanna Eden Band: Road to Paysandu

Wednesday 14th January 2026 8pm - Tickets: £20



The UK's answer to Diana Krall and Norah Jones playing songs from her album – three years in the making on three continents.

Joanna Eden – Keys/ Vocals
Guillermo Hill – Guitar
Andres Lafone – Bass
George Double – Drums

The Derek Nash Organ Trio

Wednesday 28th January 2026 8pm - Tickets: £20



Irrepressible saxophone star of the Jools Holland Rhythm & Blues Orchestra and one of the hottest, funkier players on the UK scene leads this exciting organ trio.

Derek Nash – Saxophones
Jim Watson – Organ
George Double – Drums

Stoke by Nayland Hotel, Keepers Lane, Leavenheath CO6 4PZ

Ample parking; fully accessible. Directions: www.fleecejazz.org.uk

Tickets: 01787 210796 or via **WeGotTickets** (booking fee applies); or on the door (cash or cheque only; sorry no debit/credit cards)

*Friends of Fleece Jazz discount

SPECIAL OFFER: A double room with breakfast and two tickets from £129 (subject to availability) Phone: 01206 262836

NEWTON VILLAGE HALL

COFFEE MORNING
SATURDAY 21st MARCH 2026
10am – 11.30am

REFRESHMENTS
CAKES
RAFFLE
BRIC – A – BRAC

DONATIONS WOULD BE MOST WELCOME

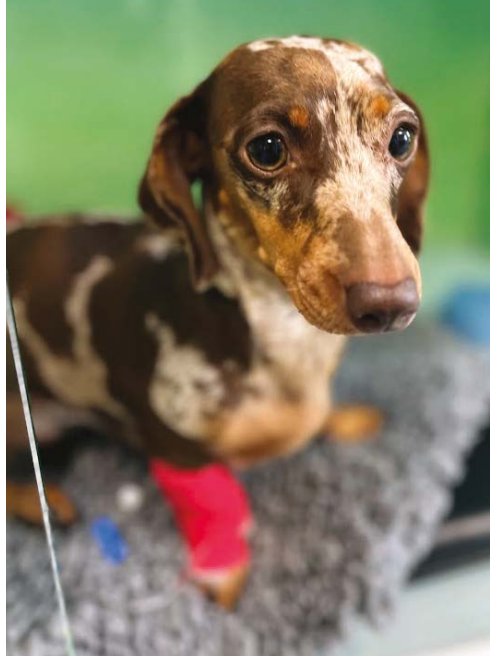
THE FLEECE HOTEL

Charity Quiz

Wed 14th	Jan	8 PM
Wed 11th	Feb	8 PM
Wed 11th	Mar	8 PM
Wed 15th	Apr	8 PM
Wed 13th	May	8 PM
Wed 17th	Jun	8 PM
Wed 15th	Jul	8 PM
Wed 12th	Aug	8 PM
Wed 16th	Sep	8 PM
Wed 14th	Oct	8 PM
Wed 11th	Nov	8 PM
Wed 9th	Dec	8 PM

Free to enter, please donate on the night to the charity of the month!

Up to 6 per team | 01787 211 818 to reserve a table



Tails from the Practice

Looking ahead to 2026 with patients who shaped us

As the year draws to a close it feels a natural time to reflect on 2025 and the patients and owners who filled our practice. Veterinary life is never dull, and the past year brought everything from complex emergencies to everyday care. Each case was a reminder of the resilience of our patients and the dedication of their owners and our team.

Winnie, a Boxer puppy, became seriously unwell over the course of just a few days. She was diagnosed with an immune-mediated meningitis, and her treatment was complicated, requiring careful adjustment at every stage and causing many anxious moments for all involved. Winnie showed remarkable determination throughout her recovery, and she is now a healthy, bouncy adult. Watching her transformation was one of the most uplifting moments of the year.

One of our most striking cases involved Sky, a Shetland sheepdog who presented with vomiting and abdominal pain. Investigations revealed a gall bladder mucocoele, a rare and serious condition. Sky required delicate surgery to remove her gall bladder, and we were fortunate to have a specialist surgeon join our team for the day. She recovered very well and has since returned to her usual lively self.

Our whole team enjoyed the Hadleigh Show in May, where it was a pleasure to meet so many new people and pets. Events like these remind us how much joy animals bring to our lives and how fortunate we are to share

that with the wider community.

Alongside complex cases, routine procedures formed an important part of our year. We carried out many neutering surgeries, including for Milo, Nellie, Bella, Ted, Jessie, and Oreo, helping to safeguard their long-term health and wellbeing. We also performed dental procedures on patients ranging from just three months to sixteen years old! Proving that age is just a number when it comes to keeping our patients pain-free and happy.

Two of our bravest patients, Ziggy and Percy, deserve a special mention. Both completed their courses of chemotherapy following a cancer diagnosis. Their journeys were long and demanding, yet they always arrived looking for treats and cuddles. Their resilience throughout treatment highlighted the importance of supporting both our patients and their families through challenging times.

September marked a milestone for us as we celebrated our first year of opening. To thank our patients and owners for being part of our journey, we handed out party bags to mark the occasion. Seeing so many familiar faces and wagging tails was a reminder of how fortunate we are to be part of this community.

Ozzy, a much-loved rabbit, presented one of the more unusual cases of the year. He arrived with a head tilt that was affecting his balance and coordination, and a CT scan revealed a severe middle ear infection. This

allowed us to perform delicate surgery to relieve the pressure and address the underlying problem. Ozzy recovered very well, and it has been a privilege to see him return to his bright-eyed, inquisitive self.

We performed several caesarean sections during 2025, ensuring safe deliveries when mothers experienced difficulties in labour and puppies needed immediate care. There is nothing quite like seeing a litter settle in for their first feed with a contented mum, knowing we helped them arrive safely.

One of the most memorable cases of the year was Simba, a young cat who sustained severe internal injuries after being hit by a car. He required intensive care and spent several nights in a critical condition. Our team worked around the clock to stabilise him, and Simba went on to make a full recovery. Today, he is back to his mischievous ways, and we are incredibly proud of him and his owners.

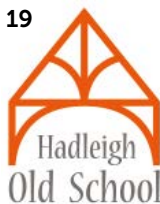
Looking back, 2025 was a year of challenges, celebrations, and meaningful moments of connection. From rare surgeries to routine care, and from critical emergencies to joyful puppy arrivals, each story has helped shape our practice and our team. As we look ahead to 2026, thank you for being part of our journey.

*Dr. Jessica Hudson BVMedSci (Hons)
BVM BVS (Hons) BSAVA PGcertSAECC
MRCVS
www.thehadleighvets.com*

'Come into the Garden, Maud' - Joan Warburton (1920-1996)

An exhibition celebrating the art of Joan Warburton will be on show at Hadleigh Old School from **3 to 19 April 2026**. A call for art loans has now gone out from the gallery, just five miles from Boxford.

Joan Warburton lived for many years in Stoke By Nayland and regularly painted the towns, villages, and countryside of the Box and Brett Valleys. Perhaps you have a work of art on your wall that is worthy of being shown in the retrospective art show being staged at Easter 2026?



The exhibition is co-curated by journalist and editor Lindsay Fulcher and Hadleigh Old School's Venue Director Ian Grutchfield. Its title, *Come into the Garden, Maud*, comes from a quip by artist Arthur Lett-Haines, shouted up to Joan while she was leaning out of a bedroom window at Benton End, the home he shared with Cedric Morris. From then on, she was known as 'Maudie'.

Warburton was one of the longest-serving female alumni of the East Anglian School of Painting and Drawing. The exhibition is staged with the permission of the O'Malley Estate, including her son Twig and great-niece Carolyn Jenkins, with provenance provided by long-standing agents Sally Hunter Fine Art.



Over 40 drawings and paintings will be shown, dating from the late 1930s to the mid-1990s. These range from early line-drawn portraits of figures such as Cedric Morris and Lucian Freud, to wartime scenes, East Anglian landscapes, cottage gardens including Ronald Blythe's Bottengoms, and later works marked by humour and imagination. Oil paintings of family life are also included,

alongside a display of ceramics by her husband Peter O'Malley, echoing their joint London exhibitions of the mid-20th century.

Ian Grutchfield says Warburton's work unusually combines both Cedric Morris's and Arthur Lett-Haines's characters to create her own unique individuality, resulting in a distinctive and life-affirming body of work.

Come into the Garden, Maud runs from **3 to 19 April 2026**. Anyone who owns a work by Joan Warburton and would consider lending it to the exhibition is invited to contact Ian Grutchfield at hadleigholdschool@gmail.com.



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*The ultimate estate-to-plate
dining experience*

POP IN FOR BREAKFAST

Monday - Friday 7-10am

Weekends 8 - 10am

Book a table and join us...

MID-WEEK LUNCH

Monday - Friday, 12pm - 2pm

Two courses £25 | Three courses £30

WILD GAME DINNER

30th January, 7pm

www.thebildestoncrown.com/



THE LINDSEY ROSE

WEDNESDAYS

£18, Burger & Selected Drink

SUNDAY QUIZ

From 4pm. Teams of 6.

Last Sunday of the month

DINING HOURS

Wednesday to Saturday

12pm – 2.30pm & 6pm – 9pm

Sunday – 12pm – 6pm

www.thelindseyrose.co.uk | 01449 741424

Hadleigh Patient Participation Group (PPG)

The column may look the same but the info varies each month so please take time to read on.

Doctor Retires: Sadly we have to say goodbye to Dr Nabarro who retires at the end of 2025. She will be greatly missed by all. We wish her a long and happy retirement. One of the new doctors has the capacity to cover her appointment times.

Patients Be Patient: As with all NHS facilities there is currently a high demand on our resources due to the considerable increase in winter illnesses e.g. 'flu', cough and colds. We are doing our best to meet these additional needs but your patience and understanding would be much appreciated.



Automatic Repeat Prescription Changes: In an effort to reduce the current high level of medicine waste there will be changes to the arrangements for automatic repeat prescriptions. It will be up to patients to re-order what they need. This can be simply done by using the slip enclosed with the previous medication or via the NHS App.

Patients should allow 5 working days for their repeat prescriptions to be completed. For further information please visit www.hadleighhealth.co.uk/news/changes-to-repeat-prescriptions or ask your pharmacist for details.

Outside Medicine Chest: If you traditionally collect your medicine from the practice dispensary inside the health centre you could expand your collection times by using the outside medicine chest sited in the patients' car park. This optional service will provide more flexible collection times and hopefully reduce queuing time inside the practice. Certain exclusions apply such as controlled drugs, fridge lines and large bags of medication. If you would like to know more please speak to one of the dispensing staff when you next visit.

Pharmacy First: Have you heard about this service which is available through your local pharmacy? The Pharmacy First scheme is an NHS initiative designed to offer professional healthcare advice and treatment for 7 common illnesses such as UTIs, shingles, sore throats, ear infections, impetigo, sinusitis and infected bites.

Anima: Have you registered yet? Why wait until you are poorly and need to make an appointment using this online triage system? www.hadleighhealth.co.uk/anima or www.nhs.uk/nhs-app

If you do not have digital access or you encounter any problems you can still telephone the surgery; a care navigator will help you. **01473 822 961**

IT Help: Once a month Communities Together offer helpful IT advice in the upstairs room of the Hadleigh Library. The next session will take place on **Tuesday 6th January** from 10am to 12noon. Booking is essential as places are limited. Contact Tracey info@communitiestogether-ea.org or **01449 707031**



Travel Vaccinations: Will you be travelling to foreign parts this year? Not sure what jabs you will need before you go? Find out by visiting <https://tinyurl.com/nhs-travel-vaccinations> and www.travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries

If you do require any vaccinations for your chosen foreign destination please complete a travel assessment form by visiting www.hadleighhealth.co.uk, scroll down to Anima > submit a request > admin request > travel assessment. It is important to make this initial appointment as early as possible – at least 6 weeks before you travel – this is due to the demand on our NHS service and the need to prioritise the services we can offer at shorter notice. We recommend if patients are travelling in less than 6 weeks that you contact a local travel clinic for your vaccinations as the health centre will not be able to support you.

Boxford Community Car Scheme: This service is available for patients needing transport to hospital or health centre appointments. Contact Jen Eastwood on **01787 211853** or jen.eastwood8@gmail.com

Out of Hours Doctor: Need a doctor when the Hadleigh Health Centre is closed, including weekends? Call 111 for advice and details of your nearest 'out of hours' duty doctor or visit www.111.nhs.uk

Free Parking for Patients: The patient car park is for the convenience of patients with an appointment. If you are visiting the area for any other reason please avoid using these dedicated spaces. However, should you have a genuine reason to visit the health centre and the patient car park is full, you can register your car inside the waiting area and that will give you two hours free parking at the nearby Toppesfield Hall parking area. Blue badge holders do not have to pay but must clearly display their badge.

Wishing our faithful readers a happy and healthy 2026

Website: www.hadleighhealth.co.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/HadleighHealthCentre

PPG Chair/ Art Work: Jan Devey deveys@btinternet.com
01473 827091 or 07881 798999

Hollow Trees Farm

Join us in our farm café this January and warm up from the cold winter. Take a seat by our cozy fire and enjoy everything we have to offer - from homemade cakes to Sunday lunch with all the trimmings to our surprise daily special!

Make sure to pay us a visit on Tuesdays at 2:30pm for either our Knit and Natter or Book Club – held alternate weeks.

If you're planning your visit, there's no need to book! Just come along and our team will get you settled and take care of the rest.

www.hollowtrees.co.uk



Are you looking to make a difference?

Become a volunteer and help change lives

At Home-Start Suffolk, we believe families should have the right support at the right time, giving children the best start in life.

As a volunteer you can help us ensure families and children are given the support they need to thrive. Your volunteering journey will offer a rewarding experience where you can learn new skills and meet new people, all while contributing to your local community. Your time and kindness could make a big difference to Suffolk families.

FULL TRAINING PROVIDED

Contact us today to find out more



homestartinsuffolk.org

01473 621104

volunteer@homestartinsuffolk.org

**HOME
START**
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Read Easy
Helping adults learn to read

Can you help us?

Read Easy provides free and confidential one-to-one reading coaching for adults who struggle with reading. We need the following support to deliver this life-changing service:

- Volunteers to join the team running Read Easy locally
- Free venues for training days and reading coaching sessions
- Volunteers to become Reading Coaches
- Donations from individuals and grants from local trusts
- Links with local referral agencies

To find out more, please contact your local group or visit readeasy.org.uk

Janet Weavers
suffolkpioneer@readeasy.org.uk

© Read Easy UK. All Read Easy groups are legally and financially independent local organisations affiliated to Read Easy UK (Registered Charity No. 1151286)

WARM UP THIS WINTER WITH A VISIT TO OUR FARM CAFÉ

DID YOU KNOW?

Our Farm Café host a Knit and Natter and a Book Club on alternate Tuesday's at 2:30pm!

This January is the perfect time to visit our Farm Café! Warm up by our cosy log burner with a homemade cake and coffee or delicious lunch crafted using our home reared meat from our Farm Butchers and high quality ingredients found in our Farm Shop.

NO NEED TO BOOK!

JUST POP IN AND OUR TEAM WILL TAKE CARE OF THE REST!

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FIND OUT MORE HERE

HOLLOW TREES FARM



Natural Boxford

*Community action, citizen science
& long-term care for the River Box*

Through citizen science, practical conservation and local engagement, Natural Boxford continues its steady work caring for the River Box and the wider environment.

The much-needed rain after our *dry-as-dry* summer has seen the river level start its up-and-down dance - nothing too drastic so far!

Rivers like the Box respond quickly to changes in weather, land use and water quality. Regular monitoring by local volunteers helps build a clearer

picture of river health over time and allows problems to be identified and reported more quickly.

Our river group keeps very busy and we were recently invited to the Essex and Suffolk Rivers' Trust Riverwatch celebration for all the local groups like ours engaging in citizen science focused on our rivers. We were given the heads-up that we would be receiving an award and were asked to give a talk. The nerves kicked in, but between us we gathered some appropriate photos and, on a rainy night at Colchester Rugby Club, I kicked off with a general round-up of all our activities and Jono finished off with a report on our huge Himalayan Balsam effort.

There were several interesting talks including one from the CEO of the National Rivers Trust explaining how the river catchment system of organisation for both ecology and wider fields is being adopted with positive results. News was also given of large funding being made available for very overdue river clean-ups – albeit based on 15-year-old data, which is very frustrating.

“Natural Boxford was named Group of the Year by the Essex & Suffolk Rivers’ Trust, recognising the collective efforts of volunteers caring for the River Box.”

Then came the awards ceremony, with awards including *The Longest Streak* (for consistent water testing), *Best Photo* (a mallard showing a keen interest in a group’s activities) and *Most Active Newcomer*. I was honoured to receive our *Group of the Year* award on behalf of all Natural Boxford members, and Jono’s dedication to all things Himalayan Balsam was recognised with the *Above & Beyond* award.



Pictured opposite from top:

The River Box behind The Causeway. After a long dry summer recent rainfall has brought welcome movement back to the river with levels rising and falling naturally.

The River Box at Primrose Wood. Regular monitoring helps build a picture of how the river responds to changing weather and seasonal conditions.

Below: *A Little Egret in the River Box at the village centre, spotted by Audrey Zuck. Once rare in the UK, little egrets first bred here in 1996 and are now a familiar sight along rivers and wetlands.*



River monitoring and habitat work

We have been carrying out our regular Riverfly surveys for over a year now and have recently set our 'trigger' level. From now on if our survey findings fall below that level we report directly to the Environment Agency, who are then able to come out and investigate what has happened, for example a pollution incident.

After our mammoth effort clearing thousands and thousands of Himalayan Balsam plants over the summer, when Jono did a sweep around all the areas covered so far he found only 15 plants - truly amazing. Our focus next year will be checking over areas where we have already been (nearly as far as the bypass, including tributaries) as there will still be some plants arising from seed already in the ground from previous years. We will then move on to the great swathes of balsam between the bypass and the Wash. We are already in contact with several landowners along this stretch. If you

have land along Stone Street adjoining the river, please do get in touch - we are very willing to help you with the responsibility of clearing this habitat- and riverbank-destroying plant - pretty though it is!

Keeping the heat in - community energy advice

Find out how to save on your energy bills with more thermal imaging and energy-tips opportunities. Last winter we ran a very successful *Keep the Heat* project which saw many households receiving external thermal imaging visits to help identify if and where they were losing heat, and what practical steps could be taken to address this. Many people were surprised at how clearly heat loss showed up and how small changes could make a noticeable difference.

There will be a number of visits on offer again this winter, with the possibility of bringing the camera indoors. This provides very clear readings of 'cold spots' (for example around loft hatches, doors and windows) with an expert on hand to interpret the images and offer tailored advice.

If you would like to receive a(nother) thermal imaging visit please contact heatenergy@gmx.co.uk, or send a message to **07821 776270** and Lisa will get back to you.

If you would like to find out more to start with, we will be organising small groups to meet in the pub with Lisa to share information about simple measures to reduce energy bills, as

River Quiz!

While carrying out our surveys we also come across many other species that are not part of the indicator group. In the October issue we set a quiz to see if anyone could identify the little fish we found - they were confirmed as sticklebacks!

Here's another one to test you - can you identify the creature in the picture?



well as grants available, for example for added loft insulation - often the number one easy fix.

We wish all good health and appreciation of the wealth and beauty of nature in 2026.

*Much love,
Louise and all at
Natural Boxford.*



Date for your diaries

Thursday 26th Feb 2026, 7:30pm
Boxford Pavilion, £5

'A Brief (un)Natural History of Rivers'

A talk by Darren Tansley, Wilder Rivers and Protected Species Manager, Essex Wildlife Trust

We are delighted to welcome Darren Tansley to Boxford. He is a conservationist whose projects range from tackling the issues of fish migration, to natural flood management and the reintroduction of species such as water voles and beavers. With a passion for mammals he was a founder member of the Essex and Suffolk Dormouse Group, co-authored the latest Essex Mammal Atlas and has delivered tracks and signs training courses to hundreds of professionals and Citizen Scientists. In 2007 he established the Riversearch project to coordinate the annual Essex Otter Survey and in 2016 he was appointed Chairman of the UK Water Vole Steering Group.

Rivers are among our most diverse habitats, yet they have never been more threatened. This talk explores what rivers once looked like, how we have altered them, and how they can be made more resilient in the face of biodiversity loss and climate change. Darren will adapt the talk to include River Box-specific content.

Refreshments will be available. Please do spread the word and bring friends.



Nedging Hall Barns' Christmas Fair

This December saw the very first Nedging Hall Barns Christmas Fair. Set in the stunning grounds of Nedging Hall it showcased a handpicked selection of 25 stalls, including artisan crafts, seasonal delights and unique gifts. The event saw over 1,000 visitors to the grounds of Nedging Hall, and it was enjoyed by all. The support from local stall holders played a big part in making the event such a vibrant and enjoyable occasion.

Alongside lots of fabulous brands there was the return of 'The Boule In', one of Suffolk's most treasured brands. The Bildeston Crown created a pop-up café serving mulled wine, hot chocolates and mince pies. Everyone was getting in the festive spirit with the team pouring over twelve litres of mulled wine over the two days!



A raffle throughout the fair raised over £1,000 for The East Anglian Air Ambulance. They are a charity independent from the NHS, receiving no regular government funding, so they rely almost entirely on community support like this.

Harriet Buckle, Creative Manager at Nedging Hall Estate, organised the event and commented: *"It was the perfect way to start the Christmas season in one of Suffolk's most enchanting settings. The fair exceeded our expectations; we were delighted with how many people joined us and the feedback so far has been incredible. We hope to open the doors of the Nedging Hall barns and host an even bigger and better Christmas Fair again in 2026."*

Winston's Wheels

Thank you to everyone who supported Winston's Wheels Disabled Dog Charity throughout 2025, from donors and event attendees to our dedicated volunteers. Special thanks also to local village news magazines for their continued support. Your help enables us to provide much-needed wheels for our four-legged friends.

Wishing you all a happy 2026!

French's Care Haven

We still need extra help at the weekends, so we are looking for someone who can work a Saturday or Sunday morning. Please call me for more details on the number below.



The photo above shows one of our helpers with our lovely donkeys, and the photo to the right is Lucy, our beautiful therapy dog, who hopes you had a good Christmas and wishes you all a happy New Year!

I would like to thank the Boxford Friendship Group for raising money for us, and Boxford United Charities for their funding this year. Every pound raised helps with our huge outgoings, and we are extremely grateful to all our donors, including our valued monthly supporters. I hope 2026 is a good year for you all.

As you may know, we have to move off our current land as the owner's house is being put up for sale. We are under great pressure to leave and are still desperately searching for suitable land, but nothing has yet come up. We currently have nowhere to move to, and winter conditions make relocation extremely difficult. The heavy clay soil is flooded around our shelters, and moving animals, fencing, and equipment now would cause serious damage to the land. New land and springtime cannot come soon enough for our team and animals.

We are looking for 20–30 acres of grazing land within approximately a 10-mile radius of this area, including Hadleigh and Polstead, if possible. We love this area and want to keep our helpers, volunteers, and the people we support with us, as well as our local supporters who attend our open days and fundraising events.

There are no two ways about it—we are in a dire situation. Do you own land and are able to sell to us? Do you know someone who does and could help? Please put feelers out for us and contact me if you have any ideas, know



of someone to approach, or are in a position to sell. Our animals are our priority, and we want them to continue living out their lives with us as the old and happy souls they are.

We have now opened a GoFundMe page to try to raise much-needed funds for the move, as it will be a huge financial challenge. You can find it at: <https://tinyurl.com/frenchs-relocation-fundraiser> or visit our website and click on the GoFundMe link. Any financial help you can give would be greatly appreciated by our animals and the people we support at our charity.

Jann

07747 755 556

jann.turner@hotmail.co.uk

www.frenchscarehaven.org.uk

The Fleece Quiz

The monthly charity quiz at the Fleece Hotel offers an easy excuse for a night out with the added bonus of supporting local good causes!

Free to enter and open to all, the quiz raised just over £5,000 during 2025, with teams invited to donate on the night to the charity of the month.

It is very much about friendly rivalry rather than serious quiz business, and organisers are hoping plenty of new and familiar faces will join in through 2026 – whether for the glory, the laughs, or simply a pub evening with a purpose.



Last year's donations supported a wide mix of local organisations, including: Shelley RDA, Boxford Village Hall, Eden's Project Sudbury, Abi's Footprints Baby Bank, Ipswich and Colchester Hospital cancer wards, Boxford Friendship Group, Hearing Dogs for Deaf People, the Befriending Scheme, Nayland First Responders, Compassion, and Boxford Spinney.

Teams of up to six are welcome. Tables can be reserved by calling 01787 211 818.



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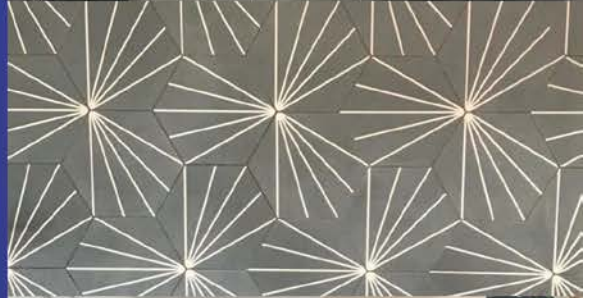
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Life at the Shelley Centre

Harnessing the power of horses to build wellbeing, confidence & independence

Happy New Year!

We'd like to start the year by worth reminding everyone why the Riding for the Disabled (RDA) is so important. Many people think RDA is there to give disabled people something to do, like going to the cinema or bowling, but it is a therapy with many benefits. A recent report was completed showing the following benefits our riders get from coming to RDA:

- Mental Health: 95% feel more calm and focused
- Social Connection: 82% feel more connected to others
- Confidence & Independence: 90% report increased confidence
- Physical Ability: 88% improve balance and coordination
- Educational Engagement: 71% of children and young people are more relaxed at school
- 80% of parents and carers say these improvements would not have happened without RDA.

Did you know that 1 in 4 people in the UK are disabled or have a long-term condition that affects their daily life? This means that the need for effective, accessible therapy is far greater than many people realise. RDA uses the power of horses to create opportunities for everyone to thrive, offering support that is both physical and emotional. Across the country, the RDA provides therapy for over 39,000 disabled people each year, helping individuals of all ages to develop skills, confidence, and a sense of achievement.

So why not become part of this amazing world? If you are one of the people who like to start the year by making a new resolution, how about becoming one of our volunteers and helping others to improve their quality of life? You don't need experience with horses or the disabled, just be reasonably fit, cheerful, willing to learn and prepared to commit a half day a week (term time only) at minimum. We give full training and the current

Above: Poppy, enjoying her riding with the help of three volunteers – one to lead the horse, and one either side of her.

volunteers are a happy and welcoming group, so you will be given full support, have lots of fun and gain a truly worthwhile addition to your life. Please ring the centre for more details or look up the Volunteering section on our website.

If you are not able to help by volunteering, how about making a financial contribution to our work? As well as supporting our programme of fundraising events throughout the year you could make donation by visiting www.justgiving.com/charity/shelleyrda. Thank you.

www.shelleyrda.com





Mystery Photos from the Archive

*A miscellany of Boxford Society archive photographs
for which we need your help*

This month we begin by wishing you all a Happy Christmas and a healthy New Year. We are sharing a selection of photographs from the Boxford Society Archive for which we are seeking your help. We would love to know where these pictures were taken and who the people are. Older Boxfordians may be able to shed some light, but we hope everyone will enjoy looking through these mystery images and, with luck, help us identify a few more pieces of Boxford's past.

Tina and Roger Loose
tina.loose@gmail.com



Above: This picture was probably taken around 1912 or a little later. A large group of mainly women and children. A church group maybe or women left as forces began to assemble for WWI in 1914?

Right from top: This picture came labelled Dot King & Emily King. If correct this is Kenny King's mother Emily and his sister Dorothy. Dorothy married Victor Rice (Snr) and was Vic Rice's mother. But where was the picture taken? Is it Boxford?

Congregational Chapel Sisterhood 1947. Is this an outing? If so presumably the men are the back up team for driving and other duties. Could this be at Felixstowe? Can anyone name some of them?





Four photos left clockwise from top left:

This photo is labelled 'Nicky Elmer possibly'. Very much a local name. Can anyone identify this young man and what his uniform and cap badge can tell us?

Edwardian hairstyle about 1901-1910 on this unnamed lady from a Boxford donated set of photos. She probably lived in Swan Street. Has anyone got a picture of the same woman that will help name her?

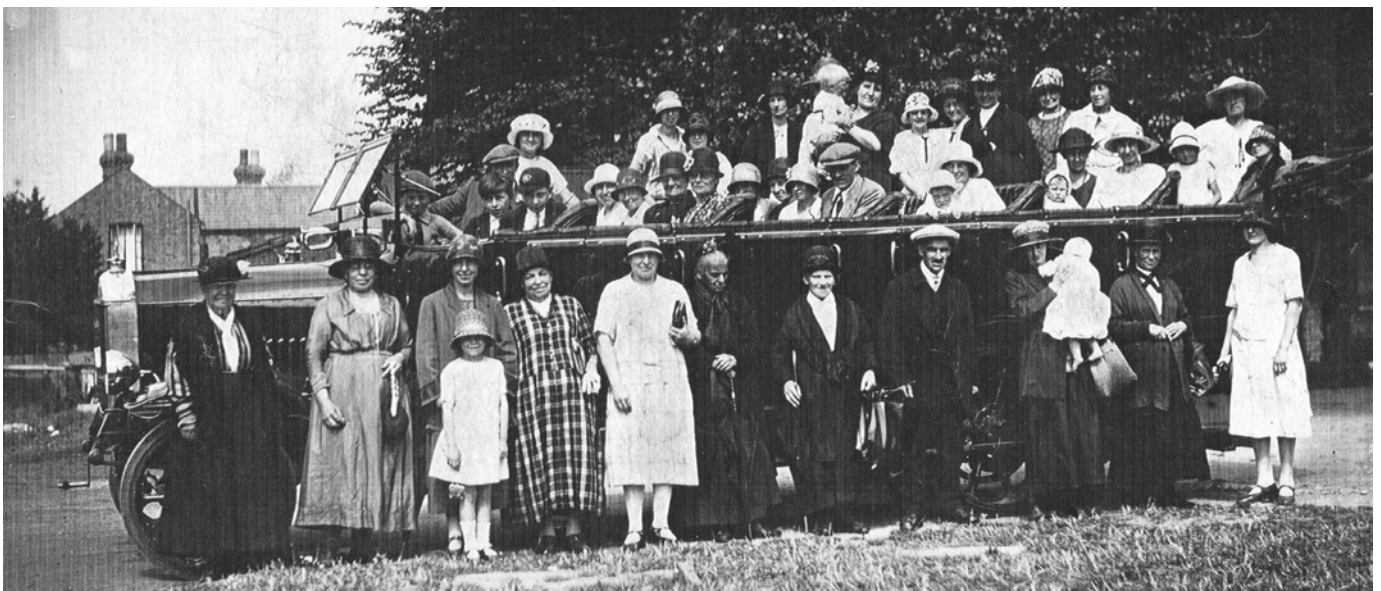
An unnamed group looking satisfied with life. I think this might be Ellis Street where cottages are raised above the street and have steps similar to these. Anyone recognise this photo?

Two ladies in fashionable but more relaxed style, probably from the early 1910's. Dresses no longer reach the ground and hairstyles are less elaborate. Sisters? Does anyone recognise the pair from their own family photos?



Below:

Groton WI outing on Tom Skinner's charabanc in 1922. Ben Rose is the driver. Who are they all? The unpadded seats, wooden wheels with solid tyres, primitive cart suspension and a top speed of 15mph all made journeys wearing. Ultimately the charabanc was a short-lived sight on our roads, and towards the end of the 1920s they started to disappear in favour of the more sophisticated motor buses which included fixed roofs and far greater comfort. I hope they were not going too far!





Above from top left:

The wedding of John and Kate Herbert 1908. Can anyone tell us more about this family? It looks a very splendid affair. Any additional family connections or background information would help place this event more clearly within local history.


'Boy racers, Homefield 1950s'. A delightful glimpse of everyday childhood in Boxford in the post-war years. A more sedate play activity in the back ground. Who are these children?

Left:

Although this beautiful picture was taken at Stoke-by-Nayland, Boxford too enjoyed the Crighton Carousel. The family travelled round during the warmer months and closed down over winter. It took a lot of skill and care to keep such an entertainment in the best and safest condition. The Crighton family are an established Boxford family. Has anyone any information or photographs of the Carousel or fair in Boxford? Does anyone recognise anyone in the picture. This may be a mix of the fair people and visitors.


Flying the New Zealand Flag. What event was this float in and when? Were the children in a school group, youth organisation, or community club? Can anyone identify any of the children?




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Pinocchio

A festive pantomime by Boxford Drama Group

Boxford Drama Group brought the classic tale of Pinocchio to life with warmth, humour and enormous community spirit in a delightful festive production written by Sally Philips. The talented cast and creative team transformed Boxford Village Hall into a world of colourful characters, lively storytelling and festive cheer, delivering a show over 4 nights that captivated the audiences.

James Tolputt made a wonderfully wicked Rafaello, an imposingly evil circus ringmaster whose schemes to steal Pinocchio added just the right touch of dramatic tension. His opening scenes were lifted by the spirited circus performers: Florence Beddis as the acrobat alongside Monica Murphy, Elaine Carpenter and Bronwen Cottrell - all of whom brought flair and lively movement to the stage.

Jeremy Morgan's Dame, Sal Monella, delivered exactly the kind of playful, cheeky humour audiences look forward to, complete with café-themed jokes and a warm rapport with the crowd. Peter Korabik was a gentle, heartfelt Geppetto, looking every inch the devoted puppet-maker thanks to an excellent wig and costume. His longing for a son gave the story an emotional centre, beautifully complemented by Hannah Carpenter's

graceful performance as the Blue Fairy.

Ellie Chamberlain shone in the title role of Pinocchio, bringing charm, energy and a bright sense of innocence to every scene. Lenka Netopilikova's Figaro was a delight, an exuberant and excitable dog whose boundless enthusiasm added humour and momentum throughout. Her lively presence helped drive the story forward, and her heroic moments in assisting Pinocchio to rescue Geppetto from the whale were especially enjoyable.

A standout highlight of the evening was the comedic duo of Al Fresco and Joe. Camilla East, in her debut performance with the group, was truly outstanding - delivering a pitch-perfect accent, impeccable timing and confident stage presence. She formed an excellent double act with Emily Barlow as Joe, and together they provided a reliable source of laughter.

Espresso (Angela Tolputt) and Cappuccino (Frances Korabik) were a constant and engaging presence throughout the production. The colourful jellyfish (Monica Murphy and Elaine Horne), complete with delightful umbrella costumes, added a playful and visually comic moment to the show. Mike Keith's loud and confident Policeman brought another burst of

energy to the scenes he patrolled.

Visually, the show was a triumph. David Philips' set design was accomplished and inventive, creating a clear and colourful storybook setting. The costumes were equally impressive, adding colour, character and theatrical flair throughout. Lighting and sound, handled by Alan Clark and Rob Beddis, were effective and well suited to the production.

Directors Jane Lindekam and Janice Keith, along with producer Elaine Carpenter, steered the production with evident care and enthusiasm, bringing the best out of their cast. The backstage team worked seamlessly to keep the performance running smoothly, and the whole event was rounded off by a lovely Christmas dinner served during the interval by Dawn Mace and her team - a well-appreciated touch that added to the festive enjoyment.

Boxford Drama Group's Pinocchio was a joyful production full of heart, creativity and memorable moments. It was clear that everyone involved gave their all, resulting in an uplifting evening of entertainment that celebrated the magic of pantomime

With thanks to Jeremy Morgan and Alison Barlow for the photographs.





Winthrop's New Year Test

A Groton History Society look at John Winthrop, the Suffolk migration, and a 'glass half full' New England

I tend to think that January is a glass half full or glass half empty month, as we look forward to a new year. Are we optimistic that it will be a good year for us, or not? This month, therefore, I thought we would look back to a January in history and ponder whether



the glass was half full or half empty for John Winthrop, as he looked through his window to the new year knocking on his door.

We are going back to January 1631, in Boston, Massachusetts. Winthrop, a Groton man, alongside old neighbours less well known, gazed out into the freezing cold, with snow laying thick and deep outside. *"This snow lasts until the end of February"*, says a member of the 1629 Fleet, thin and sickly, dependant on Christian charity to survive the winter.

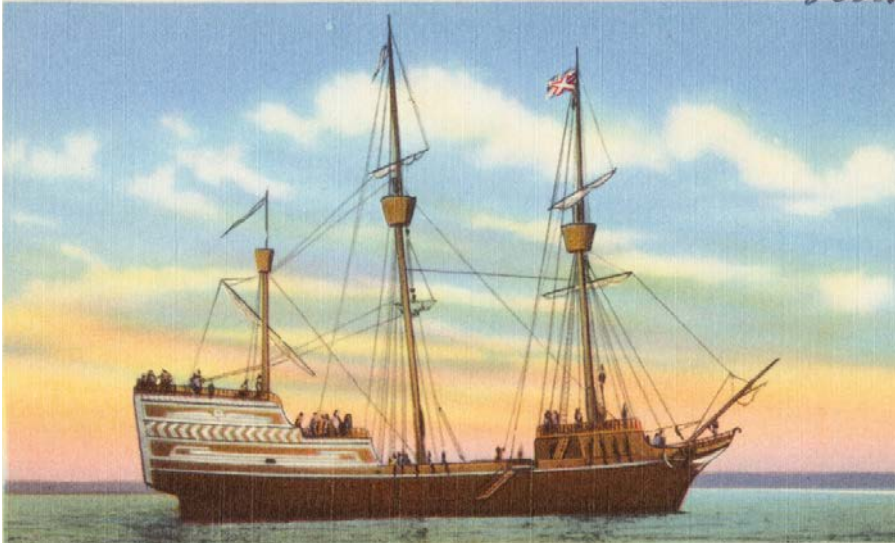
What was John thinking as the snow lay thick outside? To get a feel for the possible answers, we need to examine why he left Groton in Old England, what he was hoping to achieve in this New World, the New England, and what his first six months were like. Finally, as a result of all this, how did he feel about the telling level of liquid in his glass?

NB - New Year in 1631 was 25

March, as England still used the Julian Calendar, changing in 1752 to the Gregorian Calendar. For effect, I will use 1 January.

Why did John Winthrop leave Groton in April 1630 to sail across the Atlantic Ocean to a New England? Much focus is centred on his godly religious motivation. The full answer is more complex, although his puritan piety was central and connected to other circumstances. Winthrop was increasingly stressed by changes he was experiencing not only religiously, but also professionally and





economically. These challenges fuelled his ever-present self-examination and his search for God's plan for him.

At his core, he was a very pious puritan. Not a Puritan though, given that there was no such defined entity. He was zealous in his godly beliefs, but not a zealot. He believed in the Spirit of God working within the individual, rather than in strict doctrinal purity. This becomes clearer in his lay sermon *A Model of Christian Charity*, delivered either just before he sailed or en route.

"God Almighty in his most holy and wise providence hath so disposed of the condition of mankind, as in all times some must be rich, some poor, some high and eminent in power and dignity, others mean and in subjection." This thinking was rooted in the puritan sermons widespread in the Stour Valley during the early 1600s.

Christian Charity was not intended as a blueprint, but rather as an affirmation of the importance of values of community and Christian love, which the godly sought to implement in their communities, especially in our local area around Groton. It also affirmed a social order, possibly a social contract, founded on the belief that God accepted inequality, some rich and some poor, but crucially that God wanted every man to have need of another, and that community brotherly affection would prevail. Wealth was accepted for the Glory of God and the common good, not for individual benefit.

This was, in essence, John Winthrop's "City on a Hill". Colchester in Queen Elizabeth's reign had been described as *"a town for the earnest profession of the gospel, like unity a city on a hill, and as a candle upon a candleholder"*.

Times were changing. Under James I and then Charles I, efforts to centralise and enforce conformity within the Church of England were increasingly

felt by puritan-minded communities. Discipline tightened around doctrine and worship, and fears of a drift back towards Catholic practice grew. At a local level, enforcement was keenly felt in the Stour Valley under Theophilus Kent, Archdeacon of Sudbury, a vocal opponent of puritanism.

Professionally, John Winthrop appeared to have everything going for him. A member of the rising middling classes, he was Cambridge educated, presided over the Court Baron of Groton from 1609, purchased Groton Manor from his uncle, and trained at Gray's Inn.

"So many have died... many more languish."

By 1628 he had attained the position of Attorney of the Court of Wards and Liveries in London, though his later attempt to stand as MP for Sudbury was unsuccessful and he briefly lost his place on the Commission of the Peace following Charles I's accession.

Continuing issues with the title of Groton Manor plagued him professionally. Then, in 1629, he lost the financially beneficial role at the Court of Wards and Liveries.

A long-running title dispute involving his uncle resulted in a substantial and continuing drain on the income from Groton Manor.

This brings us to the financial stresses. Operating on only 70 percent of the income from Groton Manor, and having lost the very decent additional income from his role at the Court of Wards and Liveries, made matters very tight. He had a growing family,

supporting his two older sons through Cambridge, as well as supporting and bailing various business dealings. There were four children from his first marriage, four from his third marriage to Margaret, and another on the way.

Before losing the Court of Wards and Liveries role, he also faced expectations about how he should display his wealthier status in London, which placed further strain on his finances.

Earlier, he had toyed with following his uncle to Ireland, but the timing had not been right. In 1629 he became involved in the Massachusetts Bay Company, an evolution of the 1623 Dorchester Company and later the New England Company. His legal and local governance experience, combined with his godly conviction, impressed the investors, largely from London and eastern England. As a result, he was voted Governor for twelve months, tasked with preparing and leading the expedition to Massachusetts Bay in 1630.

Throughout his life, John had appealed to God for guidance and for his plan for him. He believed that God had saved him in earlier times and would again tell him where he should go. As the pressures already described grew tighter around him, he came to believe that New England was God's destination for him. A full exploration of this would take much longer and is for another day.

So what was he hoping to achieve in New England?

On the one hand, very simply, a fresh start. Less simply, he hoped to create a godly place where Christian Charity could guide a community of fellow godly folk. A City on a Hill, where all eyes were upon them. It was a community willing to forsake wealth and prosperity in England for a godly life in New England.

Opposite page clockwise from top:

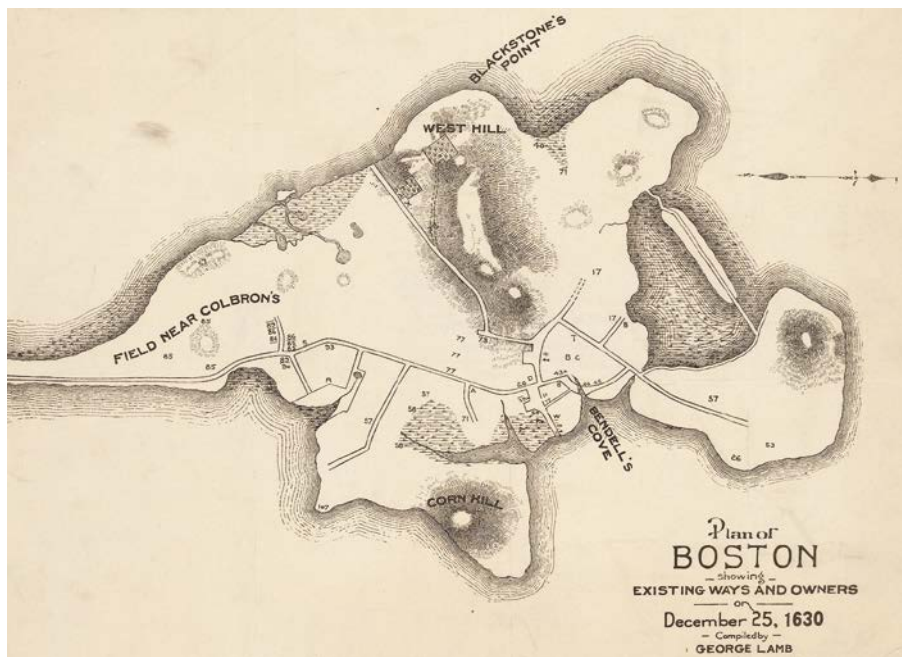
A depiction of John Winthrop landing at Salem in 1630

Harsh winter snow that lasted from late December to the end of February. Downtown Boston would look like this possibly.

A 17th century portrait of John Winthrop

This page:

The Arbella, flagship of John Winthrop's fleet, which carried settlers to Massachusetts Bay in 1630



He also saw it as a personal opportunity for himself and his family, professionally and economically, as well as being part of the infancy stage of the church in New England. This would be away from the overbearing doctrinal discipline of the Church of England (which he called 'Our Mother') yet not separate from it. This distinction was important to him and to most of those who thought as he did, though not all agreed. It is hard for us to grasp just how important all of this was to John Winthrop, yet it clearly was.

How had the journey and the first six months been? For Winthrop and those who travelled with him, the answer would be shaped as much by endurance as by expectation. The voyage took two months, with the fleet arriving in June 1630. Around 700 people sailed with the Winthrop Fleet. About 200 came from within a ten-mile radius of Groton, with over 70 men, women, and children originating from Groton and the surrounding villages. Many more would follow later.

For John Winthrop, the voyage was hard, though not as severe as it was for the vast majority who were less fortunate in their berths. Despite being laden with provisions for both the voyage and the first months after arrival, poor and unaccustomed diet, scurvy, and other diseases took a toll,

especially on the youngest children.

Imagine arriving at your holiday resort and discovering that the brochure had somewhat exaggerated both the level of completion and the quality, which did not match the reality. The weather was a little warmer than in Suffolk, but the abundance of mosquitoes was a new experience throughout the summer months. Each man or family was responsible for building their own accommodation and planting their crops. Everything they needed had been transported with them. There were no hardware stores, shops, or taverns, and little in the way of established infrastructure, beyond a church.

As Governor, John Winthrop was fortunate to be given accommodation in the largest house in Charlestown. The majority, however, made do with simple wigwam structures, which for many would have to support them through the coming winter. The native population had been devastated in 1616 and 1617 by plague, and again in the late 1620s, probably due to diseases brought by early settlers. The tribes that remained were more focused on old rivalries, highly mobile, and without established settlements. They were generally regarded with interest by the settlers, but not trusted.

We can get a strong sense of how tough life was after arrival from letters sent to England by John Winthrop and others during this period. Thomas Dudley wrote that when they arrived in July they found the remaining settlers weak and sick, with around 10% having died the previous winter. Food supplies were very low, and the settlers had to share out their own precious provisions. Deaths occurred almost

daily, even after the arrival of the new settlers.

John Winthrop wrote to John Jnr in August that *"the Lord's hand hath been very heavy upon our people in these parts, and that which I conceived to be the reasons why so many fell sick and so many died"*. In September he wrote to Margaret, his wife, who he hoped would be joining him in the summer of 1631, that *"we see much mortality, sickness and trouble"*. Again in November, in his last letter to Margaret that year, he wrote that *"so many have died, many more languish. I have lost twelve of my family [household]. Disease grew from ill diet at sea and proved infectious"*.

It is believed that about 200 settlers (around 30%) from the Winthrop Fleet died between July and December 1630. Among them was Lady Arbella, for whom the Arbella was named.

Provisions were a constant concern. Stores were running out, especially livestock, with many animals not surviving the voyage, alongside the additional demand from the earlier settlers. Supplies became more expensive as a result. Letters were regularly sent to England requesting supply ships, but this required money, a great deal of money. Investors were uneasy, with some, according to Emmanuel Downing, wanting to scale back their commitments.

"I never fared better in my life, I never slept better, never had more content of mind."

Groton Manor had still not been sold. John Winthrop had hoped for £5760, but there were no takers. It would eventually be sold in 1631 for £4200.

The ecclesiastical scene on arrival was inconsistent, with adherence to a unified approach often dependent on the individual preacher. This weighed heavily on John Winthrop and exercised both him and the preachers who had come with him. There was no unified authority, and an increasing dispersal of settlers went their own way, founding new settlements around the Bay area in search of better land.

John Winthrop moved from Charlestown to the small Shawmut peninsula, renaming it Boston. This was initially intended as a temporary move, but it became permanent before

Above:

The small peninsula called Shawmut, name changed to Boston. Founded by John Winthrop in 1630.

the winter set in. One of the Pond brothers, writing home to his father, William Pond of Groton, spoke of the land as "not being great, rocky, shallow soil", and mentioned that most of the Sudbury men had died, adding that "we do not know how long this Plantation will stand". Such doubts led several settlers, who could afford the return journey, to head back to Old England.

The overall picture was one of extreme hardship and deprivation, especially for the vast majority who were far less wealthy than John Winthrop and a small, select few. The vision of a City on a Hill, with Christian Charity as its social contract, would have seemed a long way off. A harsh winter was under way and the death rate continued to rise. The dispersal of the community had halted due to the winter snows, but would resume with the spring thaw.

Governance was beginning to take shape, and a form of local democracy was emerging, with 109 men made freemen, more by necessity than by design. Finances were under severe strain across the settlement and increasingly so for John Winthrop himself, made worse by the failure to sell Groton Manor at this time. It would have been easy for the leader of this new plantation to question the sustainability of the entire project. Might this become another failure, like the Virginia Company or the Dorchester Company before it? Both supporters in New England and investors in Old England were questioning their own commitment.

Added to this was John Winthrop's lifelong habit of continual self-

examination. Francis Bremer writes that he habitually questioned whether he was to be a magistrate or a minister, a courtier or a man of simplicity, and what God's plan for him truly was. Was this, after all, God's purpose? Yet in September, before the full scale of hardship became clear by December, he wrote to Margaret that "*I never fared better in my life, I never slept better, never had more content of mind, which comes merely of the Lord's good hand*".

Bearing in mind the Governor's daily provision of food, warmth, and accommodation, it is likely that this sense of conviction endured. Winthrop believed deeply that this was where God wanted him to be, doing his work in building a godly community and a City on a Hill for others to observe. His habit of self-examination may well have left the glass hovering around the halfway mark, one day half full, the next less certain, but never entirely empty.

For the vast majority, whose circumstances were far harsher and more life threatening, many still living in simple wigwam structures, there may not have been enough liquid in the glass to pose the question at all.

This article draws heavily on Francis J Bremer's *John Winthrop - America's Forgotten Founding Father*, *Massachusetts Bay Company - Letters from New England*, and other online sources.

Nigel Chapman
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Talks Update

We would like to thank everyone who attended the talks with Bill Clegg KC in November and Arthur Redmonds in December. Both events were very well attended and generated a great deal of interest and discussion.

Due to calendar issues, the Harwich talk originally planned for February will now be deferred for a few months. In its place, we are pleased to confirm details of the following talk.

'The Secret World: Successes and Limitations of Spying' with Michael J Reynolds

Thursday 27th March

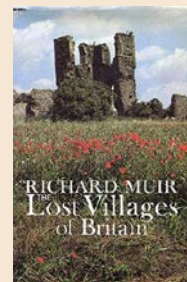
Michael Reynolds served for 29 years in Britain's Secret Intelligence Service (SIS / MI6). His career spanned the Cold War and included roles as the first MI6 Head of Counter Terrorism and later as Head of British Intelligence in Berlin during the 1980s to 1994, witnessing first-hand the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the Soviet Union.

In this talk, Michael reflects on his decision to 'do something about communism' in the 1960s, his life working within MI6, and what the reality of spying is today.

Recommended Reading, Listening & Viewing

'The Lost Villages of Britain' by Richard Muir.

"Thoughtful, careful and interesting. The stuntman turned landscape archaeologist author makes fascinating reading. Well laid out, a thought provoking little gem."



'Homage to Catalonia' by George Orwell

The story of his Spanish Civil War and the foundations of his later obsession with anti-totalitarianism... ergo 'Animal Farm' and '1984'.



'A Fool's Alphabet' by Sebastian Faulks

A story of family and places, told over 26 locations, between 1914-1918. Touches on war, identity, relationships and loss. Well recommended.



'The George Orwell Story' 4 episodes podcast series from Empire Podcast

with Anita Arnand and William Dalrymple. Fascinating insight in the man and the writer.

'The Atlantic War' from the 'We Have Ways of Making You Talk' Podcast

Al Murray and James Holland. 6 episodes covering 1939 -1941. More series to follow next year. Brilliant.

'Empire' by David Olusoga on iPlayer. Always delivers great history on TV.

We will be launching **Project 400** next year as we build towards the 2030 four hundredth anniversary of the Winthrop Fleet's emigration to New England. Anyone interested in being involved, particularly those with ancestral links to the Suffolk Migration, is welcome to get in touch.

As always, thank you for reading these articles. If you have any questions or recommendations or suggestions for future articles or would like to write an article, please don't hesitate to email me.



This Month in the Garden

Growing from seed – small beginnings, lasting rewards

Given the stark reality of the endless cost-of-living crisis, it is no wonder that growing your own food and annual flowers has become so popular, with waiting lists for allotments longer than ever. We may not be on formal food rationing like during the world wars, when growing your own and sharing became crucial. But the ever-increasing cost of basic, healthy food in shops now sees far too many people suffering from food poverty, unable to thrive, and reliant on foodbanks.

I adore propagating from seed for so many wonderful reasons, and I swear anyone can do it if they follow simple rules and use gentle fingertips. Even if you do not have your own garden, all you need is a draught-free windowsill



with good natural light. It is also by far the cheapest way to grow annual plants for seasonal bedding displays and flowering pots. Best of all, you can grow your own vegetables and salads with the sweetest satisfaction, knowing they will be far tastier, support pollinating bees, and will not cost the earth in any respect.

At the start of the New Year in the garden, seasoned allotmenters and potagers, with optimism, plot which plants they wish to sow from seed, plan crop rotation in veg beds, and design decorative displays. We sow seeds of hope in the colder months, imagining the pleasure of harvesting the fruits of our labour in the warmth of the summer sun.

When I was a baby Red Squirrel growing up in the 70s and 80s, I watched my nana Mary Woodgate brazenly take seed pods or plant cuttings from people's front gardens to

grow from. She was always armed with sharp secateurs in her handbag. She grew all her own vegetables from seed in her long, narrow garden, which she had converted into a home allotment. She would have us grandchildren literally earn our food, teaching us how to pick and peel the bountiful homegrown harvest that graced our plates as soon as we were talking and moaning.

Nana's relentless dedication and sheer determination to be as self-sufficient as she could possibly be, as an independent woman, sowed a lifelong seed in me. Through nurturing and communing with nature, I learned to find healing and faith. My little sister and I were not so keen on her roadkill



Top left: *Grow your own food from seed*

Top right: *Forage for seed pods- Indian bean tree Wisteria & Passion flower*

Middle: *Water seed trays and pots with an upturned rose on watering can so flow is gentler*

Right: *Nana Woodgate always made time to smell the flowers*

All photos © R V Woodgate

rabbit stew or her fruit pie pastry, complete with Trixie's dog hairs, though!

It takes resolute resourcefulness, reflection, and patience to be a gifted gardener. Gardening today all too often prioritises modern trends over environmentally enhancing endeavour, and the need for instant gratification over the slower but greater reward that comes from growing something from seed with your own hands. Seeing the whole growing process through from the beginning is joyful, but tending to your new plant babies' needs through each stage of life is essential. Propagating your own plants is a true measure of commitment, unconditional love, and kindness, much like any healthy addiction.

"Though I do not believe that a plant will spring up where no seed has been, I have great faith in a seed. Convince me that you have a seed there, and I am prepared to expect wonders."

Henry David Thoreau (naturalist, poet, and philosopher)

Happy gardening all,

Rachael (aka 'Red Squirrel')

redsquirrelgardensforwellbeing@gmail.com

www.facebook.com/redsquirrelgardens

Secrets to seed sowing success

• Easy starters

If you are a novice, choose fast, reliable germinators such as sweet peas, beans, nasturtiums, sunflowers, hollyhocks, tomatoes, chilli peppers, and salad leaves.

• Mix it right

Fill trays with seed compost, sieved to create a fine, aerated tilth. Gently level with a firming board, or a hardback book, to remove air pockets.

• Size up your seeds

Sow in the correct month, evenly spaced and thinly, following packet instructions. Sowing too densely increases the risk of fungal disease. Sow larger seeds in pots or modular trays, pushing them beneath the soil surface to twice the seed depth.

• Bottoms up

Water from underneath to avoid disturbing the soil surface. Stand seed trays in a shallow water bath for a few minutes, until moisture reaches the surface. Never overwater, as this can cause rot.

• Humidity and heat

Most seeds need warmth and moisture to germinate. Small propagators are inexpensive and effective. Aim for temperatures between 15-25 C.

• Regular check-ups

Ventilate trays once seedlings appear. Pot on when seedlings are large enough to handle, easing them out carefully with the rootball intact.

• Hardening off

Move young plants gradually to cooler conditions, such as a greenhouse, cold frame, or sheltered window, until ready to plant outside.

• Keep on track

Label containers with variety and date sown, and keep a simple garden journal to inform future growing.



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A Day in the Life of a Female Arborist

Tree work, teamwork, and breaking into a male-dominated trade



The day starts early, often before the sun has tipped above the horizon. Tree work is not a nine-to-five desk job. It is physical, unpredictable, and often demanding. It is also an industry still dominated by men, which makes the growing number of women entering the profession all the more notable.

For arborist Jess Riches, that challenge has become an opportunity to carve out her own path, break down stereotypes, and quietly prove that skill and commitment matter far more than gender.

“It’s like being a kid again, climbing trees. Except this time you don’t get in trouble.”

Jess’s route into arboriculture was anything but straightforward. Before working with trees, she spent time

on banana farms, drove buses, and worked in Australia’s FIFO construction industry, a sector known for its long hours and tough conditions. “I’ve always preferred manual labour roles,” she says. “When I came back from Australia, I knew I wanted to carry on doing something physical.”

Returning to the UK, she remembered her brother’s positive experience working for Blake Tree Care. “It seemed like a good fit. I could learn new skills while using my experience with machinery.”

Ask Jess what a typical working day looks like, and she laughs. There isn’t one. On large-scale willow jobs, she might spend the day operating machinery, using chainsaws, and clearing sites. On domestic work, the variety is even greater, with hedge cutting in the morning, chipping in the afternoon, and chainsaw work in between. Her favourite part of the job is domestic work. “It’s like being a kid

again, climbing trees," she says. "Except this time you don't get in trouble."

The biggest appeal of arboriculture is the variety. Every tree is different, and every site presents its own challenges. Climbing and chainsaw work bring an adrenaline rush, alongside a sense of freedom that comes from working outdoors. Spending days in the Essex and Suffolk countryside is another bonus.

But the job is not without its difficulties. "Working in all weathers can be the toughest part," Jess admits. "There have been days in torrential rain that are mentally challenging. But you just push through."

Tree surgery is rarely a solo activity. Safety and efficiency depend on teamwork, and that is something Jess values highly. "The team all get on well and support me," she says. "As I'm new to the industry, they've been keen to teach me anything I don't know."

Being the only woman on the crew could feel intimidating, but she has never allowed that to limit her. "From day one, I never said no to anything. I wanted to do everything the men can do, and I believe I have."

It is still unusual to see women working in tree surgery in the UK, and public reactions often reflect that. "People can be surprised," Jess says. "There can be an assumption that men should be able to lift heavy equipment and logs, and women can't. I just got on with it and let my work speak for itself."



Her advice to other women considering the industry is simple. "Absolutely try it. It's an amazing job with so many skills to learn. Don't be put off by it being male-dominated. If you put the work in, you'll be valued the same as anyone else."

She also challenges a common misconception about arborists



to be removed. Arborists care deeply about trees."

One recent highlight for Jess was working on a golf course project that required operating eight- and fourteen-tonne diggers, significantly larger than the machinery she had used previously. "It was a great experience," she says. "I learned how to adapt my existing skills to tree work. I also got to drive two different tractors, which was a bonus."

The experience underlined how technical the job can be. Arboriculture is not just about climbing. It involves machinery, planning, and continuous learning. Jess is now working towards formal qualifications in tree climbing and felling, steps that will expand her role and support her long-term career in the industry.

What keeps her motivated are the simple things. One of the strongest positives, she says, is the culture at Blake Tree Care. "Everyone wants to help each other and see one another gain skills. That's not something I've experienced much before."

Working outdoors also brings a daily appreciation of the landscape. "I love being in the Essex and Suffolk countryside," she says. "I never really saw it in my previous jobs. Now I work in it every day, and it makes everything easier."

Jess's story shows that arboriculture is defined by commitment, resilience, and teamwork, not gender. As more women enter the industry, they are helping to reshape perceptions of what tree work looks like and who it is for. For anyone considering a career outdoors, working with their hands, and learning new skills every day, arboriculture offers a challenging and rewarding path.

And for Jess, the early mornings, hard weather, and physical effort are all worth it.

Blake Tree Care
www.blaketreecare.co.uk
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themselves. "People think we just cut down trees and damage the environment. That's not true at all. Blake Tree Care plants thousands of trees to replace those that have



Celebrating RiverWatch Volunteers

Volunteers from across Essex and Suffolk were celebrated at an awards evening on Thursday 13 November marking the first anniversary of the Essex RiverWatch citizen science programme.

Run by the Essex and Suffolk Rivers Trust, RiverWatch brings together local groups and individuals to carry out regular monitoring of rivers, collecting monthly samples to track water quality indicators such as nitrates, phosphates, temperature and turbidity, alongside recording wildlife. This growing body of data helps build a clearer picture of river health over time and supports more targeted action to improve rivers across the region.

The celebration event, held at Colchester Rugby Club, brought together volunteers from a wide range of river catchments including the Stour, Box, Blackwater and Crouch. Awards were presented for categories recognising consistency, innovation and commitment, as well as for photography and new participants.

Natural Boxford received the Group of the Year award for its sustained work on the River Box, while Jono West was recognised with the Above and Beyond award for his efforts tackling Himalayan Balsam. Other awards highlighted the contribution of volunteers new to RiverWatch, as well as those who have carried out regular surveys since the programme began.

RiverWatch currently involves around 70 volunteers, with plans to expand participation over the coming year. The Essex and Suffolk Rivers Trust hopes this will help strengthen community involvement in river monitoring and build an even more detailed picture of the health of local waterways.



RiverWatch award winners at the first anniversary celebration in Colchester.

(L-R) Viktor Underwood, Jono West, Louise Carpenter – of Natural Boxford, Mark Lloyd – CEO of The Rivers Trust, Lesley Harper, Dr Helen Dangerfield – CEO of Essex and Suffolk Rivers Trust, Laura Mansel-Thomas, Cat Wood – ESRT, Luke Farnish – ESRT.



Royal Connections between Russia & England

Jenny Antill brings a millennium of royal encounters, politics, and personalities vividly to life

Little Waldingfield History Society was delighted to welcome Jenny back to the Parish Room to tell us all about the very long-standing royal connections between our two countries, which we were amazed to hear spans a millennium!

Kievan Rus

The story begins in the 11th century, in the era of Kievan Rus, the first East Slavic state. After the Norman Conquest, the children of the last Anglo-Saxon king, Harold Godwinson, fled to the court of King Sweyn of Denmark. In 1074, Sweyn arranged the marriage of his niece - Harold's daughter Gytha - to Vladimir Monomakh, Prince of Smolensk and later Grand Prince of Kiev.

Monomakh and his English wife are still remembered in Russia, where the Crown of Monomakh is displayed in the Imperial Treasury of the Kremlin Armoury. The early 14th century



gold filigree skullcap is composed of eight segments, richly ornamented with scrolling gold overlays, inlaid with precious stones and pearls, and trimmed with sable. It is topped with a simple gold cross set with pearls at each point.

The White Sea and Ivan the Terrible

In 1553 King Edward VI sent three ships on an expedition to China, attempting

to reach the fabled north-eastern passage by sailing around Norway. The expedition was commanded by Sir Hugh Willoughby, a distinguished nobleman with no navigation experience, while his second-in-command, Richard Chancellor, was an accomplished seaman. A violent autumn storm off the North Cape separated the vessels; Willoughby sailed east with two ships and later died with his crews during the

Above: *The Allied Sovereigns at Petworth (Thomas Phillips, 1817), depicting Tsar Alexander I being presented to the Prince Regent during the triumphant peace celebrations following Napoleon's defeat.*

Left: *Grand Prince Vladimir Monomakh and Gytha of Wessex.*

winter on the Kola Peninsula.

Chancellor reached the White Sea and landed at Archangel. When Tsar Ivan the Terrible learned of his arrival, he invited Chancellor to Moscow for an audience.

The Englishman undertook the 600-mile journey by horse-drawn sleigh, finding Moscow far larger than London but largely wooden in construction, though the Tsar's palace was richly appointed. Ivan welcomed the prospect of opening sea-borne trade with England.

Chancellor found an eager market for English wool and returned with furs and other Russian goods, along with letters from Ivan inviting English merchants and promising trade privileges. He reached England in the summer of 1554, but Edward had died, and it was Queen Mary who established the Muscovy Company, granting it exclusive trading rights with Russia. Chancellor was sent back to the White Sea the following year but perished in a shipwreck on the return journey. Despite this, Anglo-Russian trade flourished, and in 1556 Ivan granted the Muscovy Company a building in Moscow - now known as the Old English Court - which served as its base for almost a century.

In his final years Ivan considered an alliance with England to strengthen his position in the Livonian War. Engaged in conflict with Catholic Poland, he hoped Elizabeth I's Protestant realm might send military support to the Baltic and even proposed marriage to the Virgin Queen. The alliance never materialised, as England saw little strategic value in committing troops.

Elizabeth was the only woman with whom Ivan corresponded, and their exchanges continued for 22 years. After Ivan's death, she maintained correspondence with his son, Tsar Feodor I, the last ruler of the Rurik dynasty.

Execution of Charles I

Relations between England and Russia remained cordial until the execution of Charles I in 1649. Tsar Alexis I was outraged by the regicide and responded with several decisive actions:

- He formally severed diplomatic ties with the English Commonwealth government.
- He expelled all English merchants



and residents from Russia, directly undermining the Muscovy Company's trading monopoly.

- He offered refuge to English Royalist exiles in Moscow and provided financial assistance to Charles I's widow, Henrietta Maria, and their son, the future Charles II. Alexis referred to Charles I as a "glorious martyr."

Other European nations generally condemned the execution but stopped short of such a complete diplomatic rupture, constrained by practical concerns, trade interests, and internal political considerations.

"Travelling incognito, Peter the Great could fool no one - he was simply too tall."

Peter the Great

There was little diplomatic contact between England and Russia until the long reign of Peter I (Peter the Great). From 1697, as part of his drive to westernise and modernise his country, he travelled incognito across Europe on an eighteen-month tour known as the Grand Embassy. He was the first Tsar to leave Russia in more than a century, visiting several European centres before arriving in Deptford in January 1698. Although he used a false name to avoid formal engagements, his exceptional height made him instantly recognisable.

Peter arrived at William III's personal invitation, accompanied by a large and eclectic retinue that included courtiers, soldiers, craftsmen and curiosities acquired along

Clockwise from top:

Ivan the Terrible and Elizabeth I - the Tsar and the Virgin Queen maintained a remarkable 22-year correspondence, touching on trade, politics and even marriage.

Peter I and William III — portraits of the Tsar and the English king.

the way. By this stage he had already studied shipbuilding in Holland and closely observed European industry, education and technology.

In England he continued to focus on shipbuilding and naval affairs. He stayed at 21 Norfolk Street in the Strand, met leading figures including Gilbert Burnet and Thomas Osborne, and sat for a portrait by Sir Godfrey Kneller. He visited the Royal Mint several times, showed great interest in the recent Great Recoinage, and observed parliamentary proceedings, later concluding that such a system would not suit Russia.

Peter toured dockyards and arsenals, attended a fleet review, and spent three months at Sayes Court in Deptford as the guest of John Evelyn. He also visited the Greenwich Observatory, where he received instruction from John Flamsteed.

He discussed religious pacifism with the Quaker Thomas Story and William Penn, and King William III presented him with a schooner and crew in exchange for granting English merchants a monopoly on the tobacco trade in Russia. Peter left England at the end of April 1698, having been shown how to make watches — and, rather bizarrely, how to carpet coffins.

Tsar Alexander I and the Allied Sovereigns' June 1814 visit to England

To celebrate peace following the defeat of France and the abdication of Napoleon in April 1814, sovereigns and generals of the Coalition Allies took part in a state visit and a series of





peace celebrations in London, before proceeding to the Congress of Vienna later that year.

The allies crossed from Boulogne to Dover on 6 June 1814 aboard the flagship of the Duke of Clarence (later King William IV) and arrived in London the following afternoon. A succession of entertainments and ceremonies followed, including the Tsar's levee at the house of the Duke of Cumberland and the Queen's court held by Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz. Court was held at Carlton House on 9 June, followed by a ceremony admitting the Emperor of Russia, the Earl of Liverpool and Viscount Castlereagh as Knights of the Order of the Garter. The monarchs attended Ascot, visited Oxford — where Alexander, Frederick William and Marshal Blücher received honorary degrees — and were entertained at the Guildhall and the Woolwich Royal Arsenal.

On 24 June they were honoured at a banquet at Petworth House, famously depicted in a painting by Thomas Phillips RA, showing the Prince Regent presenting the Tsar to his hosts in the Marble Hall.

Although Alexander and Field Marshal von Blücher were feted as heroes, the Tsar's gauche behaviour, together with his sister's interference in the marriage plans of Princess Charlotte, tested his hosts' patience. Alexander, meanwhile, was dismayed by the Prince Regent's drunken conduct. Two streets in the developing suburb of Bayswater — Moscow Road and St Petersburg Place — were later named in his honour.

Tsarevich Alexander Nikolaevich Romanov - Part One

In the spring of 1839, the heir to the

Russian throne, Tsarevich Alexander Nikolaevich Romanov, visited England and met its young queen, Victoria. The future Tsar Alexander II was a year older than the unmarried Victoria, who was just twenty. He stayed for a month as her special guest and was received throughout with full royal splendour. Receptions, balls, troop reviews and visits to notable places were all arranged with the distinguished visitor in mind.

Victoria showed particular hospitality to the handsome young Tsarevich. They dined together frequently at Buckingham Palace; he was her regular dance partner at court balls, accompanied her to the opera and sat beside her in the royal box. Contemporary accounts suggest that Alexander made a deep impression on the Queen. At the balls she danced almost exclusively with him - something she had never done with any other partner - and between dances they talked animatedly. His three-day stay at Windsor Castle prompted lively gossip in high society, where such intimacy was considered improper for any unmarried woman, let alone the Queen herself. Alexander, however, was less taken with Victoria, writing in his diary that *"She's very short, with bad waist and uncomely face, but speaks charmingly."*

Lord Palmerston also took the Grand Duke to the Newmarket Races, where Alexander made a £300 donation (equivalent to more than £27,000 today) to the Jockey Club. It was decided that an annual race should be named in his honour, and the Cesarewitch - as the anglicised title became - continues to be run there every October.

"She's very short, with bad waist and uncomely face, but speaks charmingly."

State visit by Tsar Nicholas I

In 1844 Nicholas I visited England, and only two Russian heads of state have made formal state visits since. Unlike Peter the Great's informal and practical tour more than a century earlier, Nicholas arrived with the full pomp and ceremony appropriate to a reigning monarch. It was not solely a Russian mission: he was accompanied

Left: *Portrait of Peter I by Sir Godfrey Kneller, given by the Tsar as a personal gift to King William III*

by a Prussian delegation led by King Frederick William III and an Austrian delegation headed by Count von Metternich. (Emperor Francis had also been invited but declined, fearing a hostile reception in England.) The visit formed part of wider celebrations marking the Allied victory over Napoleon.

Nicholas stayed at both Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle, the first such royal accommodation granted since Alexander I's visit in 1814. He arrived at Woolwich on 1 June, travelling incognito under the name 'Count Orlov,' and was determined to make full use of his brief stay. He called on the Duke of Wellington at Apsley House and attended a banquet in his honour at Chiswick, hosted by the Duke of Devonshire. He went twice to Ascot, donating a cup worth £500 (equivalent to more than £55,000 today) to be run for annually, and contributed funds toward the completion of Nelson's Column. Queen Victoria, initially hesitant about the visit, warmed to the Tsar, though she considered him humourless and poorly educated. After refurbishment work in 1849, one of the ground-floor reception rooms at Windsor was named the 1844 Room to commemorate the visit, its ceiling bearing a prominent double-headed eagle.

On his return to Russia, Nicholas sent a monumental porcelain vase to Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. Standing 1.42 metres high and more than a metre across, it was transported in eight cases aboard the steamer Mermaid, it arrived at Windsor in early December, where the Queen described it as *"splendid and immense."* Made at the Imperial Porcelain Manufactory in St Petersburg and decorated in matt and burnished gold, it features large painted views of the palaces of Peterhof and Tsarskoe Selo by the artist N. Korniloff.

The vase originally stood in the window bay of the Green Drawing Room at Windsor until shortly after Victoria's death, when it was moved to Osborne House. Following restoration work after the 1992 Windsor Castle fire, it was returned to Windsor and placed in the State Dining Room.

Tsar Alexander II - Part Two

Tsar Alexander II married his daughter, Maria, to Queen Victoria's second son, Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh. A



Left: *Grand Duchess Maria Alexandrovna and Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh - whose marriage linked the Romanov and British royal families.*

Below: Nicholas II and his cousin, the future George V, photographed at a reception at Balmoral on 22 September 1896.

diplomatic row quickly followed when Alexander insisted that Maria should be addressed at court as "*Your Imperial Highness*," the title she had held since birth. Both he and Maria deeply resented the fact that her position at the British court was ranked below that of the Princess of Wales, the daughter of the King of Denmark and wife of Victoria's eldest son, Albert (the future Edward VII).

Queen Victoria was furious, as by marriage Maria was expected to adopt the title "*Your Royal Highness*." She eventually relented, and Maria was styled "*Her Imperial and Royal Highness*" - a compromise, albeit a somewhat cumbersome one. Even so, Maria did not gain precedence over the Princess of Wales.

Tsar Nicholas II and George V

Nicholas II visited the United Kingdom on at least two significant occasions: in 1896 to see Queen Victoria at Balmoral, and in 1909 to attend the Cowes Regatta with his family, hosted by King Edward VII. These visits featured family reunions, formal dinners and discussions on international affairs, notably including

Russia's intentions regarding India - topics on which Queen Victoria, Prime Minister Lord Salisbury and the Foreign Secretary were present. The encounters were shaped by the close familial ties between the royal houses: Nicholas and George V were first cousins, and their striking physical resemblance often led observers to comment that they looked like twins.

Nicholas received several high British honours. Queen Victoria made him a Knight of the Garter; Edward VII appointed him Honorary Admiral of the British Navy; and during the First World War, George V appointed his cousin a Field Marshal of the British Army.

Death of Victoria

Queen Victoria's death in 1901 marked the end of a stabilising family matriarchy in European affairs, removing a figurehead who personally connected many of the continent's major powers. With the succession of her son, King Edward VII, long-standing national and personal rivalries - particularly between Britain and Germany - were able to sharpen, contributing to the tensions that ultimately led to the outbreak of the First World War.

Victoria and Albert had nine children, forty-two grandchildren, eighty-seven great-grandchildren and 140 great-great-grandchildren, all related as third cousins. She was therefore quite literally the "*Grandmother of Europe*," with her descendants married into almost every major royal house on the continent. She also maintained extensive correspondence and personal relationships with foreign

rulers, including her grandson Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany and her granddaughter Alix, Tsarina of Russia. During her lifetime she often acted as a familial bridge, helping to smooth diplomatic frictions or temper open hostility.

Yet Victoria's hope that Europe might be held together by family ties proved fragile. Personal connections were not enough to prevent the great powers from becoming entangled in the "*complex web of alliances*" that led to war in 1914. The conflict pitted three of her own grandchildren against one another and effectively ended the era of monarchical diplomacy. Several of the royal houses linked to Victoria fell in its aftermath, among them:

- King George V of Britain
- Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany
- Tsar Nicholas II of Russia

Our audience was thoroughly entertained by the depth and spread of Jenny's talk, by her research, and by her ability to answer the many detailed questions such an extensive subject creates.

Andy Sheppard
www.littlewaldingfieldhistorysociety.wordpress.com



Next Little Waldingfield History Society Talks:

George Wombwell, England's Greatest Showman with Pip Wright

Wednesday 21st January. (Member's only event)

The most famous Victorian Showman and Menagerist.



The History of US Military Aviation in East Anglia with Don Mobley

Wednesday 18th February:

Like many who served here in the military Don decided to make his home here in Suffolk, he looks at the USAAF presence in the area from WW2 onwards.





Picture credit: Keith Mindham

Bishop Joanne & the King

Homage, prayer, and the role of a diocesan bishop

When I wrote last year about our new diocesan bishop, Joanne Grenfell (*'Welcome Bishop Joanne'*, BRN October, p.34), I said that the date for her installation service at St Edmundsbury Cathedral could not be set until she had 'paid 'homage' to King Charles, a date for which was then awaited from Buckingham Palace. This event has now occurred, on 4 December, with Bishop Joanne 'doing homage' on the same day as two other recently-appointed bishops (Carlisle and Worcester).

But what is entailed in 'doing homage' to the sovereign? A quick search on Wikipedia reveals that the term homage "originates from the Old French word *hommage*, which denotes allegiance or respect tied to the feudal system, where a vassal would pledge loyalty to a lord." My Chambers dictionary defines homage more broadly as "anything done or rendered as an acknowledgement of superiority; reverence, esp shown by outward action." In the case of a bishop doing homage to the King, it is an acknowledgement that the monarch is the Supreme Governor of the Church of England (not, note, its 'Head', as frequently misstated in the media). Traditionally, the bishop kneels

before the monarch, placing her (or his) hands together as if in prayer, and the King takes their hands between his own. The bishop then repeats, after the Lord Chancellor (who is also present), words of homage to the monarch saying, "*Your majesty is the only supreme governor of this your realm in spiritual and ecclesiastical things as well as in temporal*". (You can see some of the other wording on the diocesan website: <https://tinyurl.com/bishop-joanne>)

Bishop Joanne took the opportunity to share a Bible reading with the King, Psalm 122, which includes the poignant words "*Pray for the peace of Jerusalem*", and they prayed together. In commenting on their meeting, Bishop Joanne has said: "*I was reminded of the sense of faithful service that the role of a diocesan bishop involves, a role which the King deeply understands because of his own task of defending the faith and serving the whole of our country. I was touched to think that he would pray with me and offer encouragement to this new ministry as a bishop for Suffolk.*"

She added "*I am from a very ordinary background. I was educated at a state school in Teesside and was the first in*

my family to go to university. I couldn't have imagined, as I was growing up, that I would take on a job that involves serving God with the people of Suffolk on my heart, speaking on matters of faith and the common good in the House of Lords, and meeting the King as I prepare to do all that."

The bishop's service of 'Welcome and enthronement' is at 2pm on Saturday 24 January. Necessarily, attendance is by invitation, but it is intended that every parish in the diocese should be represented.

Before writing the above, I was reminded at a carol service I attended of the account in Matthew's gospel, often read at this time of year and which the Church celebrates at Epiphany (6 January), of the "*wise men from the East*" travelling to Jerusalem to, in the language of one modern translation, "*pay homage*" to "*the one born King of the Jews*". The 'Authorised', or King James Version, says "*to worship him*". Or, in the words of the familiar carol that we shall hear or sing at Christmas, "*O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.*" That, I am sure, would be the bishop's call to us all this Christmastide.

David Lamming

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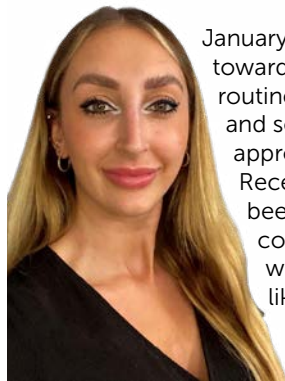
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The Glow Pro

Weight loss and your face



January often nudges us toward change - new routines, new goals, and sometimes a fresh approach to health. Recently, there has been plenty of conversation around weight-loss injections like Mounjaro and Ozempic, along with the slightly ominous phrase,

'Mounjaro face'.

This article is not about the injections themselves. It is about something more universal - how to help your skin look its best through any kind of weight change, whether big or small, fast or gradual.

What is "Mounjaro Face"?

Despite the dramatic nickname, it is not a mysterious condition. It simply describes how noticeable weight loss can affect the face. For some, features become more defined. For others, volume may shift more quickly, leaving the complexion looking tired.

The good news is that the hardest part - committing to change - is already done. Supporting your skin is about helping your outer appearance reflect how you feel inside.

Nourishing Your Skin from Within

Healthy skin starts with good nutrition. Colourful vegetables, fruits, protein-rich meals, and whole foods provide the nutrients your skin needs to stay resilient. Vegetables, in particular, are rich in antioxidants and vitamin C, helping protect the complexion and maintain a healthy glow.



Restoring Volume with Dermal Fillers

Sometimes, even with good nutrition, lost volume cannot be fully restored. Dermal fillers can help by gently plumping and supporting areas that need it. When performed by qualified medical professionals, results are subtle and balanced, so you still look like yourself - just more refreshed.

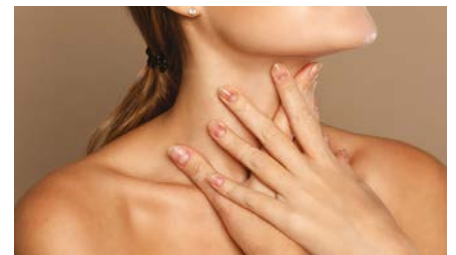
Simple Rituals to Support Your Skin

Everyday habits matter. Good sleep, stress management, and hydration all support skin health. Even a few minutes of facial massage or exercises can help maintain muscle tone and definition, while offering a small moment of self-care.



Boosting Skin Radiance

After weight changes, some skin benefits from extra hydration. Skin boosters such as Prohilo, often described as an 'injectable moisturiser', help improve hydration, elasticity, and crepiness, leaving the complexion looking supple and revitalised.



Refining Facial Contours

Radiofrequency treatments like EndyMed work beneath the surface to encourage collagen production and gradually firm the skin. While not a solution for significant laxity, they can help refine areas such as the jawline and neck as body shape changes.

In a world obsessed with the idea of 'perfection,' it's easy to forget that healthy skin thrives on something much simpler: consistent care, proper nourishment, and a touch of patience.

Whether you're navigating body changes or simply refreshing your routine, everyone deserves to feel comfortable and confident in their own skin.

At Suffolk Medical & Beauty Clinic, we're here to guide and support you every step of the way, no matter which path you take.

Heléna

office@suffolkmedicalclinic.co.uk

01787 211 000



Best of Boxford Primary School

Happy New Year! I hope you had a restful Christmas and you are ready for the year ahead.

In school, Christmas is a brilliant time to reflect on the academic year so far. We have hosted many sporting events and trips for children. The Autumn Term was rounded off with our nativity performance and whole school church service.

Nativity

School value: Respect

Reception and Key Stage 1 enjoyed their Christmas performance, The Big Little Nativity. The children retold the story of the first Christmas through acting and singing. All children played their part exceptionally well and they performed on stage with the beautiful backdrop of St. Mary's Church. It was great to see so many parents and family members attending the two performances. We are sure that many of you came away still singing the songs (Good News and Big Big Story being particular ear worms!). The school would like to extend their thanks to the Maggie, Liz and Audrey from St. Mary's Church for being

accommodating with our rehearsals and allowing Boxford Primary to use such a superb setting.

Duxford Imperial War Museum

School value: Respect

Year 5 pupils enjoyed their recent visit to Duxford Imperial War Museum which linked to their humanities unit of work. Pupils walked around the many exhibits; they were able to examine artefacts such as aircraft and tanks. Particular highlights for children were visiting Concorde, examining the Avon Lancaster and Spitfires. Pupils were able to go back in time and visit the Operation Room. It was surprising to learn that when communicating they would use the term 'angels'. If they were to say "rise twenty-four angels" this meant "rise twenty-four feet".

Millie, a Year 5 pupil, said, "I enjoyed it when we got to learn about who made the first planes (Wright Brother). It taught me about aeroplanes and how they changed over time. When I went onto Concorde, I was very surprised with how many buttons there were which would be used by the pilot and co-pilot."

Lucas said, "My favourite part of the day was going on Concorde. I thought the plane was very big and the interior was really cool. I noticed that the nose



could go down. I think this made it easier for the pilot to see."

The visit nicely tied into their history topic, Battle of Britain; children completed a comprehensive recount on their return to school. All in all, a really enjoyable trip which allowed pupils to immerse themselves in history.

Would you like a school tour?

If your child is looking to start school in September 2026, or move mid-year, please contact Mrs Clarke in the office on 01787 210332 or email office@boxford.suffolk.sch.uk. We would be more than happy to arrange a school tour for you to see our exciting curriculum.

We look forward to seeing you soon!

Mr. S. Reynolds
Assistant Headteacher



recycle

Your real Christmas tree

In Boxford

Near the entrance to Boxford Spinney

'Real' trees can be left at this site from 7am on Mon. 5th January, until 7am on Friday. 9th January
Collection will be made from 7am on Friday 9th January.

Trees must be less than 7' tall & must have all decorations, stands & pots removed. Please call 0300 1234 000 (Option 4) for further details.



Working Together



The Blooming Garden

Iced Landscapes

January is the month that winter sets in and we sometimes wake up to a white garden. I am not a fan of winter wonderlands. A monochrome landscape leaves me cold, even if it is a sparkly one. Icicles quickly lose their appeal. It means my poor snowdrops and hellebores will be lying face down in the snow and even though I know they will perk up again it is a dispiriting sight. I like to potter in the garden all year round but in the snow and ice there is nothing to do but worry about the many borderline tender plants I have foolishly planted. I have been known to rush out on a frosty night to drape table clothes and blankets over some of my treasures.

When the snow is really thick, then my Beloved tries to lure me out for a walk. He actually loves snow and talks

enthusiastically about skiing. It has taken years to convince him that I am never going to hurtle down mountains with planks of wood attached to my feet. To please him though, I will don my bear suit onesie and venture gingerly out, on the condition that there will be no snowballs, snowmen, snow angels, or any of the other fatuous things that grown people will find to do in the snow. Actually, wearing four thick jumpers, two pairs of trousers and a furry bear suit will ensure that he doesn't suggest that we walk out of the garden because I look like an ursine Michelin man.

They smell absolutely foul – a mixture of drains, dirty socks and cat pee.

But there are plants that unlike me, don't seem to mind the ice and snow and they are worth venturing into the garden for. The spidery flowers of witch hazels are quite unfazed by the ice crystals decorating their branches. Buttons of yellow winter aconites look pretty against a gleaming white



background. And the cinnamon strips of flaking bark on *Prunus serrula* shine in the sun. I also enjoy the shrub, *Muehlenbergia astonii* which comes from New Zealand. It has zig-zaggy branches that look like tangled copper wire and they look lovely growing out of a snowy bed. This plant has small heart shaped leaves in summer but I grow it for the winter effect. Other stems which look wonderful against a snowy background are those of the vibrant red stems of *Cornus alba* 'Baton Rouge', or for an orange-stemmed dogwood, I love *Cornus sanguinea* 'Anny' Winter Orange'.

When the snow melts, you can visit Groton churchyard where you will find carpets of snowdrops dancing around the ancient tombstones under the horse chestnut trees. Some of the best displays of snowdrops can be found in ancient graveyards like this. My favourite place to see snowdrops





though is the little copse at the end of Mill Lane in Polstead. For more unusual snowdrops, the magical winter garden at Anglesey Abbey has one of the best snowdrop collections in the country. You can book a guided tour of their special collections. Other great places to enjoy snowdrop displays are Ickworth Hall near Bury St. Edmunds or Chippenham Park Gardens in Cambridgeshire.

Fortunately, for those really icy days when it's just too cold to croon over snowdrops, I can retire to the greenhouse and enjoy a foretaste of spring with pots of little bulbs and other winter flowering treats. If you haven't got a greenhouse, then a conservatory, or failing that, windowsills round the house can help to cheer up the gloomiest winter month. Pots of miniature hoop petticoat daffodils, *Iris reticulata*, hyacinths and grape hyacinths are a delight. I enjoy primroses in a whole range of vibrant, gaudy colours which I would never allow in the garden, but for a winter greenhouse I crave full Disney-Technicolor. For scent, I force pots of lily of the valley and grow lemon and orange trees in pots. I love scented narcissi but not the Paperwhites which are often sold as scented pot plants. They smell absolutely foul as they mature; a mixture of drains, dirty socks and cat pee. The scent is caused by a biochemical called *indole*. In low concentrations, *indole* has a ripe floral scent and is used in perfumery. For an alternative, try the sweet scented *Narcissus* 'Avalon'. This is a Tazetta narcissus which smells divine. *Jasminum polyanthum* contains *indole* too and the scent can get a bit overpowering as the flowers mature. But as the buds open I find it delicious. It is a joy climbing over a tripod of bamboo canes. This is not hardy but it blooms well if you feed it and give it a cool dark period in autumn.

With a heated greenhouse, a conservatory or just a few windowsills, you can enjoy colour and scent throughout the bleakest months.

Chloris

Opposite page clockwise from top:

Hamamelis x intermedia 'Jelena'

Clematis cirrhosa var. *balearica* 'Wisley Cream' beautiful under her snowy hat

Primroses from the greenhouse

Flowers in the greenhouse

Above:

Red cornus stems at Cambridge Botanical Gardens

Boxford WI Update

Boxford WI have had a busy December. This started with our Christmas lunch held at The Fleece and a huge thank you to the staff for providing us with such a wonderful meal. This was followed by a quiz, provided by one of our members and 2 lucky ladies won a hamper each.

theWI
INSPIRING WOMEN



We then decorated our Christmas tree using old Christmas cards containing messages of love, joy and hope for the Christmas tree festival held in the church.

All the decorations were made by our ladies. We also ran a cuddly toy tombola at the Christmas tree festival. All toys were donated by our members.

Our theme this year was recycling.



January's meeting will be a beetle drive followed by tea, cake and a chat. In February our guest speaker, Andy Strange will give us a talk on WW2 Women at War.

If you are interested in joining the WI why not come along come along to the Village Hall on the first Wednesday of the month at 2pm where you will receive a warm welcome.

Once you are a member you will be able to enjoy the following interest groups which we hold on a regular basis:

- Dining Divas (lunch group)
- Chatterbox (afternoon with tea and cake)
- Knit and Natter
- Book club

For more information please contact our Secretary, Lyn Beer on **07961 357526** or email lyn@the-brook.net.



Notes from a Beekeeper's Diary

Reflections on an unpredictable beekeeping year

Another year draws towards its end, and it is time to reflect on successes and failures in the apiaries over the past twelve months. All things considered, 2025 turned out quite well, and indeed better than could reasonably have been expected.

Winter dragged on with heavy rain and strong winds well into May, so even though air temperatures consistently reached double figures, the rough weather meant the bees were unable to fly and forage for nectar or pollen for what felt like an eternity.

When a short and long-delayed spring finally ran into summer, the bees made up for lost time. Bees do not hang around when food is available, and hives quickly filled with brood and honey. Some hives managed better than others. One colony struggled to build momentum and unfortunately failed to survive. Others developed in fits and starts. There was no holding back the stars.

Once summer ended, the warm weather continued until early November, when it started to rain

- and rain, and rain. By the end of October the bees were no longer interested in sugar syrup, and it was reasonable to assume they were shutting up shop for the winter. But bees are always ready to surprise, and even in mid-December could be seen collecting pollen. Does that mean the colony was still raising young? Hardly likely, but bees do nothing without good cause. You have to resist the urge to open the nest to find out. Idle curiosity is never sufficient reason to disturb a colony.

It would be nice if bees followed set patterns. Patterns lead to familiarisation and build confidence. We can predict that bees will behave in a certain way, and most of the time they do. Other times they go completely off the charts. You can only do so much by opening up a nest. My policy is that if in doubt, leave it to the bees to sort out. Not scientific, or reflective of any great skill, but it works best. The bees know what they are doing.

It is good to see bees active and busy. But every silver lining has a cloud. When they are out foraging

they are burning through their precious stores. If it is cold, they need more carbohydrate to maintain body temperature. What you lose on the swings you do not gain on the roundabouts.

But the question remains - how come some colonies thrive and some do not? Many possible causes come to mind. Infestation by parasites can decimate a colony over time and leave it too weak to survive. Wasps were a serious problem this year and caused mayhem in some apiaries. I lost one colony that eventually gave up the



struggle to resist successive attacks by wasps, yet another hive no more than two feet away was hardly troubled. Wasps, like disease and viruses, thrive on weaker victims.

All my hives were originally populated from swarms. Some of my colonies are four or five years old. The original queen and attendant workers are long gone, either superseded or replaced after swarming. Some beekeepers avoid swarms. But swarms come from strong colonies, so the queens already have a track record of producing abundant progeny. Moreover, they are adapted to local conditions, and therefore stand a better chance than queens bought in from elsewhere.

Bees were doing just fine until human beings came along. But bees are only one species in the insect world. There was a time when, if you were driving home in the evening, your windscreen and the front of the car would be smothered with the corpses of dead insects by the time you reached your destination. That does not happen anymore. It might be more convenient, but it is surely a warning that somewhere along the line we have taken a wrong turning.

Land is scarce in our overpopulated island, so patches of rough scrub that once harboured the food and water resources essential for insect life have been cleared for development or recreational use. And not just in the countryside. In towns and cities, front gardens have been ripped up and replaced with concrete. Golf courses create many acres of sterile green desert. Councils spend fortunes managing grassy parkland, much of which harbours little or no wildlife of any description.

It is no coincidence that honeybee colonies thrive when they have access to a wide variety of plants providing a constant flow of pollen and nectar throughout the summer. It does not require a huge effort. Shrubs and trees in private gardens are invaluable for all sorts of insects, not just bees. The margins of small watercourses offer shelter and forage, but only if they are kept free of sewage discharge. When insect populations thrive, birds follow. Not a bad dividend. Food for thought.

As we move into a new year, beekeepers will already be wondering what lies ahead. In eight to ten weeks' time we could be enjoying the start of an early spring, something we should be preparing for even now. Or not. That is the unpredictability of beekeeping.

Tony Rand

Michelle's Story

Michelle started volunteering with Home-Start Suffolk in 2020 and continues to do so now. She has offered both telephone and home-visiting support to families in the Waveney area and has been awarded a High Sheriff of Suffolk award for volunteering.

"Being a parent is the hardest job in the world. As well as being the most wonderful and magical experience, it can also feel lonely, confusing and guilt ridden too. It always looks like everyone has it together and that no one else feels like you do. However quite often they are or have been in the same place.

I enjoy helping people and leaning on my own experiences to help others, ensuring they feel that they are not the only ones who have been through tough times.

While I was looking for a volunteering role, Home-Start Suffolk came up. I submitted my enquiry and completed my training before starting to volunteer in early 2020. I met the first family I supported in our match visit, but then Covid hit and so I provided telephone support to ensure they still had someone to talk to.

As soon as we were allowed back into homes, I went back to offering home-visiting support.

The time I spend volunteering varies depending on travel time and the needs of the family I am supporting, but is usually between two and four hours a week.

A home visit can be anywhere between one and three hours and sometimes I do some planning and research in my own time to find local clubs, groups or services the family can be signposted to for additional support. Quite often though, if I reach out to one of the Home-Start Suffolk Family Coordinators they will already have that information.

Everyone at Home-Start Suffolk is fantastic. You have a coordinator who supports us as volunteers while we are supporting each family and they regularly check in. You know they're always there at the end of the phone or an email if you need anything.

You learn so much being a volunteer. We're constantly being offered courses that deepen our knowledge around potential family situations and we are invited to peer support where we can meet other volunteers.

It's nice meeting different families. The families I have supported are very different to my own friends and my children haven't got children yet, so



it's also nice to be supporting young people.

One of the nice things about being a volunteer with Home-Start is that you can really make a difference to people and, going forwards, you can move onto supporting another family knowing that you did your job in improving their lives.

The families know from the start how long they will have a volunteer working with them and they know when and why you will no longer be visiting them. There are many reactions, but normally families are more confident, more themselves, and feel less alone and more empowered.

You absolutely notice the difference from the day you meet the family to the day you say goodbye. Sometimes they look physically different, they're starting to wear make-up or dress differently, or they sound more confident when talking to their children.

Volunteering has also made me more confident and competent. I think you spend half your life thinking you're faking it, when actually, when you speak to other people, you realise you have made it through and you're not faking it.

It has made me even more empathetic. I'm more aware that we don't know what other people are going through, and seeing what goes on behind closed doors really brings that home.

It's a good feeling to know that people listen to you, trust you, and befriend you. Not everyone has someone to lean on. If you have a few hours spare each week and want to help people through their struggles, then you should volunteer too. You can make a real difference. "If Michelle's story has inspired you to find out more about volunteering with Home-Start Suffolk, please visit www.homestartinsuffolk.org.

Feedback From James Finch

County Councillor For The Stour Valley

Project Celebrating Disability in Suffolk gets £139k grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund

The project has been made possible with The National Lottery Heritage Fund. Thanks to National Lottery players, we will honour the resilience and contributions of people with disabilities, while also helping wider communities better understand the barriers they face today.

Beyond Labels will collect and preserve personal stories, alongside the histories of organisations, schools, and charities that support disabled people to create a record that celebrates disability while sparking conversations about inclusion, accessibility, and equality.

This exciting initiative begins with the recruitment of a dedicated project officer and volunteers, the launch of a community forum, and a programme of activities designed to capture and share lived experiences.

As part of the project, Suffolk Archives, a Suffolk County Council service, will work with local schools and community groups, offering free workshops that teach skills in recording.

Suffolk County Council continues to drive electric vehicle progress

The county council continues to be one of the country's leading local authorities for electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure, under its Plug In Suffolk project. Plug in Suffolk has grown considerably in recent years to provide more EV charging solutions to more Suffolk residents.

The council has long recognised the importance of this, not only to support the ever-growing number of Suffolk drivers who are switching to EVs, but also to benefit the county's visitors and the tourism economy.

We have been pioneers in Suffolk and are putting national funding to good use to find solutions to help our residents make the important transition to EVs.

The county council's latest EV charging solution is a trial of cross-pavement gullies. It is working with around 30 residents who do not have off-street parking to easily charge.

The trial has seen each homeowner have a gully installed across the pavement, allowing them to safely run a cable from their house, through the gully, to their car.

The success of the project will be assessed in early 2026, to see if it can be rolled out further. Early indications are that it has proved popular.

Council fears Sunnica is to become a 'Trojan horse' for new large infrastructure projects

Sunnica Ltd is a joint venture between Tribus Clean Energy and PS Renewables. They are hoping to extend the provision in their agreed planning permission, to secure 'future value-adding flexibility', as stated in their letter to government:

"To provide the Scheme with sufficient future value-adding flexibility in relation to adjacent land that may be subject to planning applications in conjunction with the Scheme."

These changes would enable them to integrate future proposed developments that come forward, by allowing local planning applications to overlap with the entire boundaries of the Sunnica scheme.

It means that new, vast projects such as data centres could cover many hectares of land, on top of that covered by the already-agreed solar panels, battery storage and associated infrastructure.

A consultation on these proposed changes will begin in due course. However, while the proposal sets out a limited number of consultees, it is very important to recognise that any relevant party will be able to respond.

Sunnica Ltd has now announced that it does not intend to proceed with the change concerning the 'future value-adding flexibility'. The consultation will solely focus on the amended Order Limits surrounding Burwell substation.

Seasoned political journalist, Paul Geater, backs One Suffolk

A political journalist with over 40 years' experience scrutinising and reporting on councils in Suffolk has backed the plan to scrap the county's six councils and replace them with one authority delivering all local and county wide services. Suffolk-born Paul Geater, who currently presents a current affairs radio talk show on Suffolk Sound but previously spent decades as a political correspondent for the East Anglian Daily Times and Ipswich Star, said:

"I started off by thinking the three councils option was probably going to be the best [but], the more I have heard, the more I have looked into this, the more convinced I have been that the One Suffolk option is the only real sensible choice for the government. I am highly sceptical about the financial claims both sides have made about this. [But] I am much more sceptical about the claims from the three councils,

I just don't see how their proposals can achieve the kind of savings the government is talking about.

"It comes down to a few things.

First of all, Suffolk has an identity and has had an identity for more than a millennium. I don't think I come from Ipswich and South Suffolk, Suffolk has its own identity. I was born and brought up in the East of Suffolk... I lived for a time and worked for a time in Bury St Edmunds in West Suffolk. It is all Suffolk to me and I think that identity is very important.

"When you look at how the proposed splitting is being done, frankly the three Suffolk people seem to be using a kind of geographical gymnastics to try to equalise figures in all kinds of places and it really does develop something of a dog's breakfast of a map. Stowmarket has absolutely nothing to do with Lowestoft, it looks to either Ipswich or Bury St Edmunds and yet the idea is that local government should be run for Stowmarket from Lowestoft. It doesn't make any sense. It just looks to be as if you're building in duplication.

"I have filled in my consultation form and said that as a reporter who spent 40 years covering local government in this county that my feeling is the only solution for Suffolk is to have one council for the county."

New Year Active Travel improvements for Sudbury

Work is to start in the New Year on a new walking, wheeling, and cycling route in Sudbury to help people to get around safely and sustainably.

The scheme in Melford Road will see the replacement of existing zebra crossings with parallel crossings, and installation of a shared-use off-road pedestrian and cycle facility, with cycle priority across side roads. Works are scheduled to begin in mid-January 2026 and are expected to be complete by the end of March 2026.

To minimise disruption to the local community work will be undertaken in three phases.

- Phase One: This will require the closure of the A131 northbound, including Beaconsfield Road, and is expected to be around 25 days in duration.
- Phase Two: This will require the closure of the A131 southbound, including York Road. This phase will also take around 25 days.
- Phase Three: There will be a full overnight closure of the A131 in both directions, including Beaconsfield Road and York Road, to undertake resurfacing and install road markings. This closure is scheduled to be in place for three nights.

Works are scheduled to begin in mid-January 2026 and are expected to be complete by the end of March 2026.

Suffolk Archives Awarded National Accreditation

Accreditation is the UK quality standard which recognises good performance in all areas of archive service delivery. Accredited Archive Services ensure the long-term collection, preservation and accessibility of our archive heritage. Receiving it shows that Suffolk Archives, based at The Hold in Ipswich, has met clearly defined national standards relating to management and resourcing; the care of its unique collections and what the service offers to its entire range of users.

The Archive Service Accreditation Panel said Suffolk Archives was:

"A well-managed service, which runs an effective archive and local studies service from modern premises, including a commendable engagement programme. "There is a strong understanding of the communities served, and a genuine appetite for co-creation and engagement with new groups. The public facilities at Ipswich are modern and of excellent quality."

James Finch

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Tel: 01206 262993

Mobile: 07545 423796

Feedback From Bryn Hurren

Babergh District Councillor for Box Vale Ward.

I hope all BRN readers had a very nice Christmas and that the coming new year will be a time of peace for us all. Prosperity for everyone feels a long way off right now, but I am more hopeful that times are changing towards something better than we have seen for a long time, with hope for a better future.

The chance of improving our relationship with the rest of mainland Europe for trading within the second largest trading group in the world could help unlock our isolated and strangled economy and give us better economic stability and some growth at last. Not to mention improved working and co-operation across the physical, political and economic borders of Europe once again. We can never undo the self-imposed harm we have inflicted upon ourselves, but let us now work together

to make ourselves as safe and secure as we can, and not let the lunatics take over anything again that is precious or beneficial to the vast majority of us who work, live, and trade within our own borders, which can be better protected and policed by working as a larger group.

We also desperately need better governance over those who seek to be, or to influence, control, and manipulate our existing politicians. New laws on fraud have recently been introduced by the present government, making even knowing about fraud and not reporting it a criminal offence. This crime attracts a huge fine along with a lengthy jail sentence. This is ten years too late to stop what has happened over the past decade, but once again it is a big step in the right direction, both in political and business circles. It does not appear to work retrospectively to catch some of the bungs and plundering of the last government, but it may give us hope for the future. That said, the latest political donation of £9 million from a tech billionaire now sheltering in Thailand towards a very right-wing group should fill every citizen with dread. If this group were to take any sort of control, do we have a future at all. Just glance across the Atlantic to Trumpland. Is that what anyone wants for themselves and those they love? Please be careful what you vote for in the future. People should count for more than political ambition.

Speaking of voting, the much-vaunted mayoral elections that were due to take place in May 2026 have now been postponed for two years, despite all the work local government employees have put into this initiative. This means it is largely as we were before, with the normal elections that were cancelled last May now happening this time around, along with other district and borough elections that elect in thirds. Meanwhile, the unitary quest continues apace, and we currently expect voting for that in 2028, or perhaps not if the government has another change of heart. Watch this space.

So it is business as usual for Bryn, Box Vale, and Babergh for the foreseeable future. I will do my best, as ever, to protect our rural area from mass development across our countryside, but we will have to accept some housing to meet government targets and the huge need for homes across the country. I hope to guide planners towards sensible development, in the right areas, for the right people, and at the right price to buy and rent. Setting budgets to provide good services for young and old alike will be our greatest challenge yet, with little or no additional help from national

government expected. This will also be very difficult for parish councils trying to deliver local improvements for their parishioners.

We do, however, have a stash of CIL monies accrued from development that has already taken place. This funding can help with infrastructure and new projects. Please speak to me if any individual or group has an idea and needs financial support.

This year will also see major changes to recycling and general waste collections. These changes are expected to come into effect around mid-summer, once additional vehicles have been obtained. Recycling will be broadened to include glass and compostable material, alongside a change in frequency for non-recyclable waste, which will continue to go to the power-from-waste plant to generate electricity. Our campaign to raise awareness starts now.

As always, I urge everyone to support our local businesses, which work hard to provide the best products and services they can, whether for pleasure, play, or simply survival. Our local shops, post offices, pubs, and other businesses are there for us all to use and support where we can. Do not forget that our post offices now also act as local banks, providing most of the services they once did. Our rural bus service has also improved significantly under the new provider and is much cheaper than before. Perhaps leave the car at home or stay local. It can make sense.

For my northern parishes, GoStart runs a regular service from Bildeston into Sudbury and back on Tuesdays and Thursdays, which is market day. This service can be diverted slightly if requested, or an alternative can be arranged at a small charge for special bookings if needed. As with all of these services, it is very much a case of use it or lose it. They are vital lifelines and connections to the world beyond our boundaries, much like a train station.

Please take care everyone and dodge the winter bugs if you can. Masses of home-grown garlic in everything works for me. I will see if Boxford Stores can be persuaded to stock a good supply for the new year. Not great for romance unless you both partake, but excellent for virility and energy.

If you need your councillor for anything else, please contact me using the details below. I will continue to do my very best to get around to everyone.

Happy New Year.

Bryn

bryn.hurren@babergh.gov.uk

Tel: 01787 210854

Mobile: 07771 508348

BOXFORD

Summary of Council Meeting 25th November 2025

Public Forum: A member of the Boxford Volunteer group updated the meeting that there have been some teething problems with the bus service but they were working to get this sorted.

A resident asked for an update on the proposed new speed limits for Stone Street and commented that he didn't think the restrictions would be enough. He would like to see additional calming measures put in place as the road is now extremely dangerous. The PC will look into this.

District Council Report: DCllr Hurren's full report can be found on the BPC website.

County Council Report: CCllr Finch's full report can be found on the BPC website.

Finance: The finance report was accepted and can be found in full on the BPC website.

Planning: The full Planning details can be seen in the Minutes on the BPC website.

Consideration of contribution to repairs to surface to the front of the Old Gaol: SCC Highways have reviewed the request and have once again refused to repair the surface. The PC agreed that the surface was unsafe, the volunteer group have received a quote for repairs from a SCC approved contractor for £3,000 + VAT. CCllr Finch has offered £500 from his locality budget and DCllr Hurren is requesting that the remainder of his locality budget can be used for this matter, the PC resolved that CIL funds can be used for the remainder of the cost.

Application to DCllr Hurren for funds from locality budget to replace churchyard posts

Consideration of leasing The Old Mill Surgery: Cllr Warren and Cllr Parr have been communicating with the new owners of the Old Mill Surgery. The initial offer made by the owners is thought to be too high for consideration. Cllr Parr will continue with discussions with the owners.

Approve dates for 2026 meetings: 27th Jan, 24th Feb, 24th Mar, 28th Apr, 26th May (Annual), 23rd Jun, 28th Jul, 25th Aug (prov), 22nd Sep, 27th Oct, 24th Nov, 22nd Dec (prov).

Date of Next Meeting: 27th January 2026 at 7pm in the village hall.

Parish Council (PC) meetings are on the 4th Tuesday each month except in August and December. They are held in the Village Hall starting at 7 p.m. All are welcome to come along and observe and there is a regular item to allow residents a short time to comment and raise items.

Full minutes and other documents mentioned above can be found at: <http://boxford-pc.gov.uk>

Zoe Rumsey
01787 739317
clerk@boxford-pc.gov.uk

NEWTON

Summary of Council Meeting 10th December 2025

NPC is looking for an applicant to fill the councillor vacancy. If you would like more information on the role, please contact Dave Crimmin as below.

25/203 Planning

a. The councillors reviewed **Planning Application DC/25/04864 Land West Of Manders Auctions, Assington Road** - Change of use of land. Erection of 9No. single-storey dwellings (including 4No. Affordable). Improvements to access and public highway (including pedestrian crossing, new footpath provision etc. Biodiversity enhancements and unanimously resolved that they objected to the application as it did not comply with the Newton Neighbourhood Plan in several areas.

b. The councillors noted Appeal Reference: **6001473 1A Links View** - Appeal of refusal for the erection of a garage/workshop.

c. The council has received two planning applications since the agenda was posted, requiring a response before the next meeting. The councillors reviewed **Planning Application DC/25/04963 Land Rear Of Juglans, Sudbury Road** - Application under Section 73 of The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 - Variation of Condition 2 (Approved Plans and Documents) of Planning Permission DC/22/05206 dated: 15.12.2022 - Erection of 6No single storey dwellings, ancillary outbuildings

and alterations to existing vehicular access] and resolved to support the application.

The councillors reviewed the re-consultation of **Planning Application DC/25/04401 Squirrels Oak, Sudbury Road** - Erection of a new single storey annexe (following demolition of existing garage) and resolved that they continued to support the application.

25/206 Finance

b. The councillors authorised all payments made, as itemised in the RFO Report (Appendix C). They also noted the income received since the last meeting, the bank reconciliation and the actuals vs. budget for the receipts and payments.

c. The councillors considered the quotations for footpaths and open space grass and hedge cutting for 2026 and resolved the contracts to David Gotts (footpaths) for £450 and Flowers Groundcare (grass and hedge cutting) for £1,680.

d. The councillors resolved to donate £100 towards the Christmas Parcels.

e. The councillors reviewed the Budget Proposal (Appendix D) and resolved to set an Expenditure Budget of £31,573.68 for 2026 / 2027.

25/207 Walking Infrastructure Project Suffolk Highways has today provided indicative costing for the Walking Infrastructure scheme which also includes a signalised pedestrian crossing. The clerk will now review the costings and establish if any grants are available for the scheme.

25/208 Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Presland updated councillors that a further volunteer for the working party had been found. This now brings the total to five. The working party will hold its first meeting in early January, followed by a meeting with LUC later in the month. A meeting with residents is being planned for a Saturday in late February.

25/209 Asset of Community Value

The councillors reviewed the proposed application to extend the classification of the Saracens Head as an Asset of Community Value and resolved to proceed.

Full minutes can be found at: www.newton-pc.gov.uk

Dave Crimmin CILCA, PIALC, PSLCC
01787 375085
clerk@newton-pc.gov.uk

Boxford Rovers

Boxford Rovers continue to benefit from strong support across all age groups this season, with new track-suit sponsorship for the U11s from Whites Property and Jarvis Builders, fresh pitch-side board support and kit backing for the U18s from Toucan Wealth Management, refurbished dugouts featuring sponsor branding from Hudson Signs, and new corner-flag sponsorship from EA Hair at Kersey Mill.



Boxford Rovers U11 looking very happy and warm with their new tracksuit tops sponsored by Whites Property and Jarvis Builders



Milden's opponents in their last match of 2026. The full league fixture list is below.

There are just two changes to the teams Milden will play in 2026, with Brettenham and Nowton Academy (both relegated from Division 4) replacing Worlington, last season's Division 5 champions, and Long Melford, who finished as Division 5 runners-up. In addition to the league matches, it is hoped to arrange some friendlies, in particular a game against Long Melford, holders of the Tessa Rigby trophy after they won the inaugural match for the trophy last June. The other date to note at present is the **club AGM and pre-season social on Friday 6 March**, probably at The Fleece, but more details next month. Winter indoor nets are also being planned, details of which will be posted on the club website: www.mildencricket.com.

I end this report with another book recommendation. On our cruise I also got round to reading C.L.R. James's *Beyond a Boundary*, first published in 1963 and often described as the "best cricket book ever written". It is accurately summarised on Amazon (where you can buy a re-issued edition for £10.99) as "Part memoir of a West Indian boyhood, part passionate celebration and defence of cricket as an art form, part indictment of colonialism, *Beyond a Boundary* addresses not just a sport but a whole culture and asks the question, 'What do they know of cricket who only cricket know?'" Do read it.



Milden Cricket Club 2026

Whatever the outcome of the Ashes series in Australia (and I'm writing this report the day before the third Test in Adelaide, which England must win), with the turn of the year and daylight hours starting to get noticeably longer, cricketers start to look forward to the forthcoming domestic season. (For me personally, cricket continued in November—and I scored more runs!—with matches on sea days on the top deck of a cruise ship, crossing the Atlantic en route to the Caribbean: see photo, together with a selfie alongside the statue of Garry Sobers—who I saw playing at Lord's in 1961 and who will be 90 in July—outside the Kensington Oval ground in Bridgetown, Barbados.)



After an encouraging 2025 season, when Milden finished third in Division 5 of the Hunts County Bats Suffolk Cricket League, just missing out on promotion, their first league match of the 2026 season is a home fixture on 10 May against Hadleigh Academy – the team Milden beat by five wickets in their final match of 2025, and who will again be



2026 Fixtures

10 May	Milden v Hadleigh Academy
17 May	Haverhill v Milden
31 May	Milden v Brettenham
7 June	Brockley v Milden
14 June	Milden v Woolpit
21 June	Nowton Academy v Milden
28 June	Milden v Elmswell
5 July	Brettenham v Milden
12 July	Woolpit v Milden
19 July	Milden v Nowton Academy
26 July	Elmswell v Milden
9 August	Milden v Brockley
16 August	Elveden v Milden
23 August	Milden v Haverhill
30 August	Milden v Elveden
6 Sept	Hadleigh Academy v Milden

David Lamming

Volunteers Make our Villages Thrive!

Most of the clubs and organisations listed in these pages are run by volunteers - people who generously give their time and energy to make our community a richer, more vibrant place to live.

Whether it's a local sports team, gardening group, village hall, or charity initiative, these groups rely on the goodwill and dedication of people just like you.

Could you lend a hand?

Even a small commitment can make a big difference. Volunteering is a great way to meet new people, learn new skills, and feel more connected to your community. It's rewarding, sociable, and more often than not a lot of fun!

If there's a club or group that interests you, why not reach out and see how you could help? They'd be delighted to hear from you.

Together, we can keep our villages vibrant, welcoming, and full of life.

Additions or corrections

This guide aims to be a comprehensive list of all groups and organisations within the benefice, so if you know of a group that isn't listed here, have a change of contact details or notice a mistake, please get in touch with the editor at editor@boxriversnews.com.

Featured group

Boxford Community Council

is a local registered charity that organises community events to raise funds and then award grants and support to volunteer-run clubs and groups in Boxford, Edwardstone and Groton to strengthen village social life.

The council is actively looking for new volunteer members to help decide, organise and run new and existing events.

For more information, please visit www.boxford.me.uk or email boxfordcommunitycouncil@gmail.com



Scouting

1st Boxford Beaver Scouts	John 07966 690 313
1st Boxford Cub Scouts	Susie 07843 280396
1st Boxford Scouts	David Talbot-Clarke 07946 550519
1st Boxford Explorer Scouts	Neil Barkham 07734 108257
1st Boxford Rainbows	Janice Macmillan 07779 303690
1st Boxford Brownies	Janice Macmillan 07779 303690 janice.macmillan@yahoo.co.uk
1st Boxford Guides	Bethany Ireland bethanyireland11@gmail.com

Children Families & Learning

Boxford Primary School	01787 210332 boxford-suffolk.secure-dbprimary.com office@boxford.suffolk.sch.uk
Friends of Boxford School (FoBS)	talktofofs@gmail.com
Sunflowers Childcare	Moiria Grant 01787 211363 www.sunflowers-childcare.co.uk info@sunflowers-childcare.co.uk
Boxford Baby & Toddler Group	facebook.com/Boxfordbabyandtoddlergroup

Halls & Facilities to Hire

Boxford Pavilion	Natalie Woods 07772 916 135 nataliewoods25@gmail.com
Boxford Spinney	Mark Miller 01787 211596 www.boxfordspinney.co.uk mark.miller@talktalk.net
Boxford Village Hall	booking@boxfordvillagehall.co.uk
Edwardstone Parish Hall	Daphne Clark 01787 210698 daphne.clark@btopenworld.com
Edwardstone Millennium Green	Marijke Morris 07914 767 013 marijke_e@yahoo.co.uk
Groton Village Hall	Joanna Roberts 07845 940 008 jgant87618@aol.com
Little Waldingfield Parish Room	Sue Bowen 01787 249473 sd.bowen@btopenworld.com
Little Waldingfield Pavilion	Jennie Jordan 07522 352 558 52Jennie1@gmail.com
Marquee Booking	BoxfordMarqueeBooking@gmail.com
Milden Pavilion	Pearl 01449 741 876 info@mildenvillagehall.co.uk
Newton Village Hall	The Secretary 07955 199 000

Clubs & Groups

Boxford Bellringers	Richard Gates 01787 210432
Boxford Bible Study Group	Peter & Margaret 01787 211077
Boxford Bike Club	Kevin Bridge 07876 798 617 www.boxfordbikeclub.co.uk
Boxford Bowls Club	Ian Clark 01787 211133
Boxford Carpet Bowls	David Warren 01787 211067
Boxford Drama Group	Janice Macmillan 07779 303 690 janice.macmillan@yahoo.co.uk
Boxford Friendship Group	Alison Warren 01787 211067 or Wendy Hills 01787 210342
Boxford Gardens Open	Audrey Zuck 07852 102 455 audrey@a2zriskservices.com
Boxford Gardening Society	Elizabeth Wagener 01787 210223 elizabeth.wagener@btinternet.com
Boxford Literary Group	David Jones 01787 211104 audav@hotmail.co.uk
Boxford Rovers Youth FC	Melvyn Eke 07873 971 701 m.eke@btinternet.com www.boxford-rovers-youth.com
Boxford Tennis Social	Sue Moore 07808 481 447
Boxford WI	Lyn Beer 07961 357 526
Fleece Jazz	David Gasson 01787 210796
Highway 12 Western Dance	Chris 01787 371006
Little Waldingfield History Society	Diana Langford 01787 248298 dianalangford765@gmail.com
Little Waldingfield Over 60s & Friendship Club	Tricia Eddington 01787 247932
Local History Recorders	Edwardstone Daphne Clark 01787 210698 daphne.clark@btopenworld.com
	Groton Joanna Roberts 01787 210619 jgant87618@aol.com
Madrigalia Choir	Sue Price 01787 210913
Milden Cricket Club	Richard Robinson 07807 229447 or David Lamming 07968 791 135
Milden Singers	Pearl 01449 741876
Natural Boxford	Louise Carpenter 01787 211862 louisecarpenter@proton.me
Newton Arts & Crafts Club	Carole Langley 01787 373548
Newton War Games Club	Brian Lawson 01787 312160
Newton Fireside Club	Moir Evans 01787 374652
Pilates (Edwardstone)	Claire 07772 074 750

Clubs & Groups

Primrose Wood Volunteers	Evan Flockhart 07968 336 883 obliquewoodland@protonmail.com
Swing Jive & Lindy Hop Dance	Sarah Boldock 07956 614 824
Yoga (Boxford)	Marianne Marshall 01787 210323
Yoga Paper Kite (Newton)	Sophie 01787 313662
Yoga with Lindsey (Newton)	Lindsey 07971 800 540

Charities

Boxford & Groton United Charities	Guy Godfrey 01787 211378
Edwardstone Millennium Green Trust	Alison Barlow 07765 401 952 crossways.jemali@gmail.com
Edwardstone Charities	Nick Raymond 01787 210461 ncraymond@hotmail.co.uk
Groton Educational Foundation	Stephen Watkins 01787 210977 stephen_watkins49@yahoo.co.uk
Groton Winthrop Mulberry Trust	James Wills 01787 210484
Little Waldingfield Charities	Mary Thorogood 01787 247658 littlewaldingfieldcharities@gmail.com
Newton Green Trust	Philip Taylor 07775 777 598 philiptaylor433@gmail.com

Community Groups

3PR Boxford 1st Responders	Alistair Horne 07887 716453 alistair.horne@eastamb.nhs.uk
Boxford Allotments	David Burden 01787 211926 d.burden379@btinternet.com
Boxford Bounty	Mark Miller 01787 211596
Boxford Community Car Scheme	Jen Eastwood 01787 211853 jen.eastwood8@gmail.com
Boxford Community Council	Ward Baker 07850 941 831 boxfordcommunitycouncil@gmail.com www.boxford.me.uk
Boxford Playing Fields	Craig Needham 07970 733 934 craig.needham@me.com
Boxford Society	Jen Eastwood 01787 211853 jen.eastwood8@gmail.com boxfordsuffolk.com/boxfordSociety
Boxford Tennis Courts	Nick Moore 07977 241229
Lt Waldingfield Playing Field	Jennie Jordan 07522 352 558 52Jennie1@gmail.com

JANUARY 2026

6 TUE	Fireside Club - Bring & Share Lunch Newton Village Hall	12:30pm
7 WED	Boxford WI - Beetle Drive Boxford Village Hall	2pm
13 MON	Boxford Village Hall AGM Boxford Village Hall	7:30pm
14 WED	Charity Quiz Night The Fleece, Boxford	8pm
16 FRI	Polstead Films 'The Life of Chuck' Polstead Village Hall	7pm
20 TUE	Fireside Club - Games or Bingo Newton Village Hall	2pm
21 WED	LWHS - England's Greatest Showman Little Waldingfield Parish Room	7:30pm
23 FRI	Fun Quiz Groton Village Hall	7:15pm
26 MON	Boxford Friendship Group *Boxford Pavillion - <i>Note venue change</i>	2-4pm
30 FRI	Little Waldingfield Pop-Up Pub Little Waldingfield Pavilion	6:30pm

MARCH 2026

11 WED	LWHS - Women's Land Army in Suffolk Little Waldingfield Parish Room	7:30pm
14 WED	Charity Quiz Night The Fleece, Boxford	8pm
17 TUE	Fireside Club - Easter Egg Painting Newton Village Hall	2pm
21 SAT	Coffee Morning Newton Village Hall	10am
23 MON	Boxford Friendship Group Boxford Village Hall	2-4pm
27 THU	GHS - The Secret World of Spying Groton Village Hall	7:30pm
28 SAT	Parish Council Coffee Morning Newton Village Hall	10am
31 TUE	Fireside Club - Medical Detection Dogs Newton Village Hall	2pm

FEBRUARY 2026

3 TUE	Fireside Club - TBC Newton Village Hall	2pm
4 WED	Boxford WI - WW2 Women at War Boxford Village Hall	2pm
11 WED	Charity Quiz Night The Fleece, Boxford	8pm
17 TUE	Fireside Club - Pancakes Newton Village Hall	2pm
18 WED	LWHS - US Military Aviation Little Waldingfield Parish Room	7:30pm
21 SAT	Newton Village Hall Coffee Morning Newton Village Hall	10am
23 MON	Boxford Study Centre Literature Group Newton Village Hall	10am
23 MON	Boxford Friendship Group Boxford Village Hall	2-4pm
26 THU	Natural Boxford - History of Rivers Talk Boxford Pavilion	7:30pm

MARCH 2026

3 TUE	Fireside Club - Marks Hall Newton Village Hall	2pm
4 WED	Boxford WI - Ambulance Service Life Boxford Village Hall	2pm



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